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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Modern Languages

**Attitudinal and Motivational Factors: Performance, Attitude and Motivation  
Change in a Mexican University Context**

by

**Gandy Griselda Quijano Zavala**

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

February 2017



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

## **ABSTRACT**

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Modern Languages

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

### **ATTITUDINAL AND MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS: PERFORMANCE, ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATION CHANGE IN A MEXICAN UNIVERSITY CONTEXT**

Gandy Griselda Quijano Zavala

Considerable research has evidenced the important influence of attitudes on the language learner under the umbrella of motivation. Similarly, several studies have highlighted the close relationship between motivation and performance. Yet little research has examined the relationship between attitude, performance and change of attitude in the English as a Foreign Language setting. This thesis focuses on undergraduates' attitudes towards learning English in the Mexican context, specifically in Southeast Mexico. Despite the closeness of Mexico to the United States, there has been a lack of studies researching students' attitudes towards learning English.

This study's research questions aimed to explore undergraduates' attitudes towards learning English, the factors that influence such attitudes, the relationship between attitudes and performance, the existence and power of factors predicting attitudinal changes, and the presence of such changes over time. In order to answer the research questions, the study adopted a longitudinal mixed- method approach. The field work took place at the beginning and end of the academic year 2014-2015. Attitudes were collected by pre- and post-questionnaires. Performance was evaluated by using the University's Institutional English Diagnostic Test (EDII) results of 704 newly admitted students and the final year scores of 161 initial students. At the beginning of the students' second academic year in 2015, 12 second-year students were interviewed.

The findings of this study suggest that four salient attitudinal factors affected performance. They are 1) EFL attitudes, 2) socio-cultural impact, 3) linguistic exposure, and 4) classroom experience. Linguistic exposure, and Socio-cultural impact were among the predictors of students' performance. Although most students showed initial positive attitudes towards learning English, findings also indicated that attitudes could change over time based on attitudinal/motivational factors. These insights have implications for possible changes with regards to English curriculum and lesson planning in the institution of higher education, but also for continuing research on attitude change in other institutions in Mexico and in the ELT community at large.

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# DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Gandy Griselda Quijano Zavala,

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

## **Attitudinal and Motivational Factors: Performance, Attitude and Motivation Change in a Mexican University Context**

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission:

Signed: .....

Date: 17 February 2017 .....



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## **Definitions and Abbreviations**

Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMBT)

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

English as an International Language (EIL)

English as Foreign Language (EFL)

English Language Teaching (ELT)

Institutional Diagnostic Evaluation of English (EDII)

Institutional Diagnostic Evaluation of English for Business Students (EDIIN)

National Language Certification (CENNI)

Questionnaire for the EFL Learner (QEFLL)

Second Language (L2)

Second Language Motivational Self System (L2MSS)

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)



## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

“When students embark on the study of an L2, they are not merely ‘empty vessels’ that will need to be filled by the wise words of the teacher; instead, they carry a considerable ‘personal baggage’ to the language course that will have a significant bearing on how learning proceeds.” (Cohen and Dörnyei, 2002 p.170).

Learning an L2 continues to be a controversial aspect in education in foreign language classrooms. Whereas certain difficulties are presented to some learners to be able to be proficient in an L2, others learn an L2 with no apparent effort. Ellis (1994) describes factors involved in second language acquisition as internal and external. While internal factors relate to language transfer among other aspects, external factors include social factors. Among these factors age, sex, social class, ethnic identity, but also the social context of language learning are included. With regards to the social context, based on my own experience, as an English teacher in a public university, I have noticed certain somewhat negative reactions from students towards learning English. In other words, I have assumed students hold negative attitudes towards learning EFL.

As Cohen and Dörnyei (2002) point out, a language learner is not an ‘empty vessel’. When they start learning an L2 they bring a baggage. The baggage might include knowledge, experience, feelings and emotions. Part of that baggage seems reflected in the language classroom, but is limited to assumptions based upon class observation. In order to determine students’ attitudes, it becomes essential to address what the term entails. A great deal of previous research into attitude has focused on affective, behavioral and cognitive reactions (Ajzen, 2005; Bohner and Wänke, 2002; Baker, 1992; Oppenheim, 1982). These reactions are the ultimate result of a set of ideas constructed previously based on experiences and knowledge of the world. Undoubtedly because of its importance the term attitude was introduced in the exploration of language learning, and motivation theories.

Attitude has a pivotal role in language learning. In fact, studies on motivation and attitudes around the world offer an insightful perspective into L2 language learning. Theories of motivation from social psychology and then cognitive psychology have remained a key area of research after their introduction to second language learning. Studies that research motivation and attitudes have mostly focused on the comparison

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between Gardner's (1985) concept of integrativeness and instrumentality. Initial findings directed to the conclusion that integrative orientation contributed to better performance. Nevertheless, studies performed around the world showed that students holding instrumental orientation can also perform satisfactorily. Additionally, instrumental orientation is common in the EFL context (Tsuda, 2003; Kobayashi, 2002; Malallah, 2000) as in this type of context many times there is no specific target language group (Dörnyei, 2005). More recent motivational theories (Dörnyei, 2009) of the L2 Motivational Self-System (L2MSS) account for a progression of these two types of orientations to the images of L2 selves. Whereas L2 selves accounted for integrativeness, elements of instrumentality were approached through the ought to L2 selves. Yet, these terms were not substitutes for Gardner's (1985). Instead, the L2MSS widened the perspective of the L2 language learners through the theory of the selves. Imageries of who the language learner wants to become in the future (ideal L2 selves) and the image the learner wants to portray to satisfy others' expectations (ought to L2 selves) in collaboration with the learning experience provided a more friendly-approach to use in the language classroom. Research on the L2MSS shows that ideal L2 selves account for motivated learners (Kim and Kim, 2014; Taguchi et al., 2009). Nevertheless, recent developments in motivation have heightened the need for researching motivation from a dynamic perspective.

Cohen and Dörnyei (2002, p. 172) mention that an important aspect of motivation is that "it is not stable and static but is rather in a continuous process of change". Dynamic System Theory (DST) accounts for the study of changes in short-term motivation (Waninge et al., 2014). Therefore, if motivation approaches are more dynamic, attitude, which is a central part of motivation, needs to be readdressed from a more dynamic perspective too. In fact, attitudes are mostly addressed in empirical studies as not likely to change. This study will focus on examining language learning attitude, its relation with performance, but also with change with the aim of stating its contribution to understanding the language learner. Special attention should be given to the three components of attitude to understand the language learner. Students' aspects behind such motivation or attitudes might be diverse.

In the EFL setting, many teachers worry about their students for not having a good attitude to learn English. I consider important to take into account the feelings or perceptions towards English students bring, before they start their English instruction at university. The connection of attitudes and performance is of equal importance. This

implies a series of challenges for an educational institution. The first challenge will be to carry out research that establishes the connection between affective factors and performance, and possible changes throughout a period of time. Definitely research results can contribute to enhance the language learning environment. This is a necessary step for educational institutions if knowledge of English is pursued. English represents an open door to enhance both professional and personal endeavours for future professionals.

This chapter describes the situation of learning English in the Mexican context with the research aims to investigate Mexican university students' attitudes towards learning English, their performance, and the connection with attitude change. The need to perform more research regarding attitudes and learning English within the context of the study is emphasised. A summary of the thesis structure is presented in accordance with the research aims.

## **1.1 Learning English in the Foreign Language Context**

Education national policies are diverse across countries around the world, but what is homogeneous to one extent is that non-English speaking countries continuously emphasize learning English. This is not surprising since it has become imperative to be able to communicate in English to advance in education and business in a globalized world. Therefore, schools devote a great effort to sustain English programmes that prepare their students to succeed and excel in their professions. Still learning a foreign language might not be as simple as it sounds. Even when learning English as a Second Language (ESL), or Foreign Language (EFL) have basically merged to learning English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or even English as an International Language (EIL) due to the same phenomenon of globalization (Celce-Murcia, 2014; Harmer, 2007), learning English in a school setting and in a context where daily interaction is presented in the community's native language is still limited.

Learning a language in a classroom provides the learner the opportunity to learn and practise English, but with some restrictions. For instance, Hummel (2013) claims that classroom learning is limited in time and exposure. Learners usually have a couple of learning hours a day; sometimes a couple of days a week. In addition, as English takes place in a non-natural setting, many learners might speak to each other in their mother tongue, which reduces the time to engage in language practise. Although English is

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basically everywhere nowadays with the use of internet, there is also the help of applications that translate content, and this is, in fact, a widely used technique among many students or people who do not understand English. Exposure to English outside the classroom remains very limited unless there is constant contact with speakers of English (native or non-native) for other reasons. Otherwise, the language learner finishes her English class and goes on to normal life in her native language.

Exposure to English might be limited in the school setting, but learning English is still a must for many people. Knowing English opens up a window to access better life opportunities. For some people English represents being able to travel to understand and communicate with people from around the world, for others English provides access to understand literature and cultural aspects of the language, and for others English is a medium to escalate the work ladder. There might be an array of reasons to study and learn English, and with these reasons affective traits are originated.

The emotions, feelings, perceptions, beliefs, motivations, or attitudes a learner brings to the language classroom influence greatly the way to embark on the study of a foreign language. As emotions are many times visible and hard to hide, it is to a certain extent practical for many English teachers to attribute negative attitudes towards learning English when learners 'behave inappropriately' in the classroom. Nevertheless, attitude towards learning a language has been addressed in the literature as involving three components that involve behaviour, feelings, and cognition (Baker, 1992; Arvey et al., 1990; Ajzen, 1988), and has proven to be of paramount importance for motivation in second language learning (Ellis, 1994; Gardner, 1985). From this stance, attitude has become an important concept in second language learning.

### **1.2 Attitudes towards Learning English around the World**

As English continues spreading around the world, various affective aspects and factors are explored. The literature corroborates the importance of students' attitudes in English language learning in different learning contexts. Yet, studies on attitudes share some similarities, but also differences that need continuous exploration. The following section aims to highlight the importance of attitudes in second language learning, including implicit factors.

Most studies that involve attitudes towards learning English show that generally learners display positive attitudes (Tahaineh and Daana, 2013; Al- Tamimi and Shuib, 2009; Van de Gaer et al., 2007; Tsuda, 2003; Kobayashi, 2002; Malallah, 2000). Likewise, empirical studies have displayed individual and contextual factors that can influence a learner's attitude. For instance, research exploring individual factors in higher education has focused on researching risk-taking, shyness, gender among other variables and establishing the connection with attitudes (Tahaineh and Daana, 2013; Alavinia and Salmasi, 2012; Dehbozorgi, 2012; Kobayashi, 2002). Results implicate that contexts can mark a difference in research; that is, while attitudes towards learning English can be positive in different countries such as Jordan, Yemen or Kuwait the factors vary because the learning situations are different. For instance, in many countries education is divided for men and women, in other countries all course contents are provided in English while in other countries only the science or English majors receive their lessons in English, but students in other areas of study receive their training in their native language. Individual characteristics along with contextual factors relate to attitudes, but also to performance.

Undoubtedly, learners' performance stands as one factor that relates to motivation and attitudes despite the ongoing cause-effect debate. Different studies have established a clear connection between performance and motivation in L2 (Molavi and Biria, 2013; Dehbozorgi, 2012; Gardner, 1985). For the general learner, performance is extremely important as it represents knowledge of the target language. Yet, satisfactory performance might not equal satisfactory proficiency in English. Factors that lead to performance are worth of more exploration to establish possible connections with the stability of learners' attitudes over a period of time. The learning situation in tertiary education is one important exponent of factors involved in attitudes towards language learning.

### **1.3 The Current Study**

Even when there have been a wide variety of studies around the world trying to address the area of motivation and attitude in second language learning, the search continues for finding the factors that foster or hinder the students' achievement and performance in English specifically in Mexico. Being a neighbouring country of the United States of America, Mexico stands as an excellent scenario to perform research on learning English. The State is definitely working according to international standards for Mexicans

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to have the best education in English and achieve the proficiency in the target language that allows them to communicate effectively.

Despite the fact that teaching English in Mexico was introduced in the 1920's, teaching and learning English in Mexico is still full of tremendous flows. One main problem with the State ongoing changes in the education of English in Mexico lies basically on a fragile research foundation that many times does not take into consideration the multicultural context of Mexico, and the opinions of Mexicans from different regions. Mexico is very diverse; learning English in Northern Mexico might carry similarities but also differences to learning English in Central or Southeast Mexico. Additionally, learning English in a classroom differs greatly from learning English in a naturalistic setting. A learner who experiences studying abroad, for instance, embraces more opportunities to use the target language in a variety of contexts. A language classroom context can certainly influence how students behave or react towards English as a foreign language and model their attitudes especially if English forms part of compulsory education as it is in Mexico.

Moreover, in the specific case of Mexico although it is common to think of the United States as the main target language group because both countries share a border, there are other cities in Mexico which are not as exposed to American English as often as the cities along the border. In fact, in the south inhabitants of the state of Quintana Roo might be more exposed to English from Belize as they also share a border. Apparently the United States of America and Belize might at first sight be the prominent target language groups for Mexicans, but there are definitely other contextual and social factors involved in a community to learn English. One example is the many textbooks used in Mexico that portray British culture as well as other cultures as English is the lingua franca; then, many students might identify with this group or any other group even when they are geographically distant.

In the same manner, Mexico is a country which hosts many visitors from around the world every year, most using English as the language of communication. Another type of contact with the target language is work related issues. Mexico is well known for its oil production; this type of contact brings many personnel from foreign companies to work in the oil industry, and the medium of communication between parties is mostly English. Last but not least it is of paramount importance that even when learners might not be as exposed to American English directly, there is a great social exposure through media via

entertainment and news. Additionally, many learners might have family, friends or acquaintances that have knowledge of English, and their experiences might also shape the way learners approach the target language. Therefore, this exposure can also contribute to the general results of success in language learning. This scenario poses an interesting mosaic for English language research.

From the stance described above, this study focused on the context of Mexican higher education in Southeast Mexico. This offers a different panorama as these university students are far from the border with the United States of America, but may have contact with English speaking people due to the major economic activity of the community was the oil industry at the moment of this research. The study took place at the main public university of the city. The university has four campuses. Two of them offer upper secondary school education, and the other two concentrate on providing the community with university studies. The schools of law, business, education, chemistry and oil, information science are located at the main campus while the schools of engineering and technology, health, natural science and also distance education are located at the other campuses. The institution also has departments of school tutoring and counselling, psychology, international exchange programmes, social/community service and scholarships/grants and a language centre where English is taught for most students, and where this study developed.

There is special interest in identifying the learners' attitudes towards learning English of a sample population of Mexican university students; in addition to their attitudes, the study aims to find the factors that influence such attitudes and make the connections to their performance and possible change of attitudes. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to add to the body of literature that exists in researching attitudes towards language learning. These objectives generated four main research questions:

***RQ1*** *What are the university students' attitudes towards learning English, and the main factors that comprise such attitudes?*

***RQ2*** *Which variables contribute to the prediction of the EDII (Institutional Diagnostic Evaluation of English) test performance and English course performance?*

***RQ3*** *How do students' initial attitudes towards learning English, and performance in English compare at the beginning and end of the academic year?*

**RQ4** *What are the main reasons of any possible change in the use of English, language performance and attitude towards learning English, after an academic year, in students' opinions?*

In line with other studies researching attitudes towards learning English, this study adopted a quantitative approach. Quantitative studies, mostly statistical correlational studies about attitude and language performance provide an important part of the language development of students, but this only covers one side of the overall picture. There is a lack of studies on attitudes that include qualitative data, or better yet that include both. For this reason, both quantitative and qualitative measures were adopted in this study to provide a more complete panorama of the language learning situation described in this study.

This mixed- methods research contributes to understand better the context of attitudes towards learning English in the Mexican context. In Mexico, despite the fact that English is included in the curricula of secondary education, students still arrive at university level without having, in many occasions, at least a basic notion of English. In fact, Davies (2009) reiterates that ELT education in the public educational system is indeed poor. Unfortunately, the English learning situation for applicants who want to pursue studies in English language teaching is not different (Lemus Hidalgo et al., 2008; Bravo Gómez, 2007). In his analysis of 8 Mexican universities requirements to accept ELT applicants, Bravo Gómez (2007) suggests that these students should be accepted if they fulfil the requirement of 400 points in the TOEFL exam to guarantee that English will not interfere with the learning of content instruction taking into consideration they will be the future teachers of English. The level of English for the rest of the university population in most Mexican institutions is similar.

It is of tremendous importance to carry out studies which, among other things, explore undergraduates' attitudes towards learning English, in order to learn what factors shape those attitudes, and which attitude constructs can be used to predict EDII (*See Appendix A*) test performance. In addition, it is important to explore the interplay between possible changes in student attitude and performance during the course of English instruction. The results of this investigation will shed light on understanding the role of attitudes in learning English as a foreign language at the institution, and, crucially, help form a research-based rationale for the implementation of modifications to the curriculum and English programme's resources. Policies and decisions based on

research can lead the institution towards its goal of achieving optimal quality teaching and learning. Thus, not only will the results shed light on understanding the role of attitudes in learning English in the Mexican context in higher education, but can also lead to series of other investigations about attitude change in other institutions of higher education in Mexico, but also in the ELT research world where contexts might be similar to this specific Mexican context.

## **1.4 Thesis Structure**

The preceding section described the rationale for this study. Similarly, its importance and objectives were presented. The following chapters aim to describe the complete process for the realization of this thesis.

Chapter 2 introduces a body of literature regarding the study of motivation and attitudes. Early approaches to motivation are discussed in relation to current motivation theories. The importance of motivation and attitude as a dynamic construct in language learning and its connection to performance is established. Moreover, ELT studies related to Mexicans' attitudes towards learning English are discussed to emphasize the need for research.

Chapter 3 discusses a set of empirical studies that establish the similarities but also differences of attitude research results from empirical studies around the world. Additionally, the common approaches to measuring attitudes in language learning are discussed as well as the results of individual but also social factors and their relationship with performance drawn from quantitative and qualitative studies.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology used to develop the research, type of methods, subjects and instruments that have been used in this investigation. First, a justification of the study and its aims are described. Once the aims have been established, the four research questions that guide this study and the research instruments are presented followed by a description of the study procedure that includes an overview of the research context.

Chapter 5 includes the results from the three research instruments that aim to answer the four research questions. First, descriptive statistics and factor analysis using SPSS 21 provided answers to the first research question regarding the students' attitudes towards learning English and the main attitudinal factors. In order to answer the second

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research question i.e. the predictors of test and course performance, multiple regression was used. For the third research question regarding the changes of attitudes and performance over an academic year, t-tests were used. As for the last research question, a qualitative stance was taken using semi-structured interviews as the main instrument to answer the changes in performance, use of English and attitude. Where appropriate both quantitative and qualitative results were presented to address the research questions.

Chapter 6 presents the discussion of attitudinal factors towards learning English continuing with the discussion of attitude and performance. Moreover, attitude change is discussed in relation to the theory and the results from this study. A representation of the factors influencing attitude change is presented too.

Chapter 7 summarizes and concludes the main findings, and addresses the study implications. The limitations of the study as well as suggestions for further research are presented. Finally, a summary of the thesis concludes the major aspects of the research process.

## Chapter 2: Motivation in Language Learning

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to motivation and students' attitudes towards learning English. First, an introduction to the social-psychological construct of motivation is provided. It then proceeds to establish the relationship between motivation and attitude in language learning, the importance of attitude as well as the factors that influence attitudes. This literature review also addresses the relationship between motivation, attitude and performance and their change.

### 2.1 Defining Motivation

Among the most influential studies to understand human performance is motivation. Various definitions of motivation have been introduced. Some definitions seem rather simple while others are more structured. For instance, Graham and Weiner (1996, p. 63) define motivation as "the study of why people think and behave as they do" while Dörnyei and Ottó (1998, p.65) define motivation as "the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritised, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out". Additionally, Williams and Burden (2007, p. 94) state that "the term motivation is more helpfully used to refer to a state of temporary or prolonged goal-oriented behaviour which individuals actively choose to engage in." Whether motivation is referred as a study, arousal or a state, all of these and many other definitions of motivation concentrate on understanding the mental processes that lead a person to engage in an activity. Substantially, behaviour has not been separated from cognition as the actions performed to complete a task provide useful information to understand the cognitive process.

Certainly, examining an individual's motivation is a complex task and for this reason there have been different approaches that explore motivation. While both cognition and behaviour are indeed important terms within the study of motivation, early theories concentrated on the individual's behaviour based on rewards- punishment treatment or a stimulus- response (Skinner, 1953; Young, 1941) mostly based on experimental research with non-humans. Although results from these investigations permeated the literature for decades, the complexity of human behaviour shifted the exploration of

motivation to a cognitive perspective. There was an increasing need for motivation to explain the process of learning (Ellis, 1994).

## **2.2 Theories of Motivation: Expectancy-Value Theories**

Among earlier theories of motivation (Kelly, 1971; Weiner, 1969; Atkinson, 1964; Heider, 1958; Rotter, 1954; Hull, 1943 and Lewin, 1935), expectancy value theories remain fruitful to explain the description of the learning process. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) introduced the expectancy value theory that exemplified an individual's behaviour based on the value of a goal and the expectation to succeed which transcribed into the formula of:  $\text{Motivation} = \text{Expectancy} \times \text{Value}$ . This theory emphasized the importance of goals to shape the individual's behaviour as well as the value that the individual assigns to each of those goals; the degree of expectations to succeed influences the person's behaviour. For example, a child who desires her mother's attention and praise will be more likely to perform actions such as obtaining outstanding scores, or behaving based on her mother's standards of being a *good* kid. Therefore, expected-value theory concentrates on the behaviour an individual chooses to pursue an expected goal and its subjective value (Graham and Weiner, 1996 p.70). Presumably, alternative goals are presented to each person and each goal has an assigned value which ultimately ends in achievement. The possibilities leading an individual to perform certain actions to complete goals are rather complex. For this reason, expectancy-value theory emerged as one theory which could explain an individual's motivation. Therefore, below is presented an overview of two salient motivation theories that followed the expectancy-value approach and have greatly contributed to the teaching-learning process.

### **2.2.1 Theory of Achievement Motivation**

Atkinson's theory of achievement motivation (1964) concentrated on the approaches to achieve a goal. Based on his theory, in order to achieve a goal it was necessary to focus on three factors. The first factor centred on the need to achieve or motive to succeed. The second factor focused on the probability of being successful, and the third factor was the incentive value of success. These factors resulted in Atkinson's first approaches of his theory.

Although Atkinson's later work included modification of his formula, his work theorized the importance of expectancies and value to succeed as key factors in a person's motivation to achieve a task. Namely, expectancy was defined as those anticipated

thoughts a person holds with respect to failing or succeeding when a task is engaged. Without a doubt before actually deciding to perform a task, an individual foresees the final outcome, and due to this anticipation an individual is very likely to decide whether to embrace a new challenge as the individual evaluates the probability of success. Equally important, incentive value was essential to this theory. Incentive value referred to an affect to either succeeding or failing on a task. Succeeding at tasks with a greater level of difficulty provides a sense of great pride. This is due to the low probabilities of success. Achievement theory claimed that an individual who has a high motive to succeed is more likely to choose tasks at the intermediate level as the probabilities of success increase while a person who has a low motive to succeed chooses either easy or very difficult task. In other words, the individual does not assign importance to achievement. Therefore, the theory aimed to explain individual differences in achievement motivation such as an individual's choice to perform a task, the constancy and effort to continue the task, and the final performance of the task. Graham and Weiner (1996) consider that the type of success prediction the theory established was the main reason Achievement Motivation was predominant in the field.

Following the expectancy-value theory of Achievement Motivation, other researchers developed a model that included achievement. For instance, Eccles et al., (1998) considered in their model that two sets of beliefs were linked to the choices leading to achievement. These two sets of beliefs centred in expectations and the value given to the alternatives the individual perceives as possible. Not only did they establish this link, but also the relation of these two beliefs with internal factors such as aptitudes, personal beliefs and attitudes and external factors as cultural norms, and experiences. Eccles et al. (1998) argued these aspects to be associated with achievement-related activities. In their model, they provided motivation constructs that included ability beliefs, expectancies for success, and subjective tasks values.

### **2.2.2 Social Learning Theory**

Rotter's (1954) social learning theory departed from behaviourism with the belief that a theory should have a motivational principle component. Personality and behaviour in Rotter's theory were the main elements as personality was seen as representing the individual's interaction with the environment. Similar to Atkinson's (1964) concern, Rotter also focused on the person choosing different alternatives of behaviour. Then, the combination of behavioural approaches such as Skinner's (1974) and cognitive

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approaches as in Atkinson's, directed his theory to take both the individual and the environment as responsible for behaviour.

Then the main argument was that behaviour was changeable. In other words, if the person shifted her ways of thought, then the behaviour shifted too. Similarly, if the environment changed, the individual's way of thinking would too. Within social learning theory, people are conceived optimistically; they work towards their goals based on life experience to optimize their reinforcement rather than to avoid punishment. For instance, a person who will work for the first time will relate her expectancy of job success based on other past experiences at new effort and knowledge situations. Thus, Rotter introduced the formula of  $Behaviour = f(E, RV)$ .

Expectancy (E) was essential in this motivation theory, but also reinforcement value (RV). Individuals decide to engage in certain tasks as they expect they will result in obtaining the desired goal. Expectancies are fed and stimulated by previous experiences. Reinforcement value refers to preference for reinforcing outcomes. For instance, the positive expectation outcomes have a high reinforcement value while the negative expectation outcomes have a low reinforcement value. This distinction was categorized as internal and external control of reinforcement. A person with an internal locus of control thinks of herself as responsible for her behaviour and reinforcements. On the other contrary, a person with an external locus of control assigns responsibility to other sources such as luck for her behaviour and reinforcements. In short, Social Learning Theory contributed to the study of motivation from the study of personal control. Moreover, it highlighted the importance of the environment as essential in shaping behaviour and provided the foundation to other theories.

### **2.2.3 Attribution Theory**

Attribution theory suggests that people attribute different reasons to the events in their lives where they have either succeeded or failed (Weiner, 1986). The theory roots from the individual's curiosity to learn the causes of some events. This usually happens when there are unexpected results to certain events. For instance, if a language learner failed a test when she was expecting to pass, she is very likely to attribute it to some reason. Otherwise, if the learner expected to fail, there is no need to think of the reasons she failed because she already expected such result. These attributions relate to both cognition and motivation as the individual activates the thinking process to find a reason for the cause, and this process impacts the behaviour for approaching later tasks.

Although there can be an unlimited number of attributions a person can give to explain an outcome, a clear distinction is made between internal and external reasons (Rotter, 1966). Weiner (1986) mentioned that people mainly used four attributions to success or failure in so-called achievement situations. These were ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. However, other attributions have emerged as the theory is being researched. Attributions such as intrinsic motivation, interest, teacher competence and mood have also been put forward (Weiner, 1992). Other studies have listed even more attributions (Vispoel and Austin, 1995; Little, 1985).

Achievement, Social Learning and Attribution theories flourished among other earlier theories and contributed to contemporary cognitive approaches of motivation. These three theories shared some aspects and contributed with new elements. Like achievement theory, social learning theory made use of mathematical equations to sustain their arguments of expectancy-value. The first theory centred on the individual's needs of achievement by analysing task choice. Social learning theory centred on locus of control with emphasis on expectancy and environment. Attribution theory, on the other hand, focused on achievement, and affect by studying causality. Overall, earlier theories of motivation gave rise to more modern motivation approaches in the educational context such as the language learning setting by exploring motivation from individuals' differences, social perspective, and emotions.

### **2.3 Motivation and Attitude in Language Learning**

Undoubtedly, theories of motivation have shown important evidence of the psychological construct to understand an individual's process to achievement by following the process of engaging on a task, and carrying the task to end (Eccles et al., 1998; Atkinson, 1974). On the other hand, other theories of motivation have concentrated on the causal relationship of an individual's behaviour and emotion (Weiner, 1986; Kelley, 1967; Heider, 1958). Specifically, in the area of ELT motivation studies, the pioneer study was the Socio-Educational Model (Gardner, 2006; 1985) followed by the L2 Motivational Self-System (Dörnyei, 2009). Although the direction to motivation has recently been changing (Dörnyei et al., 2015; Dörnyei, 2012; Dörnyei, 2009) these two motivational approaches portray the relationship of motivation with attitudes in language learning, and actually devised the current approaches to motivation in language learning.

### 2.3.1 Attitude: Gardner and Dörnyei

From Gardner's theory, attitude has practically been immersed in the field of motivation. Within Gardner's model (1985) he distinguishes two types of attitudes in language learning. The first one *Attitudes towards the learning situation* refers to the type of attitude involved in the academic context where the language learning takes place. In an educational setting, there are various aspects immersed in forming attitudes such as attitudes towards the teacher, the course, and learning the language. Another salient term in Gardner's theory is that of *Integrativeness*. This refers to social attitudes (attitudes towards the language community), to the cultural issues in learning the language; for example, attitudes towards the French Canadians and ethnocentrism, and the 'openness' the learner has to embrace (to a certain extent) the target language culture. In the model these two attitudes are correlated to support the learner's motivation to learn the language. Both concepts play a fundamental role in Gardner's motivation theory.

In addition, there are two important orientations in Gardner's models that have been current until today. One is *instrumentality* referring to the pragmatic reasons the learner has to learn the language. For instance, a learner who is interested in learning English to obtain a job promotion holds instrumental orientation. The second one is *integrativeness* which evaluates the reasons a learner has to communicate with the target language community. A learner who holds an integrative orientation is very likely to engage in conversations with target language speakers to find out more about the culture and to be able to integrate. Gardner's research results confined better success and positive attitudes towards language learning to those students who held positive attitudes towards the target language community. These types of orientations explain the rationale for learners to engage in language learning, yet these orientations have also been questioned by more current research approaches as they are limited to only one or the other. Indeed, research shows different results in other contexts (Dörnyei, 1990). Additionally, the controversy of the concept of *integrative* motivation headed research in another direction.

Dörnyei (2009; 1990) argues that among academia there was a growing dissatisfaction with the concept of integrativeness. One of Dörnyei's major criticisms to the concept is that it did not have enough foundation in previous theories of motivational or educational psychology. Moreover, he claims that integrative was an ambiguous term as the target of integration remained unclear in formal classroom contexts where there is

no direct contact with speakers of the language or in other foreign language contexts. Therefore, how could integrative motivation be accounted for better language performance in learning environments with no contact with a target cultural group? Additionally, since integrative motivation included three constituents: integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation and motivation, there was a great confusion between integrativeness motivation and integrative orientation.

In fact, Noels et al., (2000) mention that integrative orientation which was believed to be essential for L2 acquisition is not fundamental for motivation. Yet, the concept has relevance in specific socio-cultural contexts where there might be contact with a target language group. In other scenarios, language learning orientations such as travel, friendship, knowledge, and instrumental orientation were evident. Needless to say the role of English has greatly changed over the years; English owns the role of international language. Thus, rather than integrating with the target language (which in many FL contexts is unclear), learners choose learning English for being updated to the world needs and exigencies.

Thus, Dörnyei (2005) studied the psychological concept of possible selves (Markus and Nurius, 1986) and proposed the L2 motivational Self-System (L2MSS), which preceded a sensible pathway to approach once again the study of motivation in language learning. This system includes two components from the psychology field, which explain the ideas people have about themselves in the future such as what they might become, what they would like to become or what they are afraid of becoming or in other words, their possible selves; this theory became relevant to language learning research because possible selves can explain how a language learner envisions herself using the target language, as it predicts the future scenario.

Thus, two concepts evolved from the selves theory although both possible selves components refer to the long-term images people have about themselves. The ideal L2 self focuses on “the representation of the attributes that one would ideally like to possess (i.e. representation of hopes, aspirations, or wishes)” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 13). Ought to L2 self, on the other hand, refers to the attributes an individual believes she needs or ought to possess in order to satisfy the expectations from others in order to avoid undesirable results. More importantly, results from previous studies (Dörnyei et al., 2006) which included integrativeness and other motivational and attitudinal dimensions and which were performed at different times and with different languages, reported similar results.

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Both attitudes toward L2 speakers/ community and instrumentality indicated two different variables in the motivation paradigm. Therefore, from a self-perspective, integrativeness was conceived as ideal selves. By way of illustration, take a person with integrative motivation who obtains better language performance based on her affinity to the target language culture. The person's ideal self would be to master the language to integrate with the target language culture (based on Gardner, 1985). According to Dörnyei (2009), the self account explained attitudes towards members of the L2 community and instrumentality as antecedents of integrativeness. The L2 speakers in Gardner's model functioned as the idealised L2 self in Dörnyei's model. His argument was based on the difficulty to imagine mastering a language from a community that we despise. On the other hand, the desire to succeed professionally also forms part of our idealized self. Yet, the self -concept includes two types: promotion and prevention (Higgins, 1987). Promotion relates to hopes, aspirations, and advancements while prevention refers to avoiding certain punishments. While instrumentality for promotion is considered part of the ideal L2 self, instrumentality for prevention forms part of the ought-to L2 self. This last type of instrumentality corresponds to the need to meet expectations and to avoid negative consequences such as in studying English to pass the course. Ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self fit the previous motivation model and provided a more sensible explanation from psychology. Nevertheless, Dörnyei (2009) added a third component in this model, the L2 learning experience which as the name suggests refers to the learning situation and the influence this one has on the learners' motives to learn the target language. This component comprises aspects of the immediate learning environment such as the figure of the teacher, the curriculum, peers as well as experiences of success. All of these aspects have turned out extremely important in the development of learner's approach to language learning.

In summary, Gardner (1985) extensively researched his model and provided empirical evidence that learners who wanted to integrate with the target language culture were more successful than others. However, many other research results found that the learners whose goals related to instrumental reasons could also be successful language learners. Due to incongruities with the model, continuous dissatisfaction grew among scholars. Yet, Dörnyei's model was determinant to explore the self-concept theory and obtain a more congruent model which could concentrate attitudes towards language speakers and community but also the instrumental reasons a learner experiences. Additionally, based on Higgins (1987) Dörnyei (2009) added the distinction of promotion and prevention within Instrumentality, categorizing promotion as part of the ideal L2

self and prevention in the ought to L2 self, and adding L2 learning experience. Consequently, emergent studies explored the connection of the model to performance similar to Gardner's (1985) initial line of research.

### 2.3.2 Language Performance

In a formal environment, a learner's performance is examined to evaluate their competence in the foreign language (Ellis, 1994). Several studies in ESL (Gardner, 1985; Gardner, 1968; Gardner and Lambert, 1959) opened a window to explore the effect of motivation in the students' language performance; the results of these studies reveal that certainly students' type of motivation and performance are related (Gardner, 1989). Specifically as mentioned earlier, integrativeness facilitated second language acquisition (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995; Gardner, 1985). As mentioned earlier, integrativeness includes attitudes towards learning the language. Therefore, attitudes function as an important element in performance. Other studies showed that students with instrumental motivation could also be successful language learners (Shaaban and Ghaith, 2000; Wen, 1997; Clément et al., 1994). What is more, other studies found a negative correlation between integrative motivation and attitudes and language proficiency (Dehbozorgi, 2012; Oller et al., 1977; Gardner and Lambert, 1972) or no significant correlation (Khodadady and Ashrafborji, 2013). Thus, although initial studies on language learning and integrative motivation showed evidence of correlation, later studies evidenced that this was not always the case. Nevertheless, motivation per se determines the course of action an individual undertakes to complete a task.

On the other hand, studies concerning the L2 Motivational Self System are more centred in the application of the two self-guides and learning experience in the language classroom in relation to motivated behaviour (Csizér and Kormos, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009; Ryan, 2008). Yet, a few studies on the system and achievement have been performed. For instance, Lamb (2012) employed a c-test to establish the connection between language proficiency and the components of the L2MSS. Moreover, Taguchi et al., (2009) research findings in Japan, China and Iran supported that the ideal L2 self explained variance in the intended learning efforts variable, in greater capacity than integrativeness. On the other hand, Kim and Kim (2011) found the ideal L2 self accounted for predicting L2 motivated learning behaviour, but not for predicting course scores. Additionally, Dörnyei and Chan (2013) confirmed the connection of ideal L2 self with intended effort; the ought to L2 self did not predict the course grades though. Thus,

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findings suggest that L2 self guides are good predictors of motivated behaviour but do not necessarily predict course grades.

Research on these two models indicates the relationship of earlier theories (Weiner, 1985; Atkinson, 1977; Rotter, 1964) to the current work of motivation. For example, achievement plays a key role in the study of motivation, but the social environment and the causal relationship for success or failure in language learning are addressed too (Gardner, 1985). Yet, the social environment in learning a language turns complex as it forms part of the individuals' beliefs, and attitudes. The L2MSS reintroduces the selves from a more pedagogical stance which can be implemented in the language classroom; yet it intends to look for causal relationships between the selves, motivated behaviour and language learning. Although establishing the reasons that foster or hinder language learning is still of general concern in motivation research and second language acquisition, the complexity of the construct has led current motivation theories to explore motivation as a dynamic factor. Motivation is being approached as the complex dynamic and changeable factor it really is.

### **2.3.3 Change in Motivation**

Linear approaches to the study of motivation have failed to explain complex patterns in second language learning. Waninge et al., (2014) argue a linear approach such as the ones in most statistics- based studies needs to be questioned. Definitely, quantitative studies contribute to see the L2 learning panorama statistically. For instance, in most of Gardner's studies we could see whether most students were integrative or instrumentally oriented, and which group performed better. Although the information could be generalized, there was still a limitation to the study of attitudes as its stability was assumed.

Although motivation and attitude change have been explored in the 1990's (Mantle-Bromley 1995; Cacioppo et al., 1994), Dynamics System Theory (DST) (Dörnyei et al., 2014) examines motivation as a dynamic construct. There are three main characteristics in this theory: change, stability and context. It is common to hear that a learner is either motivated or not as if motivation could not be altered. Cohen and Dörnyei (2002, p. 172) state that L2 motivation "is not stable and static but is rather in a continuous process of change". This process allows for stable phases but also recurring patterns in behaviour. Moreover, context was considered as a separate factor influencing affective variables (Gardner, et al. 2004). Current motivation theories include context as part of the

dynamic developing system of motivation. The learner is no longer separated from her language learning context as she is seen as a person-in-context (Ushioda, 2009).

This view has positioned motivation under scrutiny. Actually previous findings suggested that a shift to the DST was imminent when addressing attitudes and motivation. For instance, Mantle- Bromley (1995) found changes in the initial attitudes of males and females. Attitudes do not become more positive in the language classroom. Moreover, Gardner et al., (2004) findings show that the possibility of change is larger for variables related to the classroom experience than for integrativeness, motivation, language anxiety or instrumental orientation. In fact, the learning environment has been salient in studies reporting change (Busse and Walter, 2013; Campbell and Storch, 2011; Gardner et al., 2004). For this reason merely statistical studies on attitude and motivation change are limited. The learning environment is a fundamental part of the learner and one does not exist without the other.

## **2.4 Learning English in Mexico**

In formal education, the idea of being successful is almost non-existent if there is no knowledge of English. Undoubtedly, English is required for the modern world. For Mexico the study of English has always been important due to the geographical and commercial relationship with the United States of America. For this reason, the Mexican government has implemented different programmes to comply with formal education in English.

Education of English in Mexico dates back to 1920's (IMCO, 2015; Martinez, 2011) when teaching English in lower secondary school became mandatory. The officials at the Ministry of Education with a popular nationalistic view considered public education needed to be complete and relevant and open access to texts in other languages. However, in 1932 the Ministry of Education surrendered to a socialist education view influencing the suspension of English as a subject (Santos del Real, 1998). English was seen as a threat to dissolve our nationality and therefore harm our country. Fortunately, since 1941 English has officially been present in the secondary education curriculum.

By 1992 many states in Mexico started initiatives to teach English earlier in primary public schools (Reyes et al., 2012). Not surprisingly, many of these states shared borders with the United States of America, and had special interest due to constant contact with the target culture. In 2005 a new programme started, the Encyclemedia which was directed to 6<sup>th</sup> graders and piloted in 13 states (SEP, 2006). Digital resources were

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responsible as the main support for teaching since teachers did not know how to teach the foreign language. Teachers only acted as guides with help of supplementary material. Actual practise revealed that it was very complex to guide students to reach A1 in the CEFR (Common European Framework). In 2009, the NEPBE or National English Programme of Basic Education was launched. The main objective of this programme consisted of lower secondary school children reaching B1 based on the CEFR. More recently, in 2011 a new national mandatory curriculum emerged (SEP, 2011). First year pre-schoolers from the age of three to children in lower secondary education would receive English lessons at public schools. The NEPBE was immersed into this new programme which intended to strengthen the quality in primary education. Thus, it seems evident that the State looks for educational policies that emphasize learning English in the Mexican curriculum, yet it seems there is still an urgent need to evaluate the programmes they implement. To this date, there is little known about what programmes have actually been successful. Despite the fact that Mexicans have been studying English in lower secondary education for many years, a continuous deficiency in our knowledge of English is evident (Heredia and Rubio, 2015; IMCO, 2015).

### **2.4.1 Teaching English in Higher Education**

As mentioned above learning English in lower secondary schools is mandatory for three years. In upper secondary school (three years) English is included in the curricula for two years only. Therefore, once students reach university, they should ideally hold at least a basic notion of English taking into account that they have studied English for at least 5 years. Yet, the reality is far different from the initial idea. Székely, O'Donoghue and Pérez (2015) in a large scale study of 4,727 graduates from lower secondary schools and 504 teachers found that 97% of the students did not reach the ideal level (B1) recommended by the Ministry of Education. In the case of English teachers, more than half demonstrated a level below B1. Additionally, the researchers found that a satisfactory or not satisfactory grade did not necessarily correspond to knowledge of English. For instance, a student with a grade of 9 in a scale of 10 showed lack of knowledge in English while a student with a grade of 7 could reach B1. Additional studies reiterate that the situation of learning English in Mexico is indeed problematic (Borjian, 2015; Borjian and Padilla, 2010; Despagne, 2010; Davies, 2009; Borjian, 2008; Sierra and Padilla, 2003).

Part of the problematic situation of learning English in Mexico corresponds to socioeconomic levels. Heredia and Rubio (2015, p. 27) show that those students whose

parents receive higher incomes performed better in English leading to the conclusion that “the knowledge and use of English language in our country is, above all, profoundly unequal”. Additionally, González et al., (2004) also found that students with a higher socioeconomic level obtained higher scores. Opportunities cannot be equal for people who have access to more resources such as technology, travel and in general better conditions for living even if they attend a public school. From personal experience, once I was invited to participate as jury in an English exam contest among private lower secondary schools. I learned that in previous contests public schools were invited too. Nevertheless, they were not invited again because the knowledge gap between the students from public schools was tremendous. Even among private schools there was a huge difference between the ones who had experience abroad and the ones who had only received bilingual education in Mexico. Therefore, it was easier to exclude the students from public schools in this type of contest so that there is no more evidence they lack skills in English.

As expected the panorama does not greatly differ once students reach university in terms of knowledge of English and socioeconomic status. Unfortunately, students who want to pursue higher studies many times do not even reach A1 established in the CEF. González, et al., (2004) performed a study carried out in a university in Mexico City; the participants answered a proficiency test. Only about 10 % of the sample students passed the test. Unfortunately, the situation about the level of English for ELT applicants is very similar (Lemus Hidalgo et al., 2008; Bravo Gómez, 2007). Additionally, Bravo Gómez (2007) analysed eighth Mexican universities requirements to accept ELT applicants, and found that these students should be accepted if they fulfil the requirement of 400 points in the TOEFL exam to guarantee that English will not interfere with the learning of content instruction, taking into consideration they will be the future teachers of English. If the level of English for ELT applicants is deficient, then the condition for the rest of the university population might not be that different. The lack of skills in English is a fact for both students and teachers of English in Mexico (Borjian, 2015; Székely et al., 2015).

The situation of university students is similar to secondary education children with regards of their socioeconomic status. Heredia and Rubio (2015) studied a prestigious university diverse in socioeconomic terms; they found that factors related to socioeconomic status have the greatest impact in learning. In other words, those students with higher income achieved better results in a diagnostic test. Among these students were the ones who reported travelling abroad. In a different study, Davies (2009) found that improvement of English is better in private universities than in public

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universities. The socioeconomic status is part of the student, it is part of the context as Ushioda (2009) describes. The context cannot be separated from the person. For instance, I received education in English from public schools in Mexico. I obtained a B.A. in English language teaching without any prior experience abroad. A couple of years later I obtained a Fulbright scholarship to study my master's in the United States of America. While in the USA as part of the Fulbright programme, there was a convention of Fulbrighters where I met a fellow Mexican and an American to eat out. While we were having dinner, and the American and I were listening, I realized that he had studied in prestigious Mexican universities and had repeatedly travelled to the United States and other countries. His level of English was outstanding. There we were, two Mexican students who had received the same award but with completely different language learning experiences; experiences that in his case allowed him to relate and engage more in conversation. In Mexico inequity, as Heredia and Rubio (2015) mentioned, is a sad fact. Students with a low income do not have access to many opportunities other students with better incomes have. As a way to illustrate, many people say they do not know English because of lack of time or money (Heredia and Rubio, 2015).

Moreover, the strategic location of Mexico with the United States of America cannot be overlooked. Based on a Mitofsky survey in 2013, 14.5% of the urban population say that they speak English compared to 2.4% in rural localities. Similarly, in the northern part of Mexico more people speak English compared to people who live in the south. For instance, at least one out of every five people mentioned speaking and understanding English in the north. In the south only one out of every 25 people said to have knowledge of English. The British Council (2015) presents a chart representing their respondents from their data collection and even when the state of Campeche had less than 10 respondents; it was the state with the lowest percentage of respondents who have studied English. Geography in Mexico definitely forms part of the English language learning context.

In short, trained professionals in their field with competent skills in English are demanded in Mexico and the globalized world. Competent and brilliant individuals miss opportunities for not being capable to communicate in English. Therefore, universities constantly emphasize the importance of learning English among students. Many Mexican universities require a minimum score in an international test for students to obtain their diploma (British Council, 2015) as they need to be part of the process of internationalization. These measures place a tremendous pressure for universities which compete for funding, students who need to reach the required level of English and

English teachers who are appointed responsible for students' learning. With all this pressure of implementing English programmes that turn students into bilinguals, the affective factor has been ignored. Learning a language means learning culture, learning new perspectives of life. For that reason, students' voices need to be heard to know their attitudes towards learning English, and how they might evolve.

#### **2.4.2 Attitudes towards English in the Mexican Context**

Then, it becomes important to turn attention to the area of motivation. When an individual loses motivation, a lack of interest can be seen when developing activities that she before did with a great interest. In the language classroom this type of behaviour might form part of the daily scenario. The reasons can be multiple. But the theory of motivation in language learning offers logical sensible explanations for individuals to show interest or lack of interest or a good or bad attitude in learning a foreign language such as English. Studies on attitudes in other contexts show that most students have a positive attitude towards learning English, but different factors affect their performance. Therefore, I describe here a sample of studies that have been performed in the Mexican context.

Despaigne (2010) states that the relationship that Mexico has with the United States in relation to learning English is that of *imposition*, which highly affects the perception and attitudes of Mexicans. She also mentions that as a result of this, a barrier is raised to learn the language. In one of her studies, 300 participants from a private university in Mexico answered an attitude questionnaire. These students had A1 and A2 levels based on the CEFR. She found that 60.3% reported that they do not like the American culture, 67% consider that English should not always be the lingua franca and that English native speakers should learn another language, 89.72% accept that English is important, 58% think that English will help them in everything, and 45% consider English a difficult language. Despaigne argues that these negative conscious or unconscious perceptions are due to the "economic, political and socio-cultural problems between the US and Mexico" (p. 57). For instance, 61.3% of the 45% who mentioned that English is a difficult language to learn show no attraction to the United States.

The results of this study emphasize the need to analyse attitudes from a more social and historical context. She also mentions the results of the study carried out by Chasan and Ryan (1995) in the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico - UNAM (Mexico's biggest public university). In here the researchers found that students had negative perceptions

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towards English when it referred to political matters as immigration and border problems, cultural as in racism and discrimination and economical as in the predominance of American products and businesses. Basically, the students accept the importance of English to grow economically, but still resist learning the language. Despaigne (2010) considers that it is important that language teachers help students to think critically to analyse where those negative perceptions come from in order to “eliminate the barrier and fear they have towards English” (p.59).

