

DIFFICULTIES FACED BY ADULT LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS IN
LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN EDMONTON, CANADA

A Monograph

Presented to the Program

Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con énfasis en Inglés

Escuela Ciencias de la Educación

Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Licenciado en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés

by

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June, 2021

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the people in my life I love the most. This project would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of my beloved husband, Gustavo Ariza Gonzalez who cheered me up when I neglected him in my study hours because I believed him every time when he kept saying “you can”. Special thanks to my supportive mother-in-law, Magola Gonzalez for lifting my spirits when I was about to quit. I also thank my sister Arlet for believing in me and my parents Jose Torres Ballesta and Fanny Gonzalez for shaping the determined woman I am and for making me choose education as the right path to overcome social injustice.

SPECIALIZED ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

Title	Difficulties Faced by Adult Latin American Immigrants in Learning English as a Second Language in Edmonton, Canada
Author	Claudia Patricia Torres González
Editorial	Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia
Date	June 10 th , 2021
Keywords	English Language Learners, learning difficulties, studying abroad, multiculturalism.
Description	Monograph
Sources	43 References.
Contents	This monograph aims to understand the main problems Latin American students face when learning English as a second language at a private ESL school in Edmonton, Canada. The study is developed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches through interviews and statistical information to understand students' experiences and study patterns at New Hope ESL. Some recommendations and guidelines are given to the school and Latin American students to overcome the problems related to the proficiency of English and their immersion in the Canadian culture.
Research Line	ECEDU's line is part of: Education and human development. Education can impact individuals and communities through educational processes that shape their contributions to society and benefit them from flourishing in all aspects of their lives.
Conclusions	This study has found that the main barriers Hispanic learners face to learn English in Edmonton, Canada are related to socioeconomic problems that have a negative impact in their learning process. Some of them also have low self-esteem problems because they do not feel confident of their proficient level and a small portion have felt culturally discriminated, which has hampered their motivation for learning English. However, students are active and use socialization and online resources as their preferred ways to learn English by themselves. Recommendations regarding learning styles, activities, and resources for teachers and students are suggested to overcome this issue.
Advisor	Jairo Alfonso Gutierrez De Pineres Rocha

ABSTRACT

Student, Claudia Patricia Torres Gonzalez., Difficulties Faced by Adult Latin American Immigrants in Learning English as a Second Language in Edmonton, Canada. Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con énfasis en Inglés, April, 2021, Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia.

This monograph aims to understand Latin American learners' main problems when learning English as a Second Language in a private ESL school in Edmonton, Canada. The study is developed using a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches through interviews and statistical information to understand their personal experiences and study patterns throughout their classes at New Hope ESL.

Throughout this monograph, I developed an analysis based on students' perceptions of their English learning process and professional documentation on this topic to gather enough information to identify their main struggles.

In conclusion, personal and economic problems are the most significant factors that prevent students from learning English. At the same time, speaking and listening are the areas where ESL Hispanic students have more difficulties.

The school should address different learning styles, types of intelligence, needs, and motivations with tailored lesson planning and curricula to keep learners engaged in enjoyable and didactic activities such as interactive games and realia alongside scaffolding and feedback to facilitate their learning process.

KEY WORDS: English Language Learners, learning difficulties, studying abroad, multiculturalism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my gratitude to my professor Jairo Gutierrez De Pineres for his professional advice and collaboration guiding me through this process with his knowledge and experience.

I want to express my deep gratitude to the National Open and Distance University (UNAD), for allowing me to carry out this work and giving me the opportunity to develop the required teaching skills to be a professional.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

English is the most spoken language worldwide with 1.268 billion speakers (Ethnologue, 2019). It is also the language of business and science and due to globalization, it is the language that connects people through the internet. Therefore, people are more interested in travelling to English speaking countries such as Canada to settle in search of a better lifestyle or to learn the language and culture for academic or specific purposes. Since English is the primary language in the city of Edmonton, Canada, newcomers are highly encouraged to learn it in order to have better social integration and advantages to succeed in Canadian society.

Appropriate references will be found to support this study in order to understand students learning needs, motivations, and characterization of Hispanic learners as immigrants. Also, the framework of the current research on this matter and theories that highlight pedagogical strategies and concepts to overcome these challenges.