In addition, Mora Vázquez et al., (2010) conducted a qualitative study in a university language centre in the Northeast part of Mexico with three males and three females. All of them were undergraduates. They were enrolled in an intermediate English level course. The researchers collected data from a focus group interview, which after the first analysis resulted in five categories. Later, the data were regrouped into two major categories: 1) teacher-specific motivational components, and 2) group-specific motivational components. Students considered that the teacher’s attitude influenced their levels of motivation. In the same manner, they considered the teacher as responsible for good classroom atmosphere. Planning and discipline, use of supplementary materials were among the aspects students mentioned as important for the teacher to establish. Specifically about their peers, they considered the age-difference hindered communication as objectives and interests differ. Undergraduates many times shared classes with teenagers as the classes in the language centre were also open to the community. All students agreed on the importance of English for economic and professional growth; then students had a strong instrumental orientation according to Gardner’s theory (1985).

However, they mentioned that they did not find learning English as a pleasurable activity, but they saw “English as necessary to overcome the difficulties that the current socio-economic status of Mexico presents to them” (Mora Vázquez et al., p.12). The researchers concluded that programme administrators should work on offering teachers training programmes according to the real needs they face in the classroom such as teaching students of different age ranges that allow them to employ motivational strategies that envision learners’ ideal selves. Although limited in scope, this qualitative study highlights Mexican students’ attitudes towards learning English.

Another study that explored the attitudes of Mexican students in a university located in the North of Mexico is Sandoval Pineda’s (2011). Her study included both quantitative and qualitative measures by collecting data from an adapted version of the AMTB, and

interviews, class observations and a questionnaire. Not only undergraduate students participated in this study, but also teachers, and administrators. A total of 227 students participated in the study. She found out that most students uphold positive attitudes towards learning English, have good levels of integrativeness, and instrumental motivation. On the other hand, she observed that students were in heterogeneous groups holding different levels of English. Additionally, the students did not attribute their increase of English scores to the teachers' help. In fact, only 5% attributed it to teachers' help; a low percentage of students considered their teachers were dynamic and made classes interesting. About the materials, students urged to include content related to their majors as they considered the information in textbooks was basic or inadequate despite being expensive.

From the interviews performed with university administrators, teachers, and students, the researcher states that English is considered relevant in the education of Mexico. Among the reasons stated are that the United States of America is Mexico's neighbouring country, and this means constant contact with the target language group generally for commercial and professional opportunities. Teachers also mentioned some of the differences between the previous English programme and the current one. They believe the current one has more structure and formality, as in the previous one students chose when to study English and as result they did not enrol in any class. The consequence was they could not graduate because English is a university requirement. Nevertheless, they mention large classes of 45 – 50 students are difficult to manage in the sense of covering all students' needs. Also, they felt there was a lack of flexibility to use other activities rather than the textbook. Overall most teachers felt overwhelmed by covering the textbook content and prepare students to pass exams. In the same vein, teachers felt that students were not motivated to learn as they saw grammar and vocabulary related book activities as boring.

From these results, Sandoval Pineda (2011) concludes that students have positive attitudes towards learning English, but the attitudes can be affected by the English programme structure. Also, students' interest in learning languages, motivational intensity, and teacher evaluation have an effect on the students' initial test scores, but after students discover the evaluation process scores improve. Those students who have had more contact with English before university are the ones who obtain higher scores. The researcher states that programme evaluations such as this one are needed in Mexican universities.

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This set of studies on students' attitudes reveals the need to embark on a deeper analysis of the factors impacting the field of attitudes towards English and achievement. It is no more a simple relation of two constructs, but the exploration of the aspects that impact a group of students' population under a determined situation. For instance, the factors previously described certainly represent an open window to deepen in the exploration of more factors.

### **2.5 Chapter Summary**

This review of the literature has addressed early motivational theories in language learning in order to establish the connection with current learning theories of motivation and attitude. This chapter has intended to point out the importance of addressing motivation from a dynamic perspective without diminishing the importance of motivation and attitudes for achievement.

In addition, this chapter has introduced the complex current learning situation in Mexico. At present, English is learned in Mexico due to political, social and economic pressure to internationalize the students without paying attention to what learning a language entails. As Gardner (2006; 1985,) Dörnyei et al. (2014) and Dörnyei (2009) point out, attitudes towards the target language group, the ideal self of who we want to become and how this motivation can change are important in learning a language. Therefore, this research will pose important implications that could help the State generate policies that benefit Mexicans to learn English.

## Chapter 3: Attitude and Attitude Change

This chapter addresses the importance of attitude in language learning to understand their impact and change in language learning. Attitude is introduced from the perspective of cognitive and educational psychology in the study of motivation. A discussion of attitude that is specific to the language learning context is discussed and derived from earlier research in the field. This is followed by the introduction of methodological approaches used to measure attitudes. The focus of this study is attitude towards learning English in relation to factors that impact performance and change. Thus, it is important that quantitative measurement be used as it has been tested for objectivity and reliability in large scale attitude studies. On the other hand, qualitative measurement in this type of studies has provided a non-linear approach due the dynamism of motivation, but has been limited in attitude studies. For this reason, previous studies that have used both quantitative and qualitative studies independently as well as a mixed methodology are reviewed to present alternatives to the exploration of attitudes.

### 3.1 Definition of Attitude

Central to this study is the role of attitudes in learning English. Studies on attitudes and motivation have remained a focal topic in second language acquisition due to the complexity of human nature. Each individual brings in a cumulus of ideas, opinions, perceptions and attitudes. Therefore, it becomes important to understand what attitude entails. Throughout the literature there have been many attempts to define the term. Here there will be presented some earlier definitions of attitude, and more recent definitions of attitudes with the purpose to examine the important elements within the term.

Early definitions of attitude such as Thurstone's (1931, p. 261) refer to the "affect for or against a psychological object". Thurstone highlights that attitudes entail negative and positive aspects when mentioning that the affect towards something can be for or against. In other words, if an individual shows clear affection for visiting museums, it can be inferred that her attitude is clearly *for* art, or attitudes are positive. On the other hand, Allport (1935) claims that attitude cannot be directly observed from the individual's behaviour unless the individual admits such attitude. Certainly, individuals can show certain behaviour that might not correspond to an attitude. For instance, a

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person that has openly expressed to have a positive attitude about making friends from all over the world might not show interest in talking to a particular foreigner who shows arrogance. That is, her attitude at that moment does not correspond to her usual behaviour engaging in conversation with foreigners. Thus, an individual's behaviour at a certain moment does not necessarily reflect the real attitude towards a person or object in question.

Some decades later, Allport (1954) describes attitude as a disposition that is learned to not only think but also feel and behave and directed toward a person or object. Within this definition, attitude becomes learnable and involves more than only being for or against. Attitude encompasses a cognitive element. Definitely certain knowledge and reasoning about the person or object contribute to the formation of an attitude. In a way, this knowledge of ideas functions as the base that directs the feelings towards different entities, and usually ends with a reaction or behaviour from an individual. This description of attitude is more complete, but still rather simplistic for language learning.

Other definitions of attitude seem to be more appropriate to the field of language learning. For instance, Oppenheim (1982, p.39) refers to attitude as a rather abstract construct which is expressed directly or indirectly "through much more obvious processes as stereotypes, beliefs, verbal statements or reactions, ideas and opinions, selective recall, anger or satisfaction or some other emotion and in various other aspects of behaviour". This definition of attitude adds aspects that are present in language learning. Stereotyping, for example, might be common among language learners specifically in contexts where learners have restricted access to the target language group, and base their ideas and beliefs on the encounters they experience with a couple of people or even based on what the media portrays. Nevertheless, the same important elements of cognition, feelings and behaviour that Allport (1954) suggests are included in Oppenheim's (1982) definition of attitude reaffirming the complexity of attitude, and highlighting that attitude involves much more than a positive or negative behaviour toward an entity.

Specifically in the field of second language learning and bilingualism, Gardner (1985) emphasizes the importance of attitude as learning a language differs greatly from learning any other subjects at school. As Gardner points out in language learning, learners are required to learn the language, and within that process learner are asked to make the language part of their behavioural repertoire. Every aspect of the language such as sounds, grammar among other aspects is part of another culture that a learner

needs to ingest. The implications that attitudes are present in the learning process started more strongly. Nevertheless, Gardner (1985, p.9) defines attitude as “an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual’s beliefs or opinions about the referent.” Thus, this definition of attitude concurs with Sarnoff (1970), Allport (1954) and Thurstone (1931) of attitude being evaluative by means of reaction.

In more recent definitions of attitude, the cognitive, affective and evaluative aspects of attitude are salient. Arvey (1990) mentioned that it includes three components: 1) affective component of positive or negative feelings, 2) a cognitive component describing worth or value, and 3) a behavioural component indicating a willingness or desire to engage in specific actions. Additionally, Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) mention that the three action parts of attitude are 1) cognitive referring to thought and beliefs, 2) affective indicating feelings towards the attitude object, and 3) readiness for action which indicates the behaviour based on the given circumstances. These definitions agree on the inclusion of these three elements to conform the construct of Attitude.

In addition, there are other definitions which do not include affection explicitly. For instance, “An attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour” (Eagley and Chaiken, 1998 p. 269). Additionally, Icek (2005, p.3) mentions that “An attitude is a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event.” He adds that attitude is a hypothetical construct that can be perceived through measurable responses that evaluate the attitude object as positive or negative. Then, it is when attitude is considered a construct that complexity begins while when taken as a disposition then it can be identified due to the signs of stability (Garret, 2010). Despite any variation among the first definitions of attitude to the latest definitions of attitudes, it can be observed that the three important elements of cognition, affection and behaviour are included throughout the research of attitudes. For instance, the reasoning behind any ideas or concepts provides a path to form or evaluate that either positive or negative affection towards an entity finally comes out as a direct or indirect reaction. Those attitudes formed as a result of direct experiences become more predictive of future behaviour than those formed based on second sources (Fazio and Zanna, 1981). The evaluative format of attitude seems to be consistent throughout the definitions. In other words, an attitude can be judged as positive or negative, for or against.

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These three components constitute the single construct of attitude at a higher level of abstraction (Ajzen, 1988). Certainly, the construct of attitude can be abstract as it refers to the instant evaluation of an object of thought, the attitude can refer to something concrete or abstract and towards inanimate things or persons and groups (Bohner and Wänke, 2002). Attitude then is more than what can simply be observed or perceived by the language teacher in the classroom. Then to no surprise a “language attitude is more than an attitude towards the language only since the language attitude reflects the attitude towards the particular cultural group” (Roos, 1990 p. 26).

Moreover, although some definitions restrict the role of behaviour in attitude, all consider it as an important element which cannot necessarily be observed. Despite any difference in defining attitude, there seems to be a consensus of the significance of the term that directs to the understanding of individuals in society. Thus, based on these definitions of attitude in the literature, I define attitude in language learning for the development of this research as the conjunction of short or long lasting positive or negative thoughts generated from experiences, feelings and beliefs, which can be manifested by omission or reaction towards a cultural entity, and which can be adapted through learning. This position includes important key elements established by theory, but adapts to the situation I have experienced as a language learner and teacher.

### **3.2 Importance of Attitude**

Every person holds and accumulates attitudes throughout their lives, and these attitudes shape the response towards certain aspects of everyday life. These responses are present when we express our ideas, emotions, and actions. In fact, Bohner and Wänke (2002, p.14) mentioned that:

...the construct of attitudes seems to be an important mediating link between the social information we perceive in our environment and how we respond to it. Attitudes may determine to a large extent how we react to social stimuli including ourselves, how we feel, think and act relative to them.

Bohner and Wänke (2002) consider that attitudes exert a great influence on how we respond to what happens in our context, in terms of action and ideas. Individuals can act differently based upon the attitudes towards certain social information. For instance, when watching the local TV news about a parent spanking her child we can easily accumulate reactions towards what we are seeing at the moment. If an individual holds negative attitudes towards physical child reprimands, then she might consider the act as

child abuse, but if positive attitudes are exerted towards giving a spank to a child then that person might approve the act as normal behaviour. What is more we can completely modify our ideas. Taking the same example a parent who believes a spank does not hurt a child might decide that a spank is not appropriate after watching the scene starring other people. Then, there is an evaluative element in attitude to assess observable behaviour in positive or negative (Icek, 2005; Gardner, 1985; Sarnoff, 1970; Thurstone, 1931).

One of the first models that studied attitudes was Ajzen's (1988). Here attitude is defined as "the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the particular behavior of interest" (p. 117). Ajzen's (1988) Model of Planned Behavior was not specific for foreign language learning, its model explained motivated behaviour through three components: 1) perceived behavioural control which consisted of how easy or difficult it was to perform the behaviour, 2) attitude towards the behaviour which could be a positive or negative evaluation of the behaviour, and 3) subjective norm related to the social influence an individual perceives to perform the behaviour or not. In the example of language learning, the first component referred to the attitudes learners have towards learning a foreign language and what influenced those attitudes. The second component questioned about parents, home background, relationship with the teacher and their possible influence on motivation and attitude, and the third component applied to language learning and the possible problems that affected learners' motivation to learn foreign languages. Even when Ajzen's model was taken as rather simplistic, it offered a broad panorama of the influence of attitudes in language learning as learners bring to the classroom all of these ideas that motivate their approach to learn a language (Chambers, 1999). As mentioned before, attitude is more than an evaluation, more than emotions, and more than what can be perceived by others. Therefore, it is undeniable that attitude is highly regarded as important in education.

Furthermore, Baker (1992) provides three main reasons for the importance of attitude. First, attitude is a term widely used among individuals. In everyday conversations at work, at home, at leisure time the term attitude can be used and understood. For instance, a teacher can be talking about her lessons with a friend and the other would understand easily if the teacher mentions she has a student with a negative attitude. The other person can picture that this particular student has a certain negative behaviour while if the teacher mentioned a student with a positive attitude just the opposite would come to mind. Baker (1992, p.9) adds that "Common terminology allows bridges to be made between research and practise, theory and policy". The second

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reason deals with the measurement of attitude. He mentions that survey attitude measuring format indicates the current beliefs and thoughts as well as desires and preferences in a community. Certainly, a large sample of people's attitudes can be obtained using surveys. The third reason is its continued and proven utility; this type of measure has proven to be useful to learn about the attitudes of individuals toward varied themes.

These three reasons highlight the importance of attitude. The simplicity for everybody to understand the term reduces the confusion when individuals answer a survey expressing their attitude towards an entity, or even if they are asked face to face, they can relate to the question as it is a common term. If someone is asked about her attitude towards eating raw meat, the person can easily manifest an answer, which is usually a positive or negative judgement. In a more academic setting, take for instance the case of researching upper secondary school senior's attitudes towards going to college. For the answers to be objective and significant, a large sample of participants is required, and this can be possible due to the familiarity of students with the term and the simplicity of the research instrument. This does not only help the researcher to obtain significant data, but also provides useful and important data to corresponding government or school authorities to make decisions regarding new planning and policies that can be beneficial to everyone. Otherwise, changes implemented without taking into consideration the attitudes of the individuals affected by a policy can be a waste of time. Now with the aid of internet it might be possible to poll even larger group samples to obtain their feelings and attitudes. Then attitude has remained an important explanatory variable to link research to the real world and in different areas of knowledge.

One of the first theories of motivation in second language acquisition was Gardner's (1985). His socio-educational model provided a rationale for the development of individuals learning a second language. This model was based on previous foreign language models that included a focus on linguistic as well as social processing. The basis was that learning a language differs from learning other subject matters as learning a language requires the development of knowledge as well as skills which form part of the learner's community.

Gardner claimed that motivation was the key factor for an individual to perform satisfactorily in language learning. The results from Gardner's preliminary investigations (Gardner, 1960; Gardner et al., 1960; Gardner and Lambert, 1959), which not

surprisingly were performed in Canada due to its anglo-francophone community, showed an interesting panorama in the area. The individual's motivation was a strong predictor of students' language learning achievement. Thus, Gardner (1985) introduced his Socio-educational model. The model was based on four variables: social milieu, individual differences, language acquisition contexts, and outcomes. He claimed that cultural beliefs plus individual differences such as intelligence, aptitude, motivation, and situational anxiety together with formal or informal language instruction resulted in linguistic outcomes such as language achievement and non-linguistic outcomes such as attitudes towards the language or the cultural group.

Gardner's model (1985) included two types of attitudes in language learning: *Attitudes towards the learning situation* and *integrativeness*. The academic situation is comprised in the various aspects that form attitudes. The teacher, the course, and learning the language generate attitudes worth exploring. *Integrativeness, on the other hand, refers to attitudes towards the language community, and the desire to belong to the community. Both types of attitudes are fundamental to motivation. In addition, two orientations in Gardner's model influenced later motivation theories (Dörnyei, 2009, 2005). For instance, instrumentality entails the reality of learning the language mostly for practical reasons. To illustrate, a learner with an instrumental orientation might be interested in learning English to obtain a scholarship while a learner with integrative orientation has a strong desire to communicate in the target language to establish contact with the TL community. Attitudes and orientations constituted the core of the model in early L2 motivation studies. Gardner's research results connected integrative motivation to better performance. But later studies showed that instrumental orientation also resulted responsible for success in language learning. Gardner (2001) argued that instrumental and integrative are only orientations and they form part of a bigger construct, which is motivation. However, these same elements started confusion and controversy which guided the field to continue exploring motivation.*

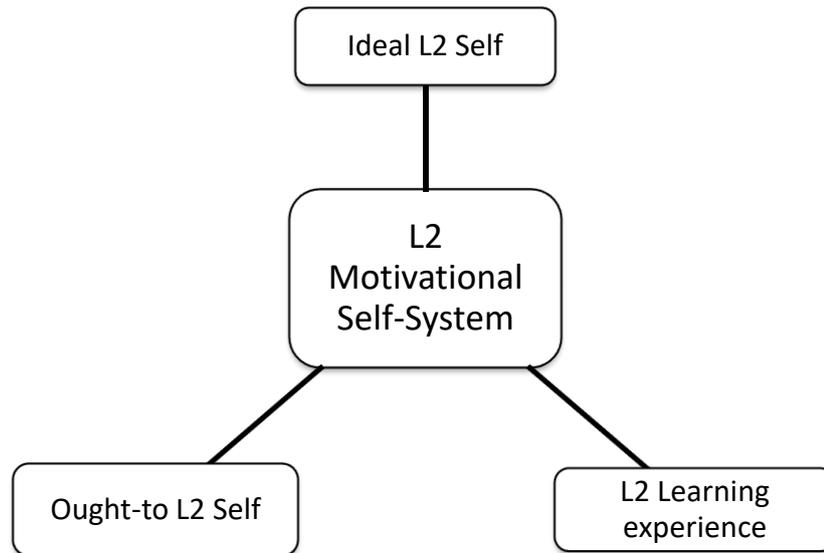
Dörnyei (1990) states that second language acquisition contexts are varied but definitely different from the context of English as a Foreign Language or Foreign Language Learning (FLL). For instance, in this type of setting the language learner is usually exposed to the target language for many years at school because it is taught as one more school subject. Even when learners are exposed academically to the target language, many times they have none or not enough direct exposure with the target language community to form their attitudes. This scenario guided Dörnyei to conduct a study in the EFL setting of Hungary to determine the relevance of integrativeness and

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instrumentality as well as other factors in this specific context. He concludes that instrumental reasons are indeed contributors to what he called the Integrative Motivational Subsystem in FLL settings and that the individual organizes them based on their career strive. Also, learners' attitudes and beliefs determine the integrative subsystem because of their limited exposure to the target language community; the subsystem consisted of four components, which are 1) interest in foreign languages, cultures, and people; 2) desire to broaden one's view and avoid provincialism; 3) desire for new stimuli and challenges; and 4) desire to integrate into a new community (Dörnyei, 1990, p. 69). Need for achievement also contributed to motivation as well as attribution about past failures. In short, Dörnyei's (1990) approach to EFL motivation summarizes that only learners with integrative motivation learn the target language while learners with a high level of instrumental motives and need for achievement might only reach the intermediate level. These findings corroborate the importance of both integrative and instrumental orientations in the EFL context, and also give light for further research.

Following a related line of research direction, Dörnyei (2005) proposes the L2MSS based on self-research (Markus and Nurius, 1986). Dörnyei (2009; 2005) found a sensible pathway to approach the study of motivation to understand the reasons a language learner succeeds or strives at learning a language. This system included two components from the psychology field, which explained the ideas people have about themselves in the future such as what they might become, what they would like to become or what they are afraid of becoming or in other words, their possible selves; this theory becomes relevant to language learning research because possible selves can explain how a language learner envisions herself using the target language, as it predicts the future scenario. Then this can contribute to more understanding of the construct of motivation in L2. The two components in this model were labelled as ideal L2 self and ought to L2 self (*See Figure 1*).

Although both possible selves components refer to the long-term images people have about themselves, the ideal L2 self focuses on "the representation of the attributes that one would ideally like to possess (i.e. representation of hopes, aspirations, or wishes)" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 13). ought to L2 self, on the other hand, refers to the attributes an individual believes she needs or ought to possess in order to satisfy the expectations from others in order to avoid undesirable results.



*Figure 1: Representation of Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self-System*

L2 learning experience is the third component in this model. Teacher, peers, curriculum, learning experiences are included in L2 learning experience as they exert influence on the learners' motives to learn the target language.

Here is also presented a brief overview of important study findings which have been based on the L2MSS and its relationship with the classroom. One study that has explored the L2 self-system theory reports that first year and final year students' motivation might be based on the ideal L2 self (Far et al., 2012). Another study conducted with Iranian upper secondary school students to test a theoretical model based on the L2 motivational self-system as well as anxiety and intended effort to learn English reports results, which indicate that L2 self and learning experience decrease students' anxiety but the ought to L2 self increases anxiety (Papi, 2010). Also, the relationship between the learners' characteristics and the L2 self and ought to self, and how these variables relate to L2 achievement in English and Mandarin have been investigated by means of self reports and objective measures. Results show a positive relationship between the ideal self and the criterion measures, the importance of imagery in the development of an individual's self, and the self-images associated with different languages as distinct L2 specific visions (Dörnyei and Chan, 2013). Moreover, the impact of two different programmes based on the L2 motivational self-system; one in England and the other one in Hong Kong with Chinese participants, show fairly positive outcomes in both programmes despite the differences in implementation (Magid and Chan, 2012). These interesting findings motivate to do more research on the

area. Research points to explore the educational influences to examine students' attitudes.

Both, Gardner's socio-educational model and Dörnyei's L2MSS have given light to a series of studies that explore the attitudes and motivation of learners around the world at different stages of education in language learning, and their effect on performance. Yet, there are other studies that use social cognitive theory concepts due to the importance of emotional and behavioural aspects in language learning success.

### **3.3 The Measurement of Attitudes**

Attitude has been defined and its importance has been addressed as well as some salient theories, but it is also important to study how attitudes have been measured throughout the literature. To this matter, Henerson et al., (1987) mention that before to start measuring attitudes, there should be a clear objective. This may be an evaluation on a programme, a part of a job report or as research. They consider the self-report is able to provide accurate data when the examiner considers there is no reason for the participant to lie about opinions or feelings. In this type of measurement the individual reports on her own attitudes by means of journals, interviews, polls, or surveys. However, they warn of the advantages and disadvantages of each of these instruments. Then, they reaffirm what is used to measure attitude depends on the study aims.

If journals and interviews are used to measure attitude then the sample population ought to be small. Needless to say the difficulties that will pose for the researcher to read 100 journals that contain attitudes and opinions about a subject. The task will be endless. Similarly, interviewing face to face a large group will represent a burden for the researcher. These two types of instruments are definitely useful for small scale studies. However, if the objective is to embrace more participants, then polls and surveys represent a better option. While both polls and surveys are commonly used to know about individuals' attitudes, opinions, and beliefs, polls are rather simplistic in the sense that the purpose is to have a rapid count of answers. For instance, in presidential elections there is certain number of options, and the citizens just decide for one of the options provided. Although surveys sometimes also require answers that can be statistically described, they might also include more elaborated answers for deeper analysis.

From the measures described above, the use of surveys has prevailed in the study of attitudes. For example, Baker (1992) mentions attitude surveys as indicators of the

thoughts, ideas, preferences, and beliefs from a community. Moreover, Creswell (2014, p. 155) mentions that “A survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population.” Similarly, Nunan and Bailey (2009) describe that the main purpose of a survey is to obtain a general picture from the attitudes, conditions or events of a specific population. Then if the objective is to know the attitudes of parents towards the new government implementation regarding children studying English in elementary schools, the sample has to be representative of the entire population in order to be meaningful. Therefore, the use of surveys is also recommended for large scale studies when the objective is to know the students’ attitudes towards language learning.

### **3.4 Factors Affecting Attitudes**

In language learning, many of the empirical studies that have researched attitudes in different geographical contexts are focused on large scale studies (Sung and Tsai, 2014; Al- Tamimi, 2009; Hussein et al., 2009; and Kormos and Csizér, 2008; Lasagabaster, 2005; Tsuda, 2003). These studies have explored attitudes mainly with the objective to identify variables that influence the language learners’ attitudes. Larsen- Freeman and Long (1991) state that among the variables that continue to be investigated due to their influence on language success are native language variables, input variables, instructional variables as a well as other individual variables as age, language aptitude, personality, cognitive style, hemisphere specialization, learning strategies and social-psychological factors. As there are many possible factors involved in language learning, the next section presents studies that explore 1) educational and 2) socio-cultural factors.

#### **3.4.1 Social Environment**

There are multiple socio-cultural influences that can intervene in the learner’s attitude. As individuals we are involved in a community and the political, historical, economic and linguistic situations within the community which affect us either directly or indirectly (Cargile, et al., 1994). Thinking that these realities do not interfere with education does not help the teaching process. Undoubtedly, the social environment impacts language learning as well as the learner’s experiences with the target language.

In order to address how the social environment influences a language learner’s attitude, it is necessary to describe what is meant by social environment. That is, the people and

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places we are surrounded by. Every day we engage in conversation with close people such as family, friends, neighbours, and co-workers because of our need to communicate a message. But their ideas and opinions might influence ours and vice versa because we value these people as in the case of parents. When parents love reading and attribute the given importance to this activity, their children can infer its value and adopt positive attitudes towards reading. In fact, Gardner (1985) manifests that parents execute an important role in learners' attitudes towards the target language through active and passive roles. Parents assign positive or negative roles towards language learning by showing interest, monitoring their children's tasks or demeaning the value of language learning by giving preference to other subjects while in the passive role, parents express their interest for the target language community. In the positive side parents would encourage their children to have foreign friends to learn about the target language culture, but in the negative side would just avoid it. Then the role of the parent is very influential.

The places the learners live or frequent also contribute to their approach to the target language. If, for instance, a language learner lives in a restricted area she might have limited access to technology. As a consequence this learner is not exposed to the target language in a way other learners are. In a study developed in Spain, Janés Carulla (2006) highlights the importance of attitudes towards language learning, and summarizes the results of a study by Huguet and Janés in 2005 performed in Cataluña, Spain. There were 225 upper secondary school children of immigrant origin participating in the study. The researchers explored their attitudes towards Catalan and Spanish in contexts where the exposure to the language varied. Overall, the researchers found positive attitudes towards both languages. However, the group of children who came from Latinoamerican background had the least positive attitudes towards Catalan, but higher attitudes for Spanish. It was interesting to find out that the most favourable attitudes towards Catalan were from the participants who had more than 6 years living in Cataluña and whose families were established before they were 10 years old. In this example the origin and length of being exposed to another language influenced the learners' attitudes.

Social class or status has also been involved in language attitudes and performance. Generally, students who come from a higher social status have more opportunities to education. A study by Burstall (cited in Ellis 1994) found that children from working class achieved lower results than those from middle class. Similarly, the last group show better attitude towards learning French. Ellis argues that rather than the economic

status it is the different environment and the experiences an individual is likely to have that make up for better results in language learning.

### **3.4.2 Gender Difference**

There have been well established differences between gender and language (Coates, 2003). Women, for instance, tend to have a more extensive repertoire than men. In addition, females use more prestige forms of language (Gass and Selinker, 2008; Grégoire, 2006) and are also more responsible for linguistic change while men may not be inclined to use new forms. Among other differences, women are characterized to perform better in achievements tests than men. Yet, although results from many studies show that women score significantly higher than men, there are other studies where men score significantly higher in certain skills, and other where there are no significant differences (Ellis, 1994).

On the other hand, women are in the front line again for more positive attitudes in language learning. Studies have shown that men drop out more from language courses than for women. A study, by Gardner and Lambert (1972), shows that women had better attitudes towards the target language group than men. Other studies mention that gender has significant differences in some aspects of language learning, but there are others which do not show significant differences. For instance, Zainol Abidin et al., (2012) found that Lybian secondary school students' attitudes in terms of cognitive, behavioural and emotional aspects are negative towards the learning of English. Moreover, they found that there was a significant attitudinal difference in gender and field of study, but not in year of study. Contrary to Zainol Abidin, et al. (2012), Alavinia and Salmasi (2012) found no significant correlation between gender and the participants' language attitudes, but there was a significant correlation in terms of gender and level of shyness.

### **3.4.3 Natural versus Educational Settings**

An individual has spent a great part of her life at school by the time she gets to university. Therefore, the educational setting provides different angles for researching attitudes. On the one hand, the classroom and what happens in it offers the researcher an array of opportunities; on the other hand, the curricula or institution policies represent a different side of research into education. Nevertheless, the classroom continues to be one of the most explored scenarios.

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A natural setting can be said the ideal scenario for learning a foreign language. For this reason, so many language immersion language courses are sold every year with the main idea to practise the language by being in constant contact with speakers of the target language once the learner steps out of the classroom. For instance, a Mexican student learning English in the United States will face the need to go to the grocery store and make a conversational exchange with the cashier. This activity is developed informally. No one is there to observe whether the learner makes any grammar or pronunciation mistakes. This setting poses a challenge in the scenario that there is nobody else to speak for the ideas the learner wants to express. Therefore, the learner sees the need to face challenges, take risks and speak in the target language to get the message across.

In the educational setting, which is the usual setting to learn a target language, learning develops differently. Even when learning the language formally is the perfect scenario for trial and error, it is limited in natural and informal exchanges that will usually happen in real life communication exchanges. For instance, special attention is given to the structure of the language, and many times little time is devoted to practicing language skills. Additionally, language can turn mechanic when practicing certain social functions. On the other hand, the formal setting can help the learner gain confidence to speak English in front of others. These two settings definitely offer certain advantages to the language learner but can also influence on their attitudes learning the language. In fact, Williams and Burden (1997) mention individuals find some environmental conditions more conducive to learning than others.

### **3.4.4 School Curriculum**

Celce-Murcia et al., (2014) define a curriculum as interconnected and interrelated and overlapping processes to plan, enact and evaluate that have as final products syllabuses, lesson plans and forms of assessments. Therefore careful planning and reasoning are implied taking into account the needs of the sample population. Then, the relationship between the curriculum and how it relates to learners' attitudes towards learning the foreign language has also been explored. For a language course to be effective, this needs to take into consideration the educational setting, class and faculty characteristics, governance of course content, assessment and evaluation requirements as well as needs analysis and specific goals (Brown, 2007). Within this process the students' participation becomes very important; knowing students' expectations and preferences can largely benefit the success of a programme. Furthermore the students also react towards the language programme.

In a study by McPake et al., (1999) Scottish learners commented that two advantages of languages programmes were to learn to communicate with foreigners and learn about other cultures, but they were dissatisfied with learning the language to talk about themselves. The students' instrumental orientation makes them feel that learning foreign languages to talk about themselves would be of little value for their purposes. Another study by Vasseour and Grandcolas (1997) which researched French teaching in England found that students also showed discontent with the curriculum due to an invisible link to the real world; learners felt they were studying the language to pass the exam. Then the teaching of French was a mere exam preparation. This picture is not isolated from other scenarios. Thornton and Cajkler (1996) provide a list of examples of transactional language that is taught to show how language is used in real life exchanges; for example, buying food, or a ticket. In other European settings language learners also depict a lack of interest in learning foreign languages (Willems, 2003) because their real needs are ignored, and they are taught what others believe they need to know. Teaching transactional language is useful but specifically for those who are integratively motivated or they have an image of speaking a foreign language in a foreign country to learn about the culture. For those students who hold instrumental orientation this type of learning is redundant.

Studies on attitudes and language learning point out the importance of different educational influences on attitudes. In a context of higher education, Saravia and Bernaus (2008) carried out a study to explore the attitudes of 178 students from two different universities in Spain. One group of students (88) majoring in English as a Foreign Language, and the other group (90) studied nursing and physiotherapy. By means of a questionnaire mainly based on Gardner's (1985), and students' self-evaluations of their language skills, the researchers analysed correlations between the learners' attitudes and the self-evaluations of four languages, Catalan, Spanish, French and English, of the two groups. They found positive and significant correlations among the self-evaluations of Spanish, French and English, the attitudes towards language learning, and motivational desire to learn the languages. Likewise, they found positive and significant correlation among self-evaluations and the construct of linguistic and cultural awareness. In general, the students majoring in English showed a higher instrumental and integrative orientation as well as motivational desire and linguistic and cultural awareness than those students in the nursing /physiotherapy field. They also showed higher self-evaluations in the language skills under exploration. Saravia and

Bernaus' (2008) research results highlight the importance of exploring the factors behind the attitudes of the students and the languages they learn.

### **3.4.5 The Teacher's Role**

The role the language teacher plays in the classroom is extremely important. Many students get motivated by their language teacher or simply hate learning the target language because of the teacher. For instance, Chambers (1999) found that the figure of the language teacher was predominant in learners' feelings about learning German. In fact, students' responses identify the language teachers as the main reason they like or dislike learning German. Based on these results not only is the teacher responsible for her teaching methodology, but for her personality, ability to motivate students and make learning meaningful and 'fun'. Also, Janés- Carulla (2006) stresses the importance of the relationship between students' attitudes and the teachers' knowledge towards the language of instruction. Other studies have also identified the teacher as a key piece for students to form their attitudes towards language learning (Wright, 1999; Clark and Trafford, 1995). Bartram (2010) mentions that this given importance to the teacher in influencing learners' attitudes might lie in the uniqueness of modern foreign language learning as "language learning makes special demands of the learner, requiring him or her to adopt 'foreign' behavioural practises and to perform these behaviours quite conspicuously in front of their teacher and peers" (Bartram, 2010, p. 43).

This demand might seem reciprocal between teacher-learner and learner-teacher as teaching a foreign language differs greatly from teaching any other subject.

Unquestionably the learner also demands the language teacher to teach the foreign language differently from other subjects. Many learners take the language class as it should be the fun relaxing class. Although they are not necessarily mistaken as any lesson should be appealing to students, it is important to take into consideration that each individual learns differently. In addition, there are many approaches to language learning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) so as some students might identify with one teaching approach, others might not. Then this poses a difficult task for the language teacher. Yet, teachers' influence on learners' attitudes is certain, and as such it needs to be given the corresponding importance.

For the above mentioned reasons, special attention should be given to the role of the English teacher in Mexico. Ramírez-Romero and Pamplón-Irigoyen's (2012) research findings about learning and teaching English in Mexico highlight deficiencies at the

political administrative level and the teachers' low level of academic preparation. A salient administrative issue indicates that there is diversion of the budget assigned for English teachers in the public system; for instance, money is paid to 'teachers' who do not really teach (Calderón, 2015) while many other English teachers hold a hectic schedule teaching in many schools to obtain a rewarded income. On the other hand, there are recurring problems with teacher's linguistic and pedagogic skills; and therefore, language teachers are in need of professionalization. There are of course English teachers who arrive at Mexican public schools and hold the appropriate credentials, but in most cases they have studied in a Lower Secondary Teacher Training College with a specialty of English Teaching. Other 'English teachers' hold an undergraduate degree on other areas, but hold knowledge of English while others are appointed only because they speak English after living in the United States for a period of time or are English native speakers (Calderón, 2015). The above mentioned deficiencies have generated an unfortunate situation for teaching and learning English in Mexico for many decades.

Undoubtedly, English teachers who are not satisfied with their payment and who lack appropriate methodology to teach languages can be a negative influence in the language classroom. In addition to the previous problems in ELT in Mexico, English teachers face the complex situation in the language classroom. Lessons in many upper secondary schools are usually full with approximately forty students. Also, English teachers usually meet their students three hours a week. The hectic schedule of an English teacher altogether with large classes and limited time assigned to English lessons makes it almost impossible for the English teacher to really learn about the learners' linguistic needs. Therefore, the teaching profession of English in public secondary schools in Mexico is rather complex taking into consideration administrative matters that affect an English teacher's income, professionalization and most important of all, learners' language education.

The educational scenario reports the teacher and the curriculum as definitely important influences on the learner's attitude. The teacher's role is so fundamental that students can actually decide to drop out the course if they dislike their teacher or consider the class is not interesting. Similarly, if the learner feels the programme content is not being useful then attitudes get inclined towards the negative side. Studies have highlighted that there are many characteristics that can be studied. For instance, in the studies described above some researchers explored secondary school learners' attitudes and others focused on higher education. Also there were comparisons between first and

second year students at different levels of education while others use experimental groups with motivational theories. Therefore, not all responsibility falls on the teacher and the curriculum. In fact, studies such as Kormos and Csizér (2008) have explored three different contexts of education such as secondary school learners, university students and adult language learners. Results indicate that their different interests affect their motivated behaviour. Additionally, there are other socio-cultural influences that also affect the learners' attitude towards learning a language.

### **3.5 Attitude and Motivation Change**

Although Schiefele (1963) considers attitude as individualised and not very likely to change, that is relatively constant, there has been an increase of research in attitude change and motivation change. In fact, Cohen and Dörnyei (2002, p. 172) state that L2 motivation "is not stable and static but is rather in a continuous process of change." And attitudes form part of this higher rank, which is motivation.

Up to now, a number of studies have highlighted factors that are associated with attitude and motivation change. Empirical large scale studies show there is change in attitudes after a given period of time. One study on beliefs (Mantle-Bromley, 1995) with middle school students measured their beliefs and attitudes about the language learning process (learning French and Spanish) with a modified version of the AMTB, and a version of the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI). Although there was no significant difference in the attitudes of the experimental group, which included five attitude change methods (1 Cognitive dissonance, 2 Acting in ways inconsistent with one's beliefs, 3 Direct exposure to the attitude object, 4 Fait Accompli and 5 Increased understanding of one's attitudes, including how they originated and how they are maintained), and control groups, there was a significant difference in the initial attitudes of male and female learners. Similar to other studies, she found that attitudes do not become more positive in the language class. An interesting finding was the students' beliefs about language learning. For instance, 44% of students believed that language learning meant learning new vocabulary, and 34% attributed language learning to translating from English. The researcher states that the fact that students hold certain beliefs which later do not match with the activities performed in class, leads to students' frustration. One of the main arguments is that the teacher is an important figure who can enhance a positive learning atmosphere.

Another study led by Gardner et al., (2004) explored the affective characteristics as included in integrative motivation (Gardner's 1985) of intermediate level French students for one year. They used an adapted version of the AMTB to test the students on six different occasions. Results from the scales and learners' scores show that the possibility of change is larger for variables related to the classroom experience than for integrativeness, motivation, language anxiety or instrumental orientation. Therefore, the classroom experience can influence attitudes which in this case were mainly based on reactions to the teacher. Regarding attitudes, motivation and anxiety scores decrease from the fall term to the spring term while the grades change in line with the final score. They argue that there are some limited changes taking place in the five variables explored, and these changes are associated to the final scores in the course.

Campbell and Storch (2011) also performed a study to know motivational changes. Their study was longitudinal to examine Chinese learners' motivation, their choices of language courses, motivation change and the factors influencing such change. Interviews were performed at different intervals over the course of a semester. They found that learners are aware of their motivation, and that the motivation factors connected to the language learning environment such as a challenging teacher or enjoyment of tasks were the ones which change negatively. Interestingly the researchers found that these negative experiences did not necessarily translate into demotivators since students were likely to protect their self-confidence by avoiding the negative experience and attributing it to the learning environment instead of to their own effort. Additionally a strong ideal L2 self prevented students from getting discouraged by negative classroom experiences. Moreover, learners' reasons to study Chinese were based on personal goals, interests, objectives, and job opportunities that even when they were instrumental reasons, they could be linked to ideal L2 and ought to L2 selves (Dörnyei 2005).

Another study on motivation change was performed by Busse and Walter (2013) with first year university students enrolled in German courses from two universities in the UK. The longitudinal mixed-methods study aimed to identify the first year changes in motivation of these students. Results show that the group of students were highly motivated to learn German, but lack confidence to comply with their language tasks at university. Results from the questionnaire also indicated that students maintained their desire to become proficient in the foreign language, but felt less enjoyment in their German lessons and so their confidence to communicate and listen to German decreased. Similarly the results from the interviews suggested learners' discontent with

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the learning environment such as the teacher and the tasks, which impacted their effort to learn German as they considered the learning environment did not match their interest regarding progress in language proficiency. They also acknowledged that the language programme was of little value in the curriculum. As a consequence they did not invest in fulfilling language tasks.

The studies described above show that quantitative and qualitative approaches have provided interesting results with regard to attitude and motivation change. Both types of approaches contribute to in great part to the understanding of foreign language learners' attitude change. As indicated by both quantitative such as Gardner et al. (2003) or qualitative (Campbell and Storch 2011) and mixed-method study (Busse and Walter 2013), affective variables indeed are not static but fluctuant and such changes can greatly be impacted by the language learning environment despite the contextual factors.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the current study explores attitudes towards language learning, its relationship with performance, and also attitude change. This study largely draws on Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self- System not only because the L2MSS is an alternative framework to Gardner's (1985) Socio-educational model, which includes attitudes as an important element of integrative motivation, but also due to the possible selves theory conceptualizing learners' images of their future that may lead to attitude change. McEown, Noels and Chaffee (2014) consider that the concepts of self and identity are included in both the Socio-educational model and the L2MSS. This model studies the language learners' images on the use of English. On the other hand, the ought to L2 self refers to attributes a language learner believes one needs to possess when engaged in language learning. The immediate impact from the elements occurring in the language classroom is also included in the model. Learners' expectations of the language and society combined with language experience influence attitudes. Therefore, these three elements from the L2MSS are relevant in both theory and practice to address the study of attitudes towards learning English in order to establish the connection with factors leading to performance and attitude change in a context where English is rarely heard outside the language classroom, but it is a university requirement.

### **3.6 Chapter Summary**

This review of the literature has addressed conceptualizations of attitude in language learning that permeate throughout the body of literature of ELT. On the same vein

empirical studies in different parts of the world, on attitudes and motivation are described with the objective to highlight important factors that affect students' attitudes towards language learning, attitudes and performance, and attitude change. Very few mixed-methods studies are available that address the study of attitudes, performance and change in language learning. Therefore, research should focus on these important elements. It is hoped that this research contributes to the broader understanding of affective factors such as attitude in language learning from a quantitative and qualitative perspective that involves an analysis of early approaches to the study of attitude and dynamic perspectives.

In brief, teachers of English around the world keep asking themselves how to help their students to learn the language when sometimes they just do not seem to want to learn it. Apparently students do not have positive attitudes towards learning English, and the result can be seen in their failing grades. From the theory we have learned that positive attitudes towards language learning results in students achieving better grades. Since the 1960's numerous studies carried out in L2 have shown that the relationship between attitude and achievement are interconnected. However, there are other studies focused on attitudes towards English as a foreign language and achievement that show no correlation between the two. Not surprisingly, the factors that influence many of these students who learn English in countries where there is no major English exposure once they step out the classroom are varied. Education national policies are diverse across countries around the world, but what is homogenous to one extent is that non-English speaking countries continuously emphasize the need to learn English as this one has remained the international language of communication around the world. For instance, in higher education is almost a must to be able to learn English, and it is even more important for some universities to be skilful in English if the major chosen is in the science field, or in the English language where the language of instruction is English while in other fields only the national language or both are used depending on the major field. All of these differences across countries suggest both students' and teachers' attitudes towards learning English are worth more exploration in the EFL context. Therefore, it is important to explore attitudes, their connection with test performance and the possible factors that directly influence towards having a positive or negative attitude towards the learning of English and that motivate change.

Specifically, Mexico is an ideal scenario to explore attitudes towards learning English given the social and commercial relationship of Mexico with the United States of America. Additionally, it is worth exploring the Mexican students' attitudes towards

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learning English due to the problematic English learning situation in Mexico despite the numerous implementations of English programmes. Despite interest for research in ELT in Mexico having incremented, there is still little research done on the exploration of attitudes and the possible factors that lead to performance and change.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

The previous chapter reviewed the research background and theoretical foundations of various models of attitude and motivation in second language learning. It also examined literature related to the factors that influence attitudes towards learning English, looked at the ways attitudinal changes may occur, and briefly considered some possible causes and effects of those changes. This chapter restates the study aims and research questions of the study, describes the research context, institution and the participants. Next, the chapter explains the methodological approach used for the development of this research, how the data collection instruments were created and/or chosen, and describes the procedures used while collecting the data itself. Finally, a summary of the chapter is provided.

### **4.1 Aims of the Study**

The previous chapters highlighted a number of factors that can influence students' attitudes. Motivation and attitude, as well as their importance in language learning have been extensively discussed in the literature, and considerable attention has been paid to the relationship between attitudes and performance. As noted earlier, the vast majority of these studies have used quantitative approaches; as such, it seems worthwhile to add a qualitative dimension to studies on these topics. Furthermore, there is a lack of studies which examine the study of attitude and performance in the context of attitudinal change over time. This investigation, which seeks to address those gaps in the research, should shed light on the role played by changing attitudes in the learning of English as a foreign language. It is also hoped that the results can encourage others to conduct similar research at other institutions of higher education in Mexico, but that the findings may have implications for future ELT research in contexts similar to those found in Mexican higher education. Ultimately, it is hoped that the research results should also contribute a wider understanding of the interplay of attitude change and performance in English as a foreign language learning and teaching in higher education.

### **4.2 Research Questions**

Taking into consideration that there are few studies which examine attitude, performance and change from a broader perspective, this study uses a mixed

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methodology. Having established the aims of this study, let us review the four research questions formulated for this study:

**RQ1** What are the university students' attitudes towards learning English, and the main factors that comprise such attitudes?

**RQ2** Which variables contribute to the prediction of the EDII (University Institutional Exam of English) test performance and English course performance?

**RQ3** How do students' initial attitudes towards learning English and proficiency in English compare at the beginning and end of the academic year?

**RQ4** What are the main reasons of any possible change in the use of English, language performance and attitude towards learning English after an academic year, in students' opinions?

### 4.3 Research Context

The study was conducted at a public university located in the southeast part of Mexico. The university was founded in 1964, and hosts 28 academic programmes for approximately 4,000 undergraduate students. The university's mission stresses the principle of excellence in education; as a consequence, the university's programmes have all been accredited as high-quality higher education programmes in their respective fields of study.

Foreign language learning also forms part of the university commitment to excellence in education, and the university has long devoted resources to language teaching and study. The current language centre initially began as a language laboratory in the 1970s, and in 1994, it was restructured as a modern university language centre. Its aim is to provide training in the learning of foreign languages to university students and the community at large, in order to ensure that linguistic competence forms part of learners' integral learning, so that they may interact appropriately in the global community. The centre's overall learning objectives have oriented toward the development of students' basic linguistic skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing based on a communicative methodology. This study was conducted in the facilities of the language centre of this University. The language centre language offers courses in English, French, and Japanese, as well as Spanish for foreigners; historically, only English and French courses have received sizeable enrolments.

It should be noted that French is offered as an elective course. On the other hand, all students who want to pursue university studies must write an institutional English diagnostic exam and complete relevant and level-appropriate courses in English, if necessary. In addition, all students can make use of its self-access centre and facilities.

The university has offered English as a foreign language courses since 1980, but the language centre was only assigned a physical location in 1994. In 1998, English became part of the curriculum for all education programmes in the university. In other words, it became mandatory to successfully complete the relevant English programme in order to graduate. Later, in 2002, in order to establish goals based on the national education policies current in Mexico, the university defined its educational model in accordance with three fundamental concepts: 1) curricula must be centred in learning, 2) significant learning must be prioritized, and 3) curricula must be organized to support three types of competencies.

The first competency is generic. In other words, all students should be competent in the use of technology, communication, and languages (both in their oral and written forms), and that language competency includes English. It also stresses the importance of a healthy lifestyle, the creation of a university identity, and sustainable education. The second competency is interdisciplinary, and focuses on identifying the student according to their department or faculty. For instance, the engineering department offers courses to all students from the different areas of engineering. The last one is specific, and relates to specific knowledge and performance objectives inculcated as part of a student's major.

As stated above, English forms part of the generic competencies that all students at the university must achieve. The objective of students learning a foreign language is defined as "expressing ideas and feelings clearly in English" (UNACAR, 2013). However, aware that communication in a second language is complex, the university implemented 5 procedures to assure that the objective could be achieved:

- 1) A specific entrance level of English or a specific score for the accreditation of English courses was identified.
- 2) Remedial courses or regularization courses were implemented for students so they could achieve the required entrance level of English.
- 3) Incoming students were henceforth required to write an English diagnostic exam.

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- 4) The results of the diagnostic exam were used to either place students in appropriate courses, or give them credits which excused them from unnecessary coursework.
- 5) For those whose diagnostic exam results were adequate, students would be assigned to English courses at one of four proficiency levels, named English I, II, III and IV.

In the 2010-2011 academic year these procedures were put into practise. In addition, the language centre of the university designed two diagnostic exams: EDII (Institutional Diagnostic Evaluation of English) and EDIIN (Institutional Diagnostic Evaluation of English for Business students). These exams are administered immediately prior to the intake of each new student cohort, and the results of the EDII and EDIIN exams have allowed university authorities to implement strategies to help students achieve the required level of English (CEFR B1) by the end of their university studies (*See Table 1*).

*Table 1: University English Course Equivalencies with National and International Standards*

Suggested semester to gain credits	Course	Equivalent Level at Completion		Course Type
		CENNI (National Language Certification)	CEFR	
1	Level A	Basic I	A1	Non- curricular
2	Level B	Basic II	A1+	Non- curricular
3	English I	Pre- Intermediate I	A2	Curricular
4	English II	Pre-Intermediate II	A2-	Curricular
5	English III	Intermediate I	A2+	Curricular
6	English IV	Intermediate II	B1-	Curricular

Depending on a student's exam results, they are placed in the corresponding course, e.g., English I – IV (*See Table 1*). Students who do not reach level I are offered Level A and B courses, which are non-credit courses, but that they need to pass in order to take the required English courses. The students have 4 opportunities to pass Level A and B courses satisfactorily; and these courses are offered at no cost for the students. Thus, the language centre at the university offers the following courses (*See Table 2*):

*Table 2: English Courses Given at the University*

Business English Courses for the Administration Department	General English Courses (except for business students)
Level A business	Level A
Level B business	Level B
Business English I	English I
Business English II	English II
Business English III	English III
Business English IV	English IV

Each of these courses provides 64 hours of instruction. The university estimates that students who complete the courses should reach a B1 level according to the CEFR for Languages. This is in line with the nation's 2006 national standards for language learning (See Table 1).

Because longstanding Mexican Bureau of Education requirements include English as a Foreign Language at least for 4 years of low and upper secondary education (ages 12 - 17), students should start their university studies with the ability to demonstrate an acceptable level of English of ideally B1 (Székely, et al., 2015; SEP, 2006) . Holding this level of English would allow students to understand basic content material in English which complements their studies at university. Then, students could focus on improving their level in the foreign language by taking advantage of the English lessons the university offers, and therefore ultimately achieve an advanced level of proficiency that allows them to communicate successfully in English and around which the EFL curriculum has been designed. Unfortunately, most Mexican students finish their English courses from lower and upper secondary school at levels of English proficiency which cannot even be considered basic. Therefore, they start tertiary education with almost non-existent knowledge of English.

Most students perform poorly on the EDII/EDIIN despite receiving English instruction in secondary education. In addition, most students continue to perform poorly in their English courses at university. This results in a high rate of students' failure in English courses. As a result of these overall high rates of failure as well as high rates of repeated failure, the institution continually implements changes to address this problem. For instance, in September 2014 they instituted remedial courses such as Level A and B so that incoming students could reach CEFR A1. This was justified according to the English test results from the years 2012 (86% of students performed below CEFR A1), 2013 (86% performed below CEFR A1), and 2014 (84.5% performed below CEFR A1). In other words, only about 15% of students actually meet or exceed the minimum required level of English for entry into the university.

A number of plans have been discussed as ways to improve the situation. It has been suggested that additional financial support be given to the language centre. Other options under consideration include improving the current self-access centres and building new ones on the third university campus, purchasing new computer equipment and other materials, financing students from the English Language Programme to take the TOEFL test, in order to offer guidance to other students with low English proficiency,

and finally, the establishment of an extra support/teaching programme for those students in Level A and B. Decisions about these plans have yet to be taken.

Many students obtain low scores on the EDII/EDIIN and go on to do poorly in the university's English courses. This has made many teachers come to the conclusion that many students have *bad or negative* attitudes towards learning English, but this conclusion appears to be, however, without foundation. Paradoxically, many of the changes that have been made to the English programme at the university have not been based on research conducted either on campus or elsewhere. English continues to be taught because of demands for students' educational and professional success in today's world. Unfortunately, the current solutions to the high rate of failure lack bases in either empirical research or methodical needs analyses; it should be unsurprising, then, that the solutions remain largely unsuccessful. As noted in Chapter 1, it is of tremendous importance to carry out studies which, among other aspects, explore undergraduates' attitudes towards learning English, in order to learn what factors shape those attitudes, and which attitude constructs can be used to predict EDII/EDIIN test performance. In addition, it is important to explore the interplay between possible changes in student attitude and performance during the course of English instruction. The results of this investigation will shed light on understanding the role of attitudes in learning English as a foreign language at institution, and, crucially, help from a research-based rationale for the implementation of modifications to the curriculum and English programme's resources. Policies and decisions based on research can lead the institution towards its goal of achieving optimal quality teaching and learning. Ultimately, attitude is an important component in performance, and plays a key role in motivational change. For this reason, attitude has been instrumental in our understanding of motivation in second language acquisition.

### **4.4 Methodological Approach**

As previously stated, many researchers have utilised a quantitative stance to measure attitude in second language acquisition. In fact, one of the most well-known tools for assessing attitude is the survey (Brown, 2001; Nunan, 1992) and the use of statistical procedures to relate it to performance through the use of tests. While a quantitative approach provides objective data for analysis and generalization, it lacks the interpretation from a more social and pragmatic perspective. The main disadvantage of merely quantitative approaches is the rather rigid system to evaluate social psychological constructs such as motivation and attitude, which largely involve feelings

and emotions. Therefore, an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach model (Cresswell, 2014) was adopted to obtain further in depth information on the connection of attitude and performance, but also change over a period of time. Furthermore, mixed methods research can be uniquely revealing to new understandings of a research problem since it provides a more complete panorama. New perspectives and frameworks can emerge from opposing viewpoints derived from both research approaches. In the following section I further explain my data sources and analysis procedures.

## **4.5 Research Instruments**

In order to answer the four research questions posed for this study, three research instruments were used. First, an attitudinal pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire were used to collect data about students' attitudes at the beginning and end of their first academic year (2014). In order to analyse performance, that year's results from the university's EDII/EDIIN and first-year English course scores were provided by the university. Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the beginning of the following academic year (2015) with a number of second-year students.

### **4.5.1 The (Pre and Post) Questionnaire for the EFL Learner**

Surveys have been widely used in second language acquisition research and have historically been the preferred means of data collection for descriptive studies (Dörnyei, 2010). Similarly, research on attitudes has been characterized by the use of surveys. In fact, Nunan and Bailey (2009, p. 125) state that the main objective of a survey is "to obtain a snapshot of conditions, attitudes, and/or events of an entire population at a single point in time by collecting data from a sample drawn from that population". The questionnaires for the language learners used in this study drew on Clément, Dörnyei and Noels' (1994) survey but owes most of its form and content (*See Appendix B*) to the survey found in Taguchi et al., (2009). Both questionnaires were developed to be used in EFL settings, taking into account the specificities of the respective countries.

The articles which reported results of these two surveys describe contexts where English is mostly learned as a foreign language and contact with it is mostly limited. Therefore, most of these characteristics can be said to apply to the case of Mexico, specifically to the city where the research was developed. Nonetheless, an analysis of both surveys suggested that a new survey be created. As a result, a number of modifications and

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additions were made so that they final survey better fit the Mexican context generally and the research questions in particular. Questions regarding attitudes towards learning English, towards persons of American and British nationality, perceived group cohesion among the students, self-evaluation of English competence, English teacher evaluation, and English course evaluation were adapted from Clément, et al. (1994). After careful consideration, both attitudes towards Americans and British nationalities were included. Attitudes towards Americans were of special interest because the study larger context is roughly 1000km from the US/Mexican border. Despite the distance between the UK and Mexico, the survey asked about attitudes towards British because many English course books used in Mexico include content on British culture. In addition, the British Council in Mexico continually offers training for English teachers and students. Moreover, many of the English examinations used in Mexico are created by Cambridge English Language Assessment.

As noted above, much of the survey was based on Taguchi et al. (2009). The survey used for this study borrowed questions regarding the ideal L2 self, *ought to* L2 self, parental encouragement/family influence, instrumentality promotion and prevention, ethnocentrism. Finally, a few items added by the author. These included questions regarding family and inter-ethnic contact (*See Appendix C*). These items were included because previous questionnaires did not include items related to contact with nationals who speak English, for instance. Items which had a negative connotation were reversed so that a high score in the questionnaires related to a positive attitude while a low score indicated a negative attitude. In particular, the analysis of attitude was problematic due to one factor indicating low value as positive for favourable attitudes. After collection, reliability of the questionnaire items was calculated using Cronbach's alpha.

The final Questionnaires for the EFL Learner (QEFL) comprised two sections: 1) A 70-item Likert-scale survey which inquired about the content mentioned above, and 2) a background and general information section (*See Appendix C and D*). This second section asked students about their age, nationality, city or country of origin, native language and foreign language studies, type of upper secondary school education, age at which they started learning English, and any foreign countries they had visited or lived in. It also asked students to evaluate their own English skills.

### 4.5.2 The Institutional Diagnostic Evaluation of English

The university's diagnostic test was used as a means of attempting to determine if there was any relationship between students' attitudes and their language attainment. The exam is an institutional measure of evaluation designed by English teachers at the Language Centre of the university. The university opted to design this assessment, in order to have immediate access to students' English test results, so that decisions regarding their future studies of the English language could be made in a timely manner. Before 2010, students took the English Language Assessment System for Hispanics (ELASH), a test administered by College Board, but results were not immediate.

The exams comprise three parts (*See Table 3*), listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and grammar and vocabulary. The listening and reading comprehension sections contain 20 multiple-choice questions; each question has four options. The grammar and vocabulary section has 120 multiple choice items; these also offer 4 options each. The exam items are based upon the content of the General English and Business English courses that are taught at the language centre of the university.

*Table 3: Description of Institutional Diagnostic Evaluation of English*

Test item number	Section	Full mark	Time
1 – 20	Listening	20	15 minutes
21- 40	Reading	20	20 minutes
1-120	Grammar and vocabulary	120	60 minutes

The analysis of scores is mainly based on the grammar and vocabulary exam items. The score analysis is organized in sections of 20 items; each one indicating a level of English. For example, items 1 – 20 evaluated the content of the Level A English course, items 21- 40 evaluated Level B, and so on. A student needs to demonstrate a minimum score (*See Table 4*) to be able to study the next course level. As shown in Table 3, the speaking ability is not considered in the exam.

*Table 4: Organization of Exam Items to Corresponding English Courses*

General English Course		Minimum number of test items to gain credit for the English course
Grammar and vocabulary exam items	Representative Level	
1-20	Level A	16
21-40	Level B	16
41- 60	English I	14
61 -80	English II	14
81 -100	English III	14
101 -120	English IV	14

As can be observed, the listening and reading comprehension sections are not taken into consideration when evaluating students' language performance; rather, they are only given to offer reference data. For instance, in case a student scores 15 on the first 20 items, the evaluator looks at the listening and reading section scores. If the listening and reading scores are "satisfactory" then the evaluator can decide if the student is ready for the next level. This system of evaluation focuses on grammar and seems very subjective to make decisions for such a large number of test takers.

Students can also receive course credit if they demonstrate their level of language competence by scoring a minimum of 450 points on the paper-based TOEFL, 170 points on the computer based test, 60 points on the internet based test, 4.5 on the IELTS, or a PASS on the Cambridge First Certificate Examination. If they show a certificate with any of these options, they would obtain 100, in a scale of 0-100, as score in each English course (Level A to English I). In the case of business students, they would need to demonstrate their level of competence in English by obtaining a CEFR B1 on the Cambridge Business English Certificate Preliminary Examination.

### **4.5.3 The University English Course Evaluation**

Because students' Level A and B course scores were analysed for this study, a short description follows. First, the content of general English courses is based on a textbook and a workbook written by Jack C. Richards and published by Cambridge University Press while the content of business courses is based on the textbook written by David, Falvey, David Cotton, Simon, Kent, Margaret O'Keeffe and Iwona Dubicka. Similarly, course activities appear in textbooks. Simply put, the syllabus and evaluation methods are directly based on the textbooks content.

Each course, Level A and B, is divided into three functional focus sections; each section ends with an assessment based on textbook exercises on vocabulary, grammar, listening, and reading; writing and speaking are evaluated separately and assessed by means of rubrics designed by the academy of English language teachers at the language centre. No access to evaluations was provided. Yet, from the content syllabus the evaluation system suggests that students' semester scores consist of their result on three exams (grammar and vocabulary and reading and listening) and three writing and speaking samples. There are no differences between the evaluating system of the general English courses and the business courses content.

#### **4.5.4 Interviews**

Interviews provide a valuable counter-balancing perspective to quantitative research. For this study, semi-structured interviews were carried out in order to collect information regarding students' opinions and perceptions in regard to their attitudes towards learning English, the use of language, their performance, and any attitude changes. Semi-structured interviews offer advantages over other interview methods because this type of elicitation technique allows the researcher to spend more cognitive energy on topics, issues and respondents' answers, and less on question formulation. Mackey and Gass (2005) suggest that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to have more freedom during the interview as it is possible to acquire information more easily. Additionally, "this form of interview gives one privileged access to other people's lives" (Nunan, 1992, p. 150). For instance, interviewees can provide important historical data (Cresswell, 2014). In other words, using this type of interview allows the interviewee to feel more comfortable, and in turn allows the interviewer to gather higher-quality information.

Before conducting the actual interviews, the interview protocol was piloted with four university undergraduate students. Nunan (1992) suggests that, as with any other data collection method, interviews should be piloted to give the researcher the opportunity to modify any question that might be confusing for the interviewee. In addition, piloting the interview allows the interviewer work out any procedural issues, get some practise administering the protocol, and allow for the trialling of follow-up questions.

Initially, I planned to pilot the interview twice. One volunteer was an Education major in the fifth semester; the other student was in the seventh semester of the English Language Teaching degree. First, an explanation that described the purpose of the

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interview was given to each interviewee. Next, the researcher obtained permission to record the conversation. The questions were open-ended questions and related to their experience learning English (*See Appendix E*). Questions included questions about when they started learning English, their experience learning English before university, their vision of their attitude about learning the language, and their suggestions for learning English. The interviews were performed in Spanish so that students could express themselves freely. At the end of the interviews, the students were asked if they found any questions confusing or uncomfortable. Both of them said they felt comfortable with the questions. However, after analysing both interviews, I noticed two questions were very similar and that interviewees seemed hesitant to answer them.

Therefore, I re-structured the questions and piloted the interview with two third-semester English students. Because these students also had answered both the pre- and post-QEFL, I was able to further refine the structure of the interview. Although the questions were open-ended, I had initially asked interviewees the questions in the same order (*See Appendix E*). After some thought, I decided to let the flow of the interview guide the order of the questions and base follow-up questions on the participants' answers in order to make them feel as comfortable and as natural as possible.

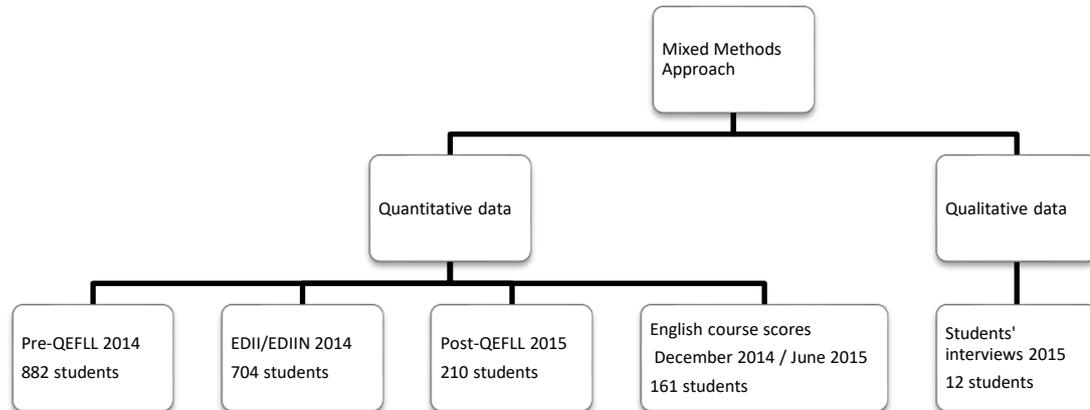
Since the interviews were semi-structured, I conducted each interview in three parts: introduction, main questions, and closure. After explaining the rationale of the study to each participant and asking whether there were any questions, participants were invited to mention the English course in which they were studying and share any information they wanted to share in order to create a friendly environment.

### **4.6 Data Collection Procedure**

Prior to commencing the study, ethical clearance was sought from the University of Southampton and the corresponding authorities in the data collection setting. Based on a mixed methods study, the data collection procedure was divided into three stages and took place over the course of an entire academic year. The first stage comprised the assessment of students' attitudes towards learning English by means of administering a pre-questionnaire (Pre-QEFL) and the collection of students' results on the institutional English diagnostic test (EDII/EDIIN). The second stage included the collection of students' attitudes towards learning English by means of the post-QEFL (*See Appendix D*) after an academic year of study, and the collection of their final results from their first

and second English courses (Level A and B). The third stage consisted of collecting qualitative data by means of interviews (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Representation of Data Collection



## 4.7 Administering the Questionnaires

In order to explore the attitudes of the students of the university, permission from the university authorities had to be requested and granted. The first step was to survey the attitudes of the 1,498 students planning to enter the university in August 2014. Before the beginning of classes at the university, the researcher met with the English teachers of the language centre and explained the purpose of the study. She asked for their help in disseminating information about the study among the students, and also asked them to provide students with 30 minutes of class time to answer the survey. The English teachers consented and it was agreed that they would explain the purpose of the survey. Additionally, the researcher provided the teachers with a short description of the study and the students' consent forms to participate in the study. Later, when students started their English classes on 18 August 2014, they learned about the study and its objective and then were given the consent form if they were willing to participate in the study.

A total of 1119 students consented and agreed to participate in the study then answered the paper based pre-QEFL. Students took approximately 15-20 minutes to answer the pre- questionnaire. After the pre-QEFLs were collected, the ones with 90% completion or above were selected, making a total of 882 pre-surveys. The data was entered, and saved into a database to be analysed. All analyses were carried out using

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SPSS version 21. Next, descriptive statistics was performed to corroborate the data entry.

The next step was to link the students' pre-QEFL with their results on the English diagnostic test. Every year, university applicants take the university English diagnostic test so that the institution can make decisions regarding students' English course placement. In May 2014, 1,498 students took the EDII/EDIIN. The exam lasted 95 minutes. As the university computing team provided the results of this exam, the researcher described and explained the purpose of this study to the relevant university authorities and obtained consent to be able to use the exam results for research purposes only if the students consented. As can be noticed, first students took the test prior to formal entrance to the university; for this reason, results were provided in June 2014. The results from the questionnaires and tests and of those students who signed the consent forms were the only ones used for the study; respondents' university identification numbers were used to link files and to maintain students' anonymity. The total sample of participants for this first exploration of quantitative data was 882 students. After the two sets of data were collected, the first statistical analyses were performed. Exploratory factor analysis and correlational tests were performed.

As one of the research questions in this study involves comparing the students' attitudes towards learning English at the beginning and end of the academic year, the 882 students who answered the pre-QEFL were contacted at the beginning of their second academic year (2015) in order to ask them to answer the post-questionnaire. Nevertheless, comparisons of QEFL and EDII were only possible for 704 students. This was a challenging task, and it took some time and effort to achieve success.

First, it was decided to contact the professor in each academic programme whose responsibilities includes approving each student's registration each semester, on the theory that these professors would be able to identify and contact participants on the basis of their student numbers. However, after talking to some of these professors, it appeared that it would be difficult to locate students in this way because the university's registration system can, for example, create multiple registration lists for the same course and not eliminate the names of students who had dropped out. In one of my meetings with the professor-advisors mentioned above, I was provided 15 attendance lists: on one list there was one student, on another one 5 students, and so on. Many students had dropped out. Ultimately, I opted for focusing on identifying participants in the degree programmes with the highest participation rates. As a result, I was able to

identify a couple of groups from the engineering and health departments, which contained large numbers of these students who had answered the pre-survey. This procedure limited the number of students I could study. After this initial winnowing, I began to identify students according to the attendance lists of students who had been registered in English I course at the university language centre. In the end, I was able to locate 210 students who were willing to participate in the post-survey out of the original 704 who had answered both the pre-QEFLL and the EDII. During September and October 2015, information about the research was given to these 210 students, and they were given the opportunity to ask questions about the study. Later they were given the consent form (*See Appendix F*), and finally they answered the post-QEFLL.

Once the post-QEFLL were collected, students' scores from their first year Level A and B English courses were collected and collated with their previous study and university consent forms. Unfortunately, it was only possible to connect 180 post-QEFLL with their corresponding scores. This was the last procedure of the quantitative data collection. The comparison between the post-QEFLL and the English course scores resulted in a population of 161 of the original 704 participants. Following the descriptive analysis for these data, other statistical tests such as t-tests, and multiple regression were performed to provide further answers to the research questions in the study.

#### **4.8 Administering the Interviews**

The final step was the collection of qualitative data. By the end of November 2015, the interviews started to take place. From the sample of 210 students, 15 were asked to participate in the study according to responses on their 1-6 Likert scale post-survey where 1 refers to totally disagree and 6 totally agree. Their average score from the four resulting attitudinal factors was used to know if their attitudes were mostly positive or negative. Students with a score of 4 or above were categorized as having a positive attitude while students with a score of 3 or below were included in the negative attitude category. Moreover, in order for sex distribution to be mostly even, there were 8 men and 7 women chosen randomly.

Next, I asked their English teachers to allow me to talk to them and invite them to participate in the study again. To avoid interrupting too many classes, the students were chosen from 3 classrooms. Finally, 12 (7 women and 5 men) students agreed to continue their participation in the study. Based on their attitudes in the Post-QEFLL, two groups (positive and negative attitudes) were categorized. All students were registered

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in the English I course at the language centre. Once the participant list was finalized, the interviews started.

The interviews were completed by the end of November 2015; they took place on university premises at different times, and lasted from 5 to 10 minutes each depending on students' answers and time availability. There was no specific order for interviewing the participants, scheduling was based according to their availability. The interviews included three sections: 1) introduction, 2) experience learning English, and 3) suggestions or comments. The first section served to create a more relaxed environment for the interviewee, since recording always causes some discomfort. The second section of the interview covered topics related to their learning of English; the third section asked what suggestions or recommendations they would give to other people learning English. The data were recorded on a digital audio recorder. Immediately after interviews were recorded, the data was transcribed (*See Appendix G for an interview transcript sample*) and analysed. There were 12 interview transcripts which made up a total of 43 pages. A pseudonym was assigned to each participant for data protection purposes. In the first analysis, I looked for patterns and concepts that appear to be significant and were grouped together. The data was coded (*See Appendix H*) manually and then analysed again to highlight salient themes, but also inconsistencies (Nunan 1992; Nunan and Bailey 2009). The responses relating to attitude and change might be subjective and therefore susceptible to recall bias. Nevertheless, interview data were triangulated with quantitative data sources.

### **4.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the methodology used for this study. First, it explained the research aims and reviewed the research questions. This was performed in order to describe the scope of the study. Next, the research context was described in detail. Third, detailed descriptions of the research instruments were introduced. Finally, the chapter detailed the procedures used for data collection.

## Chapter 5: Results

This chapter presents the main results obtained from the fieldwork. Quantitative and qualitative results are presented accordingly to answer each of the four research questions. The synthesis of data is developed to ensure full answers to the research questions. Therefore, this dataset will reveal the students' attitudes towards learning English and the main factors involved through descriptive results from the students' background information included in the pre-QEFLL, and the descriptive statistics at the item and scale level of the survey. The results obtained from factor analysis are displayed. Next, the results from English diagnostic test results and English course scores are displayed to find the predicting factors using correlation, independent sample t-test and multiple regression. Likewise, quantitative data from the post-QEFLL are presented to contrast them to the results from the pre-questionnaire and explain the difference in attitudes after an academic year.

Moreover, data from the semi-structured interviews are also presented. The results are compared with data from both questionnaires to seek emerging relationships. Results mainly from qualitative data refer to students' reasons for use of language, language performance and attitude change. In order to complement qualitative data, quantitative data is presented where appropriate. Together the dataset will aim to answer the four research questions described and justified in Chapter 4.

### 5.1 The Questionnaire for the EFL learner

As described in Chapter 3, the QEFLL was the instrument used to answer the first research question, e.g. the university students' attitudes towards learning English, and the main factors that comprise such attitudes. The QEFLL was based on two surveys by Clément et al. (1994) and Taguchi et al. (2009). The questionnaire was adapted to the Mexican context; therefore, it included items considered to be pertinent for the development of the research. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient test was done for the 70 items on a Likert scale from 1 (Totally disagree) to 6 (Totally agree); results revealed that alpha value is .89 suggesting that the items have high reliability and consistency. In total 486 females and 396 males completed the pre-QEFLL giving a total of 882 respondents. The results of the questionnaire which mainly aim to answer the first research question are presented in this section.

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From 1,394 incoming students to the University there were only 1,119 returned surveys. The ones that had a high rate of completion, and had a score on the EDII/EDIIN were considered for inclusion in the study. The missing data were scattered across the 882 questionnaires not clustering to particular variables—random missing data. In addition, 882 valid EDII/EDIIN total scores were available to be attached to the questionnaires. Although EDII was administered to students taking general English courses and EDIIN to business students, exam content slightly differed in vocabulary. Therefore, the content and layout is basically the same. The final dataset contained 882 valid questionnaire responses and test scores. SPSS 21 was used to conduct the statistical data analysis.

### **5.1.1 Quantitative Analysis of the Pre- QEFLL**

The pre-QEFLL was divided into two sections: 1) The 70 item Likert Scale from 1 Totally disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Partially disagree, 4 Partially agree, 5 Agree to 6 Totally agree, and 2) the background section. However, in this section, first the results from the background are presented in order to understand the context of the participants to later establish any connections with the results from the pre-QEFLL.

In this section the students' background information is presented. Their age range is 16 – 54 years old. The average age is 18. Spanish was mentioned as their native language by 859 students out of 882. Only two people mentioned their native language was different from Spanish, one mentioned Chol and another one Mayan. The rest of the students omitted this question. When asked about the age they started learning English, the minimum age was 3 and the maximum was 20. Age 12 was the most mentioned by 16.2% followed by age 13 mentioned by 10.4% and 15 by 9% of a total of 639 students who answered this question.

Most of the students, 64.6%, came from the state of Campeche, followed by a 13% of students coming from the state of Tabasco, and 7.6% from the state of Veracruz. The rest of the students came in from the states of Yucatan, Oaxaca, Tamaulipas, and also from Mexico City. Only 2.6% did not mention the state they came from. The majority of these students come from southeast Mexico. Regarding the type of upper secondary education they received, the majority, 73% of the students reported they studied in public upper secondary schools and 13.7% in private upper secondary schools while 4.2% received both public and private education.

Table 5: Salient Results from Participants' Background

Participants' background information	N. of students	Percent
Spanish as native language	859	97.4 %
Students from the state of Campeche	570	64.6 %
Students from public upper secondary schools	648	73.5 %
Students who do not speak a foreign language	653	74 %
Students who have lived abroad	11	1.2%
Students who have visited a foreign country	67	4.6%
Students who have not taken extra English lessons	514	58.3%

As shown in Table 5 the majority of the students, 74% did not speak a foreign language. Only 15.8% mentioned they spoke English. The languages that were mentioned in smaller percentages were Portuguese, French, Mayan, German, and also Korean and Japanese. Only 2.4 % of the students reported to speak more than one foreign language. Only 2.5% of the students omitted to answer this question. When asked if they had experienced living abroad, only 1.2% answered affirmatively. The duration of the stay ranged from 1 month to 10 years. Students were also asked if they had visited any foreign country, 7.2% of students answered positively. To this question 4.6% answered they had visited the United States of America, other countries mentioned were Canada, England, Holland, Belize, and a couple of Latin American countries. The students who visited a foreign country did it mostly (2.6%) as tourists but also for family, work, sports, study and religious reasons.

Students were also required to answer whether they had taken out of school English lessons; 58.3% mentioned they have not received extra English lessons. However, the students who have taken extra lessons (29%) mentioned the following reasons: to practise the language, understand school English lessons, reaffirm knowledge, like the language, learn more, and have difficulties learning the language (*See Table 6*). In fact, 20% of the students gave more than one reason to have received English private lessons.

Table 6: Reasons for Taking Private English Lessons

	N. of students	Percent
1. Language practise	30	3.4 %
2. Understand School English lessons	24	2.7 %
3. Reaffirm English knowledge	11	1.2 %
4. Like the language	24	2.7 %
5. Learn more	48	5.4 %
6. Difficulty to learn English	44	5.0 %
7. More than one reason	176	20.0 %
8. No private lessons	514	58.3 %
Total	871	98.8 %
Missing	11	1.2 %
Total	882	100 %

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For the purpose of this study the 28 programmes of study were grouped under 6 categories or departments: 1) Humanities, 2) Information sciences, 3) Natural sciences, 4) Engineering technology, 5) Health studies, and 6) Business studies (*See Table 7*).

*Table 7: Number of Students by Schools or Departments*

	School or department	Area of specialization	N. of students	Percent
1	Humanities	1. Education	106	12.0%
		2. English Language teaching		
		3. Law		
2	Information sciences	4. Computer engineering	78	8.8%
		5. Computing systems engineering		
		6. Multimedia design		
3	Natural sciences	7. Marine biology	210	23.8%
		8. Geology		
		9. Chemistry		
		10. Petroleum engineering		
4	Engineering technology	11. Mechatronics	153	17.3%
		12. Civil engineering		
		13. Mechanic engineering		
		14. Geophysics		
		15. Electronics		
		16. Energy		
		17. Sustainable architecture		
5	Health studies	18. Physical education	158	17.9%
		19. Nursing		
		20. Clinical psychology		
		21. Physiotherapy		
		22. Nutrition		
		23. Medicine		
6	Business studies	24. Business administration	177	20.1%
		25. Accounting		
		26. Tourism administration		
		27. Marketing		
		28. International business		
Total			882	100%

The humanities category included three colleges with a total of 106 students: 29 students from Education, 45 from the English language, and 32 from the Law programmes. The information sciences included 78 students in the programmes of computer engineering with 15 students, 39 in the computing systems engineering, and 24 multimedia design engineering students. The biggest group was Natural sciences category with 210 students. There were 30 marine biology students, 38 chemistry, 58 petroleum engineering, 57 geology, and 27 geophysics students. In the engineering technology group there was a total of 153 students; 16 energy engineering, 25 mechatronics, 50 civil engineering, 29 mechanic engineering, 7 electronic engineering, and 26 sustainable architecture students while physical education, nursing, clinical psychology, physiotherapy, medicine and nutrition were included in the Health Sciences

group with 158 students. The first group with 4 students, the second with 36, the third one with 31, the fourth group with 27, the fifth one with 40 and the sixth group with 20 students. The last group in the sixth category, business, included the business administration programme with 47 students, accounting with 46, tourism administration with 20, marketing with 21 and the international business programme with 43 students.

The participants also answered a questionnaire section that asked them about their expectations of learning English at university as well as the level of English they believed they held at the moment of answering the survey. Table 8 shows the results from this section.

*Table 8: Participants' English Learning Expectations and Self-Evaluation of English*

Percentage of English	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing	English level	Self-evaluation
	Expectations					
Less than 20%	37	28	33	33	Less than basic	248
20 – 40%	86	62	63	66	Basic	443
50 – 70%	238	215	189	178	Intermediate	111
80 -100%	508	560	578	590	Advanced	33
Total N.	869	865	866	870		835
Mean	3.43	3.51	3.51	3.52		1.91
SD	1.30	.76	.80	.80		7.63

As can be seen in table 8 most of the participants expect to achieve a high level of English language skills by the end of their university studies. They basically expect to achieve intermediate (26.7%) to advanced level (56.9%). On the other hand, the students' self-evaluations show that 82.8% consider they hold a basic (53.1%) level of English or even lower (29.7%) despite English learning forms part of the curricula in secondary education in Mexico. Then, students hold a low level of English and have high expectations of their English learning at university.

### **5.1.2 The Pre-QEFL: Item Level Analysis**

In order to address the first research question, to investigate the university students' attitudes towards learning English, descriptive statistics were analysed to display students' attitudes toward learning English at both the item and the scale levels. Table 9 displays a representation of students' given importance to English and their reasons for learning English. They are arranged in a descending order according to the mean scores given by the students (*See Appendix I*).

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*Table 9: Importance and Reasons to Learn English*

	Survey items	N	Mean	S D
27	It is good to learn English as a child.	882	5.72	.71
10	English is an important subject in the school programme.	880	5.58	.72
28	Studying English is important to me because I may need it later on for job/studies.	879	5.67	.70
35	I am interested in learning English because I want to travel around the world.	878	5.27	1.12
31	I have to study English because I don't want to get bad marks in it at university.	878	5.31	1.03
12	I need to know English to get a good job.	881	5.34	.95
61	I have to learn English because without passing the English course I cannot graduate/ get my degree.	870	5.25	1.12
8	I have to study English; otherwise, I think I cannot be successful in my future career.	879	5.03	1.20
5	Studying English is important to me because I am planning to live abroad (e.g., studying and working).	880	4.85	1.30

There are some salient results regarding the scale at the item level as can be seen from the table above. Students' answers reflect they understand the importance of the language. For example, item 27, "It is good to learn English as a child" was the only item all respondents answered and had the highest mean score. A total of 81.4% of students totally agreed on this item. Similarly, students give importance to learning English at school, and they consider "English is an important subject in the school programme". These scores represent students recognize the importance of learning English at an early age and of studying English at school.

Results from the scale also showed the predominant reasons students learn English. Item 28 "studying English is important to me because I may need it later for job/studies show that 76% of students totally agreed with the item. Even when students show interest in learning English to travel, or live abroad, their interest for learning English is focused mostly on the now i.e. pass the course to graduate from university and for instrumental reasons as to obtain a job (See Table 9). These results show students know that English is important for their future careers.

*Table 10: Attitudes towards English and Americans and British*

	Survey items	N	Mean	S D
2	I have a good attitude learning English.	881	5.15	.97
25	I would like to have American friends.	870	4.77	1.27
29	I consider Americans are friendly.	877	4.29	1.20
34	I would like to learn English to be like Americans.	879	3.00	1.60

51	I like the way the Americans behave.	875	3.45	1.24
7	The British are friendly.	879	4.39	1.05
32	I would like to know more British people.	871	4.74	1.25
44	I believe the British are reliable.	878	3.64	1.20
57	I would like to learn English to be like the British.	876	2.68	1.53

With regard to attitudes towards English and Americans and British (*See Table 10*), item 2 shows that most students and 43.9% totally agreed on having good attitudes with a mean score 5.15. On the other hand, the students show a slight difference in attitude about their vision towards cultural aspects and groups. For instance, their attitude towards Americans as shown in items 25, 29, 34, 51 indicate that they agreed on wanting to have American friends, but are not sure about Americans' friendliness. Similarly, more than half percent disagreed with "I would like to learn English to be like Americans". Additionally, few students agreed on liking Americans' behaviour. Students also responded items that seek their opinions towards the British. Most students agreed on the Britons' friendliness, and most agreed on their interest to know more British people. Results are similar to their responses about Americans' friendliness and wanting to have friends or meeting people from USA and UK. However, many students are not sure about the reliability of Britons. Finally, most definitely do not agree with replacing their identity (item 57) to learn English.

*Table 11: Cultural Identity and Contact with English*

	Survey items	N	Mean	S D
36	I am proud to be Mexican	881	5.64	.86
1	I am very interested in the values and customs of other cultures.	874	4.96	.92
47	When I watch T.V. programmes or movies in English, I try to understand the language.	873	5.04	1.10
48	I do activities where I have to use English (e.g. Reading magazines, listening to music, speaking or writing in English)	880	4.67	1.47
14	I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner on the internet or the phone.	877	3.56	1.86
65	I have interacted in English and face to face with at least one foreigner in my community city or country.	873	3.27	1.90
46	I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner in a foreign country.	879	2.84	1.87

Another item that is related to culture (*See Table 11*), but in this case, their own is item 36, "I am proud to be Mexican". This item shows a high mean score of 5.64. In fact, 79.3% of students strongly agreed on this item. Students' answers to item 1 (mean score of 4.96) show that most students (94.3%) agreed with the item "I am very interested in the values and customs of other cultures". These results indicate that overall the

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students displayed positive attitudes towards learning English, but they had some reservations regarding their attitudes towards Americans and British. For instance, their interest to learn about other cultures drive them to be interested in having American friends or meeting British people, but their strong sense of national identity prevents most students to learn English to “be like” either Americans or British. Additionally, students’ answers might reflect the familiarity or lack of familiarity with American or British cultures.

Additionally, results also portray the cultural activity practise these students engage in. For item 47 and 48 which pertain to activities for language practice such as watching T.V. programmes or movies in English and reading magazines, listening to music, speaking or writing in English, most students agreed. Students also evaluated the contact with English via foreign or national means, the use of English via internet or the phone, or contact with foreigners in their community. To this matter most students disagreed. Similarly, most have not experienced language contact abroad.

*Table 12: Classroom Experience and English in Mexico*

	Survey items	N	Mean	S D
53	I have Mexican friends who speak English.	880	4.86	1.38
24	I speak with my Spanish-speaking friends in English.	876	3.71	1.52
39	My upper secondary school classmates looked down on the ones who did not speak English well.	880	2.34	1.49
3	My upper secondary school English teachers were always fair.	879	4.28	1.27
26	My upper secondary school English teachers showed interest and disposition to help us learn English.	882	4.23	1.47
30	My upper secondary school English teachers made their classes interesting.	882	3.96	1.45
58	I knew how my English performance would be evaluated in upper secondary school.	881	4.37	1.34
15	The content evaluation of my English class was clear.	876	4.09	1.28
52	My upper secondary school classmates and I supported each other in our English class.	881	4.37	1.39

On the contrary, many students agreed on having foreign friends or acquaintances who speak English (*See Table 12*). Most students agreed with having family members or Mexican friends and acquaintances that speak English, but only about 50% agreed that to engage in interaction in English with them. Overall results highlight that students expose themselves to practise English by using visual media such as T.V., as well as performing some type of language skills practise. Yet, these students report restricted exposure to the English language either by phone, internet or in students’ communities despite at least 50% of students have some contact with foreign friends or acquaintances who speak English, and many have family members or Mexican friends

who speak the target language. Therefore, results suggest that most students might not feel comfortable speaking in English with their fellow nationals.

Results from the survey also highlighted the students' previous experience learning English, and their self-evaluation of their competence in English prior to beginning their studies at university level. Item 39 shows that most students felt comfortable with their peers and did not feel threatened. In fact, most students agreed on supporting each other in class (item 52). On the other hand, items that questioned about their English teachers such as item 3 and 26 indicated that most students think that their teachers were fair and showed interest in their learning. Yet, a good number of students (about 50%) do not agree. Nevertheless, most (75.6%) agreed on their upper secondary school teachers being professionally trained to teach English. Similarly, they considered their upper secondary school English teachers made their classes interesting (item 30). Students also responded questions regarding the content evaluation of their English lessons. Therefore when asked if they knew how their English performance would be evaluated (item 58) and if their class content evaluation was clear (item 15), most agreed.

*Table 13: Language Skills, Effort and Influence*

	Survey items	N	Mean	S D
6	I can communicate orally in English.	876	3.19	1.43
68	I can understand what I hear in English.	877	3.70	1.38
22	I am able to read in English.	877	4.12	1.42
69	If I make more effort, I am sure I will be able to master English.	879	5.59	.80
59	I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.	872	5.43	.90
37	I have to study English because, if I don't do it, my parents will be disappointed with me.	874	2.97	1.53
66	I am satisfied with my English proficiency at this moment.	878	2.93	1.69
41	Because of the influence of the English language, I think the Spanish language is corrupt.	871	2.92	1.55

Students also self-evaluated for their current language skills in English (*See Table 13*). Most disagreed on being able to communicate orally (item 6). However, with regards to the listening skills, most students agreed on understanding what they hear. Yet, their answers indicate that they might understand some of what they hear. Similar answers pertain to the writing and reading skills. On the other hand, most students do not feel satisfied with their English proficiency (item 66).

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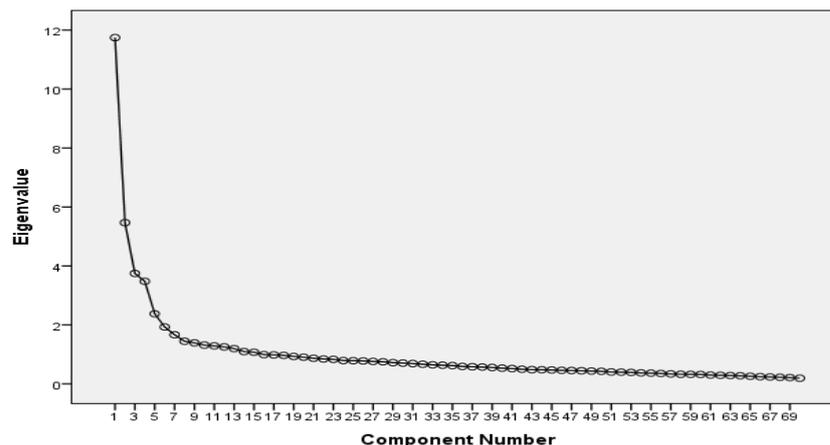
In brief, the results from these items show that most of the students consider their English learning evaluation and experience with English teachers and classmates in upper secondary school adequate. Although their lessons could have been more interesting, most students were aware of their evaluation, and there was support from classmates, indicating low sense of competitiveness. Furthermore, despite the students consider they can communicate to a certain extent in English, the results show many are discontent with the level of English they hold before the start of their lessons at university. Probably that justifies the results from item 69 “If I make more effort, I am sure I will be able to master English” where most students agreed. Similarly, students can imagine themselves as someone who speaks English (item 59). The results suggest that even when students do not feel totally content with their language skills competence, they are certain to master the language if they exert more effort. In fact, most students have the image of themselves speaking the target language indicating that they would like to speak English in the near future.

The results at the item level opened a door to continue exploring the attitudes of the students. These results indicate that most students held positive attitudes towards learning English at the beginning of the academic term; they recognized the importance of learning the language to advance economically and intellectually. In the same manner, most mentioned to be interested in other cultures, which is an incentive to learn English. In fact, most manifested they would like to have American friends or meet British people. On the other hand, most students mentioned they feel proud of being Mexican, which might have led them to express they do not agree with learning English “to be like Americans or British”. Also, their answers suggest they are in contact with the language when performing some sort of English practise by watching T.V or listening to music in English, but their interaction with foreigners in English seems limited. Although they manifested that either friends or acquaintances, or relatives speak English, yet not many engaged in interaction with them. Additionally, their experience learning English at upper secondary school appeared to be mostly adequate including support to learn the language among classmates; many did not consider their classes were interesting, though. Likewise, most showed interest in learning the language by manifesting they could master English if they made an effort and that they had the image of themselves speaking English despite considering their current English skills were not that strong, and not feeling confident with their level of English. Overall the attitude language learner survey at the item level presented useful results for further exploration.

### 5.1.3 Factor Analysis

The data from the QEFL was verified if suitable for factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) value was above .6 (.894), and the Barlett's Test of Sphericity value was significant (.000). Thus, Factor analysis was performed to explore the interrelationships in items. The survey items were subjected to the principal component analysis to extract the main factors. The factor matrix with no rotation recorded fifteen components which recorded eigenvalues above 1. Finally, Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was performed in order to classify the students' attitudes in the QEFL. An analysis of the Scree plot suggested the extraction of four predominant factors. All of the eigenvalues in these factors were greater than one. The screeplot showed a clear break between the first and second component. There is also a little break between the second and third component (See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Screeplot of Principal Component Analysis



A four factor model was decided based on the factor and screeplot. Factors with loadings lower than .3 were discarded from further analysis. These were items 7, 36, 44, 61, 64 and 17. Items which showed double loadings higher than .3 were analysed and categorized according to size of loadings and conceptualizations (See Appendix J) for the complete table of the four factors.

Table 14: Structure of the Four-Factor QEFL

Factor	Name	Item	N
1	EFL Attitudes	28, 35, 45, 69, 25, 59, 56, 19, 21, 13, 12, 2, 10, 67, 32, 47, 27, 49, 5, 8, 63, 11, 20, 1, 31, 29	26
2	Socio-cultural impact	55, 57, 37,34, 62, 70, 16, 42, 41, 43, 18, 39, 23, 51	14

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3	Classroom experience	26, 30, 54, 3, 15, 60, 58, 52	8
4	Linguistic exposure	6, 65, 22, 68, 14, 33, 46, 66, 9, 24, 40, 50, 4,48, 53, 38	16

The number of items that loaded in each of the factors is presented in tables 15 -18.

After careful analysis, each category was given a name. Factor 1 comprised EFL attitudes towards learning English; Factor 2 referred to Socio-cultural impact; factor 3 included items about Classroom experience, and factor 4 showed items regarding Linguistic exposure.

*Table 15: Factor 1 – EFL Attitudes*

Item	EFL attitude statements	Loadings
28	Studying English is important to me because I may need it later on for job/studies.	.688
35	I am interested in learning English because I want to travel around the world.	.635
45	The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.	.608
69	If I make more effort, I am sure I will be able to master English.	.584
25	I would like to have American friends.	.571
59	I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.	.568
56	I enjoy making my best effort to learn English.	.557
19	I really enjoy learning English.	.546
21	I am sure I have a good ability to learn English.	.544
13	I can imagine myself living abroad and having a discussion in English.	.538
12	I need to know English to get a good job.	.535
2	I have a good attitude learning English.	.535
10	English is an important subject in the school programme.	.534
67	I want to learn English to learn about the life and behaviour of people who live in English-speaking countries.	.531
32	I would like to know more British people.	.530
47	When I watch T.V. programmes or movies in English, I try to understand the language.	.498
27	It is good to learn English as a child.	.463
49	It is an advantage for Mexico to have an English-speaking neighbouring country such as the United States of America.	.438
5	Studying English is important to me because I am planning to live abroad (e.g., studying and working).	.410
8	I have to study English; otherwise, I think I cannot be successful in my future career.	.402
63	If my teacher wanted me to do an extra English assignment, I would certainly volunteer.	.380
11	Mexico can develop thanks to Mexicans who speak English.	.375
20	My parents encourage me to study English.	.352
1	I am very interested in the values and customs of other cultures.	.335
31	I have to study English because I don't want to get bad marks in it at university.	.319
29	I consider Americans are friendly.	.307

Within factor one, items related to attitudes towards learning English, towards Americans, towards British, importance of the language, ideal L2 self, Linguistic self-confidence and reasons to learn English (mostly instrumental) were retained. Thus,

factor 1 *EFL Attitudes* referred to the attitudes towards English but also salient cultural groups, and activities. Additionally, this factor referred to the given importance, inner reasons students express for learning the language as well as the image of themselves using the target language.

*Table 16: Factor 2 – Socio-cultural Impact*

Item	Socio-cultural impact statements	Loadings
55	Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English.	.634
57	I would like to learn English to be like the British.	.602
37	I have to study English because, if I don't do it, my parents will be disappointed with me.	.586
34	I would like to learn English to be like Americans.	.568
62	I think the cultural and artistic values of English are going at the expense of Mexican values.*	.553
70	Because of the influence of the English speaking countries, I think the morals of Mexican people are becoming worse.*	.550
16	Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.	.512
42	I do not particularly like the process of learning English and I do it only because I may need the language.*	.506
41	Because of the influence of the English language, I think the Spanish language is corrupt.	.481
43	If I don't learn English, I won't be able to travel to other countries.	.458
18	I think I would be happy if other cultures were more similar to Mexican.	.451
39	My upper secondary school classmates looked down on the ones who did not speak English well.	.415
23	It's hard for me to learn English because it's a difficult language.*	.414
51	I like the way the Americans behave.	.396

\*Reversed items

Factor 2, *Socio-cultural impact* dealt with external reasons to learn the language and fear of assimilation. Within factor 2, items related to ought to self, cultural aspects, and reasons to learn the language were comprised too.