In the development of this document, we will find out which are the main problems Hispanic students face when learning English as a second language in a private school in Edmonton to understand their implications on their learning process and thus, their performance in Canadian society. A survey is administered to analyze students' demographics and proficiency characteristics as well as their need to improve their knowledge of the target language.

The purpose of this monograph is not only to identify the root problems related to students' cognition, communicative skills, socio-economic, motivational, and cultural aspects but also to propose strategies to help English teachers at this school prevent students from withdrawing, boost their confidence, and English proficiency to success in an English-speaking country.

Significance of the Study

The Canadian Government stated the respect, recognition, and cultural freedom of diverse ethnic groups to Canadian society through the Canadian Multiculturalism Policy, 1971.

The government committed to support multiculturalism in four specific ways: assistance to cultural groups in their development and growth; assistance to members of cultural groups to overcome barriers to full participation in society; promotion of creative exchanges between cultural groups; and assistance to immigrants in learning French or English. Despite its official endorsement of multiculturalism, the government did not support multilingualism. The *Official Languages Act* of 1969 defined English, and French as Canada's two official languages, and the policy of multiculturalism was to be pursued within this bilingual framework (Wayland, 1997, p. 47).

Regarding the assistance to immigrants in learning one of the official languages, in this case, English for the interest of this study, the government has some ESL programs available "Federal, provincial and territorial governments across Canada fund language classes. You'll need to pay for private language classes" (Government of Canada, 2019). However, these classes are free only for permanent residents and protected persons. They are called: Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), but those who have a different status must pay for studying at private schools.

However, this study is limited to one private ESL school in Edmonton, Alberta, called New Hope ESL. The school has been chosen because approximately 50% of its population is from Latin American countries. The purpose is to explore how Latin American ESL students at a private school have experienced the ESL program and the Canadian culture. The findings of this research would help ESL instructors at New Hope ESL learn the challenges these students face

to better serve the Latin American ESL population and help them feel welcome in Canada and develop English proficiency keeping in mind contents that suit learners needs, targeting their cognitive levels and developing their communication skills.

The outcomes of this research would be handy to understand the reasons for discomfort, poor performance and lack of interest of Latin American ESL students, get them more engaged and prevent them from withdrawing.

Also, this study would be helpful for those Latin Americans who are considering travelling to Canada or an English-speaking country to study English for academic or settlement purposes because they could have a better overview of the problems they could encounter as newcomers which might help them make wiser decisions and get prepared beforehand.

Statement of the Problem

Canada is well-known for being a welcoming country that embraces multiculturalism and diversity with settlement opportunities for immigrants and studying programs for international students through ESL classes in those territories and provinces where English is the primary language. However, Hispanic immigrants face challenging situations when studying ESL in an English-speaking city such as Edmonton, the capital of the province of Alberta. These problematic situations lead to lack of interest, discomfort, absence, poor performance and in the worst-case scenario, some students withdraw. Some of these situations are related to components such as culture, cognition, content, and communication.

Culturally, the Latin American community contributes to Canada's ethnocultural diversity becoming one of the fastest growing ethnic communities in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016). Latin Americans accounted for approximately 1.3% and 1.9% of the Canadian and Edmontonian population respectively in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016) with 16,570 people speaking Spanish as their mother tongue. Despite the also called "Latino" community continues to shape the socio-demographic and cultural landscape of Canada, it has faced discrimination, "In 2002, 26% of Canadians of Latin American origin reported they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment based on their ethnicity, race, religion, language, or accent in the past five years, or since they had arrived in Canada" (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Also, their socio-economic progress is jeopardized "Canadians of Latin American origin generally have lower incomes than the national average. In 2000,⁵ the average income from all sources for Canadians of Latin American origin aged 15 and over was almost \$22,500, almost \$7,500 less than the figure for all Canadians" (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Furthermore, ESL programs must be tailored to help students communicate effectively with high standards of English proficiency as well as facilitate their cultural immersion in the Canadian mainstream. The big question is if Hispanic ESL students consider the topics, vocabulary, and activities, help them achieve their learning goals and raise cultural awareness of the society they are living in, and how are their literacy skills in their First Language (L1) impacting on their ESL learning process? Or which are the root causes of Hispanic ESL students' lack of interest, discomfort, and poor performance?