*Table 17: Factor 3 – Classroom Experience*

Item	Classroom experience statements	Loadings
26	My upper secondary school English teachers showed interest and disposition to help us learn English.	.831
30	My upper secondary school English teachers made their classes interesting.	.827
54	My upper secondary school English teachers were professionally prepared to teach their lessons.	.818
3	My upper secondary school English teachers were always fair.	.740
15	The content evaluation of my English class was clear.	.721
60	The activities my teachers evaluated were relevant/significant to learn the language.	.720
58	I knew how my English performance would be evaluated in upper secondary school.	.510
52	My upper secondary school classmates and I supported each other in our English class.	.496

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Factor 3 comprised aspects specific to the classroom environment. Classroom experience referring to teachers, their lessons, class content and evaluation forms were included. It also included items from perceived group cohesion.

*Table 18: Factor 4 – Linguistic Exposure*

Item	Linguistic exposure statements	Loadings
6	I can communicate orally in English.	.706
65	I have interacted in English and face to face with at least one foreigner in my community city or country.	.694
22	I am able to read in English.	.688
68	I can understand what I hear in English.	.683
14	I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner on the internet or the phone.	.656
33	I can write in English.	.617
46	I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner in a foreign country.	.602
66	I am satisfied with my English proficiency at this moment.	.587
9	I am satisfied with the work I have done in my English course.	.530
24	I speak with my Spanish-speaking friends in English.	.507
40	I have foreign friends or acquaintances who speak English.	.499
50	I get nervous when I need to speak in my English class.	-.435
4	I am afraid of sounding stupid in English because of the mistakes I make.*	-.404
48	I do activities where I have to use English (e.g. Reading magazines, listening to music, speaking or writing in English)	.393
53	I have Mexican friends who speak English.	.338
38	In my family there are people who speak English.	.320

\*Reversed items

In factor 4, Linguistic exposure included items about self-evaluation of English language skills, and classroom practise, interaction with foreigners and nationals and friendship/family, desired English proficiency, and activities performed using the target language. The eigenvalues for the four factors were 11.74, 5.46, 3.74, 3.48 respectively. The variance explained by the four factors was 16.7%, 7.8%, 5.3% and 4.9% respectively.

### 5.1.4 The Pre-QEFL: Analysis at the Scale Level

Descriptive statistics were also conducted at the scale level, the results of which are presented in Table 19. Here the students' attitudes toward learning English at the scale level are displayed. Factor 1 EFL attitudes received the strongest agreement (rated above 4 on a 6-point Likert Scale) among the students, followed by factor 4, Classroom experience. This result shows that the students have positive attitudes to a certain extent towards learning English; item 27 "it is good to learn English as a child" was rated the highest with a mean score of 5.72 while for classroom experience the lowest mean score was 3.96 for item 30, "My upper secondary school English teachers made their classes interesting." The next factor, Linguistic exposure obtained a mean score of 3.73.

Within this factor, item 66 “I am satisfied with my English proficiency at this moment” obtained a mean score of 2.93 while item 46 “I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner in a foreign country” obtained the lowest mean score of 2.84 in this scale.

*Table 19: Descriptive Statistics of the Four Factors*

	Factor	N	M	SD
1	EFL attitudes	882	5.07	.55
3	Classroom experience	882	4.23	.98
4	Linguistic exposure	882	3.73	.87
2	Socio-cultural impact	882	3.58	.46

In the last factor, socio-cultural impact item 37 “I have to study English, if I don’t do it, my parents will be disappointed with me” obtained a low mean score of 2.97 actually indicating that students do not feel this external pressure to learn the language. The highest mean score in this scale was for item 16 “Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so” with a mean score of 4.

## 5.2 The Institutional Diagnostic Evaluation of English

In order to answer the second research question i.e. the variables that contribute to the prediction of the EDII test performance, and course performance, first the results of the EDII are presented to later present results from statistical analysis such as correlations, multiple regression and t-tests. Later the results from the first year English course scores are shown. Similarly, statistical analyses are performed to completely answer the second research question.

The exam contains three sections: 1) listening, 2) reading, and the grammar and vocabulary section with a total of 160 multiple choice questions. The total sample number of students who answered the exam was 882. The listening section is presented first in the test and included 20 questions. The minimum score was 0 and the highest 19. The mean score for the listening section was 7.72 with a mode of 6. The reading section also included 20 questions; the lowest score was 0 and the highest was 20. The average score was 7.72. As for the grammar and vocabulary section, which comprised 120 items, the minimum score was 4 and the highest was 113 with an average score of 40.16. The mean score for the total test score was 55.40. The minimum score in the test was 3 and the maximum was 150 (*See Table 20*).

*Table 20: English Diagnostic Test Results*

Sections	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation
Listening	882	0	19	7.55	7	6	3.60
Reading	882	0	20	7.72	7	6	4.44
Grammar	882	4	113	40.16	35	31	18.04
Total test score	882	3	150	55.40	47	40 <sup>a</sup>	24.77

The table below illustrates the students' scores categorized in three groups taking into account the possible total score, which is 160. As can be seen 85.26 % of the students scored 79 points or below, 9.52% scored between 80 and 111, and only 5.21% scored 112 or higher.

*Table 21: Test Scores according to Performance Category*

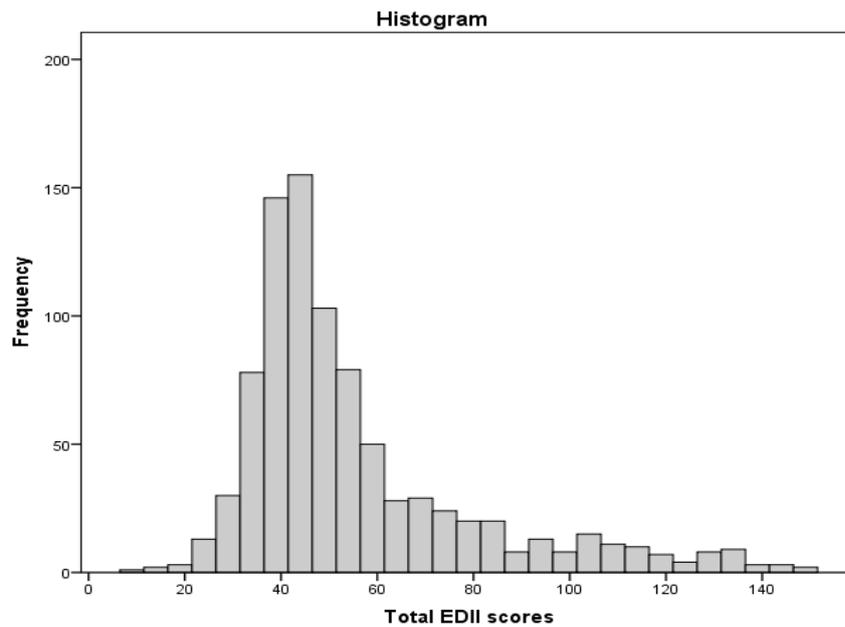
Test Score Range 160 points	Test score Scale 1-100	N. of students	Percent
<= 79	1.8 - 49	752	85.26
80 -111	50 - 69	84	9.52
112- 160	70 - 93.7	46	5.21
Total		882	100 %

The results of the students' scores in the sections of the Institutional English diagnostic exam (*See Table 21*) show a picture of the level of English most students hold at the beginning of their tertiary education. The average scores imply that most of these students do not even reach 50 percent of the total score in each section. In fact, only 5.21% of the students reached 112 points or more in an exam of 160 points. Only this small percentage of students actually obtained a satisfactory score for the university requirements.

### 5.2.1 Attitudinal/Motivational Factors and EDII Performance

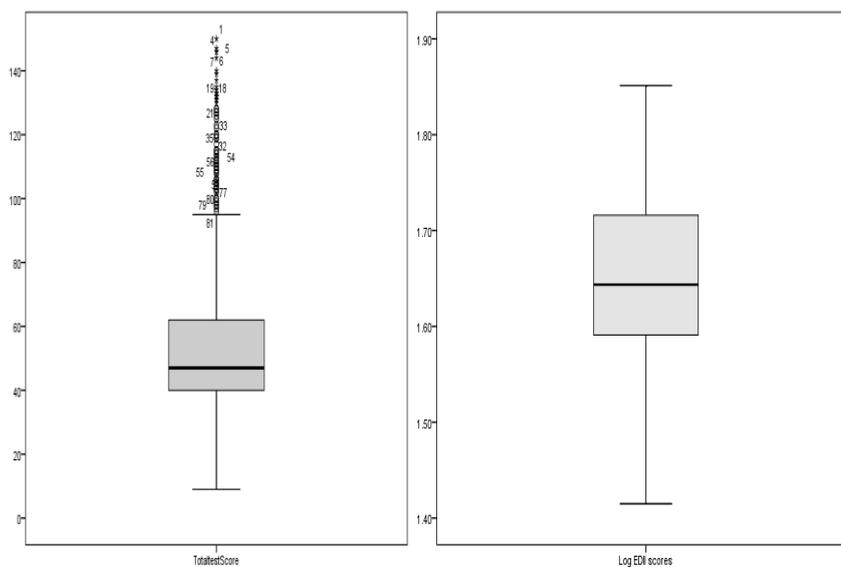
In order to establish relationships among variables, preliminary tests for Pearson  $r$  were performed to test the assumptions of level of measurement, independence of observation, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity (Pallant, 2013). First of all, both the dependent variable of EDII test scores and the independent variables resulting from the Likert scale were continuous variables. Also, the observations in the data are independent of one another. When performing a histogram on EDII test scores, the result was not normally distributed (*See Graph 1*).

Graph 1: Histogram of Positive Skewed Distribution of EDII Scores



After careful exploration of the data, outliers were identified (See Graph 2). Based on the previous information, outliers were removed (Osbourne and Overbay, 2004) mainly due to extreme scores were at least three standard deviations away from the mean ( $M=55.40$ ). Therefore, they did not represent the outcome of the sample population of the original 882 students. After transformation of the data the sample of participants resulted in 704.

Graph 2: Before and After Removing Outliers of EDII Scores

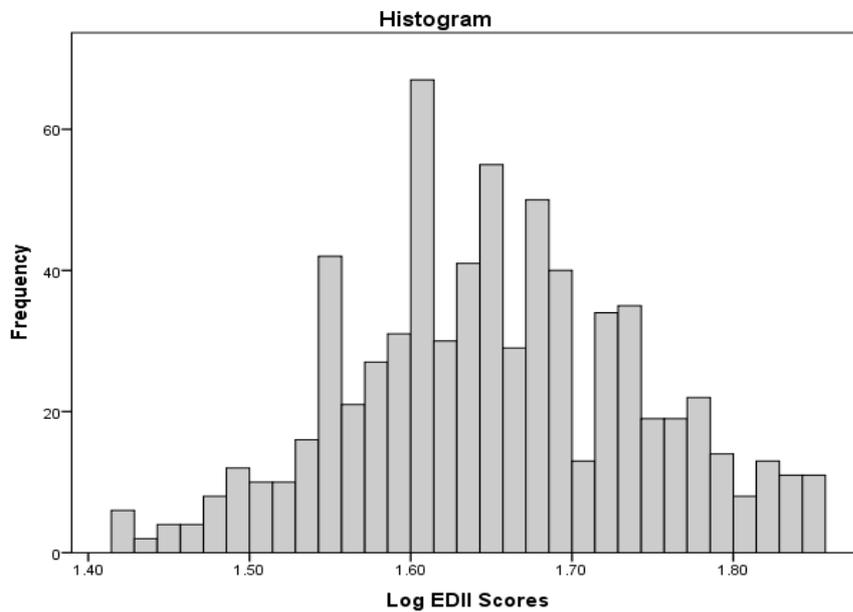


Additionally, transformation of data followed using the 10 logarithm (LG10) as data was positively skewed and fulfilled the parameters to perform the transformation. The data did not have any zero or negative numbers (Eddington, 2015). Data was normally

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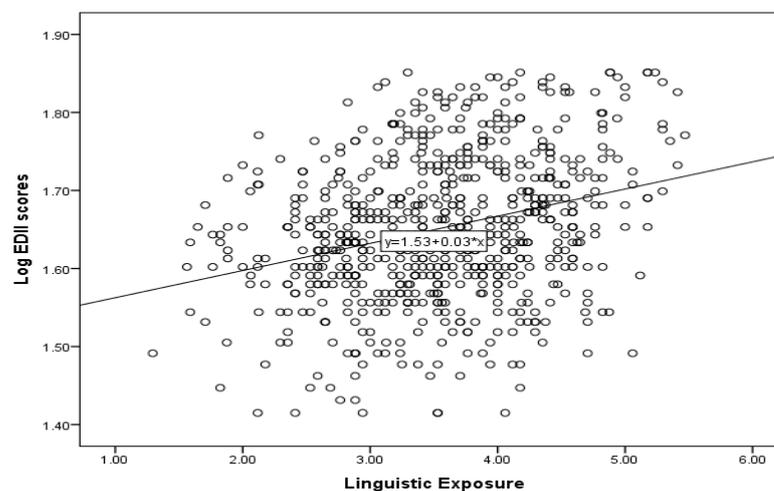
distributed as can be seen in Graph 3. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test showed significance of .001.

*Graph 3: Data Transformed with Logarithm 10*



Lastly, exploration of the four independent variables for normal distribution was performed. Histograms showed that EFL attitudes and Classroom experience were positively skewed while Socio-cultural impact showed a more normal distribution. Nevertheless, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated significance of .006 while Shapiro-Wilk indicated .030 signalling normality for the Linguistic exposure factor. Examination of the scatterplot for linearity and homoscedasticity suggested that data from the EDII tests and the Linguistic exposure factor are linear as the majority of points can follow a straight line. In addition, the points are even from one end to the other suggesting homoscedasticity (Pallant, 2013; Howitt and Cramer, 2011).

*Graph 4: Scatterplot of EDII Scores and Linguistic Exposure*



After assumptions for Pearson correlation coefficient were met, the correlation among the four factors was performed. Table 22 presents the correlation results which indicate that there is a medium correlation between EFL Attitudes and Socio-cultural impact, and Linguistic exposure. The correlation of EFL attitudes with classroom experience and test scores is small. The correlation of Socio-cultural impact with Classroom experience, Linguistic exposure and Test scores is small. Classroom experience and Linguistic exposure show a medium correlation, but the correlation with test scores is small. Linguistic exposure shows medium correlation with test scores.

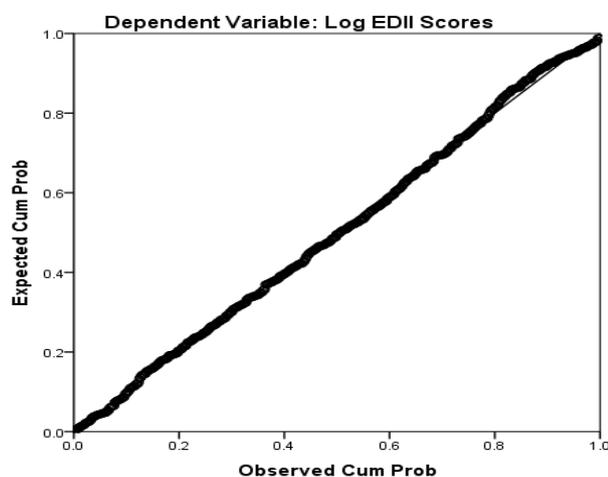
*Table 22: Correlations between Students' Attitudes and Test Performance*

Factor	EFL attitudes	Socio-cultural impact	Classroom experience	Linguistic exposure	Test scores
1 EFL attitudes	—	.36**	.27**	.43**	.17**
2 Socio-cultural impact		—	.13**	.21**	.07**
3 Classroom experience			—	.34**	.11**
4 Linguistic exposure				—	.29**
5 Test scores					—

Note. \* $p < 0.05$  (2tailed)      \*\* $p < 0.01$  level (2 tailed)      Mean of students' scores is 45.82

Preliminary tests for checking assumptions were also performed for multiple regression. There were relationships between the independent and the dependent variable above .3 as shown in the previous correlation table. Additionally, the correlation matrix showed VIF values below 10, not indicating multicollinearity. The Normal P-P Plot suggested no major deviations from normality (See Graph 5).

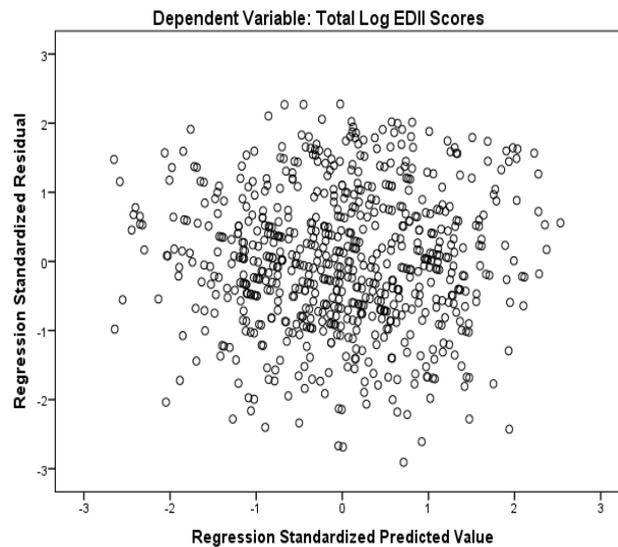
*Graph 5: Normal P-P Plot of Regression*



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The scatterplot showed most of the scores concentrated in the centre and with no outliers (See Graph 6). There was no systematic pattern to residuals.

Graph 6: Scatterplot of EDII Scores



When the four factors were used as the independent variables in the regression analysis, the results indicated that Linguistic exposure had the largest beta value of .27 among the other variables (See Table 23). This means that this variable made the strongest contribution explaining the dependent variable of total EDII performance. The significance value for the variable of EFL attitudes was .14, for Socio-cultural impact was .87, and for Classroom experience was .89. Therefore these variables did not make a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable since they are all  $>.05$ . The variable of Linguistic exposure, however, has a significance value of .00 making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the test score dependent variable.

Table 23: Multiple Regression of Attitudinal Factors and Test Performance

Factor	B	t	Sig.	
Total test score: 160, M= 45.82, SD= 9.8				
1	EFL attitudes	.06	1.4	.14
2	Socio-cultural impact	-.00	-.16	.86
3	Classroom experience	.00	.13	.89
4	Linguistic exposure	.27	6.4	.00

### 5.2.2 Gender and Type of Schooling

The institutional English diagnostic test provides results that are essential not only to the institution to make decisions regarding the appropriate instructional settings for the students to learn English at the university, but also to research purposes. In this case the exam results allow making statistical analysis which aimed to answer research questions in this study. After results of the background variables were analysed, it was decided to only further explore the variables gender and type of schooling. Results from other background variables were not further explored as results were not relevant to be contrasted. For instance, although there were some older students, students' average age was 18. In addition, Spanish was spoken for most students as their native language; indigenous languages were mentioned to a minimum. Only a small percentage of students came from other areas of Mexico. Likewise, a small percentage have either visited or lived in a foreign country. Additionally, most students hold a low level of English. Table 24 compares the distribution of participants according to gender and test performance. As can be seen from this table the results are very similar for females and males in all the categories.

*Table 24: Distribution of the Participants by Test Performance and Gender*

Test Score Range 160 points	Test score Scale 1-100	Female	Male	Total
<= 79	1.8 – 49	152	108	260
80 -111	50 – 69	118	114	232
112- 150	70 - 93.7	124	88	112
Total		394	310	704

In order to explore the relationship between the English diagnostic test scores and gender, and type of upper secondary school education, independent sample t-tests were conducted. Levene's test significant value was of .46; therefore, equal variances were assumed. After performing an independent sample t-test to compare the Institutional English diagnostic test scores for males and females, there was no significant difference found in scores for males ( $M= 45.68$ ,  $SD= 9.90$ ) and females ( $M=46.00$   $SD= 9.70$ ;  $t(702) = -.43$ . The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference =  $-.32$ , 95% CI  $-1.78$  to  $1.14$ ) was very small. The significance (2 tailed) was .66.

An independent sample t-test was also performed to compare the EDII test scores for public and private upper secondary school students. There was a significant difference

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found in scores for public upper secondary school ( $M=45.72$ ,  $SD=9.6$ ) and private upper secondary schools ( $M= 48.34$ ,  $SD= 9.65$ ;  $t(611) = -2.22$ . The significance value is .02 indicating a significant difference on the dependent variable. Those students from private schooling obtained a higher score.

Attitudinal scale scores were computed and compared for the 394 female students and 310 male students using independent sample t-test. Levene's test assumed equal variance. As reported in Table 25, among the four factors, only the Linguistic exposure factor showed a significant difference on the mean scores of the variables indicating that males were more exposed to the foreign language.

*Table 25: Independent Samples t-test: Females and Males' Attitudes towards English*

Factor	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Sig
1 EFL attitudes	F	394	5.03	.56	.31
	M	310	5.03	.56	
2 Classroom experience	F	394	4.17	1.0	.96
	M	310	4.17	.96	
3 Linguistic exposure	F	394	3.49	.79	.05
	M	310	3.61	.76	
4 Socio-cultural impact	F	394	3.57	.96	.75
	M	310	3.55	.43	

The results from the above analyses show that there was no significant value in the difference of female and male test performance. Yet, there was a significant difference between private and public upper secondary school students' test performance. On the other hand, results from correlation among the four variables and test performance show small to medium correlation. Multiple regression shows that the variable of Linguistic exposure made a unique contribution to the prediction of the English diagnostic test performance.

### 5.3 Performance on English courses

To answer the remaining part of the second research question i.e. the variables that contribute to the prediction of English course performance, it becomes necessary to provide a panorama of the scores students obtained in their first English courses. Although 210 students responded the post-QEFL, it was only possible to use 161 students' scores for the analysis as these students had both the score on the diagnostic test and on the English courses. In order to completely answer the second research

question it was necessary to perform standard multiple regression to assess the ability of the four attitudinal factors (i.e. EFL attitudes, Socio-cultural impact, Classroom experience and Linguistic exposure) to predict the students' performance in the English courses from the first term. Factor scores from the total scale were used in the regression analysis to predict which factor(s) contributed to course performance.

The two first English courses students took were Level A and Level B (Basic courses). These courses have as objective to regularize students so that they are ready to start the English I course which is part of the curricula. The average score of 161 students after the first English course was 83.7 out of 100% while in the diagnostic exam which they took at the beginning of the academic year was 30.5% out of 100% for this group of students. Then there was a visible increase in the students' performance of English based on the results of the first English course. As for the second English course scores, the average score was 77.43% for 161 students showing a decrease in students' scores from the first English course. Table 26 illustrates the scores students obtained in their first English courses (Level A and Level B).

*Table 26: English Course (Level A and B) Scores Grouped*

Scores	Level A		Level B	
	N. of students	Percent	N. of students	Percent
<= 69	45	28.0	57	35.4
70 – 85	66	41.0	51	31.7
86+	50	31.1	53	32.9
Total	161	100	161	100

### 5.3.1 Gender, Type of Schooling and First Course Performance

Independent sample t tests were performed in order to compare the mean scores on the English course with gender and type of upper secondary school. After performing an independent sample t-test to compare the English course scores for males and females, there was no significant difference found in scores for males ( $M= 82.30$ ,  $SD=8.13$ ) and females ( $M=83.53$ ,  $SD= 9.03$ ;  $t(159) = .86$ ). The significance value is .38 indicating there is no significant difference in the mean English course scores for males and females.

An independent sample t-test was also performed to compare the English course scores for public and private upper secondary school students. The mean scores for public upper secondary school ( $M=83.38$ ,  $SD=8.5$ ) and private upper secondary schools ( $M=82.17$ ,  $SD= 9.98$ ;  $t(140) = 1.55$ ) showed a significance value of .58 showing no significant differences between the two groups.

### 5.3.2 Attitudinal/Motivational Factors and First Course Performance

Table 27 shows that the correlation,  $r < .30$  of English course scores with the four factors of attitudes, socio-cultural impact, classroom experience, and linguistic exposure.

*Table 27: Correlation among the Four Factors and Level A Course Scores*

	Factor	EFL attitudes	Socio-cultural impact	Classroom experience	Linguistic exposure	Level A course scores
1	EFL attitudes	---	.43**	.28**	.34**	.07*
2	Socio-cultural impact		---	.30**	.20*	.15
3	Classroom experience			---	.14	.10
4	Linguistic exposure				---	-.11*
5	Level A course scores					---

Note. \* $p < 0.05$ (2tailed)      \*\* $p < 0.01$  level (2 tailed)      Mean of students' scores is 83.7

When multiple regression of attitudinal factors and English course score Level A was performed, the factor of Linguistic exposure had the largest Beta value of  $-.17$  showing the strongest unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable. Moreover, it also had a significant value of  $.03$  indicating a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable.

*Table 28: Multiple Regression of Attitudinal Factors and Lev. A Course Scores*

Factor	B	T	Sig.	
Total English course score (A):100, M=81.31, SD=10.99				
1	EFL attitudes	.05	.55	.58
2	Socio-cultural impact	.14	1.63	.10
3	Classroom experience	.06	.80	.42
4	Linguistic exposure	-.17	-2.09	.03

### 5.3.3 Attitudinal /Motivational Factors and Second Course Performance

Multiple regression was also performed for English course scores in Level B and the attitudinal factors to compare with the previous results from the Level A English course scores. Results showed that for Level B set of scores the attitudinal factor of Socio-cultural impact had the largest Beta value of  $.17$  making the strongest unique contribution to explaining the dependant variable and a significance of  $.04$  indicating

that this factor makes a significant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable. Therefore, Socio-cultural factor is a better predictor for the performance of the second course unlike the level A course scores, where the main predicting attitudinal factor was Linguistic exposure.

*Table 29: Multiple Regression of Attitudinal Factors and English Course Scores (Level B)*

Factor	B	T	Sig.	
Total English course score (B):100, M= 72.43, SD= 10.04				
1	EFL attitudes	.16	1.77	.07
2	Socio-cultural impact	.17	2.03	.04
3	Classroom experience	-.09	-1.16	.24
4	Linguistic exposure	-.03	-.36	.71

The data provided above aimed to answer the second research question. The first analyses of independent sample t-tests revealed that there are no differences among females and males' English diagnostic test scores. Similarly, with regard to the English course scores, gender does not show a significant difference. On the other hand, the type of upper secondary school shows a significant difference in the results of the English diagnostic test, but not for the scores in the first English course. Moreover, results revealed that EFL attitudes, Socio-cultural impact, Linguistic exposure and Classroom experience show a small correlation with the diagnostic test and the first English course scores. Yet, multiple regression revealed that Linguistic exposure is the main predictor for the dependent variables of the students' scores in the English diagnostic test as well as in English course Level A. However, the factor of Socio-cultural exposure better predicts the performance from Level A course to the Level B course.

#### **5.4 Students' Attitudes at the Beginning and End of the Academic Year**

This section presents data corresponding to answer the third research question i.e. students' initial attitudes towards learning English, and proficiency in English at the beginning and end of the academic year. In order to answer the first part of the question, I will present the most salient descriptive results of the pre and post- QEFLL. T-tests were used to analyse the relationship between students' initial and end of the academic year attitudes towards learning English (*See Appendix K for a complete table of pre and post-questionnaires descriptives*).

Contrasting the students' mean scores from the pre-QEFLL with the mean scores from the post questionnaires, it can be observed that the students' attitudes are very similar with certain increase or decrease in the mean scores. However, there are some

statement items that show an increase relevant to highlight. For instance, some of the items that show an increase in the mean score are 53, 40, 24, 14 and 65. All of these items refer to either exposure to the language or interaction in English with foreigners or nationals. Moreover, items which refer to evaluation of teachers or course content increased. That is, students shifted to more positive attitudes towards teachers at university. Items 22, 68, 6 and 66 showed that students consider their writing, listening and speaking skills have progressed as well as their level of English. Probably due to this feeling of progress in the target language, students slightly decreased feeling nervous when speaking English in class. On the other hand, although the mean score of interest in other cultures increased, there were some cultural aspects such as items 41, 62 and 18 which increased and suggested fear of assimilation. Thus, it is important to take a look at the differences between factor mean scores.

#### 5.4.1 Before and After: Attitudinal/ Motivational Factors and Performance

In order to know the possible changes in students' attitudes from the beginning of their university studies to their first academic year, paired sample t-tests were conducted. The paired sample t-tests evaluated the possible difference in students' attitudes (four main factors) at the beginning of studying English at university and after a year. Table 30 contrasts the mean scores per each of the attitudinal factors, EFL attitudes, socio-cultural impact, classroom experience, linguistic exposure, and also the English diagnostic test scores and the English course scores (Level A and B).

*Table 30: Results from Paired Samples T-tests*

	Factor	Mean	N	SD
1	EFL attitudes	4.93	161	.45
2		4.85	161	.63
1	Socio-cultural impact	3.62	161	.81
2		3.76	161	.80
1	Classroom experience	4.26	161	.94
2		4.71	161	.78
1	Linguistic exposure	3.36	161	.55
2		3.32	161	.61
1	EDII score	48.80	161	13.20
2	English course score (Level A)	83.07	161	8.70
1	Scores (Level A course)	83.07	161	8.70
2	Scores (Level B course)	77.43	161	10.04

The results of the paired-samples t-test show there was no statistically significant decrease in attitude towards learning English results from Time 1 (M=4.93, SD=.45) to

Time 2 ( $M=4.85$ ,  $SD=.63$ ),  $t(160)=1.92$ . The mean decrease in attitude scores was .07 with a significant (2-tailed) value of .05. In the case of the socio-cultural impact factor, Time 1 ( $M=3.62$ ,  $SD=.81$ ) to Time 2 ( $M=3.76$ ,  $SD=.80$ ),  $t(160)=-2.73$  shows a mean difference of -.13 indicating a significant value of .00; that is there was a significant increase. For classroom experience the mean score Time 1 ( $M=4.22$ ,  $SD=.96$ ) to Time 2 ( $M=4.67$ ,  $SD=.82$ ) has a mean difference of -.45 indicating a significant value of .00; therefore, classroom experience showed a statistically significant increase. The next factor, linguistic exposure Time 1 ( $M=3.36$ ,  $SD=.55$ ) to Time 2 ( $M=3.32$ ,  $SD=.61$ ) showed a mean difference of .04. Its significant value of .32 indicates that there was no statistically significant increase in linguistic exposure. The results from the paired sample t-test indicated that the EDII score Time 1 ( $M=48.80$ ,  $SD=13.20$ ) to Time 2 for English course scores ( $M=83.07$ ,  $SD=8.70$ ) with a difference of -49.49 has a significant value of .00 indicating a statistically significance between the two scores. The last t-test for English course scores Level A ( $M=83.07$ ,  $SD=8.70$ ) to Time 2 for English course scores Level B ( $M=77.43$ ,  $SD=10.04$ ) showed a mean decrease of 5.64 with a significant value of .00. Therefore, there was a statistical significant difference between the first English course score (Level A) and the second English course score (Level B).

In brief, there was a decrease in factor 1, EFL attitudes and factor 4, Linguistic exposure. This decrease may indicate that students start losing interest in learning English probably linked to a reduced exposure to the target language and speakers of the target language. On the other hand, the other factors of Classroom experience and Socio-cultural impact registered an increase in students' scores indicating that students had more positive experiences in their English courses, but they also increase the external pressure to learn the target language. With regard to their scores there is a salient increase from the English diagnostic test scores to their first English course. This difference might be attributed to the differences of content between the test and the English course as well as the fact that taking a test represents a nerve-racking situation for many individuals while for others taking an English exam might not be that important and as a result they might not exert all their effort to obtain a satisfactory score. On the contrary, the scores from the first English course (Level A) and the scores from the second English course (Level B) indicated a significant decrease. This last result might function as a better indicator of how students' scores evolve during the academic year due to the similarity of course structure, although an increase of course content complexity might also influence these results. More importantly results imply the close relationship between students' attitudes and their scores.

## 5.5 Self-Evaluation of English

It becomes relevant to point out the students' self-evaluation at the beginning and the end of the academic year. Table 31 displays both set of results; the first one collected in 2014 and the second one in 2015.

*Table 31: Students' Self-Evaluation of English 2014 and 2015*

Level of English	August 2014		September 2015	
	N. of students	Percent	N. of students	Percent
Less than basic	46	28.6	16	9.9
Basic	97	60.2	105	65.2
Intermediate	7	4.3	35	21.7
Advanced	2	1.2		
Total	161	94.4	174	96.9

As can be observed in Table 31, after a year of studying English and being registered in their lessons of English I (intermediate) there is still 9.9% of students self-evaluating with a very low level of English. The great majority, 65.2%, considered they hold a basic level of English and only 21.7% considered they were proficient at the intermediate level; that is, the English course level they were studying by the time they participated in the study.

## 5.6 Students' Views on Attitude, Use of English and Performance

In order to answer the fourth research question, e.g. the changes of use of English, performance and attitude from the students' perspectives, a total of 12 students from the English I course were interviewed to learn about their attitudes towards learning English, and the factors that influence such attitudes. In this section, the main findings from the interviews are presented. Students started the interviews providing their names, age, city of origin, and their major. A couple of students added the reasons they had chosen their area of study, and others added information about siblings, work and even some personal characteristics. Immediately, I confirmed with them the level of English they were studying.

### 5.6.1 Attitudes towards Learning English

After this, the first question was introduced, *how do you really feel about learning English?* Among the answers were *I like it, I don't like it, English is interesting, it's difficult, it's not that difficult, I feel tense and like I have to learn it, it's a useful tool.*

Additionally, most comments included the utility of English for professional development. This coincides with data from the QEFLL (See 5.1.2). For example, Manny, an accounting major answered from the beginning to the end of the interview that English was a necessary tool in his area. In fact, when he was asked a follow up question, he confirmed his previous answer. This student was the only one that reiterated from the beginning to the end of the interview he considered English a basic tool to obtain a job. It is important to mention again that participants responded in Spanish for their comfort; responses for the clarity of the study are provided in English.

<Excerpt 1>

*Interviewer: Would you like to learn English for any other reason?*

*Manny: Well, I think nowadays knowing English is basic at any job, wherever you would like to work... you need English.*

Other students also provided information regarding the importance of English, and how it relates to their interests. For example, Alexa also mentioned English is a basic tool. Gabriel mentioned he would like to learn English because of work, but also to understand movies in English, and actually speak English. From the interviews students did not mention the impact of English in the development of Mexico, but all of them had a clear idea of the importance of the target language for their own career development.

Other students repeatedly mentioned that English is a need, which coincides with quantitative data (See 5.1.2). One interviewee mentioned “They (teachers) tell us English is basic (in our professional development) and we have to learn it”. Although students did not mention explicitly they study English to avoid failing the course or having problems graduating, a couple of students’ comments in fact indicated that they also hold prevention orientation, which coincides with an increase mean score the socio-cultural factor (See Table 30). Cassi, for instance, mentioned that not knowing how to pronounce certain words affected her scores when she presented orally in class. She has looked for help with her teachers to be able to understand the topics and pass her exams. Another example is Alexa. She mentioned that she did not like English, but tried to understand it because she is aware that English is one more course to take (and pass!). Therefore, these results sustain the ones from the QEFLL where both promotion and prevention instrumental orientation (See 5.1.2; Table 9) was present for this sample of Mexican students.

### 5.6.2 Views on American and British cultures

During the interviews only a couple of cultural aspects were mentioned. From the beginning of the interview, Gabriel, for example, mentioned he wanted to learn English to understand movies in English. Leo also mentioned that English was an opportunity to understand basically anything and specifically cultural aspects such as songs and movies. Similar results were salient from the QEFLL (*See Table 11*). He expanded a bit more on the topic as he has experienced travelling to the United States of America from childhood. He mentioned a difference between the young generation and the senior generation. From his experience and perspective “young people possess a *free mind*, and are friendlier because they want to meet people from other countries as part of the cultural boom”. But, he mentioned that the “senior work generation are exclusive as they think *you are a foreigner*.” Leo mentioned this as part of his last academic experience and encounter with other oil workers from Texas. He has experienced the culture in both an informal and formal environment. Other students expressed their ideas regarding the United States of America and Britain only when they were asked.

First, their opinions regarding American culture will be described. Basically their ideas of American culture were mainly positive. Results from quantitative analysis coincide with these results (*See Table 10*). Gabriel referred to American culture or American people as “first world culture”. He highlighted aspects from American culture such as salary, and behaviour as superior to Mexicans’. There were other related comments such as “It’s a first world country”, and “there are more opportunities than in Latin-American countries”. Other comments made reference to the culture. For example, “it’s an interesting culture”, “they have freedom of speech”, and “they are open-minded”. Rose, for instance, said that American culture was based on discipline but they were also liberal. One last interesting point that was almost left out by the students was the possibility of access to information. One interviewee said: “There is a world of information on the net”. On the negative side, a student mentioned she did not like the United States of America. She did not provide any reasons though. Gabriel added that he did not agree with US government on war policies; another student mentioned older people are sometimes close-minded. The aforementioned topics were not really discussed in the interviews, but it is very likely that the results towards American culture would have been different, had they focused on political-social matters.

In regard to British culture, some students expressed their opinions although they were more limited. Students did not mention much about British culture except for Rose. She

stated that she believed Britons were not very clean, and they were sarcastic. Gabriel, on the other hand, explicitly said that from what he has seen on TV, he considered they were elegant, classy and sophisticated people with good manners. As seen, there are contrasting views about this culture. But, while Rose did not mention the reasons behind their opinions, Gabriel mentioned the source. None of them has really experienced contact with British people or have travelled to this country. Another student clearly said that she had no idea about British culture. Another interviewee said she did not know much about Britain, but she would like to visit. Students' limiting ideas about British people might arise due to the geographical distance between Mexico and Britain, but also because contact through media is limited.

Although students might not be really familiar with American or British cultures and have therefore based their ideas on what they hear or see, an aspect they can all relate to is learning English. In fact, many students clearly know they do not want to lose their identity to be like either Americans or British when learning English (*See Table 10*). For this reason, they were asked their preference of country in regard to studying English. Many students alluded to the notion of accent between American and British English. The overall response to this question was positive. For instance, the majority responded stating a choice. This suggested that students might actually see a possibility to travel to any of these countries. A couple of students mentioned they would like to go to the United States of America. For instance, Marian would prefer to study English in the United States of America because one of her cousins who lived in the U.S.A. told her that living there increased the learning opportunities. Similarly, Manny and Peter said they were more interested in visiting the U.S. in order to learn the language. Peter preferred the United States of America because of its proximity to Mexico. The rest of the students mentioned they would like to go to England. It is important to remark that England was preferred over the United States as the first English-speaking country students would visit (*See Table 34*). It seems students might regard education in Britain as "high standard" as Erika described it. As a matter of fact, a couple of students mentioned that they liked British accent rather than American. Finally, there were a couple of comments which indicated students' interest to visit Britain. Cassi said she would like to visit England to see its buildings and the snow. As expected Gabriel would love to visit because of the football teams in the premier league.

Additionally, there was visible interest in both or other cultures as results in the QEFLL suggested (*See Table 11*). One example was Elizabeth's comments. She would like to visit both USA and England because all cultures are interesting. Other countries were

also mentioned. For instance, Judith dreamed of visiting Canada. It is important to mention that Canada was actually preferred by 28% of students (*See Table 34*). Judith said she has heard it is a nice place and has had great references and comments about Canada. Edward would like to visit the United States of America first and then Germany. In general, students held positive attitudes towards American, British and other cultures, but not all of them saw themselves really using the language in real life.

### **5.6.3 Visions of English**

During the interviews, a couple of students expressed their interest of using English in the future. Among the comments in regard of interest in cultures, two students with possible L2 selves were identified. The QEFLL results highlighted that students may actually have L2 selves (*See Table 9*). These two students expressed clearly how they envisioned themselves in the future. For instance, Edward mentioned his L2 self-image without explicitly being asked. He actually said that he saw himself speaking fluent English for work training abroad. He knows that many company oil workers are sent abroad to take training courses, and as a future petroleum engineer he has this clear image of himself living that situation. In order for him to be sent abroad, he needs to be proficient in English. Then he has a clear image of how he would use the language in the future. Judith, who is also a major in petroleum engineering, saw herself using English for work and leisure. She dreams of visiting Canada, and would like to work there if she likes the place. On the other hand, Leo did not directly mention his L2 image, but his comments and experience with English suggest that he is already proficient in the language and that he plans on using it in different scenarios; one scenario would be work as he is also majoring to be a petroleum engineer. Another scenario would be entertainment. On the other hand, there was no clear figure of ought to L2 self. During students' interventions, they did not manifest really being forced or pressured to learn English. Only Peter mentioned that he felt forced to learn English, but he did not indicate the reason. From students' ideas and feelings, it can be observed that there is an apparent image of ought to L2 self implied and it comes from the need to learn English in today's world as the knowledge of English opens opportunities to excel professionally basically anywhere in the world.

In short, students indicated being instrumentally oriented as in the results of the QEFLL (*See Table 9*). They regard English as important in their professional lives. A couple of them clearly saw how they would be using English in the future; work related reasons and travelling were mentioned. The later indicates possible images of L2 selves. A couple

of students manifested being interested in cultural aspects such as understanding songs and movies in English. This was also salient from the QEFLL (*See Table 11*). Additionally, many would like to travel. Most would like to visit England to study English despite the geographical distance between Mexico and England, and the closeness to the United States of America. It seems students regard British English as more prestigious. Although only a few students mentioned cultural aspects of English without being asked, from students' comments it was clearly that they regard English as important and that they are interested and willing to learn about other cultures. Other aspects of the interviews are described later in this chapter under the most appropriate section.

#### **5.6.4 Use of English**

As mentioned in the data collection and analysis section, students were grouped into two categories based on their post-QEFLL results. From the 12 participants, there were 6 in the negative attitude category and 6 in the positive attitude category (*See Appendix L*). Here are presented some of the salient results.

In the negative attitude group, there were Cassi, Alexa, Elizabeth, Gabriel, Marian and Erika. With regard to the use of English, most students had little contact with English in their upper secondary school lessons. This also coincides with quantitative data (*See Table 12*). But at university they need to perform academic tasks that require mainly reading in English. In fact, many of their professors assign reading articles, abstracts which students usually translate to be able to understand the content. For instance, the education majors mentioned they are given abstracts to read, the systems engineering major needs to understand the commands in English. Therefore, students mainly read. They actually said that they can understand passages, but with the help of translation to fully understand the texts. Academic assignments and activities that involve other linguistic skills (listening, speaking, and writing) were not mentioned by the students. Overall, the need to use English has increased in the academic setting, although not in its totality.

Students also reported using English outside the classroom. Those students who have used English did it mostly at their jobs. Elizabeth reported some kind of interaction with foreigners in the classroom, but there was an interpreter. But in the case of Marian, Erika and Alexa, they were exposed to English at work. For instance, Marian had contact with English at work as she usually listened to English because her boss interacted in English at meetings, but she did not mention if she interacted in English during these

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exchanges. Erika and Alexa faced the need to understand spoken English at work when they participated in oral exchanges trying to sell cinema tickets. Their experiences were different. Alexa actually engaged in the exchange with the help of her colleague while Erika just listened to the exchange of her colleague with the customer; Erika could have interacted and helped her co-worker, but she did not intervene. Even when she wanted to help, she avoided the situation because she was insecure of her level of English. Results from the QEFLL also reflected dissatisfaction with their level of English (See Table 13).

< Excerpt 2 >

*Alexa: Once I worked at the cinema and some foreigners arrived. Then nobody knew English and my colleague and I had to improvise to be able to sell the tickets.*

*Interviewer: How did you feel?*

*Alexa: I felt weird...I never thought I would use English like that ... all of a sudden.*

<Excerpt 3>

*Erika: Casually at work, at the cinema, a foreigner arrived and asked my colleague if she spoke English. And because... I guess she didn't want to feel ashamed, she said yes. Then the man, a senior person started talking, telling her which movie...and she didn't understand...and I was like... how can I help her? Because we were both there and I don't feel proficient, and she said she knew English, but didn't...finally another customer approached and started talking to the foreigner, and this person told my colleague in Spanish which movie (he wanted to see). And I thought if we had been able to talk to him, everything had been much easier.*

From their expressions these students felt ashamed they could not sustain a simple conversation at work, but showed interest in learning the language probably in case they face another similar situation.

Within the group of students with positive attitudes, there were Edward, Rose, Peter, Leo, Manny and Judith. Except for Leo, the students manifested little contact with English in upper secondary school (See Table 11). These students also reported to use English for academic assignments. For instance, the accounting, and business majors were given financial mathematics assignments in English. But, only two students described using English in a non-academic setting, Leo and Edward. In the case of Leo, he has been in contact with English since he was a child due to constant trips to the United States of America. More recently, he participated in a university exchange

programme to U.S.A. In the case of Edward, the encounter happened casually as one foreigner asked for directions where Edward happened to be at the moment.

<Excerpt 4>

*Interviewer: Have you used English outside the classroom?*

*Edward: Yes. My mom sells food and once an American stopped by to ask for directions because he was lost. Then I used my knowledge of English...*

*Interviewer: How did you feel? Was it the first time?*

*Edward: It was very intense! After that happened...one feels excited because it is something unique that one experiences...It feels great.*

In this extract, it can be observed that Edward's experience was different from Alexa's and Erika's. While Alexa tried to communicate she did not do it alone, she needed help. In the case of Erika she wanted to help, but felt powerless as she considered her knowledge of English as deficient. But in Edward's case, he admitted to be a very confident person from the beginning of the interview. He actually faced the situation alone and was successful. From that event he gained even more confidence as his words and facial expressions showed.

Overall the participants' use of English over a year of studying English at university has definitely increased since most of the participants mentioned not using English before (See Table 13); some did not even speak English during their English lessons in upper secondary school. All students in both categories have used English since they started studying English at university. The use is mostly academic. Additionally, a few of them have experienced the need of English for professional growth. Then, students are practically aware of the current and future use of English for academic, but also work purposes. This coincided with the results from the QEFL (See Table 9).

### **5.6.5 Language Performance: Scores and Students' Views**

With regard to language performance, the results can be appreciated from both quantitative and qualitative data. In order to understand the performance of students, quantitative data from the English diagnostic test and the Level A English course are presented to later contrast with students' perceptions from the interviews. Three students from the 12 students participating in the interviews scored 100 in the first Level A course (as they scored above 50 points in the EDII, See Table 32), and therefore the university granted 100 in their first English course, in a scale of 0/100. That is, they

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did not have to study the Level A English course; they could move on to the next level. One of these students was in the negative attitude group category and two in the positive attitude group. Table 32 shows the results of the diagnostic test and the first English course; the university minimum passing score is 70.

*Table 32: Students' Diagnostic and English Course Scores*

Attitude category	Participant	Diagnostic Test Score	First University course Score
		100 %	Level A 100 %
1 Negative attitude	Marian	25	61
	Cassi	27	79
	Erica	24	72
	Gabriel	51	100
	Elizabeth	25	80
	Alexa	47	70
2 Positive attitude	Edward	48	99
	Peter	28	82
	Rose	35	81
	Judith	54	100
	Manny	28	83
	Leo	66	100

Although Gabriel, Judith and Leo were granted passing scores to gain credit and could have progressed faster than the rest of students, they were still studying English I. What is more, Marian in category 1 failed the course (a score of 61), took the course again probably as a summer course, and was studying English I. Therefore, obtaining a full passing score in the diagnostic test did not guarantee students would finish their English instruction at university faster than others.

In the negative attitude category, there were students who obtained satisfactory scores in the EDII. For instance, Gabriel obtained 51 in the diagnostic test and was granted 100 in the Level A course. There was also another student whose score in the diagnostic test was not that low; Alexa's score was 47%, yet her score in the English course was 70%, which is the minimum passing score. Marian, Cassi and Elizabeth obtained low scores from 24 to 27%. However, only Marian failed the course while Cassi and Elizabeth obtained above 70%.

In the positive attitude category, scores in the EDII were slightly higher. There were 2 students who did not take the Level A English course because they obtained credit due to their satisfactory score in the EDII. Other students obtained low scores (28%) such as Peter and Manny followed by Rose (35%), but the three of them obtained similar results of 82%, 83% and 81% respectively in their first course score while Edward obtained 45% in the diagnostic test and obtained a much higher score in his first English course (99%).

Although not much information on performance was mentioned by the students, from their comments it was visible that most did not believe they were capable to communicate in English by the end of their secondary education. Now at university, some students considered their knowledge of English has improved while others believed there has been progress, but not substantial progress as in the case of Elizabeth and Marian.

<Excerpt 5>

*Interviewer: Do you feel your English has progressed since you started university?*

*Elizabeth: Well according to my scores...yes. I have some progress, not much but some.*

<Excerpt 6>

*Marian: Yes, a bit. I thought at this level I would be more fluent, but not really...*

As can be seen in the above excerpts students admitted progress in learning the target language based on the scores obtained during their English courses, but they are far from feeling proficient in English. On the other hand, there were students who admitted their knowledge of English has improved. They actually felt they were capable of using the target language, and provided their reasons.