Objectives

General Objective

To determine the main problems Latin American learners, deal with when learning English as a Second Language in Edmonton, Canada, based on their experiences at New Hope ESL school in order to suggest guidelines for teachers and students to overcome these situations.

Specific Objectives

- Classify Hispanic ESL students' motivations to learn English in Edmonton, Canada.
- Analyze the cultural impact on Hispanic students' learning process when studying English as a Second Language.
- Contrast content, curriculum and syllabus with Hispanic ESL goals and expectations.
- Inquire about English proficiency and communicative difficulties of Hispanic ESL learners.
- Identify students' perceptions of the ESL teachers' support.
- Make suggestions on strategies to approach the Hispanic ESL students' problems.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Definition of terms

Private school

A school that does not receive financial support from the government.

ESL

“English as a Second Language” (ESL), also referred to as English for Speakers of other languages, is a specialized approach to language instruction designed for those who have a primary language other than English and who are limited in English proficiency. The term “specialized” connotes the use of several distinct and varying methods and strategies based on a wide range of innovative learning theories that have been developed over several decades, and which deal specifically with learning and teaching strategies of English to non-native or limited English speakers” (Carrasquillo, 1994, p. 4).

According to this definition, most of the immigrants from Latin American have Spanish and Portuguese as primary languages and take ESL classes to improve their English proficiency. In Edmonton, Canada ESL training is offered by many different organizations, including high schools, colleges, universities, immigrant-serving agencies, religious and community organizations as well as private language schools. These classes can be studied formally or informally, full-time or part-time, in person or online. They also offer English for Specific Purposes ESP, language test preparation Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP). Some of these tests are taken for academic, professional and immigration purposes. These ESL programs offer extra-curricular activities to help students

immerse themselves in the culture with field trips to the mountains, playing hockey, basketball, or skiing, etc.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)

are used to assess language skills in Canada. Someone at Benchmark 1 has little or no English skills. A person at Benchmark 12 can speak English fluently (Government of Alberta, n.d.). This standard is very important because it is used among Canadian schools to measure students' English proficiency.

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR): It is an international standard for describing language ability. It describes language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing, such as teachers or learners, to see the level of different qualifications. It also means that employers and educational institutions can easily compare our qualifications to other exams in their country (Cambridge).

Categories of ESL students in Canada:

1. **Immigrants by choice.** Normally have received formal education in their native countries more or less equivalent to Canadian standards. May have learned English as a foreign language in school. Make the choice to come to this country and have the choice to return to their native country. Family units are usually intact. Families are financially independent because parents are employed or have access to funds in their native country. Families may have been recruited by the government because of their education and work experience. May be sponsored by family members established here.
2. **International Students.** Are here temporarily for the purpose of study. Are here to learn English and immerse themselves in Canadian culture. Pay to go to school in

our province. Are in the province for varying lengths of time. Are generally highly educated students. Generally, have studied English before coming to Canada.

3. **Temporary Foreign Workers.** Students from this category are in the province studying while their parent(s) or themselves are on an employment contract. These students are similar to immigrant students in most respects except that they are here for a limited time due to their parent's or themselves contractual employment.
4. **Government Assisted Refugee.** Government-assisted refugees are Convention Refugees Abroad and members of the Source Country Class whose initial resettlement in Canada is entirely supported by the Government of Canada or Quebec. This support is delivered by CIC-supported non-governmental agencies. Canadian Citizenship and Immigration. Are referred to Canada by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Are permanent residents (landed immigrants) and therefore have all the rights and privileges of a Canadian citizen regarding education and access to services. Have left their country involuntarily due to political, social, and/or economic upheaval and are unable to return safely.
5. **Refugee Claimant.** Canada offers refugee protection to people in Canada who fear persecution or whose removal from Canada would subject them to a danger of torture, a risk to their life or a risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment. Arrived in Canada without status and is seeking asylum (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2009, pp. 4-15).

It is important to understand what type of ESL students are interacting in the classroom because despite they may be immigrants, they could undergo different situations according to their

immigration status and this can have an impact on their personal and cultural backgrounds facing distinct situations and experiences.

Theoretical framework

Previous studies

Some research studies have focused on analyze the difficulties faced by ESL students in different settings. To illustrate, the first study was conducted in the U.S. based on Hispanic ESL students' experiences while the second took place in Australia based on different ESL students' communities.

Calderon, R. A. "Exploring the Experiences of Hispanic ESL Students in ESL Programs"
Walden University, Chicago, United States, 2016.

This research was carried to determine the causes of poor performance of the Hispanic ESL students in a private college in the United States. The information was gathered from 3 ESL classroom observations and interviews with 15 Hispanic community college students. Also, the researcher had a focus group with 7 different students to understand their perspectives and problems about the ESL program.

According to the results of this research, Hispanic ESL students were satisfied with the ESL program, but they would like to use technology in the classroom, more speaking practice in class, to be corrected when they mispronounce a word, and instructors who spoke Spanish. One of the suggestions for the college was to create a policy to institutionalize professional development to help ESL teachers be more aware of the issues that Hispanic ESL students face in the classroom in order to help students achieve English proficiency.

Wehbe, F. "Difficulties English Learners May Face in an ESL Environment". Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, 2013

The purpose of this research was to find out the problems that interfere with students' acquisition process of English as a Second Language. The study found issues related to diversity in racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds and the need to administer new teaching techniques into the classroom.

The researcher looked into these problems by using theories to address these problems through classroom observation, some conversation excerpts were used to evidence these issues. In this study, they also focused on teachers' perceptions about teaching approaches of ESL.

Some of the recommendations of this study were the use of scaffolding strategies controlled with the presence and participation of a teacher as well as student-centred learning as the preferred teaching approach. Also, the use of a communicative approach by teachers to include social context in the curriculum of teaching English as a second language.

Related Previous Theories

Bilingualism Theories by Cummins

The Communicative Proficiency Model (4 Quadrant Model)

As for Cummins (Baker, 2011), the four quadrants are meant to keeping high challenges in the classroom by providing scaffolding to support and encourage students to use the L2.

First quadrant. Everyday English in the classroom helps students to build up their communicative skills in the L2.

Second quadrant. Cognitively undemanding tasks, but less scaffolding support. The purpose is to allow pupils to use the second language within their possibilities and skills.

Third quadrant. Visual and personal aids such as pictures, flashcards, dictionaries, teacher tutoring, etc.

Fourth quadrant. Tasks are cognitively more demanding and require the student to have higher thinking skills such as analyzing, arguing, hypothesizing, etc. (Baker, 2011).

Thresholds Theory

According to this theory, Cummins (Baker, 2011) asserts that there are three thresholds to reach balanced bilingualism. Firstly, pupils have low proficiency and cognitive levels in both languages; On the second floor, students are more competent in one of the languages, and finally, on the third threshold they are highly competent in both languages.

Common Underlying Proficiency Model

States that despite two languages seem to be different on the surface, they have similar cognitive proficiency system. Based on the development of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and gradually move to more complex skills called Cognitive and Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Bilash, 2009).

Scaffolding theory

According to Bruner's theory, students need help from their teachers and other adults while they acquire the knowledge and skills to do it more independently. The scaffold "is gradually dismantled as the work is completed" (Wheeler, 2014).

For instance, the teacher sets up a structure that can be used for different examples, students then can use the pattern to make their sentences. They then would not need it once they have learned it by practicing it several times.

Differentiated Learning

According to the education expert, Carol Tomlinson (Films Media Group, 2015), there are five key concepts teachers must keep in mind to apply Differentiated Learning in the classroom. The first one is a learning environment that allows students to feel confident and respected. Second, a high-quality curriculum with clear and specific content students need to learn. Third, assessments throughout the class, pre-assessment to identify their needs and interests, formative assessment to monitor and get feedback from students and then adjust the lesson if needed and summative assessment to check if they reached the learning goal. Fourth, teaching adjustment to support different level students according to their needs, challenging tasks for advanced students and scaffolding for low levels. Fifth, Leadership and Management to let the students be accountable and participate in the class with roles with a student-centred approach.