<Excerpt 7>

*Alexa: Before I didn't understand anything if I was given a text, but with key words I start understanding faster, and about pronunciation... I think I have better pronunciation.*

<Excerpt 8>

*Judith: Yes indeed, I understand the tenses...better. I can use them now. I can hold a conversation longer. I can definitely move on from "Hello. How are you?"*

### **5.6.6 Scores and Proficiency in English**

The need of obtaining satisfactory scores is of extreme importance for students. Despite only a couple of students mentioned their concern with regard to obtaining passing scores, it was evident they felt some sort of pressure to pass their English courses as English is a mandatory course (See Table 9). Additionally, a numerical assessment system implies that if an individual obtains a low score, she lacks knowledge of the subject matter being tested while a high score represents satisfactory command of a subject

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matter. As a result, it is not surprising that most of these students based their progress on the scores they obtained on their English courses. In fact, they mentioned that their scores reflected their knowledge of English. For instance, Leo mentioned that he obtained low scores in grammar, but he was aware grammar posed a problem for him. Another interviewee said that she did not obtain the best scores but they were fair. Others were thoughtful about the question and admitted they have to make more effort. In other words, most students were aware that if they did not obtain better scores it was the result of their limited knowledge or effort. But there was one student whose comments differed from the others, the case of Peter.

<Excerpt 9>

*Interviewer: Do you consider your scores correspond to what you know in English?*

*Peter: No, many of my teachers tell me...well I usually get 80 or 85 [in a scale of 100] in my English courses. However, I feel...many teachers tell me 'you can do it, but you need more practise'...I do not get very good scores, but not that bad either...I believe it's not the right score. [showing puzzled face]*

*Interviewer: How come? Do you think you deserve less or more?*

*Peter: I believe I deserve less.*

Despite obtaining satisfactory English scores, Peter considered his scores did not reflect his skills in English. This striking comment suggests that he was not content with his performance of English; he did not feel proficient in English. Teachers' comments of "you need more practise" might mean to him "your English is not good enough". He mentioned that he really wanted to learn English and that if he had the opportunity he would travel to the United States because it is near Mexico. Additionally, Peter manifested interest to know more about American culture. Interestingly, he commented that he was not very much interested in culture, but he enjoyed learning from other countries. He was the only student who mentioned specific cultural themes of the United States such as its flag, the Statue of Liberty, Independence War and Mount Rushmore. Yet, he mentioned that he would only travel abroad if he were more proficient in English. This reiterated his poor confidence despite obtaining satisfactory scores in English.

Furthermore, some differences can be seen between the group of students with negative attitudes and the ones with positive attitudes towards learning English. In the first group most students mentioned feelings of frustration towards their learning progress in English. They did not progress as they expected. At least one student from

this category believed she improved reading and was able to understand a bit faster with the help of key words. She also considered that her pronunciation and knowledge of grammar has improved. On the other hand, Judith from the second group of students with positive attitudes actually felt she has improved her grammar skills and has gained enough knowledge to engage in a conversation when before she could only say a greeting. Judith confessed that she started to learn English feeling very nervous and afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at, but later she felt relaxed. She mentioned teachers as a form of comfort and guide to learn English. Additionally, Rose and Edward also agreed on their progress even if they did not provide too many details. On the contrary, Leo and Manny described their progress as limited. For instance, their lessons have only been useful to practise English or learn words. Peter, on the other hand, was not sure of his progress. In fact, he believed that his scores did not correspond to his real knowledge of English. He considered he deserved less. He also mentioned that his English teachers have told him that “he can learn English but needs lots of practise”, basically implying that his knowledge of English is inadequate.

In short, the scores from the EDII for both category groups were similar as they were mostly low scores. Nonetheless, only the students with positive attitudes obtained scores above 80 in their first English course (*See Table 32*). It seems that students with negative attitudes to learn English despite obtaining relatively higher scores (compared to the rest of the students) on the diagnostic test still do not reach more than 80% in the English course. Additionally, most students with more positive attitudes towards learning English believe there was progress in their learning even if they did not consider it of great significance. On the contrary, most students with negative attitudes believe there was no progress. More importantly, most students in both categories believed their knowledge of English corresponded to their scores. Therefore, if they barely pass the course or fail and repeat the course, it seems very fair they believe they have not improved their performance in English despite obtaining passing scores. If they obtain above 80%, they mostly consider they have progressed in their learning of English.

Regardless of their scores, problems learning English were salient, but also strategies that have helped them learn the language. For instance, most interviewees reported pronunciation and listening as difficulties. Results coincide with the ones given in the QEFLL (*See Table 13*).

Vocabulary and limited time to learn English were also mentioned by at least one interviewee. Other factors mentioned although not specifically as problems were class

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time. As in the case of Cassi who believed she has moved backwards; she spent a semester with no English practise because she took it in summer course. Manny also mentioned class time as one problem. Despite the problems, they believed certain actions or strategies have been of great help. Participants mentioned effort, attitude (towards the teacher and the lessons), aspiration (to pass the course) and studying as factors that have helped them learn English. Other factors that have contributed to their language learning are asking and looking for help, having supportive teachers, and doing out of classroom practise as listening to songs or watching videos. In other words, having extra exposure to the language fosters language learning. Therefore, students seem to be very aware of finding strategies to learn English and pass the course.

In short, among students there is a feeling of improvement with regards to their knowledge of English. On the other hand, they are not really confident of using the target language. In any case, all of these students have reached the English I course. In other words, they have obtained satisfactory scores in Level A and B courses. Yet, the scores seem to be a referent for them about 'general knowledge of English', but the scores do not really represent what they feel capable of doing with the foreign language.

### **5.7 Attitude Change: Negative to Positive**

As presented before there are some differences in the four attitudinal factors that emerged from the paired sample t-test (*See 5.4.1*). In the following section, results from the interviews regarding attitude change are presented. This section has been organized based on two main premises. The first one is concerned with the possible changes and the second one with the stable attitudes during one academic year, 2014-2015.

First, all students mentioned their interest to learn English in one way or another. For instance, some alluded English is an important language due to globalization and it is considered a basic tool for every professional (*See 5.6.1*). Then, having knowledge of English is considered a need. Additionally, some students admitted they like the language because they believe it is interesting while others are uncertain about how fond they feel of the foreign language; nevertheless, they admitted they want to learn it due to instrumental reasons. In order to pinpoint if there was any change in attitude, students expressed their opinions of English lessons in upper secondary school. In fact, some even mentioned their experiences in lower secondary school. Later, students expressed their beliefs regarding the differences between English lessons at upper secondary school and university.

An overall panorama showed that most students considered they did not have proper English lessons during secondary education. Some students were more reserved in their comments by saying that the English lessons in upper secondary school or secondary school were “not of great help”. Others pinpointed that their knowledge of English was basically non-existent when they finished upper secondary school. The latest coincides with QEFLL results where students evaluated their level of English before they started university (See Table 13 and Table 31). At least a couple of students attributed this lack of training or knowledge to their English teachers; they mentioned that sometimes their teachers were not the right ones. Cassi expanded a bit on her experience learning English in upper secondary school.

<Excerpt 10>

*Interviewer: When did you start learning English?*

*Cassi: It was in lower secondary school for 2 to 3 years. Later it was in upper secondary school for 4 semesters. There are six semesters (in upper secondary school). Yes, 4 semesters. In upper secondary school some teachers were demanding. Others did pay attention to us; they wanted us to speak in English. Others didn't care whether we learnt or not. In upper secondary school my teacher was somewhat inflexible. If you passed the course good, if you didn't also 'good'.*

Other students' comments regarding some upper secondary school English teachers suggested that their education in English was absent so to speak. On the one hand, sometimes students did not receive English lessons. On the other hand, the teacher was present but the activities the teacher assigned and performed in the classroom did not require interaction in English. In addition, when peer competitiveness was mentioned, it was because it derived a sense of frustration that led to not learning English. This contradicts the results of the QEFLL, where most students felt support from classmates (See Table 12.) In Marian and Erika's case, their peers overshadowed them.

<Excerpt 11>

*Marian: I feel studying English is a need, but it's difficult for me. In lower secondary and upper secondary school...my [English] teacher did not really teach [did not show up]. In upper secondary school the group was very competitive... it wasn't... it didn't feel right and I didn't learn much. There was no speaking practise in my lessons...*

<Excerpt 12>

*Erika: Our teacher then [lower secondary school] was an intransigent person...there was a student who spoke English because she attended HH [a private English institute] and he always focused on her, and called on her and everybody was ... [shows upset facial expressions]. She*

*knew... I don't know how much English... and our teacher used to tell us 'Learn from her'. And well that discouraged me...I used to do my assignments, but I didn't understand and I only handed in the assignments to pass the course.*

Moreover, a couple of students mentioned that they did not take English seriously in upper secondary school; they did not see a real need. All of these aspects seem to highlight that most of these students' attitudes towards learning English in upper secondary school were mainly negative. Thus, it is of great concern to explore if these attitudes shifted or were stable during one academic year.

Even when students were grouped into two categories of negative and positive attitudes based on their post-QEFL results, from their opinions in the interviews they were regrouped into the students that shifted their attitude and the ones who did not. There were some cases where students manifested having a determined attitude but their comments were inclined towards a different attitude. Then, based on their comments and opinions they were classified in the group that better described their attitudes. Most students manifested changing their attitude from negative to positive.

From students' responses, it was visible that many students hold negative feelings towards learning English (*See Appendix L*). For example, Cassi, Alexa, Marian and Erika expressed opinions of frustration when they were asked about how they felt learning English or when they had started to learn English. They lacked examples of adequate English instruction before university. One example of this opinion is Erika's, from the beginning of the interview she expressed her beliefs regarding learning English as children. She considered that learning English from childhood is an advantage because this allows a person to learn much more English at university level. Results from the QEFL indicated that learning English as a child was perceived by most students as important (*See Table 9*). She added that it is frustrating to start the process of learning English at university, especially because secondary school teachers like hers were not the 'right' ones. As a result, these experiences have led the students to feelings of neglect regarding the study of English.

Then a factor that most of these students had in common was the negative classroom experience when learning English at secondary education. They considered that English was of no use or help to continue their English instruction at university. Not surprisingly, attitudes were mostly negative for this group of interviewees. In fact, comments among these participants when they learned they had to study English at university were also negative. Comments were 'We have to study English for 4 years!', 'I don't like English.',

and 'I don't want to study English.' Most students who held negative attitudes explicitly admitted they started learning English at university with a negative attitude, but later changed for better. This result contradicts that of the QEFLL as most students reported initial positive attitudes, but they decreased after the academic year (See Table 30). At least five main reasons were identified for this group of students to change from negative attitude to a more positive attitude.

### 5.7.1 Need for learning English

The first reason is the usefulness they see in learning English. For instance, now that students are at university they can relate English to their area of study. Manny who is an accounting major mentioned that now he considered English was important for his professional development and manifested that English is a basic tool. Besides, his financial mathematics professor provided assignments in English. In Judith's case she felt that her attitude has changed from negative to positive because now she likes the subject. Edward and Rose considered that their attitude changed from negative to positive as they realized that it was important to learn because of their future careers. In fact, Rose said "my area of study demands me to learn English" for a student majoring in international business. The students are convinced English is of paramount importance for the development of their careers, and they started using the language academically.

<Excerpt 13>

*Interviewer: Do you consider you have had a change in attitude towards learning English now that you are at university level?*

*Judith: Now I feel that...I have a very good attitude because I like the subject and I do feel I am doing well [in the course].*

<Excerpt 14>

*Edward: I feel good about learning English because it's a universal language...it's like everything...sometimes at the beginning we are not interested in something as we should be, and later we realize how important the subject is and then it is when we start to make an effort. So I can say at the beginning I was not interested but later I realized it was an important subject.*

### 5.7.2 Support from the English Teacher

A second reason for attitude change relies once more on the English teacher. As a matter of fact from students' comments the figure of the English teacher and other instructors is central for students to notice the importance of English for their

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professional development. Erika mentioned “they (teachers) tell us English is basic and we should learn it”. On the other hand, students valued teachers’ support. They expressed feeling much more supported by their teachers at university when they have questions. For instance, Erika mentioned that now she felt support from her English teacher. In addition, Marian expressed that she felt fine now that her teacher worried about students learning because it has not always been the case. Marian said there were teachers who did not care if students learned or not; she had teachers in upper secondary school that did not show up, so she considered that teachers make a difference. She also mentioned that now she could attend extra tutoring in English at university for English teachers to explain and answer her questions. Moreover, the activities seemed to be more engaging and attractive to students to practise the foreign language. Feeling supported by their English teachers contributed to the shift of students’ attitude to the positive side.

### **5.7.3 Appropriate Language Complexity**

The third reason is represented by the foreign language itself and the students’ performance. A certain degree of difficulty and complexity in English lessons is expected. Alexa, for example, exclaimed that now she has learned more vocabulary and knowledge of grammar. In upper secondary school she said “we only studied the verb ‘to be’ during the three years of English lessons”. Judith also mentioned that language in upper secondary school was very basic. Now that they are at the English I level they can see that there are more complex language structures than ‘verb to be’, adding interest to learn English. Moreover, Judith feels now she has been learning and as a result she obtained satisfactory scores. Her satisfactory performance on the English courses was an indicator of her learning. Similarly, other students from both categories refer to their scores to evaluate their knowledge of English.

### **5.7.4 Classroom Peer Interaction**

The fourth reason is based on classroom peer interaction. The fact that students from different majors share English lessons by level of English seemed appealing for students since it might work as an incentive to interact with different people, and take the opportunity to eliminate fear to speak English. Alexa expressed that her lessons in lower and upper secondary school were very different from the university. For instance, she studied English with the same students during her English lessons at secondary education, but at university she met new people in her English courses as they are from

different majors. She believes this is an advantage to be able to talk to different people because it is less threatening to talk in English in her lessons. Somehow sharing the classroom with the same students from content courses would add stress and anxiety to some students. The need to get to know people from different majors, but who share the English lesson may motivate students, to a certain extent, to engage in interaction. After all, at the beginning they are complete strangers and many times they do not know each other's areas of study. Judith considered that lessons at university include more interaction than the ones in upper secondary school.

### 5.7.5 Attitude and Effort

The fifth and last reason for attitude change involves effort and attitude. Alexa mentioned that even when she did not like learning English, she tried to learn it; she made the effort to learn it. Judith said that even when she finds it difficult to learn English, she enjoys learning the language. Similarly, Edward mentioned that when there is a need to learn English, then effort is made to learn it. Edward did not consider English important in upper secondary school; he did not pay special interest to English in upper secondary school but at university he noticed its importance. He mentioned he has always been a good student, and he is proud of himself and his achievements. Edward considered he invested in the language and he expressed enthusiasm as he spoke about effort being optimal to learn English. Rose finally said it out loud as she believes learning English does not really depend on how difficult it is to learn English, but on having the correct attitude to learn it and making enough effort to learn the language in and out of school. Quantitative results (*See Table 13*) coincide with qualitative results as students agreed that if they exert more effort they can master English.

Nevertheless, there were some students who despite saying they now hold positive attitudes towards learning English, during the interview they also made comments that reflected that their attitude towards English was positive but with some limitations. For instance, it seems they did not engage in a complete effort to learn the target language; Rose's comment, "I hold a positive attitude, but kind of lazy" clarifies this. Additionally, Marian believes that she works under pressure to learn English; otherwise, she is not able to remember after a while. In other words, she might be the type of student who performs tasks or prepares for exams a couple of hours before they are due. On the other hand, Erika wished she had some more time to invest in learning the language; because of work she found it difficult. Therefore, time seems to be the excuse for limited language practise. Manny, also mentioned "I believe my problem [learning

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English] is that I do not study.” Like Edward, Manny did not pay attention in upper secondary school but now they both considered English was important for their professional career. However, Manny admitted that he did not pay much attention to English as it was difficult for him to dedicate time to study. Among the reasons were that he finds difficult to focus on reading, and that his lessons were only twice a week. This complicated remembering content of English lessons. His facial expressions seemed to communicate that English lessons were more of a burden for him despite continuously manifesting that English was a basic tool to advance professionally. Manny mentioned he felt he could learn more if he invested some more time studying English. He also believed his English was not that deficient. In this particular case, the student considered that learning English is important, but he did not make much effort to study. Yet, Manny watches movies, and listens to music in English. This suggests that he is not happy with the lessons, but he actually enjoys English. Then, students might manifest a more positive attitude but that does not necessarily imply an increase in their effort to learn the target language.

In short, from the students’ perspectives and comments five main reasons can be highlighted for students shifting from a negative to a more positive attitude. First, they need to see a need to learn the language. Definitely if there is no clear objective in learning the language then it might be more difficult to reach the goal. Second, the English teacher stands out again as an important figure to students’ exerting a positive attitude towards learning English. Students need to feel supported by their English teachers. Third, the foreign language should pose a degree of difficulty; otherwise, the students lose interest in learning as they do not feel they are learning something useful. Also, they relate their knowledge of English to their English course performance. Fourth, classroom peer interaction is important for students. Class environments, where they feel free to express their ideas in English provide a sense of comfort to continue learning, and reduce their anxiety and fear to express in a foreign language. Lastly, the fifth reason relies on the main topic of this study, which is attitude. They considered having the right attitude to learn English is of great help no matter the difficulties the learner might face learning it. If effort is invested in learning English in and out of the language classroom they believe it is possible to learn.

### **5.8 Sustained Attitudes**

From the 12 students, Gabriel, Leo and Elizabeth expressed their stable positive attitudes towards learning English. Elizabeth mentioned: “I still hold positive attitude

[towards learning English] although sometimes being under pressure makes you change, but I think it [learning English] is necessary". In the case of these students who started with a positive attitude and maintained that attitude for over a year, three salient reasons were identified.

### 5.8.1 Sustained Positive Attitudes

The first reason is an overt expression of liking and enjoying learning English. Gabriel mentioned his interest in foreign languages; he expressed interest in learning English as he wants to be able to learn it well despite the difficulties encountered. Leo also expressed interest for the language. He mentioned English allows him to understand various cultural aspects such as music and movies. He considered English very useful to have access to almost anything. As seen in excerpt 15, Leo showed confidence about expressing himself in English. This might be in great part due to an early exposure to the target language in a context where the target language is spoken, in combination to early training at school.

<Excerpt 15>

*Leo: I have a very fearless attitude towards English because everybody makes mistakes. If you ruin it now, it is the same as if you do it later. Then when you talk to foreigners that speak English, they don't mind. They say "what does this/that mean? Say it differently" and you continue communicating. The point is not to say "I won't talk to him/her because I am going to feel diminished". Everyone makes mistakes. They make mistakes, why wouldn't we?*

Elizabeth did not give too many details, but she mentioned English was interesting. She even considered to major in English language, but later decided for Education. She also mentioned during the interview that all cultures were interesting. These three students share the joy of learning English and being interested in cultural aspects. Interest in cultural aspect was also salient from the QEFLL (See Table 11).

The second reason for them to maintain their positive attitudes is based on a satisfactory experience learning English in upper secondary school, where again the English teacher played a central role. Gabriel enjoyed his English lessons in upper secondary school; in fact, he showed pride when he mentioned that his English teacher called on him because he knew he would respond to his questions. That is, he was very participative of his English lessons. Also, Leo indirectly pointed out the teacher when he mentioned that the system to learn English was based on interacting in English, watching videos, listening to songs in order to eliminate shame and fear to speak

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English. Later, he explicitly admitted that the figure of his English teachers telling him to speak, to get rid of fear helped him to learn English. Elizabeth again did not give too many details, but she mentioned “My English teachers in upper secondary school were really good”. She mentioned that she believed it was easier to learn English then because lessons were more theory- based. Additionally, both Leo and Elizabeth mentioned they learned English as children. While Leo continued his education from elementary school to university, Elizabeth learned English in kinder garten, but there were no lessons in elementary school (6 years). She started studying English again in secondary education. Then, the English learning experience for these students was positive, and the reason for this so-called positive experience was mainly their English teachers.

The third reason for sustaining their initial attitude towards learning English relied on extra linguistic exposure. Both Gabriel and Leo shared one type of linguistic exposure, which is by means of entertainment such as listening to songs in English because they want and like to understand what they listen to. Elizabeth did not mention any extra practise of English besides the one she received in the classroom. However, the three students have been exposed to English in situations that are rather different from the regular English lessons. For instance, Gabriel received extra exposure to the language by receiving private English lessons. Only this student mentioned private English lessons. This is similar to quantitative results (*See Table 6*) as most students did not report taking extra English lessons. Moreover, Leo has experienced travelling abroad since he was a kid, and now that he is at university he was involved in an academic visiting exchange programme. Elizabeth manifested that once she had contact with some foreigners and even when there was an interpreter available, she tried to communicate. Extra linguistic exposure seems to help students to maintain positive attitudes towards learning English even if this exposure is limited.

### **5.8.2 Sustained Negative Attitudes**

Just like positive attitudes, negative attitudes towards learning English can also be stable for an academic year in a transition from upper secondary school to university. These are the cases of Cassi and Peter who expressed they held negative attitudes towards learning English. During the students’ first interventions it was noticeable a sense of apathy in participating in the interview despite they had accepted to participate, and agreed to be recorded. As the interviews started and the students expressed their feelings towards learning English, it was clear that they had something worth hearing. In

the first place, both students expressed they were not sure about studying English. In other words, if the English courses were not mandatory they would have omitted English from their education. In fact, Cassi explicitly mentioned she did not like English while Peter admitted he felt forced to study English. He even admitted feeling forced to study English while he was studying upper secondary school. Then, his feelings towards English remained the same. He did not expand on describing his lessons in upper secondary school but mentioned that the lessons were scarce. Cassi, on the other hand, mentioned that some of her English teachers during four semesters in upper secondary school showed interest in students' learning English while others just did not seem to care. Others were very demanding. Thus, this experience in upper secondary school contributed for these students to start learning English at university with feelings of frustration.

<Excerpt 16>

*Interviewer:* What would be your attitude now that you are at university?

*Cassi:* I feel it [my attitude towards English] is the same because I sometimes want my teachers to teach me how to pronounce ...but I don't know how...here [the self-access centre] they help us clarify our doubts or questions, but I feel they do not help us with pronunciation... so now that I just gave my presentation I did get nervous, I forget... besides I don't know how to pronounce the words, so I get a bad score. I do get a bad score and it does affect me.

These students did not only start learning English with feelings of frustration, but also maintained these negative attitudes. Although not expressed explicitly, both students reaffirmed those feelings of frustration on the English instruction they have received at university. These students manifested interest to learn English, but also admitted they have found certain difficulties. One of the difficulties they have found relied on their learning needs not being covered in the English lessons at university. Cassi, for example, mentioned she would like to pronounce words correctly. Cassi mentioned that even when she has received extra sessions to answer her questions, teachers did not really teach her pronunciation and she continued struggling. When it is time for her to present in English in her class, she does not know how to pronounce the words and she believes as a consequence she obtains a low score. On the other hand, Peter mentioned having difficulties understanding spoken English. Peter also believes his language needs can be covered by attending private English lessons, but he cannot afford them. In other words, he considered that what he needs to learn of English cannot be obtained in his lessons at university or at least in his last English course. He actually said his knowledge of English was mainly due to a teacher who was very interactive and explained in English

and Spanish in one initial English course he received at university. Therefore, although not directly, both students centred their attitudes on the English teacher as being responsible to find out and try to cover students' needs.

Additionally, the content activities developed in the classroom were not significant to learn the language. Cassi wished the lesson could go beyond the course book, its explanations, and listening and oral presentations. She believes she could learn more by having more games in the classroom, more interaction. From her comments, she considered classroom instruction was the main reason for her to learn English. That is, she considers the teacher as the main figure to lead the student to learning, but accepts that if she does not practise the language then she forgets what she has learned. In the case of Peter, some comments by his teachers as "you can do it, but you need more practise" made him feel he does not deserve the satisfactory scores he receives. These comments made him doubt of his knowledge. Somehow the message is *you will not receive more practise here*. Then, both of these students have basically maintained the negative attitudes because they relied on the teachers' activities and comments to learn the language. This can lead them to a sense of frustration as they do not receive what they expect.

Overall, students' opinions indicated that attitudes towards English can change mostly from negative to positive, but they can also be stable. Additionally, even when attitudes are said to be positive there are aspects such as effort that might be more on the negative side. On the contrary, even when attitudes are positive, students manifest negative aspects such as not enough progress in learning English. Thus, the students' attitudes cannot be said to be completely negative or completely positive. In addition, although most students manifested their attitudes have shifted from negative attitude to positive, from their opinions there are signals that these attitudes might refer to knowing the importance of English, but not necessarily making every possible effort to learn the language.

## **5.9 Students' Opinions: Post-QEFL and Interviews**

In the final part of the post-QEFL, the students evaluated their experience learning English at university after an academic year. Additionally, during the interviews they provided suggestions for learning English. In the post-survey, they rated their overall experience learning English at university by assigning values of Excellent, Good, Regular

and Bad because these are terms they can easily relate to. Table 33 shows the ratings given by the students.

*Table 33: Students' evaluation of English at university*

Learning English at University	N. of students	Percent
Excellent	6	9
Good	89	57.4
Not so good	57	36.8
Bad	3	1.9
Total	174	96.7
Missing	6	3.3
Total number of students	161	100

As can be seen slightly above fifty percent of the students consider that their experience learning English at university has been satisfactory, and an important 36% consider it has not been so satisfactory. Both "Excellent" and "Bad" obtained a 1.9% of the 161 students' population.

Additionally students also exerted their comments towards learning English in general. Students' comments were grouped according to common themes. Among the most important aspects mentioned by the students were: the English lessons related to University policies, the English teacher, and the English learner. With regard to the English lessons, some opinions related to the university policies emerged. For instance, many students mentioned that the lessons are based on theory, and therefore in class there is traditional teaching. Students would like to have more enjoyable and dynamic lessons using a variety of materials and different strategies and methods. At least one student commented on not being content with course evaluation. Also, at least three students mentioned that English should not be mandatory. Instead, some mentioned there should be a learning emphasis based on the utility of the target language for work opportunities.

On the other hand, students also made comments regarding the university course registration system. Six students mentioned they were not taking English lessons because they did not find space in their corresponding English course at the university registration system, which coincides with comments from the interview when a student said sometimes they spend a semester without English lessons, and then they forget what they have learned. One student explicitly mentioned that the university registration system needs improvement.

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As expected there were comments related to the English teacher. There were some specific comments on aspects the English teacher could improve. For example, a couple of students stated they would like their teachers to have better pronunciation, and more punctuality. Even when most students had a positive comment regarding the English teacher, there was one that mentioned “there are good teachers, not all of them”. However, overall the students considered their English teachers are professional and hold a good level of English. Another salient aspect from the students’ comments lies in teacher’s support. This aspect emphasizes the need for students to feel their English teachers’ support. For instance, a student mentioned that her teacher gives lots of examples in class, and helps them anytime they need it. Moreover, another student stated “Teachers show interest and want to help those who don’t understand”. Another comment urged teachers to motivate students to eliminate fear to speak English. At least a student mentioned that teachers explain in English and then translate into Spanish. There was no more information regarding this comment, so it is not possible to know if this student regarded this action as appropriate or inappropriate. Based on my own experience as an English teacher and learner, sometimes a translation from English into Spanish at the basic levels is helpful for both types of students, the ones who do not really understand and those who have understood English because they can rectify their understanding. This strategy helps the student to grasp the idea of the topic and the class can continue in English.

The next comments centred on the learners and their approaches to English. Some comments inclined to the negative side. A couple of the students mentioned they did not like English and others mentioned it was difficult to learn English. Yet, while one of these students focused on the more positive side saying “it’s difficult, but I understand it” others say “I’m not a fan of English” and “I don’t like English at all”. This is represented in the qualitative data (See 5.8.2) At least one student mentioned she did not identify with some teachers and peers. Other comments focused a lot more on themselves as learners and their proficiency. A student mentioned she could communicate orally in English with no problem. Many comments included the need and desire “to learn” more English and learn it well. A student mentioned “I would like to know more than I do now”, another stated “I hope to improve my English”. Additionally, comments such as “I know I don’t have the best performance, but I’d really like to learn it”, highlight students’ interest in learning the language. Overall, they want to learn more.

In addition, students also recognized the importance given to English course scores and their lack of effort to learn English. A student commented “I focus too much on my grades and not on learning English”, and another stated “I’d like the lessons to slow down. The students do not give them importance; they only focus on their grades”. Others admitted they need to make more effort to learn such as “I want to learn English so I must make more effort to understand it”. On the other hand, some students admitted their lack of commitment to learn the target language. One example is “I’d like to take more English lessons, but I’m lazy”, “I like English but I haven’t studied hard”, “I don’t study English”, or “Teachers are not the problem, but my lack of effort”. These comments support the feelings expressed by many students during the interviews (See 5.7).

Furthermore, students expressed their interest to travel to an English speaking country by choosing one of the options given or writing their own. Interestingly, Canada was preferred by 28% of students as their first choice to travel if they had the opportunity (See Table 34). Their second choice was England with 27.3% and in the third place the United States of America with 19.3%. Australia was preferred by 5.6% of students. There were students who might have been interested in visiting more than one place (9.3%).

*Table 34: Students’ First Choice to Visit an English Speaking Country*

Country	N. of students	Percent
Canada	45	28
England	44	27.3
USA	31	19.3
Australia	9	5.6
More than one	15	9.3
Other	3	1.9
Missing	14	8.7
Total	161	100

In the final part of the interview students were invited to give suggestions or recommendations for other students to learn English. Their answers have been placed into two groups: 1) For the English learner, and 2) for the English teacher.

- 1) Suggestions and recommendations for the English learner
  - a) **Learn the language:** Learn basic structures, regular and irregular verbs, vocabulary, tenses

- b) **Practise beyond the classroom:** listen to songs, watch movies to get used to English sounds, get involved with the language (listen, read, use the internet), talk to someone who speaks English
  - c) **Have a positive attitude:** Have a positive attitude, study and make a big effort, enjoy learning the language, fall in love with English, get rid of fear to speak the target language
  - d) **Take language opportunities:** Learn English from childhood
- 2) Suggestions or recommendations for the English teacher
- a) **Classroom practise:** Teach through games, teach through dynamic visual activities
  - b) **Teacher support:** Show support and rapport for students learning English

Overall, every language learner faces learning difficulties. When students talked about their feelings about learning English they mentioned some salient attitudes before they started learning English at university. Only a couple of students mentioned being interested in learning the language at this stage. On the other hand, most students manifested not being interested in learning English in upper secondary school. Some admitted not giving importance to the language. Some more even mentioned having negative experiences learning English in secondary education with very demanding teachers or teachers who did not pay attention to students with learning English problems. Nevertheless, all students expressed their interest to learn English. Despite not being fond of the language, scoring low or high in the EDII or holding positive or negative attitudes, instrumental reasons were very salient.

A couple of students mentioned they would not only want to learn it because of work or study, but because they want to understand the target language cultural aspects such as movie scripts or songs. More importantly, some students accepted they had to make more effort to learn the foreign language either to learn it or pass the course, and it was a time-investment issue. Interestingly most students from the negative attitude, but also from the positive attitude group expressed their desire to involve their siblings in learning English so that they do not experience the same problems they surpassed. Many mentioned that when English is learnt as a child then it becomes easier. Others mentioned they would like their future children to learn English. Yet, only those students who held positive attitudes scored above 80% in their first English course.

Therefore, if learners' difficulties learning English are not addressed appropriately, they can easily transform to feelings of frustration. Fortunately, even students holding negative attitudes admitted the importance of English. Despite expressing negative attitudes towards English after a year of studying English, they also mentioned positive actions towards the learning of English.

## 5.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the results gathered from the research instruments in this study and the institutional data provided by the university: 1) pre-QEFLL, and 2) the EDII, 3) post- QEFLL, 4) English course scores, 5) semi-structured interviews. The results from these instruments have allowed me to answer the four research questions entirely, i.e., the students' attitudes towards English, the factors that comprise students' attitudes, and the attitudinal factors that contribute to the EDII performance, and English course performance, the comparison of initial and final attitudes, performance and use of English after an academic year.

In general, results from the QEFLL questionnaires evidenced the importance of learning English as children because it entails implications for work, study, and travel purposes. There seems to be a general consensus that to learn English, both effort and disposition are needed. However, little exposure to English implied that interaction in the target language is limited. Results from the questionnaire also showed that upper secondary school learning experience was mostly adequate taking into consideration parameters of class evaluation were mostly clear, and teachers' showed disposition to help students learn English. Yet, the lessons in upper secondary school did not seem interesting for most students. Nevertheless, data from the interviews evidenced both negative and positive attitudes. With regard to the factors that comprise students' attitudes, results from factor analysis indicated four main factors: 1) EFL attitudes, 2) Socio-cultural impact, 3) Linguistic exposure, and 4) Classroom experience. The first factor comprised aspects of importance, interest in the language, effort to learn English, but also reasons to learn the foreign language. The second factor also included reasons to learn the language, but reasons influenced by socio-cultural pressure. Linguistic exposure, the third factor, comprised aspects of interaction and language practise in English as well as evaluation of language skills. Finally, the fourth factor of classroom experience gathered aspects of formal learning with regard to lessons, evaluation and teachers.

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As for the second research question regarding which attitude constructs or variables influence the students' performance on the EDII, and in the English course performance, results indicated Linguistic exposure as one attitudinal/motivational factor in the prediction of the EDII. There was a significant difference between test performance and type of upper secondary education. Private education seemed to offer an advantage in EDII results. With regard to English course scores, Linguistic exposure showed to be a significant predictor for the performance on the first English course while the Socio-cultural impact factor showed to be the strongest predictor for the scores of the second English course (Level B).

The third research question, e.g. contrast between attitudes and performance in English at the beginning and end of the academic year resulted in substantial changes. Results from independent sample t-tests showed that there was variation among the four attitudinal/motivational factors. There was a significant decrease for the EFL attitudes factor and for Linguistic exposure. On the contrary, the Socio-cultural impact factor showed a significant increase as well as Classroom experience. With regard to performance, there was a statistically significant difference from the results of the EDII to the first scores in the Level A English course. Yet, there was a statistically significant decrease from the first English course (Level A) scores to the second one (Level B). As a result, the rate of failing students increased. Moreover, as expected students' self-evaluation of skills in English increased from less than Basic English to basic or intermediate.

Finally, the fourth research question regarding attitude, performance and language use change from students' perspectives showed interesting results. Both positive and negative attitudes at the beginning of studying English at university were reported by students. Contrary to QEFLL results (See 5.1.2), students mostly reported negative attitudes towards learning English especially those students who reported positive attitudes from the QEFLL. Nevertheless, most students showed a more current positive attitude towards learning English. Therefore, attitudes shifted. Yet positive and negative attitudes also remained stable for the period of one academic year. Regarding performance, mostly feelings of progress attached to satisfactory scores were salient, although progress not many times equalled proficiency in English. Generally, exposure to the language seemed to increase, but not to a great extent. Thus, even when quantitative results indicated a small correlation among the four attitudinal/motivational factors, results from qualitative data indicated relationship among these four attitudinal/motivational factors.

## Chapter 6: Discussion

The previous chapter presented the research findings in an interconnected form to triangulate data from the research instruments. This chapter presents and integrates evidence drawn from the data described in Chapter 5 to address the research questions directly. The aim of this research was to identify EFL undergraduates' attitudes towards English and the attitudinal/motivational factors that lead to performance and change. This mixed method study intended to shed light on the importance of attitudes in the EFL context specifically in the Mexican context. The data will be discussed based on four major themes: 1) attitudes towards learning English, 2) attitudinal factors and performance, 3) attitude change and stability, and 4) attitude change representation. The first examines the nature of attitudes comprised into four main factors. The second section examines the correlation within four main factors to determine whether the factors predict students' performance. The third section considers whether or not there is shift in students' attitudes towards learning English. This chapter will establish associations between attitudes, performance, and change based on the relevant literature.

### 6.1 Attitudes towards Learning English

Several reports have shown that broader dimensions of attitudes and motivation are comprised into factors. The results of this study seem to be consistent with other research which found motivational factors (Sung and Tsai, 2014; Taguchi et al., 2009; Clément, et al., 1994; Gardner, 1985). The present study was designed to determine the attitudinal/motivational factors of undergraduates with regard to learning English, and findings revealed four main factors. Therefore, this part of the discussion will centre on attitudinal, socio-cultural, linguistic and educational factors regarding undergraduates' attitudes towards learning English, as a mandatory subject at university.

The data gathering procedures revealed that learning English is recognized as important. Students perceive that English education is essential. In fact, they believe English education should be part of school programmes and start as early as possible. These results are in agreement with those obtained by Tahaineh and Daana's (2013) study, where they found undergraduates perceived English as important. Also, the results also are similar to Gülsen et al. (2009) where gender and attitudes did not show any significance. Similarly, these results seem to be consistent with other research which

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found that students consider that English should start in the first grade of schooling (Al-Tamimi and Shuib, 2009). A possible explanation for this might be that as learners start their tertiary education, comparisons with regard to level of English start to emerge among students. Those who started learning English as children may have an advantage over certain topics or higher proficiency in English. Therefore, learning English from childhood may be considered to provide a more solid foundation that allows individuals to reach a proficient level of English at university. Thus, students indicate mostly positive attitudes towards learning English. These results are in agreement with those obtained by other researchers (Ahmed, 2015; Tahaine and Daana, 2013; Al-Tamimi and Shuib, 2009; Van de Gaer et al. 2007; Tsuda, 2003; Kobayashi, 2002; Malallah, 2000).

On the other hand, the underlying economy relationship between Mexico and the United States of America definitely impacts the situation of learning English for Mexicans. There is a general consensus that knowledge of English can contribute to the development of Mexico. This is in line with a study from the British Council (2015) in Mexico, which shows that there is a correlation between occupation, level of education attained, household income and access to English language learning. The importance of English for professional and economic growth coincides with previous studies (Despagne, 2010; Mora-Vázquez et al, 2010; Al-Tamimi and Shuib, 2009). This result may be explained by the fact that the connection of Mexico and the United States of America advocates learning English to strengthen economy relations. As a result, students pursue learning English to obtain jobs with higher salaries, and as a consequence, receive a direct benefit to their knowledge. Additionally, institutions of higher education induce students to be proficient in English to be competent in today's economy. At the same time, students know they can contribute to the development of Mexican economy by using English as means of communication to establish professional connections. It can therefore be assumed that the interest in learning English is connected to a desire of increasing a socio-economic status. These results are likely to be related to those of other studies that have found higher socioeconomic levels to be more conducive to learning English in Mexico (Heredia and Rubio, 2015; González et al., 2004).

### **6.1.1 Learning English Orientations**

As stated above, learning English is regarded as important and necessary mostly to advance economically. Professional opportunities abound for individuals who manage to be proficient in English. Not surprisingly, then, this study found that students consider English important mostly for utilitarian or *instrumental* reasons. This partly concords

with other studies in the EFL settings (Fryer et al., 2013; Tahaineh and Daana, 2013; Al-Tamimi and Shuib, 2009; Taguchi, et al., 2009; Kormos and Csizér, 2008; Rahman 2005; Dörnyei, 2003; Malallah, 2000), where students also showed instrumental reasons to learn English mostly for promotion interest. On the other hand, there is an evident prevention mode that influences students' attitudes towards learning English. These results are in accord with recent studies indicating that prevention is a common reason to learn English in EFL settings (Taguchi et al., 2009; Dörnyei, 2006). Mandatory English lessons exert great pressure on students because of the responsibility to pass the English course to attain their ultimate goal of graduating. It is interesting to notice that many students learn English to pass the course, and for that reason they make effort to understand the target language despite feeling certain rejection or difficulty towards English (See 5.4). In fact, the current study found that it is mostly to prevent failing the English course that students look for formal extra tutoring in English. These results are in agreement with those obtained by Tsuda (2003), where those first and second year university students who mentioned not being fond of learning English admitted they wanted to gain credits. It seems possible that these results are due to students taking the corresponding measures to graduate in order to prevent a possible future decline of professional life.

Growing professionally seemed to be a constant worry that even L2-selves (Dörnyei, 2005) relate to promotion. The key construct of the L2MSS model was evident in this study. This study showed high mean values for L2 selves (See 5.1.2). These results agree with Kormos and Csizér (2008). There were students who held a clear image of their future (See 5.6.3) from the premise that the L2-self is constructed based on lived experiences with member of the L2 community and on those ideas our imagination has created. Images of who they wanted to become using the language were present as they portrayed themselves speaking English, but mostly due to work related plans either in their home country or abroad. Yet, travelling abroad for training reasons, for instance, became promotional (Taguchi et al., 2009; Higgins, 1998). One interesting finding is that students who closely associated to work in the oil industry apparently held a clear L2 image. However, caution must be applied to interpret these results as it is a small sample of students. Also, the L2 selves were not analysed in depth. It could be argued that these results were only due to students' positive attitudes towards learning English. In addition, the genuine desire to live abroad to interact daily in English, and be part of the target language culture was not evident. This finding reiterated instrumental reasons to learn English. From this I might conclude that even when these students expressed

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possible images of using the target language, L2 selves require a more careful follow-up process (Kim, 2009) as they can be mistaken by personal learning goals, and L2 learning motives. Therefore, the results suggest that a more careful exploration on L2 selves is necessary to confirm that L2 selves have been internalized. This is an important issue for future research.

On the other hand, although the findings revealed prominent instrumental reasons to learn English (*See 5.6.1*), interest to interact and establish contact with other cultures was also present. Despite complex political affairs between the United States of America and Mexico, which at times portray Americans mistreating Mexicans, students showed that they are willing to be friends with them. These findings may be somewhat limited because no further exploration among students coming from a public or private school was performed as in Despaigne's (2010) study, where she found that students from public schools felt more attracted to American culture than those from private schools. Nevertheless, this outcome is contrary to that of Despaigne (2010) who found certain rejection towards Americans and their culture. This result may be explained by the fact that students' participation did not focus on any political matter. Another possible explanation for this is that contact with Americans in the community is mostly limited to work. The findings indicated that students are open to have more American friends despite reservations regarding their friendliness, and behaviour. The reason for this is not clear but it may have something to do with cultural aspects of both cultures because Mexicans are extremely friendly, and engage easily in conversation whereas Americans are very respectful of their time and space.

Another important finding was that few Mexican students have encountered the opportunity to visit their neighbouring country or travel to other countries. Nevertheless, preconceived ideas regarding American and British culture were salient. These conceptions of Americans and Britons are very likely to be formed based on experiences, or the media. Surprisingly, rather than perceiving English language instruction as an imposition of American culture, students recognized the USA as a first world country with the economic benefits it entails despite evident pride of being Mexican. This finding is contrary to Despaigne (2010) and Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009), which found that English was considered a threat to culture and an imposition of American culture.

In the case of attitudes towards Britons, students were open to the culture but with some reservations. A possible explanation for this might be the geographic distance

between Mexico and Britain. Another possible explanation for this is again the limited contact British culture despite it is displayed through textbooks used in the education of English in Mexico. Nevertheless, a salient pattern was the preference for learning British English rather than American English. This result is striking taking into consideration the aforementioned reservations towards Britons. Studying English in Britain is preferred over American English mainly because British English accent is considered to be of more status. This coincides with Evans and Imai (2011) results where British English was considered proper and superior. Yet, despite the closeness of Mexico and the USA, Canada was mentioned in the post-QEFL as the second choice to visit an English-speaking country, leaving the USA in the third position. Although there were not negative comments with regard to American culture, one of the issues that emerges from these findings is the rather complex bilateral relation between American and Mexican culture.

In addition, the findings suggested there is increasing awareness of the importance of English and other cultures. This result agrees with Sandoval-Pineda's (2011) study. The present study evidenced interest for other cultures, but mainly as a learning source to acquire English. The overall students' comments towards the USA, the UK or Canada concentrated on learning English. There were only a few comments that highlighted real interest in visiting other countries. Therefore, despite students' interest in other cultures, instrumental reasons were reaffirmed when these destinations were seen as opportunities to learn English. On the other hand, despite showing pride in their own cultural identity, students recognized the importance of other cultures and are willing, to a certain extent, to embrace another culture through language learning.

Equally important, family and significant others showed to be of great influence in attitudes. The findings suggested that the influence of parents and family, for instance, was mainly positive. Parents' participation seemed to be of encouragement. Similarly, the same students considered that their siblings must study English. A possible explanation for this might be that parents and students themselves have encountered difficulties to learn English. Parents, who have faced the need to speak English independently of holding knowledge of English, are probably more inclined to encourage their children to learn the foreign language. In any case, parent support still points to be extremely important at tertiary education (Rassouli and Osam, 2013; Tahaneh and Daana, 2013). On the other hand, influence was also derived from significant others. In this case, the major figure was the English teacher. These results are in line with those of previous studies (Bartram, 2010; Janés- Carulla, 2006; Chambers, 1999; Wright, 1999;

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Clark and Trafford, 1995). The outcome in this study evidenced that the influence of the teacher can be both positive and negative. For instance, teachers encouraged students to foster their language skills with constant reminders of the importance of learning English for professional training and development. Additionally, teachers' empathy and support for students' language learning is really valued by students. Yet, some teachers' learning approaches caused certain discomfort among students both in secondary education and at university. Teachers' poor methodologies and classroom approaches decreases students' interest in learning English. These results are in agreement with those obtained by Busse and Walter (2013), who found a decline in students' effort due to the teacher and the unappealing tasks. These findings seemed to support that family members may be a source of motivation or demotivation as well as teachers' interventions (Ghavamnia and Ketabi 2013; Lai and Ting, 2013).

One issue that emerges from these findings is the undebatable students' interest in learning English. These findings may also help us to understand the reasons for students to learn English besides the fact that it is a mandatory subject at university. The most significant reason to learn English for these Mexican students is to be prepared for the future. Knowledge of English represents access to better jobs, which indicates an increase of socio-economic status. Additionally, students are aware of the possibility to travel abroad and have contact with other cultures. This interest, however, seems a consequence of the possibilities to learn English or receive some sort of professional training. Little importance was given to visit other countries to integrate either to American, British or other cultures. On the other hand, family and teachers represent a strong influence for students to engage in learning English. Although family influence in the findings of this study appears to be positive, the influence of teachers can both be positive or negative. These results may be explained by the fact that English is a global need; therefore, English is seen as important by family and significant others, and students may take the same position towards the language as its utility is valued.

### **6.1.2 Social, Cultural and Learning Impact**

Previous studies (Clément et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 1990; Clément and Kruidener, 1983) agree of the importance of socio-cultural factors. Nevertheless, they have mostly addressed the interest of knowing, learning or understanding other English-speaking countries ways of life. The findings in this study support that social, cultural and learning pressure impact students' attitudes. Certainly, socio-cultural factors have been widely

discussed in the literature (Vigotsky, 1987; Schumann, 1986) as important elements that cannot be separated from language learning. As Bartram (2010, p.65) mentions the fact that “certain areas of sociocultural influence are particularly important when examining the formation of language attitudes” is undeniable as language and culture are intrinsically related as parts of society.

Learning English today has distanced from the joy of learning to interact with people from other cultures for personal reasons. Social pressure is present as language learners encounter a series of socio-cultural fears to learn English. Some of these fears are based on society as foundation. A new learning experience implies pressure of some sort as discussed previously. Dörnyei (2009) refers to the ought to L2 selves as attributes an individual believes she ought to possess in order to satisfy the others’ expectations to avoid undesirable results. Despite there is an important number of students who feel they should learn English to be respected by others, findings in this study suggest that there were no clear images of ought to L2 selves. This finding is in accord to Taguchi et al. (2009) where ought to L2 self was not salient. Nevertheless, a general feeling of having to study English was perceived by students as a need to learn the language. It seems this need has surpassed the obligation of a mandatory course. España-Chavarría (2010) discusses the importance of English and emphasizes that university students see it as a way to reach professional success; especially those who did not have access to English before university. Therefore, society pushes these students to comply with the language requirement the world demands. This result may be partly explained by the power relationships that influence students’ willingness to communicate (Norton, 2010).

Likewise, conforming to our own culture, adopting another or taking both cultures can be a source of enjoyment or internal distress. The findings showed that students are open to learn about other cultures to establish friendships, which is similar to Tahaineh and Daana (2013). Yet, students disagreed with wanting “to be like” Americans or Britons. Similar to Al-Tamimi and Shuib’s (2009) findings, there was a sense of national pride or confidence that may relate to genuine interest in learning English, but saving their identity. Contrary to Clément’s et al. (1994) where they categorize the items of thinking, behaving or being similar to US/UK people as *identification* factor, here these identification items pertain to Socio-cultural impact. Although learning a foreign language does not equal forgetting one’s own culture, students may see an increasing risk at every foreign word that is uttered. Extreme cases might go from a language learner omitting contact with her own culture festivities and traditions and celebrating the target language’s customs to a language learner retaining her traditions and

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rejecting foreign culture completely. To construct ethnic identity, self-identification and the perceptions and attitudes of others are important (Fought, 2006). A strong feeling of ethnic identity might be linked with limited desires to be part of target language culture. Nevertheless, findings suggested English was not seen as a threat to students' culture. In other words, national identity is not greatly affected if learners want to be friends with Americans or Britons as they still recognize the importance of preserving their culture and learning English. Nevertheless, this is an important issue for further research.