It is vital to create an invitational learning environment, where teachers can share ownership and responsibility with students. Engaging them with quality content for the assigned curriculum by referencing the learning goal followed by discussion at the beginning of classes. The use of pre-assessment during the warm-up to gauge their levels and previous knowledge as well as frequent formative assessment during the activities to keep track of students' readiness and offer valuable feedback and summative assessment at the end of the class with interactive quizzes and games. Also, teachers must have some pre-established routines that allow students to be self-directed and help make class stages run smoothly.

Learning Styles

Learning styles are characteristic approaches to learning and studying, which generally include superficial and deep information processing (Woolfolk, 1996). According to this psychologist, those students who have a deep information processing approach, are more eager to learn because they want to make connections to help understand their reality while superficial processing pupils are more likely to use their memory to learn new concepts. However, Woolfolk claims that what many experts have considered learning styles are better classified as learning preferences because they are personal reactions and choices to certain learning environments and methods that are more related to personality and biology. She encourages us to identify how we prefer to study, or which way is the most effective for us to learn. Then, as answers varies per individual, everyone develops different learning patterns.

As teachers face different learning styles in the same classroom, we must consider different approaches and methods to address them in our lesson planning. Yet, it would be impossible to deliver the most suitable method for all of them but providing some variety can help them know that classes can be flexible because there are different ways of learning and that is important.

Learning Models

There are several learning models we must keep in mind before, during, and after we teach our classes. They are essential to design strategies for our students because they can give us a better understanding of how to deal with students' learning styles.

Model and the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument® HBDI®

This theory helps people better understand the four integrated brain systems, and their predilections for each system leading to different abilities to handle situations accordingly

(Herrmann, 2000). This theory analyzes four areas of the brain to help us understand where certain mental activities and preferences are more active. These groups are: The Upper Left (A Quadrant), Lower Left (B Quadrant), Lower Right (C Quadrant), and Upper Right (D Quadrant).

Herrmann allocates the preferences using the following scheme:

The A Quadrant is typified by preferences that are logical, analytical, technical, and quantitative. The B Quadrant is typified by preferences that are controlled, planned, administrative, and sequential. The C Quadrant is typified by preferences that are emotional, interpersonal, feeling oriented, and spiritual. The D Quadrant is typified by preferences that are imaginative, holistic, innovative, and synthesizing. These quadrants are the four key interrelated constructs measured by the HBDI®. (Herrmann, 2000)

Consequently, teachers deal with students who expect the typical lecture, memorize some grammar structures, and go along a textbook (B Quadrant) or those who are really interested in expanding their knowledge and dig in the concepts (A Quadrant). While other students are eager to communicate when learning so that they develop activities such as games, shopping lists or things that are not common in a regular class (C Quadrant) or other pupils who want to explore different perspectives and sometimes do not take classes seriously (D Quadrant). Therefore, it is relevant to acknowledge their preferences because they lead us to identify students' learning motivations.

Felder-Silverman Model

This theory (1998) is the result of research carried by Dr. Richard Felder in collaboration with Dr. Linda K. Silverman, an educational psychologist. They intended to identify learning styles in engineering students through *The Index of Learning Style*, but afterwards, the model has

been used for varied school and college settings. The model initially explored five dimensions, but after some changes, only four remained:

Sensory-intuitive. Felder and Silverman refer to Carl Jung's theory of *Psychological Types* (Jung, 1971) with these categories for people who perceive the world through the senses. Think of students who prefer to guide their knowledge by using observation and procedures and like to experiment and practice. While other students are better at processing abstract concepts and symbols as well as using theories and insights.

Visual-verbal. The authors shifted the auditory for the verbal element in this category because the auditory concept includes sounds and spoken words in opposition to the visual feature with pictures, charts and diagrams but writing words did not fit in the visual category as they represent spoken words, not images. This category also includes kinesthetic learners who would rather touch and move to understand.

Active-reflective. According to these experts, active students are prone to engage in classrooms discussions and stirring activities. In contrast, reflective pupils are deep thinkers through contemplation. This category is part of Kolb's theory (Kolb, 1984).

Sequential-global. "Sequential learners follow linear reasoning processes when solving problems; global learners make intuitive leaps and may be unable to explain how they came up with solutions" (Felder & Silverman, 1998, p. 679). In other words, sequential learners are those who prefer a step-by-step approach. For example, modules break down into units, and units into topics. But global learners think out of the box and can make connections among concepts.

This theory also proposes teaching styles to address every learning style:

As for the sensory-intuitive pupils, teachers should favor content. Think of realia and problem-solving exercises for sensory students and creativity and research for the more intuitive

ones. Likewise, for the Visual-verbal, it is recommended a focus on presentation. For instance, mind maps, flashcards, pictures and charts for visual students and podcasts, listening exercises, storytelling for the verbal ones. Moreover, active students need more participation and teamworking activities and reflective students some time to analyze and come up with their conclusions. Finally, drill exercises and scaffolding for sequential pupils and analysis from an overview perspective for global students.

Felder and Silverman warn teachers about the mismatch between their students' learning styles and their teaching styles. As teachers are unable to address all the learning styles in one class, they must try different approaches in every class and assess their effectiveness.

Kolb's Learning model

David Kolb (1984) was concerned about the way students process knowledge. According to him, pupils can experience concrete situations through direct involvement for active/accommodator learners or abstract concepts such as reading for theorist/assimilator learners. These experiences become knowledge when students reflect about them (reflective/diverge learners) or test them through experiments (pragmatic/converge learners). Thus, it is necessary to understand that students might process contents in different ways and use knowledge for different purposes. The key is recognizing their strengths to empower them and guide them to explore other learning styles.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

Richard Bandler and John Grinder, intended to explain the cause of success of individuals by identifying patterned connections between neurological processes, language, and acquired behaviors (Bandler & Grinder, 1975). These theorists assert that mind and body are

interconnected because the way we think influences our attitudes and vice versa. They analyze three big systems (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2004):

Visual representational system. Students prefer their mental imagery, sight, and reading skills to visualize what they learn. They can plan and connect abstract concepts.

Auditory representational system. This system values auditory memories such as spoken explanations and discussions. Students can remember the sequence of lectures and explanations, but struggle when making connections among them. It is essential for learning languages.

kinesthetic representational system. Pupils use their bodies and movements to process and transform knowledge. For instance, these students prefer TPR and stirring activities where they must stand up, move around or touch things. They like to carry out experiments and projects. As a result, the use of PowerPoint presentation, videos, pictures, and charts helps visual students. In contrast, auditory students prefer oral instructions and the repetition of sentences. While kinesthetic students are active writers in chats.

According to Bandler and Grinder, students tend to favor one system over the others and thus, they specialized in that one, but this means that they weaken the other representational schemes and its abilities. As teachers, we must encourage students to take advantage of the system where they perform better and help them function the others.

Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner (2011) claims that it does not exist one unique intelligence, instead, there are several kinds of intelligence people develop over their lives:

Linguistic-verbal. People with this type of intelligence are good at reading, writing, learning languages and communicating their ideas. This ability is essential for learning English as a second language.

Musical. Individuals who are skilled in the performance, composition, and appreciation of music. They have sensitivity to recognize rhythm, pitch, meter, tone, melody, or timbre. For instance, singers, composers, critics, people who can play musical instruments, etc.

Visual-spatial. Those who can deal with recognizing, visualizing, and manipulating large-scale (pilots) and fine-grained (surgeons) spatial images have this intelligence.

Logical-mathematical. This area involves abstractions, reasoning, numbers, logic, and critical thinking. Think of engineers, accountants, and scientists.

Bodily-kinesthetic. The ability to control our bodies and motions to create, handle objects, or solve problems. For example, people who are good at sports, handcrafting, and dance.

Interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. Individuals who can understand themselves (intrapersonal) and others (interpersonal) feelings, motivations, and moods. Teachers, salespeople, and social workers usually have this intelligence. It is also called emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) and it determines the way we handle frustration and confusion when learning.