With regard to the learning impact, the learning atmosphere is basically linked to teachers' class management. For instance, both the upper secondary school English learning experience and experience at university were mainly based on the teacher and the activities involved in the classroom. These results coincide with Gardner (2004). Overall, students consider the figure of the English teacher of great importance. This study shows that most students start university with mostly positive references from their previous English lessons as most consider their upper secondary school English teachers were committed to teaching interesting classes and caring about students' learning. Students appreciated their teachers' form of evaluation. Therefore, teachers' knowledge, preparation and management skills are important to give students a sense of security in the classroom, which concurs to findings reported in Ghavamnia and Ketabi (2013). The results of this study indicate that the students are aware of their teachers' training, which is very positive. Generally, students showed respect towards their teachers limiting their comments to the language experience contrary to other attitude studies in European countries, where students mentioned their teachers were stupid or did not hold knowledge of the foreign language (Bartram, 2010). This can probably have a cultural explanation as Mexicans still value and respect their elders. The latter coincides with Diaz et al. (2016) as they found learners considered this teacher's legitimate power as beneficial.

On the other hand, the figure of the English teacher can be overshadowed by a lack of training. The present study raises the possibility that teachers themselves hold a negative attitude towards teaching those students who need it the most. The findings in this study suggest that students who might be in more need to learn the language may be erroneously catalogued as having a negative attitude towards learning English. As a result, teachers focus attention on those students who participate actively in class even if this procedure harms other students' confidence. This type of actions leads to frustration or anxiety (Horwitz, 2001) as reported in this study. Feelings of anxiety may

arise when a teacher focuses on students who can answer their questions and forget the rest (Tananuraksakul, 2011).

Humans naturally experience feelings of anxiety before unexpected or uncontrolled situations, and at different degrees (Ellis, 1994; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). In this study, for instance, most students felt nervous when they found themselves speaking English in class. Moreover, most also accepted they were afraid and nervous of making mistakes. These types of feelings are common among foreign language students, and many times prevent the students from expressing their ideas or participating in class even when their English may be sufficient to get the message across. This finding partly coincides with Kirova's et al. (2012), who found that learning difficulties and learners' own sense of self and fear were among the reasons for anxiety. Therefore, the learning environment can either provide a satisfactory or unsatisfactory learning atmosphere.

The findings in this study suggest that a satisfactory experience mostly involved a teacher's encouraging support and engaging activities. Upper secondary school teachers and university teachers who used the classroom scenario to build students' language confidence through practise were seen as supportive teachers. Class time and space devoted to really practise English were also seen as valuable. Additionally, students noticed activities that involved language practise through games, songs or oral presentations fostered uninhibitedness to learn and speak English. Lastly, words of encouragement were greatly appreciated by students.

Similarly, those who had a non-satisfactory experience also regarded the teacher as the main figure. This type of teacher was basically absent from lessons, or was very demanding. This coincides with Ramírez-Romero and Pamplón-Irigoyen's (2012) and Calderón (2015) where they highlight administrative problems in the education system in Mexico. Additionally, teachers focused on learners who already spoke English. In other words, teachers practised English with a few students instead of teaching English to all. Moreover, students were demanded to fulfil certain tasks for evaluation purposes, but they considered they had not received enough practise to be successful. A lack of engaging activities as well as teacher support and words of encouragement were perceived in the language classroom. Similarly, these results are supported by Ramírez-Romero and Pamplón-Irigoyen's (2012) when they highlight salient problems of teacher professionalization. Thus, while some students received appropriate language learning conditions in their English lessons, others mostly experienced frustration. Special attention should be given to improve educational conditions such as English teachers'

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development, as the findings in this study emphasize the importance of the teacher for learners to develop both linguistic skills, and confidence to speak and engage in the learning of English.

The findings in this study also indicate that some students recognized that they did not enjoy learning English but they were aware they might use it at some point in their lives. The importance of learning English is reflected by feelings of self-confidence to learn the language specifically in the transition from secondary education to tertiary education. It may be that these participants had great expectations from their English lessons at university. In other words, they expected to learn what they probably did not learn before. Because of this, linguistic self-confidence abounded at the beginning of the term. Effort and willingness to learn and master English signalled students' positive attitudes and motivation to learn English even when English is a mandatory subject. Therefore, despite some considered English a difficult language, the utility of English compensated any learning difficulty they could encounter. This finding coincided with Despaigne's study (2010), where findings revealed that students who viewed English as difficult also made great effort to learn it.

However, the findings seemed particularly informative when association between upper secondary school learning experience and language interest is made. At upper secondary school, students are mostly immature. In fact, many usually ignore whether they will pursue further studies. This factor may explain why English might be seen as one more subject. The findings showed that some students recognized they simply did not pay attention to English (*See Excerpt 14*); they did not assign importance to the learning of a foreign language. This finding is in line with Tahaine and Daana's (2013); they found in their study that learners considered that they did not exert every single effort to learn English. As a consequence, some of the participants in this study considered they lost the opportunity to learn English in upper secondary school. This finding alleviates somehow the pressure assigned to the English teacher's role as students may want to learn English only after they recognize the utility of knowing English. Despite teachers and activities defined both positive and negative English learning experiences in school, English lessons could have been more satisfactory for learners, had they taken their own responsibility to be in more contact with English.

### 6.1.3 Contact with English

Exposure to language represents one fundamental aspect in learning the language (Seliger, 1977), but it becomes difficult in contexts where real contact with speakers of English is limited. Here are discussed two types of exposure: direct and indirect. Direct interaction, as interaction face to face, with foreigners even by means of technology is ideal. In an EFL context many times there is no specific target language group as Clément et al. (1994) and Dörnyei (1990) have pointed out. In this study, the American is the most visible target language group, yet the status of English as a global language suggests an array of possibilities of contact with anybody who speaks the language. Within the setting where this study developed there was moderate affluence of native and non-native speakers of English who work in the oil industry. Most of them spend time at hotels and places for entertainment such as cinema, restaurant and bars. Not surprisingly, contact in English at the end of upper secondary school is limited taking into consideration the places of possible contact with English in the community.

The findings indicated that students who worked were more likely to experience direct contact with English. Working students were exposed more to English as they worked in places that foreigners visit; for instance, the movie theatre. Students' face to face interaction was mostly as service providers. Interestingly, this result coincided with students' attitudes and perceptions of using English mostly for instrumental reasons. On the other hand, there was also direct contact which happened unexpectedly such as being asked for directions to a place. In any case it is important to remark that the students were not actually looking for opportunities to practise the target language, they happened to be working or at a place where exposure occurred.

Although direct interaction of these students with foreigners might be limited in this context, students recognized that interaction in English can take place among nationals. In fact, this is the common scenario to interact in an EFL context. The findings showed a number of students who admitted speaking English with their friends. In the classroom, teachers usually indicate students to practise English by communicating with their peers in the target language, but this might not always occur. Findings also revealed that speaking English with someone who shares the same native language might be difficult and bizarre, and not "natural". A possible explanation for this may be that in the process of assimilating a majority culture, students want to maintain their L1 as a way to affirm their own identity (Ellis, 1994). It is important to highlight that most students manifested being proud of being Mexican. This should add value to the fact that some

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students do not often interact with nationals in English. This reduces the chances for language practise taking into consideration the language classroom can be limited in time and exposure (Hummel, 2013; Brown, 2007).

Fortunately, this study also indicated that academic exposure in English increased at university. Reading assignments in their content courses provide students more contact with English. Assignments such as understanding abstracts or articles are common. However, besides the reading activities, students mentioned translation. In other words, translation is common practise among students to comprehend texts. This finding suggested students lack effective reading strategies to comprehend what they read in English. This result is linked with Quijano-Zavala's (2006) research findings, where there was absence of teaching reading skills or strategies despite the reading skill was viewed as important. The findings showed that students, however, considered they can read in English, and centre their attention on the improvement of other problematic skills such as listening and speaking. The skill of writing was not mentioned by students. This might indicate that professors do not consider it important. As a result, students might not seem the relevance of writing either. Practise and contact with all language skills within the English classroom and other content courses seemed restricted. There is academic exposure in English, but it differs from what academic language teaching (Celce-Murcia et al., 2014) implies.

By indirect exposure I refer to any type of secondary or incidental contact students have with the language. Indirect exposure can enhance the language learning process. When students watch T.V. in English and try to understand what they hear in English, they are in direct contact with the language, but in situations where students focus more on the content and less on the language, then it functions as an indirect source of exposure. The findings in this study reveal that cultural aspects can many times be learned from media. For example, Peter accepted he learned about British culture from T.V. as he is a football fan. Then, when watching football matches he was indirectly learning about important aspects of language such as culture. Therefore, media represents an immediate source for EFL students to be in contact with the target language culture. Watching TV, specifically sports, was also reported in a study by Ahmed (2015) as the most common activity in English that Bangladeshi students performed. Similarly, in Al-Tamimi and Shuib's (2009) findings, movies in English were also considered of interest by students. Students are clearly using activities of their interest that lead them to learning English unconsciously.

Family and significant others are stated in the literature as important figures that influence attitudes towards language learning (Williams and Burden, 1997; Larsen and Freeman and Long, 1991; Gardner, 1985). Family or significant others can also function as indirect source of exposure to the language. In many learners' families there is someone who speaks English. The learner might not speak English with that person, but sooner or later that knowledge of English functions as linguistic reference for the learner and has an impact on the learner's learning process. This becomes an advantage for these learners compared to others who have no English speaking family or relatives. Involving siblings in learning English seems to be of interest for many students as they believe they could avoid learning problems in the future. They also think that having someone in the family who speaks English would give them an opportunity for language practise. Therefore, this study is in line with other studies (Blumenthal, 2014; Rassouli and Osam, 2013; Tahaineh and Daana, 2013; Gardner 1968), which found significant others and family are important figures that influence language learning. This study evidenced that family can be a great influence in language learning, but can ultimately become a source of language exposure even if it starts indirectly.

Both exposure to media and significant others represent an indirect language opportunity that can change to be direct. The indirect exposure from media attracts students' attention towards language when something becomes of their interest. Similarly, the students themselves might start being an indirect source of exposure in their families and end up becoming a source of direct exposure of English to them.

## **6.2 Performance in English**

The various data gathering procedures generated a considerable amount of information with regard to students' language performance. Findings revealed learners' scores on the diagnostic test should improve. These results coincided with the overall panorama of learners of English in Mexico (Lemus Hidalgo et al., 2008; Bravo Gómez, 2007; González et al., 2004). Therefore, students reach university and most do not hold the 'desired' score according to international standards that the institutions of higher education require (A1). This is very unfortunate since most students start learning English at lower secondary school, and continue to upper secondary school. Interestingly, students are very much aware of the level of English they hold. Students' self-evaluation of English skills corresponded to test results. That is, students who self-assessed their linguistic skills as low received a low score in the test. Most students considered that they either

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held a basic level of English or lower than basic, which coincided with Heredia and Rubio's (2015) findings of students of secondary school holding a low level of English. A small percentage of students believe they hold intermediate or advanced level.

Moreover, the findings revealed that there might be a number of students who hold knowledge of English, but did not take the English test seriously. An exploration of the university exam revealed that there was an information section in the exam booklet that informed students that test results did not determine their acceptance to the university. Although this information intended to relax students to obtain real test results, the findings showed there were students who answered the exam effortlessly. This information might indicate that the institutional evaluation of English might not be taken seriously by all students. As a result, an important number of students may obtain a low score in the English diagnostic exam when in reality they hold knowledge of English. These results impact English lessons seriously as students complained that occasionally they do not find space to register for their English lessons.

Furthermore, findings indicated a significant difference between the scores students obtained in the diagnostic test score and the scores in the first English course. Most students pass the first English course with scores ranging from 70 (minimum passing score) and 85 (in a scale of 100). Therefore, taking into consideration students' low entrance level of English, there seems to be improvement by the end of the first term. Yet, course scores decreased from the first term to the second one. Generally, scores greatly increased from diagnostic test scores to the first English course, but then scores decreased.

### **6.2.1 Factors Influencing Performance**

From the findings above, it can be noted a difference between entrance exam scores and English course scores. To highlight the most salient factors in performance, gender did not reflect significant differences in students' performance, but type of upper secondary school did. There were no significant differences among the test and course scores of females and males. This finding is in line with other studies (Alavinia and Salmasi, 2012; Hussein et al., 2009). A possible explanation for this may be that most students receive education from public schools.

Nevertheless, findings showed that type of upper secondary school education influenced performance. Students from public schools outnumbered those from private

upper secondary schools, but students from private schools showed a more significant difference in performance than those from public schools. Many private schools invest more in foreign language education, due to competitiveness among private institutions. This may be one explanation parents prefer their children to study in a private institution. These results further support the idea that parents value bilingual education and for this reason they prefer private education to public (e.g. Calderón, 2015; Rassouli and Osam, 2013). Additionally, those who receive education from a private institution might usually hold a higher social economic status than the rest of the students, and this shapes the learners' experiences (Ellis, 1994). Unfortunately, economic inequality is a problem in education in Mexico (Heredia and Rubio, 2015). On the other hand, type of upper secondary school is not representative of students' performance in their English course scores. A private school provides an advantage to students when they take the diagnostic test, but after a semester of studying English at university, this variable does not indicate better performance in the English course score.

Additionally, feelings towards progress and performance in English indicated most students view scores as indicators of language progress. In fact, a general feeling of progress was assigned to scores since most students considered they were fair. When tests are an important element of the classroom, students give more importance to tests than to learning (Assessment Reform Group, 2002). Nevertheless, this progress extrapolated achievement rather than proficiency. These findings suggest there are two types of students. One type centred progress on scores and the other on abilities to use the target language. A passing score meant progress for the first group of students even when they wished they were proficient in English. Interestingly most of these students fit into the negative attitude category. On the other hand, the other group of students actually evaluated progress based on their abilities to understand the language. Students who held positive attitudes were better able to analyse and evaluate language progress as they considered that lessons provided an opportunity for practicing the language. They also obtained scores above 80/100 in their first English course. Additionally, they evaluated their learning in class as limited. It is important to mention that these students obtained a satisfactory score in the diagnostic test, except for one who admitted he did not invest any effort in answering the test, but he had knowledge of English. Therefore, results agree with Kuhlemeier et al. (1996) where they found those students with positive attitudes rated higher in achievement. Results also agree with Busse and Walter (2013) as their findings indicated that students who expressed lack of progress was mainly due to insecurity in language skills tasks, but also for the

decline of enjoyment in learning the foreign language. Interestingly, one student holding positive attitude recognized his scores did not really correspond to his level of English as he considered he deserved less. He considered his scores corresponded to his effort but not the level of English. In other words, language proficiency might be questionable. A further study with more focus on the relationship between scores and language proficiency is therefore suggested.

### **6.2.2 Language Proficiency and Confidence**

Reaching the desired language proficiency might be the dream of many language learners. The findings in this study revealed that despite students rely on their English course scores to evaluate their language performance, proficiency is not satisfactory. An overview of students' self-evaluation of English skills showed that most students believe their proficiency in English is much lower than the English course they were studying at the time of this study. This finding is similar to Tsuda's (2003), where most undergraduates felt they had low proficiency in English. Attending and passing an English course level, then, does not accurately indicate language proficiency. It seems students believe they have knowledge of English, but they lack the abilities to communicate using English.

As usual, language difficulties are present in the process of language learning. Certainly, some language skills seem more difficult than others. Findings in this study revealed that students considered reading to be the strongest skill, followed by writing, listening, and speaking. Interestingly, reading and writing skills were better evaluated. Yet, they base reading comprehension on translation, and it is very likely that being able to write sentences in English is mistakenly assumed as writing in English. While reading tasks and assignments are assigned to students at university, it is not clear if writing assignments beyond the English course are required. On the other hand, contrary to expectation, most students considered they understand spoken English. This can be interpreted as the result of direct or indirect exposure to this skill. They listen to their teachers speaking English, listen to audios or songs, and watch movies or videos on the internet. Nonetheless, the speaking skill is the most difficult for students. Two explanations can account for this. First, coping with phonological awareness and patterns of English pronunciation, among other aspects, becomes difficult for Spanish speakers. Explicit instruction and lots of practise is necessary to be able to produce sounds that do not exist in their native language. Moreover, a learner's speaking skills are always under scrutiny by an audience such as the English teacher. Then even when the students in this

study believe they are able to understand some of what they hear, read and write, most cannot communicate orally in English, which lead to feelings of discontent. After all, the common question when someone asks another about knowledge of English is “*do you speak English?*” Therefore, if there is lack of confidence in speaking skills, this drives them to restrict interaction in English.

Encounters with English native speakers are sometimes avoided due to ‘not mastering English’. In an academic situation, Ghavamnia and Ketabi (2013) found that students usually keep quiet mainly due to their lack of confidence in their proficiency. Therefore, a learner unsure of her proficiency remains quiet before a situation where English needs to be spoken. Two assumptions emerge from this situation: 1) lack of proficiency or 2) lack of confidence in proficiency. In the first scenario the students might be passing the English course, but with a limitation of their communication skills in English while in the second, the learner might be able to communicate but does not feel self-efficient; an indication that language exposure and interaction should be emphasized. An individual’s perceptions to communicate successfully, authentically and relatively error-free determines her attitudes towards the foreign language (Dewaele, 2008). This coincides with the findings in this study as students who held positive attitudes actually mentioned they could communicate in English unlike the ones with negative attitudes.

Furthermore, the findings indicate a relationship between performance and the four resulting attitudinal factors (*See Chapter 5*) in this study. The factor of Linguistic exposure made a significant unique contribution to the prediction of test scores, and scores on the first English course. Based on these findings, students who experienced more contact with English were the ones who obtained better scores in the test, and in the first English course. Language exposure has been presented as significant in other contexts (Nuramal and Chonlada, 2014; Parina and De Leon, 2013; Ajileye, 1998). Contact as an influencing factor in a language community, and the positive relationship between contact and an improvement in ethnolinguistic attitudes is of paramount importance (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2005). Exposure to foreign languages shapes the attitudes towards the same languages (Dewaele, 2008). Although Linguistic exposure stands out from other factors regarding test and first English course performance, the factor of Socio-cultural impact surpasses the factor of Linguistic exposure as a predicting factor for students’ performance on the second English course.

The findings seem particularly informative regarding students’ contact with English. Contact with English within the target language culture undoubtedly includes aspects

which would be hard to find in a context where Spanish is mostly used, yet intercultural contact - either abroad or in their learner's native country - can influence the learners' attitudes (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2005). This study showed that language exposure was related to attitudes towards learning English. In addition, exposure influenced attitudes. This influence was mostly positive. Undoubtedly early direct contact with English in an English-speaking country provides confidence and proficiency in English, and highlights the importance of English for communication. Moreover, a sense of security and efficacy results for learners who can communicate in English with native speakers in their community. More importantly, the students who encountered difficulties communicating in English manifested eagerness to continue learning English despite their somewhat negative attitude. The availability of input gives the learner the opportunity to take risks and engage in communicating in the L2 (Yule, 1996).

### 6.3 Attitudinal/Motivational Changes

The data gathering procedures indicated a disparity of attitudes towards English at the beginning and end of the academic year. Nevertheless, other attitudinal/motivational factors are supported from both methods. This part of the discussion addresses attitude change from the perspective of the four salient attitudinal/motivational factors.

As mentioned previously, there were four attitudinal/motivational factors in this study. Those four factors showed changes during the academic year of 2014-2015. Two factors *EFL attitudes towards learning English* and *Linguistic exposure* decreased while *Socio-cultural impact* and *Classroom experience* increased. With regard to the first factor, there were some specific elements that decreased while others were maintained. For instance, there was an evident reduction in the attitudes towards speakers of English and other cultural aspects which suggests that careful attention should be given as culture is a fundamental part of learning a foreign language. As Gardner (1985) states a language is not learned as other subjects; when learning another language a learner needs to engage in the other language culture and everything that implies. Probably the lessons could reinforce this aspect as these attitudes if explored in more detail could lead to the identification of possible stereotypes regarding language groups, but also to the implementation and monitoring of language planning projects (Roos, 1990).

Students' attitudes towards learning English decreasing after an academic year of studying at university coincided with Busse (2013), but also with other studies which explore the students' transition to university in other areas (Krause and Coates, 2008;

Krause, 2005). The findings in this study imply that students' attitudes decline by the end of the first term at university since they have already obtained a grade and have also spent time without studying English. In fact, Gardner et al. (2004) found that students tended to decrease their attitude and motivation during the school breaks. Therefore, spending time without English instruction seems to decrease the students' attitudes towards learning English. This suggests that the longer it takes for a learner to study English from one course to another, the more attitudes can be affected. Special attention might be needed as comments of not being able to register in English lessons at university were salient from students' comments. This might decrease the interest they initially held to learn English. Therefore, it seems the English learning situation in the classroom and the institution led to changes in students' attitudes. This finding is supported by Lai and Ting (2013) study, and Gardner et al. (2004) as they found that motivational changes usually occur in attitudes towards the language learning situation.

The findings suggest that there might be other possible reasons for students' providing a lower score to the factor of Attitudes towards learning English. First, as stated previously, students probably had great expectations about learning English immediately after finishing upper secondary school. As time progressed they might have realized that learning English is not automatic. The fact that students do not feel content with their level of English might result in students' lower attitudes to learning English. Campbell and Storch (2011) found that the learning environment either motivates or demotivates learners in different semesters when learning starts taking place. Then, learners are very likely to lower their attitudes and expectations towards learning English after a year of studying English at university.

The findings revealed that effective linguistic exposure or contact with English decreased. Yet, the findings showed more interest in understanding T.V. programmes and movies in English. Probably the double purpose of these types of activities: enjoy and learn at the same time contributed to an increasing interest in English.

In fact, findings in this study also showed that media can be a great source to access the target language cultural aspects. On the other hand, students reported language practise in the classroom and reading in English for content course assignments. But exposure is still limited. The need to speak English outside the classroom is sporadic. Only few students at this level experience language encounters.

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The findings show that linguistic exposure contributed to better performance. Unfortunately for many students, contact with the foreign language in a foreign country is limited. The economic situation of most public school students do not allow them to travel abroad, which supports Ellis' (1994) link between the social status and the learning experiences. In other words, language learning experience seems limited as a consequence of a limited budget. Those who experience living in another culture gain other learning insights. Although results cannot be generalized, this study showed that an open mind, a more relaxing attitude and self-efficacy may be the result of continuous contact with English in a foreign country. Nevertheless, opportunities for interaction in the foreign language appeared more common and often within Mexico. For instance, students interacted in their community; now at university students seem to have more friends who speak English. Additionally, technology provides a valuable source for students to interact in the target language in the absence of travelling abroad. They seem to be very aware that interaction over the phone and internet are valuable tools to practise English. In short, there is possibility of contact and exposure inside and outside the language classroom. It is only necessary to be aware of these opportunities to reduce anxiety, increase confidence and improve English.

On the other hand, there is an increase in socio-cultural impact, which might be interpreted from two angles. Social and cultural aspects do have a great impact on learners. There is implicit pressure of studying English as a mandatory course. Yet students may not really consider it as an imposition, contrary to what Despaigne (2010) argues in her study. This finding points towards a real interest to understand and learn English, and this is not pressure free. This finding agrees with Bartram (2010), where European learners are also aware of the need to speak English.

Additionally, there was an increase in peer pressure. For instance, in upper secondary school, there was not a sense of diminishing the students who did not speak English well. Probably at that stage, students' proficiency was very similar. Additionally, English was not seen as important at that stage. Probably, there was not a high degree of competitiveness among the students to speak English at upper secondary school. Nevertheless, peer pressure increased at university as students also became aware of the need of English. In fact, Dominguez Lopez et al. (2015) found that negative emotions were mostly salient for beginner and intermediate Mexican students for the oral skill. For instance, Cassi compared her knowledge of English to those of other students who had received education in English from childhood. This finding coincides with Graham (2006) as in her study students with low self-efficacy compared to their peers. Despite

mostly low scores in the diagnostic evaluation, there are also some scores that indicate satisfactory results. As described in Chapter 5, even students who did not take the Level A English course, due to obtaining a satisfactory score on the diagnostic evaluation, were taking the English 1 course. In other words, students who have experienced contact with English abroad and are self-confident are mixed among those who expressed not being proficient in English. As a consequence, different levels of proficiency might be present in an assigned level classroom. This finding coincided with Ghavamnia and Ketabi (2013) study results. Therefore, this situation can be considered as one more difficulty to learn English, which suggests social impact is greater in the language classroom.

The learning experience has played a particularly crucial role in understanding language learning (Dörnyei, 2009; Clément et al., 1994; Gardner, 1985). The findings indicated there were positive classroom experience changes. This finding coincides with Csizér et al. (2010) where the immediate environment influences learners' attitudes, goals and motivation. While competitiveness increased, so did the support among peers. Moreover, the activities performed in the classroom were more relevant than the ones they performed in upper secondary school, and there was more awareness about the evaluation system. Classroom activities with a clear purpose to develop language skills invite students to engage in learning (Hedge, 1987). Then, even though peer pressure increased, other aspects of classroom learning signalled a more positive atmosphere. This may signal a reduction of anxiety as students learn more English and as they familiarized with their peers and English teachers; in Krashen's (1985) terms when the affective filter is high. A note of caution is due here since anxiety was not further explored in this study and different sources for anxiety have been documented (Horwitz, 2001).

On the other hand, English teachers at university were highly regarded. Students definitely valued teachers' effort and willingness to help students learn. This coincides with findings in Ghavamnia and Ketabi's (2013) study as they found having a friendly and knowledgeable teacher was important for students. It seems students identified some differences from the transition of learning English in upper secondary school to university, which is similar to Rahman's (2005) findings. In his study students felt more content with their functional English courses at university. In fact, well trained teachers increase respect (Bartram, 2010). Similarly, the findings here suggest that students valued their lessons and were aware of the need to speak English in the classroom with peers and teachers.

Major aspects of attitude change based on the four attitudinal/motivational factors were addressed above based on all data gathering. The next discussion concentrates on major aspects that lead to stability or attitude change from students' perspectives. In this part of the discussion change in attitude will be addressed in the following manner: 1) Negative to positive attitude and, 2) Stability. Finally, a representation that illustrates attitude change towards learning English based on all data gathering is presented.

### **6.3.1 Negative to Positive Attitude**

Findings in this study indicated overall positive initial attitudes towards learning English which actually decreased after an academic year. Nevertheless, from students' perspectives the process was inverted. In other words, initial attitudes were mostly negative and then shifted to positive. The findings suggest a clear connection of attitudes to classroom learning experience.

Initial negative attitudes concentrated on negative classroom learning experience. Interest for learning English, as a mandatory subject at university, was little when students started tertiary education. As expected, not receiving proper English lessons in upper secondary school or lower secondary school was a salient reason. Lack of support from previous English teachers was evidenced. In fact, findings suggest absence of English teachers at secondary school education. As a result, knowledge of English was basically non-existent. Additionally, so-called peer competitiveness suggested discomfort among students. Once again the English teacher was partly responsible when attention was given to students who knew more English. Logically, a sense of frustration was visible as other students felt ignored. Then, in this scenario the class probably became a one to one session as the teacher concentrated on the active learner. This resulted in the rest of students being ignored (Ghavamnia and Ketabi, 2013). In addition, there was absence of activities that promoted interaction. Students received instruction about the target language, but teachers did not create the right opportunities into the classroom to develop the necessary linguistic skills for students to speak English. Peer interaction was not constructed as there was no contact face to face among students, or suitable context that invited to interaction (Apple and Lantolf, 1994). This leads to the assumption that the teachers lacked interest, knowledge of second language teaching methodology, or proficiency in English. In fact, Borjian (2015) mentions that there are not enough English teachers in Mexico who hold sufficient proficiency in English. On the other hand, there are always students who in fact do not like English. This is not the exception since a couple of students mentioned that they did

not take English seriously in upper secondary school. This echoes Borjiam (2015) study where Mexican English teachers expressed that students do not see a short term use for the use of English; they lack a perspective of the use of English in future situations, and they notice the importance of English until they start college. In other words, students' real need to learn English is not usually constructed before tertiary education.

Nevertheless, it is possible to shift negative or uncertain attitudes towards learning English into positive. There are at least five main reasons for this group of students to change from negative to positive or somewhat positive. The first reason is the usefulness they see in learning English (Tahaineh and Daana, 2013; Al-Tamimi and Shuib, 2009; Van de Gaer, et al., 2007; Tsuda, 2003; Kobayashi, 2002; Malallah, 2000). For instance, now that students are at university they can relate English to their area of study. The university, society and the world basically demands them to learn English. If there is no knowledge of English, there is basically no room to excel professionally in their respective areas of specialization. Besides, university professors provided assignments in English. Students were convinced English is of paramount importance for the development of their careers, and they started using the language academically.

A second reason for attitude change relied once more on the English teacher. As a matter of fact, the figure of the English teacher and other instructors is central for students to notice the importance of English for professional development. It seems English teachers and professors constantly reminded students to learn English. On the other hand, students value teachers' support and demand attention to their needs. This finding goes in line with Ghavaminia and Ketabi's (2013), where they found that the students expected their teachers to be friendly, and that they desired more attention to their concerns. Empathy seems to be of great assistance in the foreign language classroom. Moreover, classroom activities seem to be more engaging and attractive. This also concurs with Ghavaminia and Ketabi's (2013) findings, where students reported they wanted instructors to make lessons more fun and interesting. Feeling supported by their English teachers contributed to the shift of students' attitude to the positive side. This result coincides with Gardner et al. (2004) that one influential factor is the learning situation, specifically learners' reactions to the teacher.

The third reason is represented by the foreign language itself. There is expectation of certain degree of lesson difficulty and complexity. That feeling of learning something new becomes extremely important for students even if it is a new word or a new grammar topic. Moreover, direct exposure to the language by face to face interaction

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adds extra drive to learn the language. For instance, a couple of students who experienced direct contact and were able to get their message across were also able to experience what Brown (2001) describes as the “I can do it!” principle of language learning. In fact, Lightbown and Spada (1998) mention that the state of exhilaration students experience with the language leads them to be eager to learn more. Otherwise, students feel trapped learning the same content repeatedly. To illustrate this, one student mentioned that verb *to be* was studied during three years of upper secondary school. This finding coincides with Ramirez-Romero et al. (2012) finding; in their analysis of teaching English in Mexico, target language was repetitive from one cycle to another. As students advance, they should see that there are more complex language structures than ‘verb to be’; this adds interest and value to learn English.

The fourth reason is based on classroom peer interaction. Findings revealed students felt comfortable sharing lessons with classmates from different fields. The need to get to know people from different majors might motivate students to engage in interaction, therefore, functioning as an incentive to interact with different people and eliminate fear to speak English. It can therefore be assumed that sharing the classroom with the same students from content courses would add stress and anxiety to some students. This observation points towards the importance of group dynamics. Then this finding supports previous research into group dynamics as this is reported as one factor responsible for students’ motivation change (Lai and Ting, 2013).

The fifth and last reason for attitude change is attitude, effort and self-efficacy. Admitting learning English is not enjoyable or finding English difficult seems no impediment to change from negative to positive attitude. In upper secondary school many students did not see the need to learn English, and did not consider it important. At that stage, students are not yet mature, many do not even know what they will major in, and some others do not even know if they will continue to pursue higher education studies. Travelling abroad might not even be included in their plans. Once students notice and admit the importance of English, and find interest or a need to learn it, they are more likely to engage in learning the target language even if at first they were not convinced of enjoying the process. By the second term, students mostly showed a more positive attitude that included effort and feelings of being self-efficient towards learning English. This finding is consistent with that of Graham (2006), which found that mastery students considered effort as a major role in language learning. In other words, it can therefore be assumed that students were motivated, which match with Borjian and Padilla (2010) and Borjian’s (2015) results. They found that Mexican students among

other reasons pursue learning English because they are motivated, and had cultural connections with the culture. Yet, this study has been unable to demonstrate salient cultural connections. These results also support previous research into motivation which links attitude as an important component of motivation (Gardner, 1985) and (Yule, 1996).

In short, from students' perspectives and comments five main reasons can be highlighted for students shifting from a negative to a positive attitude. First, they need to see a need to learn the language. Definitely if there is no clear objective in learning the language then it might be more difficult to reach the goal. Second, the English teacher stands out again as an important figure to students' exerting a positive attitude towards learning English. Students need to feel supported by their English teachers. Third, the foreign language should pose a degree of difficulty; otherwise, the students lose interest in learning as they do not feel they are learning. Fourth, classroom peer interaction is important for students. A learning environment where they feel free to express their ideas in English provides them a sense of comfort to continue learning, and reduces their anxiety and fear to express in a foreign language. Lastly, the fifth reason relies on the main topic of this study, which is attitude. Having a positive attitude and a sense of self-efficacy to learn English is of great help no matter the difficulties the learner might face. If effort is invested in learning English in and out of the language classroom they believe it is possible to learn. Significant learning takes place when students change, as this leads to some permanence of the learning experience (Dee Fink, 2003).

### **6.3.2 Positive Attitude Stability**

Motivational dynamics establishes that there are states of stability (Dörnyei, 2014). Findings indicate important elements that lead to attitude stability over a period of one academic year. Further insights into the relationship between initial and final attitudes revealed both stable positive and negative attitudes.

The findings show three salient reasons for students who remained with positive attitudes towards learning English for over a year: 1) joy for the language, 2) previous learning experience, and 3) linguistic exposure. The first reason is an overt expression of liking and enjoying learning English. Those students who like and enjoy learning English were most likely to maintain positive attitudes throughout the academic year despite circumstances that overshadow learning. Skehan (1995) mentions one characteristic of

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exceptional language learners is their interest and enjoyment of learning languages. Enjoying the language leads to have more concrete learning goals (Williams and Burden, 1997). Understanding cultural aspects and language through music was a clear goal for some of these students. Additionally, Noels et al. (2000) argue that students who are more autonomous and learn English in a supportive environment are more likely to learn as learning becomes a pleasurable activity. Clearly, this study shows that their joy for learning English motivated these students to maintain a positive attitude throughout the academic term.

The second reason to maintain positive attitudes was based on previous satisfactory learning experience. In this case, the most prompt experience was upper secondary school, where again the English teacher played a central role. Students feel certain comfort when they are 'seen' by their English teachers. In other words, students want to participate, they want to be called on; they want to be present in the classroom and enjoy learning through fun activities. In other words, students expect their teachers to make them part of learning. This finding is in full accordance to Ghavamnia and Ketabi's (2013) findings, where students wanted instructors to make English classes fun and interesting. The current study found that students with positive attitudes are very likely to have goals. Goals are extremely important in language learning and autonomous learning, and play an important role in motivation (Pintrich and Schunk, 2002; Benson, 2001). This finding seems to be consistent with Campbell and Storch's (2011) results as they found personal goals to be clear indicators of motivation or demotivation. Moreover, Taguchi et al. (2009) found that the learning experience for Chinese students was not as important as for Japanese or Iranian students as Chinese had a specific goal.

Additionally, it is very likely that students who maintain a positive attitude use the language classroom to really practise English. The fact that teachers asks them a question in class represents for them an opportunity to speak up. These students mostly maintained their positive attitudes due to satisfactory experience learning English. Thus, as the findings suggest, not only do students want their teachers to encourage them, to offer that sense of comfort to eliminate shame and fear to speak English, but also they need teachers to cope with their goals.

The third reason for sustaining a positive attitude relied on linguistic exposure. Students who sustained positive attitudes engaged more in extra-curricular exposure to the target language. As Dewaele (2008) found in his study, exposure to the foreign

languages being researched are linked to personality dimensions and this exposure shapes the attitudes towards the languages. The findings in this study suggest one main source for extra linguistic exposure. Apparently the most immediate source of extra linguistic exposure is entertainment. Listening to songs, watching movies or videos in English provides practise for students outside the language classroom, and exposure to culture. This coincides with previous studies (Al-Tamimi and Shuib, 2009; Tsuda, 2003). Entertainment seems a major force for students to engage in learning English. Additionally, these students seemed to be determined to learn English, which support Deci and Ryan's (2012) self-determination theory. Then, determination in understanding the language for a purpose maintains the desire to learn English.

### **6.3.3 Negative Attitude Stability**

During the period of one academic year students considered their attitudes remained static. At least, the attitudes mentioned were mostly negative. Contrary to sustained positive attitudes, negative attitudes concentrated on two main aspects: language experience and instruction (*See 5.7.2*).

First, not many English lessons were received from upper secondary school. This can clearly be a source of demotivation as Campbell and Storch (2011) found in their study; past learning experiences is a source of motivation or demotivation. Additionally, students did not have a constant figure of the English teacher who cares about students' learning. In their learning English experience, there were demanding English teachers who showed interest, but others did not care whether students learned. Inappropriate characteristics of teachers' teaching methods are a source of demotivation (Ghadirzadeh et al., 2013). Thus, this type of experience in upper secondary school contributed to negative feelings and attitudes towards English before they started learning English at university. For this reason students manifested anxiety and insecurity to study English at university. These findings corroborate that of previous studies (Fryer et al., 2013; Tsuda, 2003). Previous language learning experience probably overshadowed the interest or curiosity to learn English, and converted any feeling towards English into an unwanted load. This may be a possible origin of feelings of 'I don't like English' as synonym of 'I had a bad experience learning English', or feelings of 'I have no choice but study English' because it is a fact students need to pass the English course to graduate.

Moreover, it is unfortunate that the negative experience learning English might repeat, but under a different scenario. Definitely every student has her own needs learning the

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language, but it seems that when certain expectations are not fulfilled in the language classroom, they can easily transform to feelings of frustration to learn the language. For instance, students were expected to give oral presentations in front of their peers as a form of assessment (*See Excerpt 16*). Their learning expectations were probably to receive all the tools and information to comply with such language requirement, but the content activities developed in the classroom seemed not to be significant to learn the language and achieve what they were asked. Therefore, course content also contributed to students' lack of interest in learning English; that is, the content did not correspond to students' needs or reasons to learn English. Findings indicated that activities centred on the course book. Similar findings were salient in Ghadirzadeh et al. (2013), where course content also contributed to demotivation. If instruction about pronunciation among other techniques to improve oral skills is not provided, a student may feel frustrated. It is not only the pressure of delivering a message in English in front of others and not knowing how to do it, but receiving a low score as a result.

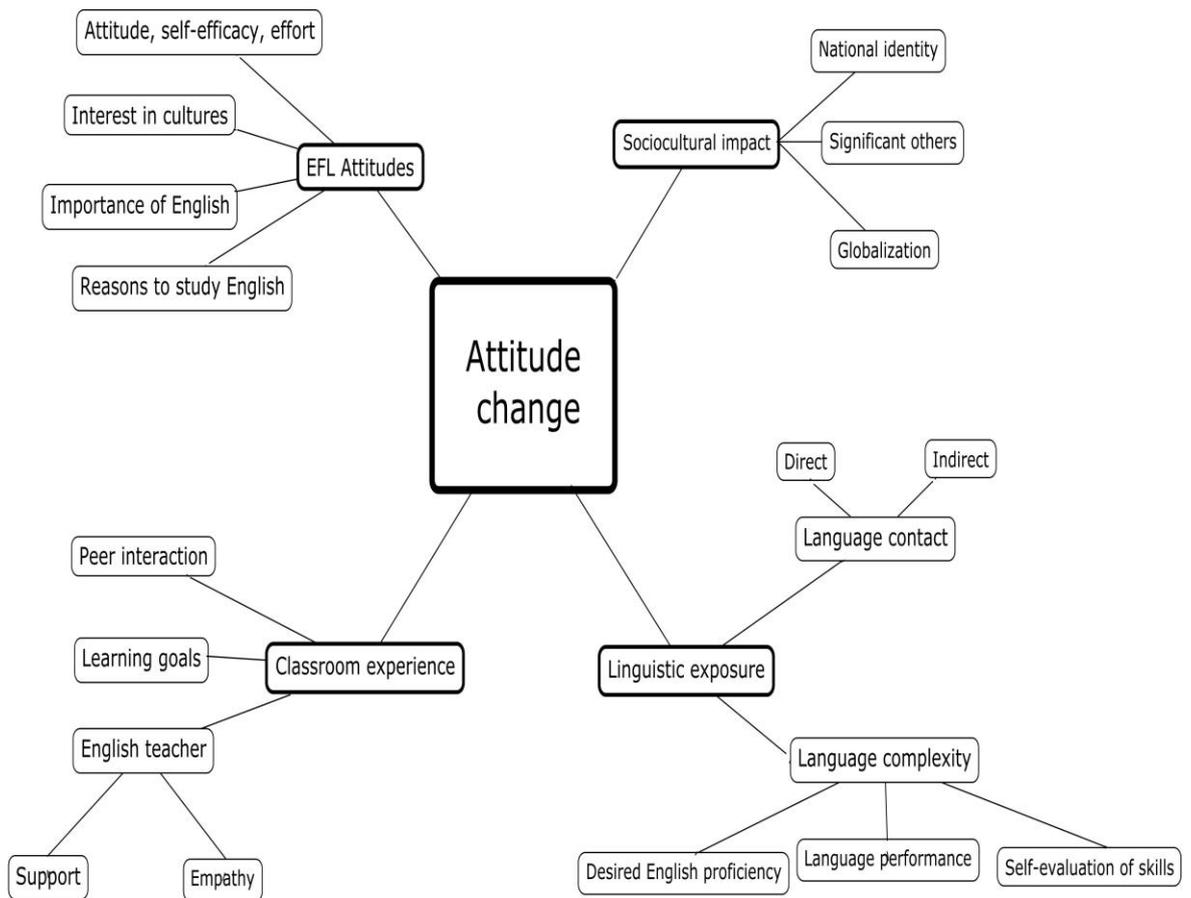
These students who maintained a negative attitude towards learning English expected more from the language instruction at university. They tried expressing their needs, but they did not receive what they asked. Classroom activities as well as teachers' comments led these students to think they cannot receive what they need from the English lessons at university. Unfortunately, related studies in the Mexican context show that English teaching is centred mostly on a grammar and vocabulary based curricula (Borjian, 2015; Ramirez-Romero et al., 2012). Thus, lessons could go beyond grammar explanations, and listening and oral presentations that the course book dictates. Instead students require more interaction in English that lead them to improve their pronunciation and oral skills. They believe this can happen by having more games in the classroom. Regarding of students' attitudes towards learning English, fun and interesting English lessons are demanded as in Ghavimnia and Ketabi's (2013) study. This can give students the language practise some English teachers recommend to their own students. Comments by teachers as "you can do it, but you need more practise" basically disregard the responsibility of the teacher of presenting the opportunities to speak and practise in the classroom considering the limited resources students have to really interact in English in other scenarios. Besides this type of comments can damage the student's integrity and effort to study English and cause the inverse effect on the students as in Ghavimnia and Ketabi's (2013) findings. A silent learner is not a synonym of apathy; a silent language learner can, in fact, be digesting the process of learning but at her own pace.

In summary, positive attitudes remained relatively stable for a period of a year based on enjoyment for learning English, satisfactory experience and exposure to English (See 5.7.2). Students who aimed to understand English enjoy the learning process and want to learn the target language cultural aspects. They also count on a previous positive learning experience and more exposure to English. On the other hand, negative attitudes are sustained when there is some sort of learning frustration. This includes over reliance on the teachers' activities and comments to learn the language. In other words, they base their learning mainly on the English teacher as these students did not manifest a learning goal to learn English nor did they express an extra activity to learn English. Therefore, foreign language learning determines positive or negative attitudes (Hermann, 1980) since the English teacher is an essential part of language learning. Other studies are in line with this finding, where attitudes towards learning English influence performance (Al Samadani and Ibnian, 2015; Bidin, et al. 2009).

#### **6.4 Attitude Change Representation**

The findings from a mixed methodology confirmed and reiterated that students' attitudes towards learning English are based on four major factors: EFL attitudes, Socio-cultural impact, Classroom experience and Linguistic exposure. From these results emerged the following figure:

Figure 4: Factors of Attitude Change



The findings in this study suggested four main factors gathered from quantitative data. The factors of EFL attitudes, Socio-cultural impact, Classroom experience and Linguistic exposure were confirmed and reiterated by qualitative data. In the figure presented above the four factors interconnect and lead to attitude change. The first factor, EFL attitudes, comprises aspects which are intrinsically related to the individual's characteristics. For instance, the student brings to the language classroom a set of ideas previously learnt. Some ideas relate to attitude, self-efficacy and effort. These results match those observed in previous studies (Dörnyei, 2006), where self-confidence, effort, cultural interest, attitudes towards L2 speakers and also reasons to learn English are part of motivation models. In this respect, quantitative data show that most students start learning English at university level with positive attitudes while results from qualitative data suggest that learners start university with a bad attitude towards learning English. Similarly, quantitative data show that attitudes towards learning English decrease after a year of learning English while qualitative data show that students' attitudes can actually change to positive, but also be stable.

The second factor, socio-cultural impact unlike the ought to self, comprises national identity, significant others and also globalization. Although fulfilling others' expectation is implicit within these three aspects, national identity exerts a rather negative influence in students' attitudes with regard to interaction in English. A note of caution is due here since results are limited to the high mean score pertaining to being proud of being Mexican and a couple of students' responses stating that speaking in English with national peers is not natural. On the other hand, significant others and globalization seem to impact more positively as they highlight a need to learn the target language. Additionally, the phenomenon of globalization seems to drive an image of possible L2 selves for first year students. A possible explanation for this might be that students imagine themselves as future professionals in the work field. English is part of that training. Because of this students managed to be in the corresponding English course. According to these data we can infer that these students may be motivated despite their positive or negative attitudes. These results are consistent with data obtained in Far et al. (2012). Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative data reiterate the importance of national identity, significant others and globalization for the students' performance on subsequent English courses, and attitude change.

Moreover, classroom experience is also of extreme importance for performance and attitude change. Generally, learners indicate a higher level of satisfaction with their classroom experience. However, quantitative data is gathered to strict numbers students can only choose from. When students expressed their opinions, the situation regarding classroom experience, performance and change became more complex, but also more understandable. One main aspect worth highlighting is that students demand a suitable atmosphere for learning. This atmosphere can be promoted by interaction among peers that centre mainly on support rather than on "unfair competitiveness". The findings partly coincide with Papi's (2010), which found that a good learning experience indicates a decrease in students' anxiety. Linked to this, setting goals allow to focus on learning independently from the teachers' behaviour or teaching practises. This finding seems to reiterate those of previous studies (Dörnyei, 2005). On the other hand, the teacher continues to be an important figure within this factor. Teaching methodology is of great significance and students demand a variety of exercises that contribute to building language skills. Nevertheless, the findings in this study suggest that support and empathy from teachers are above all important for students. Quantitative and qualitative data highlighted the importance of a suitable atmosphere that motivates either change or stability in attitudes.

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Contrary to statistical results where Linguistic exposure decreased by the end of the first year, students' opinions suggested that Linguistic exposure increased at university, although it is still limited. From both sets of data it was concluded that Linguistic exposure comprises two main subdivisions. The first one is language contact and the second language complexity. Language contact comprises direct and indirect contact. Direct contact refers to any type of interaction where the learner communicates without mediators while indirect contact is when the learner is mainly receptive of the language by different means. Indirect contact such as watching a T.V programme in English with subtitles can easily transform to direct contact with the language. For instance, the student who loves football perceived and learned about cultural aspects of British culture, which were implicit while watching the games. The second subdivision refers to language complexity. Students demand the appropriate level of language complexity in the target language because teaching/learning repetitive language causes discontent and frustration. In other words, it is a detriment to reach the desired English proficiency. Yet, the language can become complex when the activities presented in the classroom do not agree with the assessment. As a form of illustration, students give oral presentations for their oral skills to be assessed, but not enough oral practise might be provided in the classroom. This may impact language performance. For students who hold positive attitudes, set learning goals, are self-efficient and exert effort, this might not be a problem. Finally, self-evaluation of skills mostly corresponds to the performance obtained. Thus, a pre-conceived result is basically foreseen based on experiences involving the target language.

The data collected from both quantitative and qualitative data allowed to have a broader panorama of the study in question. For instance, quantitative data provided a general result into the learners' attitudes towards learning English, which at first sight suggested that most students had positive attitudes towards learning English when they started university, and that they decreased after a year. Yet, although it cannot be generalized, qualitative data contradicted these results. The sample indicated more initial negative attitudes, which actually turned to positive by the end of the academic year. Not only did qualitative data point out attitude change, but also stability.

With regard to predicting factors for the EDII exam and English course scores, type of upper secondary education seems relevant. Private upper secondary education provided an advantage to students who took the EDII. Results from quantitative and qualitative data suggest that education from private school provides learners with more linguistic exposure. In addition, Socio-cultural impact was also salient from both sets of data.

Current global language learning demands seem to impact learners' performance and attitude change. Moreover, qualitative data provided more evidence to explore the students' learning experience at upper secondary school and at university than quantitative data. While statistical analyses provided a general picture for these students' performance and attitude change, it was the information gathered from students' interviews that provided specific details into each of the attitudinal/motivational factors leading to performance and attitude change or stability. Focusing only on a quantitative or qualitative method would have limited the scope of the research since attitude includes an affective component, which is difficult to explore through questionnaire data. A mixed methodology broadened the situation of learning English in Mexico with regards to attitudes towards learning English and performance. Thus, using a mixed methodology allowed me to explore data from more than one standpoint (Creamer, 2018) in order to integrate both sets of data into the four main factors mentioned in the representation presented above.

The present results are significant in at least two major respects. First, two of these factors are directly responsible for students' performance (Linguistic exposure and Socio-cultural impact). The main factor responsible for EDII performance is Linguistic exposure, and as time progresses from academic term to academic term, Socio-cultural impact appears to be increasingly important. As far as attitude change is concerned, the four factors intervene to attitude change or stability at some point.

In addition, these results provide further support for the attitude components described in the literature (Bohner et al., 2002; Arvey, 1990; Allport, 1954). For instance, Figure 5 representing attitude change includes cognitive, affective and behavioural components. The findings indicate that each of these three components is represented in the four factors. For instance, cognition is implied in the attitudes towards learning factor recognizing the importance of English. Similarly, it is reflected in social impact as knowledge of English is portrayed through globalization. While cognition can be represented in classroom experience through learning goals, it is represented in linguistic exposure by language complexity. Additionally, the affective component is implied in the four factors too. To illustrate affection in the attitude factor, there is attitude per se but also reasons to learn the language or interest in cultures. Affection is clearly evident in the classroom experience as shown by teachers' support and empathy. Likewise, language complexity generates some form of affection, as significant others are reflected in socio-cultural impact. Finally, a behavioural component is portrayed in each factor. As a way of illustration, the linguistic exposure factor comprises many

aspects of reactions such as language contact and performance. Other elements in each of the factors can reflect the cognitive, affective and behavioural components of attitude. Thus, the four attitudinal/motivational factors corroborate the three components of attitude.

## **6.5 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter a discussion of the main theories and empirical studies related to the studies on attitude, performance and change are presented. First, attitudes in regard to performance and change are contrasted with other related studies. A representation of the four attitudinal/motivational factors and their subdivisions is portrayed to represent attitude change.

The first part of the discussion centres on the attitudes towards learning English. Similar to previous studies, factors comprise the broader dimensions of attitude and motivation. This study identified four major attitudinal/motivational factors. These are EFL attitudes, socio-cultural impact, classroom experience and linguistic exposure. On the other hand, the findings in this study coincide with other studies as students regard the study of English as important. Additionally, attitudes towards English were mostly positive. Overall, the country's economy development and their own professional development were salient reasons to learn English. Therefore, instrumentality mainly for promotion, but also for prevention played a key role in these findings despite some interest in other cultures. Moreover, there were some students who seemed to have clear images of L2 selves. Willingness to learn English was indicated by students stating they felt confident to exert effort to learn English. Even when clear images of the ought to L2 self were not identified, aspects that exert social pressure to learn the language flourished. For instance, the obligation to learn English as a mandatory course has been surpassed by the need to learn English as a demand from the world.

In addition, the language classroom may contribute to a satisfactory or unsatisfactory language learning environment. Many times the teacher is a source of anxiety or comfort depending on the measures taken in the classroom. Generally students demand dynamic interesting activities, but also support and empathy from their English teachers. These findings are in line with that of previous studies signalling the important role of the teacher and the learning environment. Within the classroom, language can be confined. Despite having Mexican friends who speak English, students seldom interact in English with them. Nevertheless, the study evidenced academic assignments that

include use of English, and direct contact with the language increased at university. Also, significant others motivate learning English, which is in line with previous studies.

Also similar to previous studies, students feel they have low proficiency in English. In fact, their scores and their self-evaluations confirmed those feelings. They basically relied on the scores to assess their knowledge of English, and despite having passing scores they do not feel proficient. Although quantitative findings revealed that the linguistic exposure factor was the most prominent factor to predict students' performance at the beginning of the academic year, EFL attitudes became more salient after the academic year. This finding coincides with other studies which evidenced that attitudes decreased after a year of studying at university. On the other hand, although social impact and classroom experience apparently did not impact students' performance, qualitative data evidenced that all factors interconnected and are important for ultimate progress in language learning.

The four factors, EFL attitudes, Socio-cultural impact, Classroom experience and Linguistic exposure, explained the changes in attitudes. The first factor comprises aspects of attitude, self-efficacy and effort. These results coincide with previous studies. The second factor includes national identity, significant others and also globalization. While the first element seems to have a negative connotation, the last two influence positively. Moreover, classroom experience motivates either change or stability in attitudes. This finding partly coincides with other studies because the learning experience may decrease students' anxiety. Similarly, setting goals fosters more independent learning. Yet, teacher's support and empathy are highly valued by students. On the other hand, language contact comprises direct and indirect contact with the target language while language complexity refers to the appropriate level of the language for students. Repetitive language and very complex language tasks cause discontent and frustration, which actually coincide with students' self-evaluation of skills. The four factors representing attitude change also coincide with the three main elements of attitude, which are cognitive, affective, and behavioural. Together these four attitudinal/motivational factors exemplify the elements that contribute to a change in attitude towards learning English.



## Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the major results from this study in relation to undergraduates' attitude, performance and change towards learning English. The aim of the present study was to examine the main attitudinal/motivational factors that influence performance. Then, attitudinal changes over the course of an academic year are addressed. Finally, limitations of this research followed by recommendations for future research in the institution of higher education, and in the field of language learning are provided.

The conclusions of this study were based on the results obtained from a mixed-method approach, which included pre and post attitudinal surveys, exam and course scores, and semi-structured interviews. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods is consistent with Nunan and Bailey's (2009) who claim that a combination of various types of data collection and analysis are appropriate and helpful.

Based on the data detailed in Chapters Four, Five and Six, major conclusions were obtained. First, this study has shown that students recognized the importance of learning English mostly for professional growth even before they started their studies at university. This given importance extrapolates to mostly positive attitudes towards learning English and surpasses the interest in the language to be in contact with other English-speaking cultures such as American and British cultures. In fact, no special interest to learn English to be like Americans or British was salient. Contact with other cultures was mostly mentioned for one main reason: to learn English, which related to growing professionally.

Secondly, the results of this study show that performance in English increases during the period of transition from upper secondary school to university, but then fluctuates over the academic year. Initial performance, as indicated by a diagnostic test, showed mostly poor performance in English despite Mexican students receive English lessons in secondary education. By the end of the first term, a significant increase from diagnostic test to English course (Level A) scores was striking. This result may be explained due to the emphasis that the institution devotes to initial students learning English. Yet, a more reliable comparison was represented by the scores in the Level A and Level B English courses, as assessment forms were more consistent and uniform. At the end of the second course (Level B), there was a decline in students' performance. This is very important because scores are highly regarded by students. A high degree of agreement

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with the assigned scores was salient. Interestingly, even when students achieve passing scores in their English courses, competence in English is dubious.

As a matter of fact, students were very aware of their performance. First, it was reflected in their self-evaluations. Self-evaluations acted as one predictor of students' scores in the diagnostic test. Also, most agreed with course scores, but feelings of "I don't know English or my English is not good enough" were evidenced based on experiences. Additionally, even self-efficient and confident students considered English lessons at university need to be more engaging to provide a suitable learning atmosphere that leads to more knowledge of English.

Third, one of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is the four main attitudinal/motivational factors comprising students' attitudes towards learning English. The first factor of EFL attitudes showed students' attitudes towards learning English were mostly positive when they started tertiary education. The second factor, Socio-cultural impact, indicated a social impact on students. Many expected respect from others, admitted they learn English to satisfy others' expectations, and accepted they were not fond of English, but might need the language. Socio-cultural impact did not seem to affect negatively students' disposition to learn English, which coincides with Lasagabaster (2005), where the sociolinguistic context accounts for positive attitudes.

Linguistic exposure, the third factor, persisted to be of great importance. For instance, it provided an advantage to students to perform better in diagnostic test. Students, who took private tutoring, studied at private institutions or had contact with English through experiences abroad definitely received more exposure to English. In fact, those students from private upper secondary schools showed better performance in the diagnostic test. Linguistic exposure might foster self-confidence for those students who only need an extra push for them to realize they can communicate in English. Additionally, even at unsuccessful encounters with English, students took the experience as opportunities to exert more effort to learn English. In other words, they seem to prepare for the next encounter. The last factor of Classroom experience showed positive aspects of experience learning English at upper secondary school and at university. For instance, respect for teachers and agreement with the evaluation system was evident. Nevertheless, English lessons were considered mostly uninteresting.

Thirdly, this study has found that generally the four attitudinal/motivational factors tended to shift, but also remained stable throughout one academic year. On one hand, EFL attitudes decreased after a year mainly on effort and interest in cultures. Contrary to

EFL attitudes, Socio-cultural impact increased. Despite students felt more comfortable with classroom environment, the idea of English needed for job enhancement was imprinted probably as a demand from globalization. Linguistic exposure slightly increased as more academic activities that require reading in English, and more direct contact with English outside school augmented. The Classroom experience factor increased positive attitude towards the learning experience with regards to teacher and course content evaluation. Despite the low correlation among factors, further data evidenced that the four factors interrelated to form and change students' attitudes towards learning English.

The relevance of attitude in language learning is clearly supported by the current findings. For instance, initial negative attitudes can turn to positive if five principles are fulfilled: 1) Need for learning English, 2) Support from the English teacher, 3) Appropriate language complexity, 4) Classroom peer interaction, and 5) Attitude and effort. On the other hand, attitudes can remain either positive or negative. Positive attitudes are stable when there is a genuine interest in the target language and its culture. As a result, linguistic exposure increases in the quest to know more about the target language culture. Finally, a continuous fruitful classroom experience encourages positive attitudes towards learning English. Similarly, classroom experience is also important to preserve negative attitudes. Students who continue experiencing feelings of frustration in language instruction are very likely to maintain negative attitudes towards learning the target language. Moreover, those holding positive attitudes report more exposure to English while the students holding negative attitudes do not report language exposure. Interestingly, they rely too much on their English teachers, and do not manifest clear learning goals. Although this group of students does not express language learning goals, they might have an ultimate goal of passing English courses. For instance, they study the corresponding English course. That is, they have not failed English courses. In other words, motivation exceeds their negative attitudes. After all, motivation "involves sustaining that interest and investing time and energy into putting the necessary effort to achieve certain goals" (Williams and Burden, 1997, p.121)

On the whole, the mixed methods approach used in this study provided sufficient data to suggest a schema that portrays four main factors that comprise students' attitudes towards learning English. These factors are interrelated and complement each other to understand salient elements leading to attitude change. Another significant finding is that among the four factors, only Linguistic exposure and Socio-cultural impact had an

impact on students' performance. Nevertheless, the four factors greatly contribute to shifting or stable attitudes.

## **7.1 Study Implications**

Findings from this study highlight certain implications for the community of English Language Teaching. In general, therefore, it seems that the perspectives addressed here emphasize the importance of learner's attitudinal/motivational factors in relation to performance and change. Suggestions will be addressed in order to pinpoint pedagogic implementations that emphasize the language learning process. The findings of this research provide insights for an emphasis on using the four factors identified in this study for promoting positive attitudes towards learning English in higher education.

### **7.1.1 The Institution of Higher Education**

Overall, this study strengthens the idea that globalization demands individuals with knowledge of English. This is one of the reasons English is a mandatory course in most institutions of higher education. Students need to be prepared for work in a globalized world. However, learning English is as complex as it is each individual. The evidence from this study suggests that institutions of higher education should analyse their English language programmes. In this case, the first suggestion for the University is concerned with the EDII. It is recommended students be informed, as early as possible, of the opportunities to gain course credit by obtaining satisfactory scores in the diagnostic test. This would permit students to take the exam seriously. As a result, students who hold knowledge of English can move on to their corresponding English course; space and attention can be provided to those holding low level of English, as the current data highlight the importance of linguistic exposure for performance. It is important that students do not miss English courses because of a limitation in English course availability at the institution.

On the other hand, the results of this research support the idea that a needs analysis (Hedge, 2000) is necessary specifically to find the gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do. Despite the English course programme specifies a functional approach based on the development of the four language skills, students demand more enjoyable and dynamic language activities. Additionally, they require an emphasis on speaking and listening as they want to be able to understand English to communicate. Similarly, students mention a need to understand academic texts, but

they rely on translation. Writing apparently is neglected. Therefore, a needs analysis is recommended to really address the situation of the language programme and students' language needs.

### **7.1.2 The Role of English Teachers**

These findings have significant implications for the understanding of the role of the teacher in the language classroom, and complement those of earlier studies. The teacher can greatly influence learner's attitude change or stability. On one hand, she is the responsible figure to present activities that stimulate and promote language proficiency. It is recommended that more attention is assigned to the teaching and development of language skills for students to have more opportunities to improve and feel satisfied with proficiency. Exposure to English in an English speaking culture is ideal. In fact, studying abroad has a great impact on the development of the L2 self (Hsieh, 2009). But travelling abroad might be limited for many Mexican students with low income status (Heredia and Rubio, 2015). Therefore, development of language skills through a variety of activities and tasks is encouraged.

For most students, learning English is confined to the language classroom. Nevertheless, there are other types of linguistic exposure which seem affordable for everybody. For instance, watching movies, videos and other entertaining content such as sports, listening to songs, reading in English for academic reasons prevail as language exposure activities. Additionally, the advantage of a globalized world provides other types of opportunities. For instance, students can communicate with the use of technology. Talking on the phone by using the internet to communicate is increasing with the help of phone applications. Therefore, exposure to media might be a usual channel to practise the language especially for those students who can afford a digital T.V. cable provider, or an unlimited internet provider, where access to channels completely in English is available. This opportunity, however, might not be usual for all students taking into consideration the unequal economy conditions in Mexico (Heredia and Rubio, 2015). Access to TV or to certain channels can be limited (Jia and Aaronson, 2003). Fortunately, the great majority of students admitted that they try to understand English when they watch T.V. programmes, or movies in English. Others watch videos in internet. When students perform these types of actions they are in direct exposure with English. English teachers should promote these types of activities. Furthermore, Becerra and McNulty (2010) suggest that teachers should focus on how students learn, and that teachers can

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help learners achieve significant learning experience by revising language content, but also goals and objectives.

On the other hand, students expect support and empathy from their teachers. It becomes important that learners feel appreciated. Concern for their language development, interest, encouragement and motivation are elements students need in their language teachers. Additionally, they expect trained professionals who care about their progress. Thus, an implication of this is the possibility that the language teacher provides a combination of interesting communicative activities and tasks, support and empathy in language learning, and knowledge of English.

Another recommendation that can be attended in the classroom by the English teacher is to perform brief attitude surveys. The commonness of the term 'attitude' as Baker (1992) suggested allows gathering data easily as subjects understand the connotation of the term. English teachers should take advantage of the term attitude to find out students' attitudes at the beginning of the English course. By simply answering a couple of questions related to their attitude towards English, and their experiences, students express feelings towards English and at the same time they perceive their teacher's interest and support. These findings have significant implications for the understanding of how attitudes towards learning English change. Students bring certain attitudes from their previous experiences learning English, which can be positive or negative. However, English teachers do not have the time to perform in-depth research about attitudes previous to every English course they teach; for this reason, surveying students in a simple form can generate an overall panorama of the learning situation for each language learner to write their individual language learning plan that includes goals and objectives. This can actually help internalize their goals for them to become L2 selves, and increase their sense of self-efficacy.

### **7.1.3 Attitudes towards Learning English**

Even when a cumulous of research on motivation and attitudes has been performed throughout the world, results continue to point out the need to perform more research to improve the learning situation of English as a foreign language. The statistical results generally concur with other attitude studies around the world where students have positive attitudes towards learning English. The present study confirms previous findings and contributes additional evidence that suggests that attitudes towards learning English are intrinsically linked to motivation and performance. A key strength of the

present study was the identification of four attitudinal/motivational factors, which resulted from the approach of a mixed-methodology in the study of a construct that has been largely addressed through quantitative methods. The attitude change representation presented in this study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of attitude, performance and attitude change. This study proposes that EFL attitudes be reviewed from the perspectives of four main attitudinal/motivational factors that are linked to performance and attitude/motivation change and stability.

Because of this, special attention must be paid to the relationship between attitudes and performance, as findings confirm that students are not content with their level of English despite obtaining passing scores in their English courses. Initial attitudes towards learning English are mostly positive, but these diminish in their first year of studying English at university. This occurs even when apparently they do not feel much pressure to study English, their classroom learning experience is better, they have more language exposure, and they believe their scores correspond to what they know in English. Yet, most are not satisfied with their level of English. They are not reaching the proficiency level they wish and that the institution demands. The results of this study implicate that students' attitudes, performance and attitude change towards learning English are important aspects that should not be overlooked.

The analysis of attitudes, performance and change undertaken here, has extended our knowledge of students' beliefs, importance of the foreign language, cultures, and expectations of learning English. Knowing this information is of great help when making decisions about language programmes and lesson planning. Attitudes should be stimulated so that students continue being interested in learning English and foreign cultures; focus on the four attitudinal/motivational factors and class language content could contribute to the learning process by stimulating positive attitudes which project learning goals, stimulate L2 self-images, self-efficacy and promote effort to learn English. Then it is important to listen to students, and learn their expectations to design fruitful English lessons. In the same vein, the design of an individual language learning plan should be addressed in the classroom for students to work towards their learning goal and raise self-confidence.

## 7.2 Limitations of the Research

This study presented certain limitations that have been stated throughout the thesis. Here they are explained in more detail. These centred on the generalization of the findings, and the research process.

A limitation of this study is that only one institution of higher education in Mexico participated in the study. Mexico is a geographically diverse country and such diversity implies similar but also different scenarios to learn English. The research outcomes might greatly differ from those contexts where exposure to the target language is greater. Nevertheless, the findings of this study situated in southeast Mexico regarding the positive attitudes of the students towards learning English coincide with another study performed in Northern Mexico (Sandoval-Pineda, 2011).

It is unfortunate that the comparison of attitudes was limited to a group of students. First, only the attitudes of those students studying the English I course were contrasted. Analysing the attitudes of those students who do not reach the English 1 course or those who manage to credit more courses beyond English I would be ideal. Yet, focusing on students from English I course was the most feasible strategy to locate most students from the original sample of 704 students.

The study is limited by the lack of information on the role of a couple of background variables on attitudes, performance and change. For instance, student's major in relationship with attitudes and performance was no further explored due to that most students held initial positive attitudes and most students showed a low performance in the English diagnostic test. Additionally, multiple regression analysis did not reveal a major contribution. Nonetheless, results from interviews may suggest that area of study can contribute to having positive attitudes, feelings of self-efficacy and better performance. Moreover, studying the attitudes of those who have experienced travelling abroad was not further explored due to the small number of students who hold that experience. In learning scenarios where travelling abroad is recurrent, it would be worthwhile to perform further research since the study findings clearly show that language exposure predicts performance. In addition, although a sense of national identity was excluded from the four factors, the mean score for this item suggests that these Mexican students feel very proud of their culture. At least a couple of students mentioned that is not natural to speak in English among nationals. Also, despite the proximity of Mexico and the United States, more students would prefer to visit England

or Canada rather than the USA. Therefore, these background variables could be explained further in future studies.

The study is also limited by the lack of information on the assessment forms used to explore performance. Students' performance was limited to the assessment forms that the institution of higher education provides to students without a deeper analysis of the evaluation forms themselves. Neither the diagnostic test nor the forms of English course evaluation were assessed. They were taken as real current forms of assessment despite any flaws; these assessments are the ones used by the institution, and English teachers to make decisions.

The major limitation of this study lies in the methodological procedure. While QEFL were answered at the beginning and end of the academic year, interviews were only performed once with students registered in the English I course, and limited to the beginning of the second academic year. An issue that was not addressed in this study was initial students' attitudes reported from interviews as well as periodical interviews during the English courses to identify more solid changes. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study suggests important implications resulting from the explorations of students' attitudes towards learning English.

### **7.3 Further Research**

Areas needed for further investigation are discussed in this section. What is now needed is a cross-national study involving subjects from different regions of Mexico in order to validate the four attitudinal/motivational factors. The common goal among institutions of higher education is that all Mexican undergraduate students learn English. There are doubtless expectations from the Mexican society itself and from the globe for Mexicans to speak English. Borjian (2015, p. 164) mentions the "economic partnership between the US and Mexico has motivated (and at times forced) many Mexicans to learn English in order to advance economically". In line with the need the world imposes on learners to speak English, feelings of 'I do not like English' or 'it is a difficult language' are set aside and learners focus more on the need. Generally, knowledge of English is seen as synonym of prosperity for most Mexicans in this study. Thus, the same world forces learners of English to be part of a global community.

Nevertheless, learning situations might differ as Mexico shares border with the United States of America to the North. There are cities that are daily visited by international tourists while others have foreign visitors because of work, and others simply do not

## Chapter 7

have that many affluence of visitors. Students with highest contact with foreigners tend to show low attitudes and motivation (Dörnyei, 2005). These differences are worth exploring as findings in this study indicate Mexicans are very proud of their identity, and at the same time, they are interested in other cultures and willing to establish friendships with foreigners, but with some reservations.

A further study could assess the long-term effects of unsatisfactory learning experience towards learning English. The literature already corroborates the importance of the language teacher in the language classroom. Similarly this study evidenced the great influence of the teacher on the learner. Taking into account the findings of this study, which indicate a strong sense of national identity, it would be ideal to perform more research to explore pre-service English teachers and service teachers' attitudes based on the four attitudinal/motivational factors resulting in this study. Results would contribute to understand English teachers' feelings and experiences that lead them to make decisions in the language classroom. For instance, English teachers who do not show interest in foreign cultures are very likely to omit cultural aspects in the classroom (Williams and Burden, 1997, p.53). Therefore, further research on teachers' attitudes and motivation is needed.

In terms of directions for future research, further work could address more longitudinal studies in the field of attitudes and motivation, and language classroom. As findings indicate the four attitudinal / motivational factors comprise attitudes towards learning English. The factors of EFL attitudes, Socio-cultural impact, Classroom experience and Linguistic exposure include the three components of attitude: Cognitive, affective and behavioural. These components regulate attitude changes. Nevertheless, these changes alternated with attitude stability on both sides, positive and negative. These states of change and stability can be further explored with DST (Dörnyei et al., 2014). In fact, motivation was evidenced in this study, which again supports that attitudes are one component of motivation, but it is motivation which drives a learner to fulfil a goal (Gardner, 2003; Williams and Burden, 1997). Motivation provides the energy to make effort to learn. In this case, despite negative attitudes towards learning English and unsatisfactory proficiency, students achieved passing their English courses. Therefore, testing these factors based on the principles of DST to monitor motivational and attitudinal changes is recommended. It is only through research that significant aspects of ELT can be studied and addressed as different perceptions of English can impact the EFL classroom (Graham, 2006).

## 7.4 Chapter and Thesis Summary

The main purpose of this study was to identify learners' attitudes towards learning English in order to find major factors leading to performance, and attitude change. Throughout this chapter, the findings of this study, the limitations, the implications and suggestions for further research were explored.

Much research has been devoted to identifying students' attitudes towards learning English throughout the world, mainly based on Gardner's Socio-educational model (1985), and more recently on Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System. The literature abounds with examples of the relevance of attitude for motivation in language learning. Both attitude and motivation were until recently studied as static constructs. Nevertheless, more recent approaches to motivation concur that motivation is a dynamic construct. Therefore, given the connection of attitude and motivation, it became necessary to shed light on the stability of attitude.

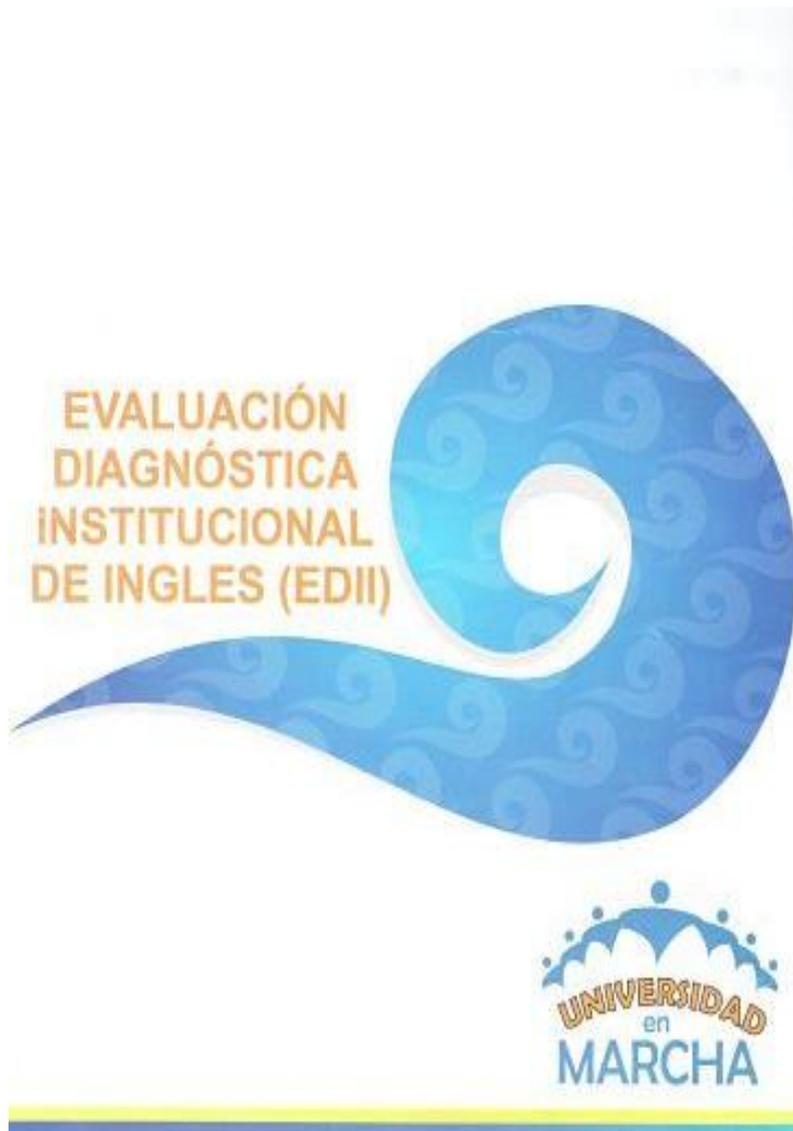
This thesis investigated the attitudes of undergraduates in a Mexican institution of higher education. It explored the attitudinal factors that comprise such attitudes and then looked into the relationship of the four resulting factors to predict the students' performance on evaluations used in the institution. Moreover, the study explored the factors that fostered students' attitude change. The study employed a mixture of quantitative and qualitative measures to provide a full perspective into the view of attitudes towards learning English.

The findings indicate a general tendency for holding positive attitudes towards learning English, prior to their first English lessons at university, and despite low performance on the institutional diagnostic test. Their performance in the first English course improves, but at the end of the second English course decreases and so do their attitudes towards learning English. Although this study did not intend to show a causal relationship between attitudes and performance, findings show performance and proficiency have an impact on attitudes. The findings seem particularly informative when the four factors (EFL attitudes, Socio-cultural impact, Classroom experience, and Linguistic exposure) interconnect and contribute to attitude change as portrayed in the four factor representation. The factor of Linguistic exposure is linked with performance, and contributes to generate positive attitudes while negative attitudes centre on unfruitful language learning experiences, and the students' reliance on the English teacher. Thus, further research on the attitudinal/motivational factors is needed.

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Despite the study limitations, this study draws attention to the study of attitudes towards learning English through the exploration of four factors that imply a dynamic view of attitude. I defined attitude described in Chapter 3 as “the conjunction of short or long lasting positive or negative thoughts generated from experiences, feelings and beliefs, which can be manifested by omission or reaction towards an entity and which can be adapted through learning”. From this stance, language classrooms represent the ideal place to promote positive attitudes. If attitudes and performance are to be shifted to positive, the learning environment should provide the necessary elements. There is, therefore a definite need to promote the four attitudinal/motivational factors of EFL attitudes, Socio-cultural impact, Linguistic exposure and Classroom experience in the language classroom.

## Appendix A EDII Cover and Presentation



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## Presentación

Usted tiene en sus manos un instrumento para la medición de sus conocimientos de inglés. Nos complace decirle que ha sido elaborado con mucho entusiasmo y esfuerzo y estamos complacidos de que pueda finalmente llegar a sus manos.

### Instrucciones generales

Para usar este instrumento de manera correcta se requiere que usted:

Se relaje, no se tensione, solo queremos saber cuanto sabe usted en realidad. Si sabe poco o nada no se preocupe, recuerde que al menos por ahora no es requisito de ingreso a nuestra universidad.

No se copie, no tiene sentido. La honestidad en la aplicación de este instrumento es muy importante para dimensionar correctamente sus verdaderas necesidades de aprendizaje.

Si usted no conoce la respuesta, le invitamos a no elegir una al azar. Es mejor dejar en blanco el espacio de la respuesta o simplemente detenerse y avisar a la persona que aplique o supervise este instrumento, que usted ya concluyó.

Este examen de ubicación consta de tres secciones:

Sección 1: auditiva,

Sección 2: lectura,

Sección 3: uso de vocabulario y gramática.

**Sección I**, en esta sección, usted escuchará nueve conversaciones y responderá una o más preguntas en cada una de ellas. Antes de que usted escuche una conversación, lea las preguntas. Luego escuche la conversación y enseguida responda las preguntas al terminar la conversación. Elija la respuesta correcta para cada pregunta y llene el espacio indicado en la hoja de respuestas. Usted escuchará la conversación solo una vez. La primera conversación es un ejemplo. Usted tiene **15 minutos** para realizar esta sección.

**Sección II**, en esta sección, la de lectura, usted encontrará varios párrafos. Después de leer cada uno, elija la respuesta correcta para cada pregunta y llene la opción deseada en la hoja de respuestas. Usted tiene **25 minutos** para completar esta sección.

**Sección III**, esta sección es de uso del vocabulario y gramática y consta de 120 reactivos. Elija la respuesta deseada y marque el espacio correspondiente en la hoja de respuestas. Usted tiene **1 hora** para terminar esta sección.

Marque sus respuestas con claridad. Si usted desea cambiar una respuesta borre su primera respuesta completamente.

Al terminar el examen, usted entregará primeramente la hoja de respuesta a la persona que aplica el examen, posteriormente el aplicador recogerá el cuadernillo del examen. En caso de concluir anticipadamente el examen, usted deberá avisar al supervisor o persona que se encuentre aplicando el examen y él o ella le recogerá la prueba. Autorizándole entonces su salida del aula. Si esto ocurre, usted deberá abandonar las instalaciones de la universidad inmediatamente, y evitará acercarse a cualquier aula donde se esté aplicando la prueba. Por su comprensión le anticipamos las gracias.

## Appendix B Motivation/Attitude Surveys

(Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels, 1994)	Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009)
1. Orientations	1. Ideal L2 self
a) Instrumental	2. Ought to L2 self
b) Knowledge	3. Parental encouragement / Family influence
c) Travel	4. Instrumentality – promotion
d) Friendship	5. Linguistic self confidence
e) Socio-cultural	6. Instrumentality – Prevention
f) integrative	7. Fear of assimilation
2. Attitudes towards learning English	8. Travel orientation
3. Attitudes towards Americans	9. Ethnocentrism
4. Attitudes towards the British	10. Interest in the English language
5. Need for achievement	11. Attitudes towards learning English
6. Motivational intensity	12. English anxiety
7. Anxiety in class	13. Integrativeness
8. English use anxiety	14. Cultural interest
9. Perceived group cohesion in the student	15. Attitudes towards L2 community
10. Self-evaluation of English competence	
11. Satisfaction	
12. Desired English proficiency	
13. Frequency of inter-ethnic contact	
14. English teacher evaluation	
15. English course evaluation	
16. General information	

## Appendix C Pre- QEFL (English and Spanish Versions)

Questionnaire for the EEFL learner

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Area of study: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Please read the instructions and write your answers. This is not an exam; there are not right or wrong answers. The results obtained from this questionnaire will be used for research purposes only. Thanks for your help.

I. Mention to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements choosing from 1 to 6 according to the scale below. Please make sure you answer all the statements.

1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Partly disagree	4 Partly agree	5 Agree	6 Totally agree
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(Example) If you totally agree with the following statement, write like this:

I really like playing soccer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
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1. I am very interested in the values and customs of other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I have a good attitude learning English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. My upper secondary school English teachers were always fair.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I am afraid of sounding stupid in English because of the mistakes I make.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Studying English is important to me because I am planning to live abroad (e.g., studying and working).	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I can communicate orally in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The British are friendly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I have to study English; otherwise, I think I cannot be successful in my future career.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I am satisfied with the work I have done in my English course.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. English is an important subject in the school programme.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Mexico can develop thanks to Mexicans who speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. I need to know English to get a good job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I can imagine myself living abroad and having a discussion in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner on the internet or the phone.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. The content evaluation of my English class was clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. In my English lessons, I seldom do more than is necessary.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I think I would be happy if other cultures were more similar to Mexican.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I really enjoy learning English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. My parents encourage me to study English.	1	2	3	4	5	6

21. I am sure I have a good ability to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I am able to read in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. It's hard for me to learn English because it's a difficult language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I speak with my Spanish-speaking friends in English.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I would like to have American friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. My upper secondary school English teachers showed interest and disposition to help us learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. It is good to learn English as a child.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Studying English is important to me because I may need it later on for job/studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. I consider Americans are friendly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. My upper secondary school English teachers made their classes interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. I have to study English because I don't want to get bad marks in it at university.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. I would like to know more British people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. I can write in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. I would like to learn English to be like Americans.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. I am interested in learning English because I want to travel around the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. I am proud to be Mexican.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. I have to study English because, if I don't do it, my parents will be disappointed with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. In my family there are people who speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. My upper secondary school classmates looked down on the one who did not speak English well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. I have foreign friends or acquaintances who speak English.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. Because of the influence of the English language, I think the Spanish language is corrupt.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. I do not particularly like the process of learning English and I do it only because I may need the language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. If I don't learn English, I won't be able to travel to other countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. I believe the British are reliable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner in a foreign country.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
47. When I watch T.V. programmes or movies in English, I try to understand the language.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
48. I do activities where I have to use English (e.g. Reading magazines, listening to music, speaking or writing in English)*	1	2	3	4	5	6
49. It is an advantage for Mexico to have an English-speaking neighbouring country such as the United States of America.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50. I get nervous when I need to speak in my English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51. I like the way the Americans behave.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52. My upper secondary school classmates and I supported each other in our English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
53. I have Mexican friends who speak English.*	1	2	3	4	5	6

54. My upper secondary school English teachers were professionally prepared to teach their lessons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
55. Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
56. I enjoy making my best effort to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
57. I would like to learn English to be like the British.	1	2	3	4	5	6
58. I knew how my English performance would be evaluated in upper secondary school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
59. I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
60. The activities my teachers evaluated were relevant/significant to learn the language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
61. I have to learn English because without passing the English course I cannot graduate/ get my degree.	1	2	3	4	5	6
62. I think the cultural and artistic values of English are going at the expense of Mexican values.	1	2	3	4	5	6
63. If my teacher wanted me to do an extra English assignment, I would certainly volunteer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
64. Considering how I study English, I can honestly say that I do very little work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
65. I have interacted in English and face to face with at least one foreigner in my community city or country.*	1	2	3	4	5	6
66. I am satisfied with my English proficiency at this moment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
67. I want to learn English to learn about the life and behaviour of people who live in English-speaking countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6
68. I can understand what I hear in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
69. If I make more effort, I am sure I will be able to master English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
70. Because of the influence of the English speaking countries, I think the morals of Mexican people are becoming worse.	1	2	3	4	5	6

\*Added by author

## II. Answer the following and mark with an X the answers where appropriate.

<b>Native language:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish Other: (specify): _____	<b>Gender:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	<b>Age:</b>	____
<b>If you have had private English lessons (including courses abroad), mark the reason (s) in the corresponding boxes:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Practise the language <input type="checkbox"/> Understand my English lessons <input type="checkbox"/> Reaffirm my knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> I like the language <input type="checkbox"/> To learn more <input type="checkbox"/> English is difficult for me to learn. <input type="checkbox"/> I haven't taken English private lessons. Other: (Mention): _____	<b>Upper secondary school:</b>  <b>*If you studies in both, mention the number of years you studied in each one</b>	Public <input type="checkbox"/>  *No. of years: _____	Private <input type="checkbox"/>  *No. of years: _____	
<b>Other languages you can communicate orally:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> Mayan <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> None Otra: (Menciona): _____	<b>State of origin:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Campeche <input type="checkbox"/> Chiapas <input type="checkbox"/> Tabasco <input type="checkbox"/> Oaxaca <input type="checkbox"/> Yucatán <input type="checkbox"/> Veracruz Other (mention): _____ Other country (mention): _____		

If you have lived in an English-speaking country, mention how long you lived in that country: \_\_\_\_\_

Age you started learning English: \_\_\_\_\_ years old

If you have NOT travelled abroad, answer the following: (Note: if more space is needed, use the reverse of this page.)

Given the opportunity, first English-speaking country you would visit.	The United States of America	Australia	Canada	England	Other country: _____
* Mark the possible reasons for your trip.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____

If you HAVE travelled abroad, answer the following: (Note: if more space is needed, use the reverse of this page.)

Country or countries you have visited.	The United States of America	Australia	Canada	England	Other country: _____
* Mark the possible reasons for your trip.	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____

III. Mark with an X below the approximate percentage of English you expect to achieve by the end of your university studies.

Linguistic skills	Less than 20%	20% - 40%	50% - 70%	80% - 100%
1. Read different types of materials in English.				
2. Understand different dialogues and conversations in English.				
3. Speak in English (Talk, give presentations, etc.)				
4. Write in English (e-mails, essays, etc.)				
Level of English you consider you hold at this moment.	Less than basic	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced

## Pre-QEFL (Spanish version)

## Cuestionario para el alumno de inglés

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Carrera: \_\_\_\_\_

Por favor lee las instrucciones y escribe tus respuestas. Esto no es un examen; no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Los resultados de este cuestionario se usarán con propósito de investigación. Por ello, te pido que contestes sinceramente. Gracias por tu ayuda.

I. Menciona qué tanto estás de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las siguientes oraciones marcando un número del 1 al 6 de acuerdo a la escala de abajo. No dejes ninguna sin contestar.

1 Totalmente en desacuerdo	2 En desacuerdo	3 Parcialmente en desacuerdo	4 Parcialmente de acuerdo	5 De acuerdo	6 Totalmente de acuerdo
----------------------------------	-----------------------	------------------------------------	---------------------------------	-----------------	-------------------------------

(Ejemplo). Si estás totalmente de acuerdo con la siguiente oración, marca así:

Me gusta mucho jugar fútbol.	1	2	3	4	5	6
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1. Me interesan los valores y costumbres de otras culturas.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Tengo una buena actitud sobre aprender inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Mis profesores de inglés en la universidad son justos en todo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Me da miedo sonar como tonto(a) en inglés por los errores que hago.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Estudiar inglés es importante para mí porque planeo vivir en el extranjero (ej. Estudiar o trabajar).	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Puedo comunicarme en forma oral en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Considero que los ingleses son personas amigables.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Tengo que estudiar inglés; de otra forma no tendré éxito en mi carrera.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Me siento a gusto con el desempeño que he tenido en mis cursos de inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. La materia de inglés es importante en los programas educativos de todas las escuelas.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. México puede lograr el desarrollo gracias a los mexicanos que hablen inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Necesito inglés para conseguir un buen trabajo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Me imagino viviendo en el extranjero y hablando en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. He interactuado en inglés con al menos un extranjero por medio de internet o teléfono.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. La forma de evaluar el contenido de mis clases de inglés en la universidad es clara.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Es necesario aprender inglés porque las personas que me rodean esperan que yo lo haga.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. En mis clases de inglés, raramente hago más de lo que me piden.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Sería más feliz si otras culturas fueran más parecidas a la cultura mexicana.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Realmente disfruto aprender inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Mis padres me alientan a estudiar inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. Tengo la seguridad que aprenderé bien el inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6

## Appendix C

22. Puedo leer en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Me cuesta trabajo aprender inglés porque es un idioma difícil.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Interactúo con amigos o conocidos, que hablan español, en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. Me gustaría tener amigos norteamericanos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Mis profesores de inglés en la universidad han mostrado interés y disposición para ayudarnos a aprender el idioma.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. Es bueno aprender inglés desde niño.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Estudiar inglés es importante para mí porque lo necesitaré en mi carrera y para seguir estudiando.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Considero que los norteamericanos son personas amigables.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. Mis profesores de inglés en la universidad han hecho las clases interesantes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. Tengo que estudiar inglés porque no quiero tener malas calificaciones en la universidad.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. Me gustaría conocer más personas de Inglaterra.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. Puedo escribir en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. Me gustaría aprender inglés para parecerme a los norteamericanos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. Me interesa aprender inglés porque me gustaría viajar por el mundo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. Estoy orgulloso de ser mexicano.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. Tengo que aprender inglés porque si no lo hago mi familia se desilusionará.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. En mi familia hay personas que hablan inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. Mis compañeros de grupo de la prepa hacían de menos a los que no hablaban bien inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. Tengo amigos o conocidos extranjeros que hablan inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. Debido a la influencia del inglés, creo que el español se está dañando.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. No me gusta el proceso de aprender inglés, pero lo hago porque podría necesitar el idioma.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. Si no aprendo inglés, no podré viajar a otros países.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. Creo que los ingleses son personas de fiar.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. Las cosas que pretendo hacer en el futuro requieren que yo hable inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. He interactuado en inglés con al menos un extranjero en un país extranjero.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47. Cuando veo programmeas o películas en inglés trato de entender el idioma.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48. Realizo actividades donde tenga que usar el inglés (ej. Leer revistas, escuchar música, hablar o escribir en inglés).	1	2	3	4	5	6
49. Es una ventaja para México tener a los Estados Unidos de América como país vecino que habla inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50. Me da nervios cuando tengo que hablar en inglés en las clases.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51. Me gusta el comportamiento de los norteamericanos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52. Mis compañeros de grupo de la prepa y yo nos apoyábamos en las clases de inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
53. Tengo amigos mexicanos que hablan inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
54. Los profesores de inglés de la prepa estaban bien preparados para enseñar sus clases.	1	2	3	4	5	6
55. Es importante estudiar inglés porque las personas me tendrán más respeto si sé inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6

56. Me gusta esforzarme al aprender inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
57. Me gustaría aprender inglés para parecerme a los ingleses.	1	2	3	4	5	6
58. Sabía cómo se iba a evaluar mi desempeño en la clase de inglés de la prepa.	1	2	3	4	5	6
59. Me imagino a mí mismo pudiendo hablar en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
60. Las actividades que se evaluaban en mis clases de inglés de la prepa eran relevantes para aprender el idioma.	1	2	3	4	5	6
61. Tengo que aprender inglés porque si no paso los cursos de inglés, no me podré graduar.	1	2	3	4	5	6
62. Los valores culturales y artísticos del inglés están superando a los mexicanos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
63. Si mi profesor (a) de inglés diera una tarea extra, yo la haría.	1	2	3	4	5	6
64. Considerando la forma en que he estudiado inglés, puedo decir que estudio poco.	1	2	3	4	5	6
65. He interactuado en inglés cara a cara con al menos un extranjero en mi comunidad, ciudad o en mi país.	1	2	3	4	5	6
66. Estoy contento con el nivel de inglés que tengo en estos momentos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
67. Quiero aprender inglés para conocer sobre la vida y comportamiento de las personas que viven en países donde se habla inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
68. Puedo entender lo que escucho en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
69. Si me esfuerzo, seguro aprendo y domino el inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
70. Por la influencia de países donde se habla inglés, considero que la moral de los mexicanos está empeorando.	1	2	3	4	5	6

## II. Responde lo que se te pide y/o marca con una X las respuestas en donde corresponda.

<b>Lengua materna:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Español Otra: (especifica): _____	<b>Género:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Femenino <input type="checkbox"/> Masculino	<b>Edad:</b>	
<b>Si has tomado clases particulares de inglés (incluyendo cursos en el extranjero), marca la razón o razones en los recuadros:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Practicar el idioma <input type="checkbox"/> Entender mis clases de inglés <input type="checkbox"/> Reafirmar mis conocimientos <input type="checkbox"/> Me gusta el idioma. <input type="checkbox"/> Para aprender más <input type="checkbox"/> Me cuesta trabajo aprender inglés. <input type="checkbox"/> No he tomado clases particulares. Otra: (Menciona): _____	<b>Preparatoria:</b>  <b>*Si estudiaste en ambas, menciona el n. de años en cada una.</b>	Pública <input type="checkbox"/>  *No. de años: _____	Privada <input type="checkbox"/>  *No. de años: _____	
<b>Otras lenguas o idiomas en las que te puedes comunicar de forma oral:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Portugués <input type="checkbox"/> Francés <input type="checkbox"/> Alemán Otra: (Menciona): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Inglés <input type="checkbox"/> Maya <input type="checkbox"/> Ninguno	<b>Estado de procedencia:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Campeche <input type="checkbox"/> Tabasco <input type="checkbox"/> Yucatán Otro estado (menciona): _____ Otro país (menciona): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Chiapas <input type="checkbox"/> Oaxaca <input type="checkbox"/> Veracruz

Si has vivido en algún país donde se hable inglés, menciona el tiempo que viviste en ese país:

Edad en la que empezaste a aprender inglés: \_\_\_\_\_ años.

Si **NO** has viajado al extranjero, contesta lo siguiente:

<b>Dada la oportunidad,</b>	Estados Unidos de Norte América	Australia	Canadá	Inglaterra	Otro país: _____
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<b>primer país donde se hable inglés que visitarías:</b> * Marca el o los posibles motivos de tu viaje en los recuadros.	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Religioso				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Familiar				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Estudio				
Otro: _____	Otro: _____	Otro: _____	Otro: _____	Otro: _____	

Si **SÍ** has viajado a un país extranjero, contesta lo siguiente: (Nota: si necesitas más espacio para mencionar información, utiliza el reverso de esta hoja)

<b>País o países que has visitado.</b> * Marca el o los motivos de tu viaje.	Estados Unidos de Norte América	Australia	Canadá	Inglaterra	Otro país: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Religioso				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Familiar				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo				
<input type="checkbox"/> Estudio	<input type="checkbox"/> Estudio	<input type="checkbox"/> Estudio	<input type="checkbox"/> Estudio	<input type="checkbox"/> Estudio	
Otro: _____	Otro: _____	Otro: _____	Otro: _____	Otro: _____	

III. Marca con una X debajo del porcentaje aproximado que esperas alcanzar al término de tu carrera universitaria.

Habilidad lingüística	Menos de 20%	20% - 40%	50% - 70%	80% - 100%
1. Leer diversos tipos de material en inglés				
2. Entender conversaciones diversas en inglés				
3. Hablar en inglés (conversar, exponer, etc.)				
4. Escribir en inglés (correos, ensayos, etc.)				
5. Nivel de inglés que consideras tienes en estos momentos.	Menos de básico	Básico	Intermedio	Avanzado

## Appendix D Post- QEFL (English and Spanish Versions)

### Questionnaire for the EEFL learner

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Area of study: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Please read the instructions and write your answers. This is not an exam; there are not right or wrong answers. The results obtained from this questionnaire will be used for research purposes only. Thanks for your help.

I. Mention to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements choosing from 1 to 6 according to the scale below. Please make sure you answer all the statements.

1 Totally disagree	2 Disagree	3 Partly disagree	4 Partly agree	5 Agree	6 Totally agree
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(Example) If you totally agree with the following statement, write like this:

I really like playing soccer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
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1. I am very interested in the values and customs of other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I have a good attitude learning English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. My university English teachers were always fair.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I am afraid of sounding stupid in English because of the mistakes I make.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Studying English is important to me because I am planning to live abroad (e.g., studying and working).	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I can communicate orally in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The British are friendly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I have to study English; otherwise, I think I cannot be successful in my future career.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. I am satisfied with the work I have done in my English course.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. English is an important subject in the school programme.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Mexico can develop thanks to Mexicans who speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. I need to know English to get a good job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I can imagine myself living abroad and having a discussion in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner on the internet or the phone.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. The content evaluation of my English class was clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. In my English lessons, I seldom do more than is necessary.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I think I would be happy if other cultures were more similar to Mexican.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I really enjoy learning English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. My parents encourage me to study English.	1	2	3	4	5	6

21. I am sure I have a good ability to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I am able to read in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. It's hard for me to learn English because it's a difficult language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. I speak with my Spanish-speaking friends in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I would like to have American friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. My university English teachers showed interest and disposition to help us learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. It is good to learn English as a child.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Studying English is important to me because I may need it later on for job/studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. I consider Americans are friendly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. My university English teachers made their classes interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. I have to study English because I don't want to get bad marks in it at university.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. I would like to know more British people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. I can write in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. I would like to learn English to be like Americans.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. I am interested in learning English because I want to travel around the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. I am proud to be Mexican.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. I have to study English because, if I don't do it, my parents will be disappointed with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. In my family there are people who speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. My university classmates looked down on the one who did not speak English well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. I have foreign friends or acquaintances who speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. Because of the influence of the English language, I think the Spanish language is corrupt.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. I do not particularly like the process of learning English and I do it only because I may need the language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. If I don't learn English, I won't be able to travel to other countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. I believe the British are reliable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner in a foreign country.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47. When I watch T.V. programmes or movies in English, I try to understand the language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48. I do activities where I have to use English (e.g. Reading magazines, listening to music, speaking or writing in English)	1	2	3	4	5	6
49. It is an advantage for Mexico to have an English-speaking neighbouring country such as the United States of America.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50. I get nervous when I need to speak in my English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51. I like the way the Americans behave.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52. My university classmates and I supported each other in our English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
53. I have Mexican friends who speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
54. My university English teachers were professionally prepared to teach their lessons.	1	2	3	4	5	6

55. Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
56. I enjoy making my best effort to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
57. I would like to learn English to be like the British.	1	2	3	4	5	6
58. I knew how my English performance would be evaluated in upper secondary school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
59. I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
60. The activities my teachers evaluated were relevant/significant to learn the language.	1	2	3	4	5	6
61. I have to learn English because without passing the English course I cannot graduate/ get my degree.	1	2	3	4	5	6
62. I think the cultural and artistic values of English are going at the expense of Mexican values.	1	2	3	4	5	6
63. If my teacher wanted me to do an extra English assignment, I would certainly volunteer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
64. Considering how I study English, I can honestly say that I do very little work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
65. I have interacted in English and face to face with at least one foreigner in my community city or country.	1	2	3	4	5	6
66. I am satisfied with my English proficiency at this moment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
67. I want to learn English to learn about the life and behaviour of people who live in English-speaking countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6
68. I can understand what I hear in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
69. If I make more effort, I am sure I will be able to master English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
70. Because of the influence of the English speaking countries, I think the morals of Mexican people are becoming worse.	1	2	3	4	5	6

**II. Answer the following and mark with an X the answers where appropriate.**

<b>Native language:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish Other: (specify): _____	<b>Gender:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	<b>Age:</b> _____
<b>If you have had private English lessons (including courses abroad), mark the reason (s) in the corresponding boxes:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Practise the language <input type="checkbox"/> Understand my English lessons <input type="checkbox"/> Reaffirm my knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> I like the language <input type="checkbox"/> To learn more <input type="checkbox"/> English is difficult for me to learn. <input type="checkbox"/> I haven't taken English private lessons. Other: (Mention): _____	<b>Upper secondary school:</b>  <b>*If you studies in both, mention the number of years you studied in each one</b>	Public <input type="checkbox"/>  *No. of years: _____	Private <input type="checkbox"/>  *No. of years: _____
<b>Other languages you can communicate orally:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> German Otra: _____ (Menciona): _____	<b>State of origin:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Campeche <input type="checkbox"/> Tabasco <input type="checkbox"/> Yucatán Other (mention): _____ Other country (mention): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Chiapas <input type="checkbox"/> Oaxaca

**If you have lived in an English-speaking country, mention how long you lived in that country:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age you started learning English:** \_\_\_\_\_ years old

<b>If you haven't had the opportunity to travel to an English-speaking country, and if you could travel where would you go?</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> The United States of America <input type="checkbox"/> Australia <input type="checkbox"/> Canada <input type="checkbox"/> England Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____

If you have travelled abroad during 2014 - 2015, answer the following: (Note: if you need more space use the back of this page.)

<b>Country or countries you have visited.</b>  <b>*Mark the reasons of your trip.</b>	The United states of America	Australia	Canada	England	Other country: _
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tourist <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Work <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Study Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista <input type="checkbox"/> Religioso <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo <input type="checkbox"/> Estudio Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista <input type="checkbox"/> Religioso <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo <input type="checkbox"/> Estudio Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista <input type="checkbox"/> Religioso <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo <input type="checkbox"/> Estudio Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista <input type="checkbox"/> Religioso <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo <input type="checkbox"/> Estudio Other: _____

**III. Mark with an X below the approximate percentage of English you expect to achieve by the end of your university studies.**

Linguistic skills	Less than 20%	20% - 40%	50% - 70%	80% - 100%
1. Read different types of materials in English.				
2. Understand different dialogues and conversations in English.				
3. Speak in English (Talk, give presentations, etc.)				
4. Write in English (e-mails, essays, etc.)				
Level of English you consider you hold at this moment.	Less than basic	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced

**IV. How would you describe your experience learning English at university? Place an X in the corresponding box.**

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Excellent</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Good</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Regular</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Bad</b>
<b>Comments:</b>			

## Post- QEFLL (Spanish version)

## Cuestionario para el alumno de inglés

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

Carrera: \_\_\_\_\_

Por favor lee las instrucciones y escribe tus respuestas. Esto no es un examen; no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Los resultados de este cuestionario se usarán con propósito de investigación. Por ello, te pido que contestes sinceramente. Gracias por tu ayuda.

I. Menciona qué tanto estás de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las siguientes oraciones marcando un número del 1 al 6 de acuerdo a la escala de abajo. No dejes ninguna sin contestar.

1 Totalmente en desacuerdo	2 En desacuerdo	3 Parcialmente en desacuerdo	4 Parcialmente de acuerdo	5 De acuerdo	6 Totalmente de acuerdo
----------------------------------	-----------------------	------------------------------------	---------------------------------	-----------------	-------------------------------

(Ejemplo). Si estás totalmente de acuerdo con la siguiente oración, marca así:

Me gusta mucho jugar fútbol.	1	2	3	4	5	6
------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---

1. Me interesan los valores y costumbres de otras culturas.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Tengo una buena actitud sobre aprender inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Mis profesores de inglés en la universidad son justos en todo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Me da miedo sonar como tonto(a) en inglés por los errores que hago.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Estudiar inglés es importante para mí porque planeo vivir en el extranjero (ej. Estudiar o trabajar).	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Puedo comunicarme en forma oral en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Considero que los ingleses son personas amigables.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Tengo que estudiar inglés; de otra forma no tendré éxito en mi carrera.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Me siento a gusto con el desempeño que he tenido en mis cursos de inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. La materia de inglés es importante en los programas educativos de todas las escuelas.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. México puede lograr el desarrollo gracias a los mexicanos que hablen inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Necesito inglés para conseguir un buen trabajo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Me imagino viviendo en el extranjero y hablando en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. He interactuado en inglés con al menos un extranjero por medio de internet o teléfono.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. La forma de evaluar el contenido de mis clases de inglés en la universidad es clara.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Es necesario aprender inglés porque las personas que me rodean esperan que yo lo haga.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. En mis clases de inglés, raramente hago más de lo que me piden.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Sería más feliz si otras culturas fueran más parecidas a la cultura mexicana.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Realmente disfruto aprender inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Mis padres me alientan a estudiar inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. Tengo la seguridad que aprenderé bien el inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6

22. Puedo leer en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Me cuesta trabajo aprender inglés porque es un idioma difícil.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Interactúo con amigos o conocidos, que hablan español, en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. Me gustaría tener amigos norteamericanos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Mis profesores de inglés en la universidad han mostrado interés y disposición para ayudarnos a aprender el idioma.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. Es bueno aprender inglés desde niño.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. Estudiar inglés es importante para mí porque lo necesitaré en mi carrera y para seguir estudiando.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. Considero que los norteamericanos son personas amigables.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. Mis profesores de inglés en la universidad han hecho las clases interesantes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31. Tengo que estudiar inglés porque no quiero tener malas calificaciones en la universidad.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. Me gustaría conocer más personas de Inglaterra.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. Puedo escribir en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. Me gustaría aprender inglés para parecerme a los norteamericanos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. Me interesa aprender inglés porque me gustaría viajar por el mundo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. Estoy orgulloso de ser mexicano.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. Tengo que aprender inglés porque si no lo hago mi familia se desilusionará.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. En mi familia hay personas que hablan inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. Mis compañeros de grupo en la universidad hacían de menos a los que no hablaban bien inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. Tengo amigos o conocidos extranjeros que hablan inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. Debido a la influencia del inglés, creo que el español se está dañando.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. No me gusta el proceso de aprender inglés, pero lo hago porque podría necesitar el idioma.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. Si no aprendo inglés, no podré viajar a otros países.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. Creo que los ingleses son personas de fiar.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. Las cosas que pretendo hacer en el futuro requieren que yo hable inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. He interactuado en inglés con al menos un extranjero en un país extranjero.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47. Cuando veo programmeas o películas en inglés trato de entender el idioma.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48. Realizo actividades donde tenga que usar el inglés (ej. Leer revistas, escuchar música, hablar o escribir en inglés).	1	2	3	4	5	6
49. Es una ventaja para México tener a los Estados Unidos de América como país vecino que habla inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50. Me da nervios cuando tengo que hablar en inglés en las clases.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51. Me gusta el comportamiento de los norteamericanos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52. Mis compañeros de grupo en la universidad y yo nos apoyábamos en las clases de inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
53. Tengo amigos mexicanos que hablan inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
54. Los profesores de inglés de la universidad están bien preparados para enseñar sus clases.	1	2	3	4	5	6
55. Es importante estudiar inglés porque las personas me tendrán más respeto si sé inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6

56. Me gusta esforzarme al aprender inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
57. Me gustaría aprender inglés para parecerme a los ingleses.	1	2	3	4	5	6
58. Sabía cómo se iba a evaluar mi desempeño en la clase de inglés de la prepa.	1	2	3	4	5	6
59. Me imagino a mí mismo pudiendo hablar en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
60. Las actividades que se evalúan en mis clases de inglés en la universidad son relevantes para aprender el idioma.	1	2	3	4	5	6
61. Tengo que aprender inglés porque si no paso los cursos de inglés, no me podré graduar.	1	2	3	4	5	6
62. Los valores culturales y artísticos del inglés están superando a los mexicanos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
63. Si mi profesor (a) de inglés diera una tarea extra, yo la haría.	1	2	3	4	5	6
64. Considerando la forma en que he estudiado inglés, puedo decir que estudio poco.	1	2	3	4	5	6
65. He interactuado en inglés cara a cara con al menos un extranjero en mi comunidad, ciudad o en mi país.	1	2	3	4	5	6
66. Estoy contento con el nivel de inglés que tengo en estos momentos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
67. Quiero aprender inglés para conocer sobre la vida y comportamiento de las personas que viven en países donde se habla inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
68. Puedo entender lo que escucho en inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
69. Si me esfuerzo, seguro aprendo y domino el inglés.	1	2	3	4	5	6
70. Por la influencia de países donde se habla inglés, considero que la moral de los mexicanos está empeorando.	1	2	3	4	5	6

## II. Responde lo que se te pide y/o marca con una X las respuestas en donde corresponda.

<b>Lengua materna:</b>		<b>Género:</b>		<b>Edad:</b>	
<b>Si has tomado clases particulares de inglés (incluyendo cursos en el extranjero) durante el año 2014- 2015. Marca la razón o razones en los recuadros:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Practicar el idioma <input type="checkbox"/> Entender mis clases de inglés <input type="checkbox"/> Reafirmar mis conocimientos <input type="checkbox"/> Me gusta el idioma. <input type="checkbox"/> Para aprender más <input type="checkbox"/> Me cuesta trabajo aprender inglés. <input type="checkbox"/> No he tomado clases particulares. Otra: (Menciona):	<b>Preparatoria:</b>	Pública <input type="checkbox"/>	Privada <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Otras lenguas o idiomas en las que te puedes comunicar de forma oral:</b>		<b>Ciudad y estado de procedencia:</b>			

¿Has vivido en algún país donde se hable inglés?  Sí  No País: \_\_\_\_\_ ¿Cuánto tiempo?

¿A qué edad empezaste a aprender inglés? \_\_\_\_\_ antes de los 6 años \_\_\_\_\_ 6 a 11 años \_\_\_\_\_ 12 a 15 años \_\_\_\_\_ 15 años o más

<b>Si no has tenido la oportunidad de viajar a un país donde se hable inglés, y</b>	<b>País</b>	<b>Razón(es)</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Estados Unidos de América <input type="checkbox"/> Australia <input type="checkbox"/> Canadá <input type="checkbox"/> Inglaterra	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo <input type="checkbox"/> Estudio <input type="checkbox"/> Religioso <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo Otro: _____

<b>podieras realizar un viaje, ¿qué país sería?</b>	Otro: _____	<b>* Marca el o los posibles motivos de tu viaje en los recuadros.</b>
---	-------------	--

Si has viajado a un país extranjero durante el período 2014 - 2015, contesta lo siguiente: (*Nota: si necesitas más espacio para mencionar información, utiliza el reverso de esta hoja*)

<b>País o países que has visitado.</b>  <b>*Marca el o los motivos de tu viaje.</b>	Estados Unidos de Norte América	Australia	Canadá	Inglaterra	Otro país:_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista <input type="checkbox"/> Religioso <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo <input type="checkbox"/> Estudio Otro: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista <input type="checkbox"/> Religioso <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo <input type="checkbox"/> Estudio Otro: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista <input type="checkbox"/> Religioso <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo <input type="checkbox"/> Estudio Otro: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista <input type="checkbox"/> Religioso <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo <input type="checkbox"/> Estudio Otro: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Turista <input type="checkbox"/> Religioso <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar <input type="checkbox"/> Deportivo <input type="checkbox"/> Estudio Otro: _____

**III. Marca con una X debajo del porcentaje aproximado que esperas alcanzar al término de tu carrera universitaria.**

Habilidad lingüística	Menos de 20%	20% - 40%	50% - 70%	80% - 100%
1. Leer diversos tipos de material en inglés				
2. Entender conversaciones diversas en inglés				
3. Hablar en inglés (conversar, exponer, etc.)				
4. Escribir en inglés (correos, ensayos, etc.)				
5. Nivel de inglés que consideras tienes en estos momentos.	Menos de básico	Básico	Intermedio	Avanzado

**IV. ¿Cómo describirías tu experiencia aprendiendo inglés en la universidad? Marca con una X.**

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Excelente</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Buena</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Regular</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mala</b>
<b>Comentarios generales:</b>			

## Appendix E Interview Guide

English and Spanish versions

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (students' name)

Thanks for participating in this interview. The objective of this study is to know more about the students' experiences regarding the learning of English. I ask your permission to record this interview. The information you share with me is confidential. Your name will not be mentioned at any moment and the information will be used only for research purposes. Do you have any questions?

### Introduction

1. Could you share some information about yourself? (Where are you from? What is your major? Etc)
2. How do you feel about learning English? When did you start learning English?

### Questions about learning English

3. What was your attitude before studying English at university? Why?  
**NOTE: Think of your English lessons in upper secondary school, for example.**
4. Do you consider this attitude has changed or remained?  
No, why?  
Yes, how?
5. What difficulties have you encountered when learning English?
6. What do you consider has helped you learn English?
7. Did you use English in a real situation (reading, writing, listening or speaking) before you started your studies at university? Describe.
8. Have you used English now? Describe.
9. Do you consider your English has improved since you started university?  
No, why?  
Yes, how?
10. Do you consider your course scores correspond to your knowledge of English?

### Conclusion

11. Do you have any recommendation for other students to learn English? Any other comment?

## Guía de entrevista

Estimado \_\_\_\_\_ (nombre del estudiante)

Gracias por participar en esta entrevista. Te recuerdo que el objetivo de este estudio es conocer más acerca de las experiencias de los estudiantes respecto al aprendizaje del idioma inglés. Te pido tu permiso para grabar esta entrevista para no perder datos importantes. La información que tú me proporciones es confidencial por lo que tu nombre no será mencionado en ningún momento y sólo será usada para la investigación. ¿Tienes alguna duda?

**Introducción**

1. Dime un poco sobre ti (¿de dónde eres? ¿qué estudias? ¿qué curso de inglés llevas?)
2. ¿Cómo te sientes respecto a aprender inglés? ¿Cuándo lo empezaste a aprender?

**Preguntas sobre el aprendizaje del inglés**

3. ¿Qué actitud consideras que tenías hacia el inglés antes de empezar a estudiarlo en la universidad? ¿Por qué?

**NOTA: piensa en las clases de inglés de la prepa por ejemplo.**

4. ¿Consideras que ha cambiado esa actitud al día de hoy?  
No, ¿por qué?  
Sí, ¿En qué sentido?
5. ¿Qué problemas has tenido para aprender inglés?
6. ¿Qué crees que te ha ayudado a aprender inglés?
7. ¿Antes de entrar a la universidad te fue de utilidad el inglés en alguna situación real (en alguna situación de la vida diaria en cualquier forma leer, escribir, escuchar/entender hablar)? Describe.
8. ¿Has utilizado el inglés de alguna forma real (fuera de clase) a partir de que empezaste a estudiarlo en la universidad? Describe.
9. ¿Consideras que tu conocimiento en inglés ha progresado desde que empezaste la universidad?  
No, ¿por qué?  
Sí, ¿en qué forma?
10. ¿Consideras que tus calificaciones corresponden a lo que tú sabes en el idioma inglés?

**Conclusión**

11. ¿Tienes alguna recomendación para otros estudiantes para aprender el idioma inglés? ¿Algún comentario?

## Appendix F **Participant Information and Consent Form**

**Study Title: EFL undergraduates' attitudes, performance and change: A longitudinal mixed-methods study**

**Researcher:** Gandy Griselda Quijano Zavala **Ethics number:**8644

**Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.**

### **What is the research about?**

My name is Gandy Griselda Quijano Zavala and I am a professor at the Universidad Autonoma del Carmen. This research is part of a study to comply with the requirements of PhD in English Language Teaching from the University of Southampton in the UK. The results of this study will help me explore your opinions and experience towards learning English. This study will be of great benefit to the university and the federal government which is my sponsor to implement changes in the teaching and learning of English in Mexico.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen because you are a university applicant and I want to know your opinions about learning English before you start your university studies.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will answer a brief survey about your attitudes learning English which will take you 15 - 20 minutes approximately. Also, you might be chosen to carry out a very brief follow-up interview (later during the semester).

### **Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

The main benefit is that your participation will greatly help understanding your needs learning English, which might contribute to possible changes in teaching and learning English at the university.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

It will take only a short period of your time.

### **Will my participation be confidential?**

The information you provide will be coded and kept on a password protected computer. The information you provide will be used with research purposes only. Under no circumstance your name will be revealed. It is only for information control purposes.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You have all the right to participate or decline, but your information is truly valuable to improve the teaching of English in Mexico.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, contact the Chair of the Faculty Ethics Committee Prof Chris Janaway (023 80593424, c.janaway@soton.ac.uk).

**Where can I get more information?**

You can contact me if you require more information at [ggqz1y12@soton.ac.uk](mailto:ggqz1y12@soton.ac.uk), [ganross@yahoo.com.mx](mailto:ganross@yahoo.com.mx), via Facebook: Gandy Griselda Quijano Zavala or 938 140 72 14

*Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):*

I have read and understood the information sheet (insert date /version no. of participant information sheet) and have had the opportunity to ask questions

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

*Data Protection*

*I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.*

Name of participant (print name).....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....

## Appendix G Interview Transcript Sample

### Entrevista 1

Entrevistador: Bueno, buenas tardes. ¿Me puedes decir tu nombre por favor?

Marian

Entrevistador: ¿Me puedes decir un poco más sobre ti? ¿De dónde eres? ¿Qué estudias? Y cualquier otra cosa.

Marian: Ehh yo estudio ingeniería geológica. Bueno yo estudio y trabajo. Tengo 20 años.

Entrevistador: ¿En qué trabajas?

Marian: Soy secretaria con una señora. Ehh cuando no estoy en la universidad; estoy trabajando. Ehh tengo dos hermanos. Soy la mayor de tres hermanos.

Entrevistador: Ok. Y ¿estás estudiando inglés 1 ahorita no?

Marian: Sí, inglés I.

Entrevistador: ¿Cómo te sientes respecto a aprender inglés? Honestamente, ¿cómo te sientes?

Marian: ummm cómo ¿cómo me siento?

Entrevistador: Sí, bueno sabemos que lo tienes que estudiar, pero si tú realmente lo quieres estudiar, si realmente le ves alguna utilidad, si te ves en la necesidad.

Marian: Sí realmente siento que es una necesidad estudiar inglés sin embargo se me hace muy difícil.

Entrevistador: Ok, muy bien. ¿Lo estudiaste en la prepa?

Marian: Sí

Entrevistador: ¿Y en la secundaria?

- Marian: Emmm, sí pero no. La maestra no nos daba clases.
- Entrevistador: Muy bien, ¿has estudiado aparte? ¿Clases particulares o ...?
- Marian: No. Prácticamente desde la prepa fue que empecé [a estudiar inglés].
- Entrevistador: ¿Y cómo te sentiste en la instrucción que tuviste en la prepa, respecto al inglés?
- Marian: ummm
- Entrevistador: En tus clases, con tus compañeros, con tus maestros...
- Marian: Pues para empezar el grupo era muy estee competitivo. Era ummm no era...no se sentía bien. No se sentía cómodo estar ahí y esteee ummm y casi no aprendía. Casi no...
- Entrevistador: No te sentías en confianza con tus compañeros ¿no?
- Marian: uhumm
- Entrevistador: ¿Hablabas en clase? ¿En inglés?
- Marian: No. Nunca...en inglés. Nunca nos hicieron hablar así [en clase].
- Entrevistador: Ok, nunca hubo alguna actividad donde tuvieras que hablar ¿no?
- Marian: Uhum [sí]
- Entrevistador: Ok, ¿cómo te sientes ahora que estás aquí en la universidad? ¿Ves alguna diferencia, algún cambio?
- Marian: Sí, prácticamente aquí estoy aprendiendo todo lo que debí haber aprendido en la prepa. Y me siento un poco más en confianza porque cuando no aprendo algo en clase puedo venir a asesorías. Y me siento más en confianza.
- Entrevistador: ¿Cómo dirías qué es tu actitud entonces hacia el aprendizaje del inglés?
- Marian: Pues... yo siempre trabajo bajo presión, esteee al principio como que muy relax pero cuando siento la presión como que ya aprendo rápido.

- Marian: [Risas]
- Entrevistador: A fuerzas ¿no? Bueno sí todos tenemos diferentes formas de aprender. Bueno, ¿has tenido algún problema para aprender inglés?
- Marian: Sí
- Entrevistador: ¿Cómo qué?
- Marian: Pues no se me quedan las palabras. Como veo otras personas que lo recuerdan súper bien. Yo no. Lo estudio ahorita y al ratito lo quiero volver a recordar y se me olvida. Es muy raro las palabras que recuerde.
- Entrevistador: Entonces se te hace difícil aprender vocabulario. Y ¿qué te ha ayudado a aprender inglés? Lo que sabes ¿qué sientes que te ha ayudado a aprenderlo?
- Marian: Repasarlo. O sea como que cuando sí aprendo es porque estoy todos los días un poquito repasando un poco para que ya el examen.
- Entrevistador: Entonces aparte de lo que estudias tú aquí en casa repasas, ¿haces algo más para aprender inglés aparte de estudiar tus notas y repasar?
- Marian: Busco videos en YouTube o así en internet para...
- Entrevistador: ¿Como cuáles te gustan?
- Marian: Puessss...varios busco el tema y ya el que me aparezca, y ya veo cuáles me gustan y ya los checo.
- Entrevistador: Muy bien, ¿qué opinión tienes tú sobre la cultura norteamericana? Cuando escuchas Estados Unidos ¿qué se te viene a la mente?
- Marian: Güeros [risas]
- Entrevistador: Aparte de güeros [risas] ¿qué más?
- Marian: Que es muy interesante y que me gustaría convivir por allá.
- Entrevistador: Sí, ¿si te gustaría ir? ¿Qué lugar te gustaría visitar?
- Marian: Pues los Estados Unidos en sí...

- Entrevistador: Sí, pero ¿no tienes ninguna ciudad en particular? Ok ¿te gustaría ir a estudiar inglés o q qué? O ¿a pasear nada más?
- Marian: De hecho...no... tengo la idea de estudiarlo...como que... bueno... Tengo un primo que estuvo viviendo allá. Él se fue de aquí en cero. Y allá como en meses lo aprendido súper rápido. Y él me dice que es porque lo tienes que aprender a fuerzas porque te hablan en inglés y ahí lo vas a aprender. Entonces...eso me da confianza como para pedir...sí porque aquí hay para ir... en 6 meses para ir a aprender inglés pero me gustaría esa parte de ir aunque sea sólo 6 meses a aprender. Enfocarme en inglés.
- Entrevistador: Sería buena idea, y ¿tienes alguna idea de la cultura inglesa por ejemplo?
- Marian: No, no conozco la cultura inglesa.
- Entrevistador: Bien, ¿te has visto en alguna situación real donde tengas que utilizar el inglés? ¿Platicar con alguien, o que alguien te pregunte algo en inglés? O leer algo en inglés material que te den tus maestros. Algo real, fuera de tus clases de inglés.
- Marian: Sí, en el trabajo. Mis jefes los más altos son venezolanos pero hablan en inglés cuando vamos a juntas allá en Villahermosa. Si hablan en español pero muy poco. A veces hablan en inglés las juntas son inglés. Hablan en inglés.
- Entrevistador: ¿Consideras que tu conocimiento en inglés ha progresado desde que empezaste la universidad?
- Marian: Sí. Un poco.
- Entrevistador: ¿Qué tanto? ¿Qué tanto es un poco?
- Marian: Un poco porque yo creía que ya a este nivel ya iba a fluir más. Iba a hablar, pero no. Todavía me cuesta mucho trabajo.
- Entrevistador: Sientes que necesitas un poquito más entonces... ¿Tienes alguna recomendación para alumnos que quieran aprender inglés?

- Marian: Sí. Yo les recomendaría que desde el principio vayan estudiando vocabulario. Yo por ejemplo a mi hermanita de 7 años trato de hablarle en inglés. Ah mira esto...empiezo hablar de cosas en inglés para que se le vaya siendo más sencillo.
- Entrevistador: Ah muy bien. Respecto a tus clases, tus maestros, tus compañeros, ¿cómo te has sentido?
- Marian: Ahorita bien. Con la maestra que tengo muy cómoda pues porque ella...bueno yo pienso que muchas veces la diferencia es el maestro porque por ejemplo ella se preocupa que nosotros aprendamos. En cambio hay maestros que... bueno si lo aprendes bien y si no también.
- Entrevistador: Y en cuanto a las actividades, ¿qué tipos de actividades crees que te ayudan a aprender más?
- Marian: Redactar textos porque así la maestra me corrige.
- Entrevistador: ¿Tienes algún otro comentario?
- Marian: No.
- Entrevistador: Pues muchísimas gracias.

## Appendix H Interview Coding System

Theme	Attitude	Linguistic	Classroom Experience	Socio-cultural Impact
	Ef= Effort	DLE= Difficulties learning English	PEE=Previous English Experience	UoE= Use of English
	PAE= Positive attitude (wanting to study English)	Pro= Progress classroom	CEE= Current English Experience	CI= Cultural interest
<b>Codes</b>	NAE= Negative attitude (not wanting to study English)	POC= Practise outside the classroom		WI= Work interest
	PEAC= Positive English Attitude change			FF=received influence from family or influence on family
	SA= Same attitude			

## Appendix I Pre-QEFL Results

Item	Totally disagree	Disagree	Partially Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Totally agree
Total ss= 882	1	2	3	4	5	6
Percent						
Q1 I am very interested in the values and customs of other cultures.	.5	1.0	3.3	23.9	38.8	31.6
Q2 I have a good attitude learning English.	.8	1.4	3.1	15.8	35.0	43.9
Q3 My upper secondary school English teachers were always fair.	3.2	6.6	14.1	30.0	27.4	18.4
Q4 R I am afraid of sounding stupid in English because of the mistakes I make	9.9	10.7	13.2	23.1	24.4	18.5
Q5 Studying English is important to me because I am planning to live abroad (e.g., studying and working).	2.6	4.5	7.0	19.5	23.7	42.4
Q6 I can communicate orally in English.	14.4	20.4	21.5	23.8	13.4	5.8
Q7 The British are friendly.	1.4	3.3	11.0	38.0	31.9	14.2
Q8 I have to study English; otherwise, I think I cannot be successful in my future career.	2.4	2.4	5.8	16.0	26.4	46.7
Q9 I am satisfied with the work I have done in my English course.	5.4	6.8	13.4	29.8	30.0	14.1
Q10 English is an important subject in the school programme.	.1	.3	1.7	6.0	23.0	68.6
Q11 Mexico can develop thanks to Mexicans who speak English.	1.2	1.7	4.2	17.8	32.4	41.7
Q12 I need to know English to get a good job.	1.0	.8	2.8	11	27.1	57.2
Q13 I can imagine myself living abroad and having a discussion in English.	4.0	4.1	7.4	20.1	24.7	38.4
Q14 I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner on the internet or the phone.	22.3	12.2	11.8	15.0	16.3	21.9
Q15 The content evaluation of my English class was clear.	4.2	7.6	16.4	30.8	27.1	13.2
Q16 Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.	7.7	7.6	17.6	27.0	22.7	16.7
Q17R In my English lessons, I seldom do more than is necessary.	8.6	11.3	18.4	32.3	22.3	6.2
Q18R I think I would be happy if other cultures were more similar to Mexican	10.1	9.9	18.4	29.0	17.8	14.1
Q19 I really enjoy learning English.	1.1	1.7	6.6	25.3	33.6	31.0

Q20 My parents encourage me to study English.	3.3	4.3	7.7	18.9	27.6	37.3
Q21 I am sure I have a good ability to learn English.	.6	1.0	4.8	16.0	32.0	44.4
Q22 I am able to read in English.	5.9	8.7	14.3	28.9	22.1	19.5
Q23R It's hard for me to learn English because it's a difficult language.	16.4	14.1	18.4	25.3	17.1	8.4
Q24 I speak with my Spanish-speaking friends in English.	10.4	12.7	18.5	25.4	18	14.3
Q25 I would like to have American friends.	3.3	2.9	7.4	21.1	28.5	35.5
Q26 My upper secondary school English teachers showed interest and disposition to help us learn English.	7.5	6.6	13.3	23.7	26.5	22.4
IQ27 It is good to learn English as a child.	.8	.3	.9	2.9	13.6	81.4
Q28 Studying English is important to me because I may need it later on for job/studies.	.2	.5	1.1	5.1	16.8	76
Q29 I consider Americans are friendly.	3.1	4.6	13	34.5	27.9	16.3
Q30 My upper secondary school English teachers made their classes interesting.	8.5	8.7	15.2	28.9	22.9	15.8
Q31 I have to study English because I don't want to get bad marks in it at university.	1.2	1.4	3.9	10.4	24.3	58.4
Q32 I would like to know more British people.	2.3	2.8	11.2	20.7	26.6	35
Q33 I can write in English.	7.3	10.3	18.1	32.1	16.9	13.7
Q34 I would like to learn English to be like Americans.	24	17.5	21.8	15.5	12.1	8.7
Q35 I am interested in learning English because I want to travel around the world.	1.8	1.6	4.9	11.3	20.4	59.5
Q36R I am proud to be Mexican.	1.1	.9	1.4	5.1	12.1	79.3
Q37 I have to study English because, if I don't do it, my parents will be disappointed with me.	23.9	16.7	20.4	20.9	10.8	6.5
Q38 In my family there are people who speak English.	18.1	9	8.3	19.3	18.5	25.4
Q39 My upper secondary school classmates looked down on the one who did not speak English well.	42.1	19.8	15.4	11.3	6.8	4.3
Q40 I have foreign friends or acquaintances who speak English.	18.6	9	9.5	14.7	17.2	30.7
Q41 Because of the influence of the English language, I think the Spanish language is corrupt.	25.4	17.5	18.8	20.1	10.7	6.3
Q42 I do not particularly like the process of learning English and I do it only because I may need the language.	22	16.1	15.5	14.1	14.9	16.6

Q43 If I don't learn English, I won't be able to travel to other countries.	13.2	10.3	12.9	18.6	18.5	26.4
Q44 I believe the British are reliable.	6.6	8.5	25.7	38.4	14.2	6.1
Q45 The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.	1	2.5	3.9	13	24.7	54.4
Q46 I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner in a foreign country	37.6	15.1	12	10.7	8.7	15.5
Q47 When I watch T.V. programmes or movies in English, I try to understand the language.	1.4	2.5	4.9	15.4	32.4	42.4
Q48 I do activities where I have to use English (e.g. Reading magazines, listening to music, speaking or writing in English)	5.7	5	9	17.1	23.4	39.7
Q49 It is an advantage for Mexico to have an English-speaking neighbouring country such as the United States of America.	5.1	4.1	10.4	26.5	29.5	24.4
Q50 I get nervous when I need to speak in my English class.	5.3	6.1	7.1	22.9	27.8	30.7
Q51 I like the way the Americans behave.	8.4	12	28	32.4	13.8	4.5
Q 52 My upper secondary school classmates and I supported each other in our English class.	5	6.5	12	23.6	28.9	23.9
Q53 I have Mexican friends who speak English.	5.2	3.6	5.3	13.8	29.9	41.8
Q54 My upper secondary school English teachers were professionally prepared to teach their lessons.	5.4	7.1	11.6	25.1	29.4	21.1
Q 55 Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English.	13.6	12.8	21.1	25.1	16.9	10.1
Q56 I enjoy making my best effort to learn English.	1.2	1	4.4	16.8	34	42.1
Q57 I would like to learn English to be like the British.	31.4	18.3	19.8	16	8	5.8
Q58 I knew how my English performance would be evaluated in upper secondary school.	4.2	5.6	14.2	24.1	29	22.8
Q59 I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.	.9	.8	1.7	9.3	25.3	60.9
Q60 The activities my teachers evaluated were relevant/significant to learn the language.	5.8	6.3	10.4	28.3	29.8	19.2
Q 61 I have to learn English because without passing the English course I cannot graduate/ get my degree.	2	1.5	4.5	10.5	23.5	56.6
Q62R I think the cultural and artistic values of English are going at the	12.8	13.2	21.1	26.3	16.4	10

expense of Mexican values.						
Q63 If my teacher wanted me to do an extra English assignment, I would certainly volunteer.	.8	.9	3.2	11	27.6	56.1
Q64R Considering how I study English, I can honestly say that I do very little work.	6	7.3	11.7	31.2	27.7	15
Q 65I have interacted in English and face to face with at least one foreigner in my community city or country.	28	14.7	11.7	11.1	14.4	19
Q66 I am satisfied with my English proficiency at this moment.	29.9	15.4	17.6	15.9	10.2	10.5
Q67 I want to learn English to learn about the life and behaviour of people who live in English-speaking countries.	3.7	2.7	9.9	21	25.3	37.1
Q68 I can understand what I hear in English.	8.8	11.7	16.1	37.1	15.2	10.5
Q69 If I make more effort, I am sure I will be able to master English.	.5	.8	1.5	6.1	18.7	72.1
Q70R Because of the influence of the English speaking countries, I think the morals of Mexican people are becoming worse.	17.9	15	24.7	24.3	9.9	7.7

## Appendix J 4-Factor Pattern Matrix

State ment	EFL attitudes	Socio-cultural impact	Classroom experience	Linguistic exposure
28 Studying English is important to me because I may need it later on for job/studies.	.688	.029	-.051	-.135
35 I am interested in learning English because I want to travel around the world.	.635	-.005	-.074	.080
45 The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.	.608	.046	-.085	.030
69 If I make more effort, I am sure I will be able to master English.	.584	-.211	.093	-.103
25 I would like to have American friends.	.571	.043	-.032	.141
59 I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.	.568	-.096	.081	-.047
56 I enjoy making my best effort to learn English.	.557	-.061	.059	.077
19 I really enjoy learning English.	.546	-.186	.068	.333
21 I am sure I have a good ability to learn English.	.544	-.169	.116	.232
13 I can imagine myself living abroad and having a discussion in English.	.538	.103	-.125	.270
12 I need to know English to get a good job.	.535	.181	-.079	-.177
2 I have a good attitude learning English.	.535	-.277	.065	.133
10 English is an important subject in the school programme.	.534	-.043	.098	-.115
67 I want to learn English to learn about the life and behaviour of people who live in English-speaking countries.	.531	.167	-.061	.073
32 I would like to know more British people.	.530	.004	-.114	.259
47 When I watch T.V. programmes or movies in English, I try to understand the language.	.498	-.163	.082	.277
27 It is good to learn English as a child.	.463	-.045	.070	-.048
49 It is an advantage for Mexico to have an English-speaking neighbouring country such as the United States of America.	.438	.181	.005	.086
5 Studying English is important to me because I am planning to live abroad (e.g., studying and working).	.410	.075	-.148	.317
8 I have to study English; otherwise, I think I cannot be successful in my future career.	.402	.232	.023	-.179

63	If my teacher wanted me to do an extra English assignment, I would certainly volunteer.	.380	-.006	.155	-.076
11	Mexico can develop thanks to Mexicans who speak English.	.375	.204	.014	-.017
20	My parents encourage me to study English.	.352	-.025	.152	.147
1	I am very interested in the values and customs of other cultures.*	.335	-.037	-.017	.094
31	I have to study English because I don't want to get bad marks in it at university.	.319	.181	.147	-.331
29	I consider Americans are friendly.	.307	.131	.187	.083
55	Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English.	-.012	.634	-.011	.088
57	I would like to learn English to be like the British.	-.017	.602	-.068	.190
37	I have to study English because, if I don't do it, my parents will be disappointed with me.	.031	.586	.011	-.051
34	I would like to learn English to be like Americans.	.102	.568	-.012	.118
62	I think the cultural and artistic values of English are going at the expense of Mexican values.*	.009	.553	-.053	-.041
70	Because of the influence of the English speaking countries, I think the morals of Mexican people are becoming worse.*	-.070	.550	-.013	.032
16	Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.	.214	.512	.054	-.041
42	I do not particularly like the process of learning English and I do it only because I may need the language.*	-.293	.506	-.003	-.247
41	Because of the influence of the English language, I think the Spanish language is corrupt.	-.189	.481	-.039	.088
43	If I don't learn English, I won't be able to travel to other countries.	.197	.458	-.083	-.131
18	I think I would be happy if other cultures were more similar to Mexican.	.005	.451	.107	-.152
39	My upper secondary school classmates looked down on the ones who did not speak English well.	-.142	.415	-.021	.151
23	It's hard for me to learn English because it's a difficult language.*	-.159	.414	.036	-.326
51	I like the way the Americans behave.	.162	.396	.067	.189
26	My upper secondary school English teachers showed interest and disposition to help us learn English.	-.082	-.041	.831	.066
30	My upper secondary school English teachers made their classes interesting.	-.090	.041	.827	.019

54	My upper secondary school English teachers were professionally prepared to teach their lessons.	-.138	-.004	.818	-.015
3	My upper secondary school English teachers were always fair.	-.070	-.104	.740	.057
15	The content evaluation of my English class was clear.	-.018	-.017	.721	.161
60	The activities my teachers evaluated were relevant/significant to learn the language.	.013	.021	.720	.038
58	I knew how my English performance would be evaluated in upper secondary school.	.062	.024	.510	.022
52	My upper secondary school classmates and I supported each other in our English class.	.038	.059	.496	.063
6	I can communicate orally in English.	.051	-.037	.120	.706
65	I have interacted in English and face to face with at least one foreigner in my community city or country.	.064	.111	-.028	.694
22	I am able to read in English.	.114	-.069	.137	.688
68	I can understand what I hear in English.	.053	.017	.163	.683
14	I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner on the internet or the phone.	.136	-.016	.000	.656
33	I can write in English.	.112	.015	.157	.617
46	I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner in a foreign country.	-.035	.235	-.016	.602
66	I am satisfied with my English proficiency at this moment.	-.148	.112	.196	.587
9	I am satisfied with the work I have done in my English course.	.115	.001	.199	.530
24	I speak with my Spanish-speaking friends in English.	.082	.158	.149	.507
40	I have foreign friends or acquaintances who speak English.	.182	.090	-.003	.499
50	I get nervous when I need to speak in my English class.	.126	.306	-.004	-.435
4	I am afraid of sounding stupid in English because of the mistakes I make.*	.051	.327	.040	-.404
48	I do activities where I have to use English (e.g. Reading magazines, listening to music, speaking or writing in English)	.378	-.108	.155	.393
53	I have Mexican friends who speak English.	.180	-.006	.151	.338
38	In my family there are people who speak English.	.070	.073	.144	.320

## Appendix K Pre and Post QEFL Results

N.	Pre and Post Survey Items	First Results 2014			Second Results 2015		
		N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
27	It is good to learn English as a child.	210	5.73	.66	208	5.71	.76
36	I am proud to be Mexican.	210	5.67	.79	206	5.56	1.07
28	Studying English is important to me because I may need it later on for job/studies.	210	5.63	.76	210	5.31	1.06
69	If I make more effort, I am sure I will be able to master English.	209	5.60	.75	205	5.39	.89
10	English is an important subject in the school program.	210	5.57	.75	209	5.33	1.10
59	I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.	208	5.41	.84	206	5.22	1.07
31	I have to study English because I don't want to get bad marks in it at university.	209	5.38	.95	206	5.00	1.12
63	If my teacher wanted me to do an extra English assignment, I would certainly volunteer.	208	5.32	.88	202	5.00	1.13
12	I need to know English to get a good job.	209	5.28	.96	209	5.07	1.23
61	I have to learn English because without passing the English course I cannot graduate/ get my degree.	205	5.25	1.05	204	5.01	1.26
35	I am interested in learning English because I want to travel around the world.	209	5.23	1.07	203	5.08	1.24
2	I have a good attitude learning English.	210	5.12	.94	210	4.72	1.19
56	I enjoy making my best effort to learn English.	209	5.07	.89	205	4.73	1.20
11	Mexico can develop thanks to Mexicans who speak English.	210	5.04	1.02	208	4.67	1.30
45	The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.	209	5.03	1.13	205	4.71	1.36
21	I am sure I have a good ability to learn English.	208	4.98	1.08	209	4.68	1.21
1	I am very interested in the values and customs of other cultures.	208	4.97	.82	206	5.01	1.10
8	I have to study English; otherwise, I think I cannot be successful in my future career.	209	4.97	1.28	208	4.67	1.39
47	When I watch T.V. programmes or movies in English, I try to understand the language.	206	4.90	1.13	204	4.95	1.13
50	I get nervous when I need to speak in my English class.	210	4.77	1.25	206	4.55	1.50
13	I can imagine myself living abroad and having a discussion in English.	207	4.75	1.30	209	4.48	1.52

5	Studying English is important to me because I am planning to live abroad (e.g., studying and working).	208	4.75	1.24	208	4.40	1.54
25	I would like to have American friends.	204	4.75	1.24	208	4.54	1.38
53	I have Mexican friends who speak English.	209	4.72	1.47	205	4.79	1.33
19	I really enjoy learning English.	209	4.68	.99	209	4.54	1.31
20	My parents encourage me to study English.	209	4.62	1.28	208	4.61	1.45
32	I would like to know more British people.	210	4.61	1.21	204	4.47	1.46
67	I want to learn English to learn about the life and behaviour of people who live in English-speaking countries.	209	4.59	1.26	205	4.42	1.42
48	I do activities where I have to use English (e.g. Reading magazines, listening to music, speaking or writing in English)	210	4.52	1.47	205	4.52	1.44
7	The British are friendly.	209	4.43	1.00	209	4.04	1.25
49	It is an advantage for Mexico to have an English-speaking neighbouring country such as the United States of America.	210	4.39	1.26	205	4.11	1.35
29	I consider Americans are friendly.	208	4.38	1.11	210	4.00	1.26
52	My high school/university classmates and I supported each other in our English class.	210	4.38	1.36	206	4.37	1.34
54	My high school/university English teachers were professionally prepared to teach their lessons.	210	4.35	1.40	204	4.99	.97
58	I knew how my English performance would be evaluated in high school/English course.	210	4.32	1.25	205	4.41	1.48
60	The activities my teachers evaluated were relevant/significant to learn the language.	209	4.29	1.28	206	4.64	1.27
26	My high school/university English teachers showed interest and disposition to help us learn English.	210	4.27	1.46	210	5.07	1.08
64	Considering how I study English, I can honestly say that I do very little work.	206	4.23	1.16	204	3.99	1.34
4	I am afraid of sounding stupid in English because of the mistakes I make.	210	4.19	1.49	210	4.14	1.62
3	My high school/university English teachers were always fair.	210	4.13	1.31	209	4.66	1.15
9	I am satisfied with the work I have done in my English course.	208	4.10	1.14	209	4.09	1.30
43	If I don't learn English, I won't be able to travel to other countries.	209	4.10	1.64	204	3.77	1.58
15	The content evaluation of my English class was clear.	209	4.05	1.21	207	4.54	1.12
22	I am able to read in English.	210	3.99	1.28	208	4.26	1.18
30	My high school/university English teachers made their classes interesting.	210	3.98	1.40	210	4.70	1.20

16	Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.	210	3.90	1.44	208	3.84	1.59
33	I can write in English.	206	3.83	1.15	206	3.87	1.20
18	I think I would be happy if other cultures were more similar to Mexican.	208	3.79	1.38	208	3.96	1.51
40	I have foreign friends or acquaintances who speak English.	209	3.70	1.83	206	3.95	1.88
17	In my English lessons, I seldom do more than is necessary.	210	3.68	1.30	209	3.61	1.37
38	In my family there are people who speak English.	208	3.67	1.85	203	3.70	1.87
23	It's hard for me to learn English because it's a difficult language.	208	3.66	1.47	207	3.69	1.54
24	I speak with my Spanish-speaking friends in English.	209	3.62	1.48	209	3.89	1.39
44	I believe the British are reliable.	210	3.60	1.19	206	3.44	1.32
68	I can understand what I hear in English.	209	3.56	1.28	204	3.66	1.25
51	I like the way the Americans behave.	209	3.52	1.20	206	3.08	1.30
62	I think the cultural and artistic values of English are going at the expense of Mexican values.	210	3.50	1.37	203	3.63	1.53
42	I do not particularly like the process of learning English and I do it only because I may need the language.	209	3.46	1.74	205	3.52	1.75
14	I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner on the internet or the phone.	208	3.41	1.80	210	3.51	1.87
55	Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English.	208	3.40	1.42	205	3.42	1.58
34	I would like to learn English to be like Americans.	208	3.10	1.55	204	2.69	1.60
70	Because of the influence of the English speaking countries, I think the morals of Mexican people are becoming worse.	210	3.05	1.31	204	3.05	1.55
6	I can communicate orally in English.	210	3.02	1.29	209	3.16	1.39
37	I have to study English because, if I don't do it, my parents will be disappointed with me.	210	3.01	1.52	203	2.72	1.54
65	I have interacted in English and face to face with at least one foreigner in my community city or country.	206	2.97	1.79	205	3.24	1.91
41	Because of the influence of the English language, I think the Spanish language is corrupt.	208	2.92	1.43	201	3.09	1.66
57	I would like to learn English to be like the British.	207	2.73	1.47	204	2.41	1.53
46	I have interacted in English with at least one foreigner in a foreign country.	209	2.72	1.71	204	2.73	1.76
66	I am satisfied with my English proficiency at this moment.	210	2.72	1.57	204	2.99	1.57

39	My high school/ university classmates looked down on the ones who did not speak English well.	209	2.42	1.57	205	2.69	1.41
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## Appendix L Record of Attitude Change

Attitude category from Post-QEFL	Participant	Attitude before university English lessons	Attitude after a year of university English lessons
Negative	Marian	-	+
	Cassi	-	-
	Erica	-	+
	Gabriel	+	+
	Elizabeth	+,-	+
	Alexa	-	+
Positive	Edward	-	+
	Peter	-	-
	Rose	-,+	+
	Judith	-	+
	Manny	-	+,-
	Leo	+	+

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