Naturalistic. It is the ability to identify and distinguish our environment, which includes plants and animal species. This consciousness about our ecosystems is vital for our survival and sustainability of natural resources. Gardner's theory is important because it allows us to understand that every student has these types of intelligence at some degree, which means that we must address their learning needs with plural methods as they vary per student. Also, there are some factors that impact the development of these skills such as genetics and experiences that help

students thrive (early learning, private tutors, resources, favorable context) or lessen (lack of resources, opportunities, motivation) these abilities.

Constructivism

Lev Vygotsky (1978) contends that individuals shape their knowledge through their experiences with others (classmates, teachers, communities) in an active process where they negotiate meaning. This framework also states that students are not mere recipients of input, they connect previous constructions to new information in order to adjust their perceptions of reality. In this scheme, teachers are facilitators who guide students and provide scaffolding strategies to help them reach autonomous levels. While communicating with peers allows student to learn together and make meaningful reflections about what they are learning, so that social factors such as culture can influence their learning process. However, Vygotsky also acknowledges that despite being immersed in a community, each student is different and can process and use knowledge in different ways.

In the classroom, teachers can implement this theoretical proposal with a student-centered approach that values students' participation, collaborative learning, scaffolding activities (Coppie & Bredekamp, 2009), retrieving prior knowledge before introducing new content, engaging discussions, and interactive teachers' role through negotiation. Likewise, Bruner (1961) highlights the influence of teachers in making knowledge discoverable and autonomous for pupils. They then, make their own assumptions and connections about contents.

Social Learning theory

Bandura (1978) contends that students can acquire language through four stages.

Attention. Learners use observation to focus on the target language.

Retention. It is the ability of students to retrieve information and store them for long periods.

Reproduction. Once students have analyzed and memorize target language vocabulary, structures, and usage, they will be able to repeat them by trying through experience and exposure.

Motivation. The willingness of students to engage in this process.

There are countless opportunities for ESL instructors and students to learn through socialization in Canada. Some of these experiences can occur inside the classroom with collaborative activities since students may have to use the target language to communicate with students who speak other languages. Also, learners can observe how native teachers use the target language to give instructions and once retained, pupils could use this information to reproduce them. More spontaneous interactions occur at lunch time when students gather to talk about their interests. Likewise, it depends on students' motivation to dare practice and engage with this socialization process to learn English.

Motivation

“Motivation refers to a process that starts with a need and leads to a behavior that moves an individual towards achieving a goal (Melendy, 2008). In Second Language Acquisition, it refers to the attempt and desire to learn a language and positive attitudes toward learning it (Dornyei, 1994)” (Babae, 2012). As teachers, we might ask about the variables that move students to accomplish their aims and resist challenges and difficulties.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

The American psychologist Abraham Maslow developed a classification of human motives based on their needs. The scale ranges necessities from basic at the bottom to increase in complexity at the top (Pardee, 1990):

Physiological needs. (Hunger, thirst, sleep, etc.), they are in the first level and are essential for human life.

Safety needs. Once the physiological needs are met, individuals can move to the next level where people want to have economic security (employment), protection with shelter, stability, and the prevention of danger and chaos. More related to money.

Social needs. A person necessity of feeling loved and accepted by others.

Self-esteem. People achieve autonomy and independence. They feel appreciated and self-confidence. It is linked to psychological needs.

Self-actualization. At the top, individuals can achieve their full potential and transform into a better version of themselves.

According to this scheme, people are in constant growth and must meet basic needs first to go up in the pyramid. However, these needs can overlap between levels and once a need is met, it is no longer a motivator. This model is important because when students cannot meet basic needs such as food and shelter, it is difficult for them to focus on their self-development needs to get them motivated to learn English.

Self-determination theory

This theory posits students are motivated to achieve different goals through an active and continuous challenging process. It identifies personality features that help individuals self-regulate

to accomplish their objectives. It considers the social conditions of the context where the individual is immersed such as competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci et al., 1991).

Intrinsic motivation. Students are “induced for their own sake, and are linked to feelings of pleasure, interest and satisfaction derived directly from participation in the behavior” (Link, 2019). The individual does not need external aids to feel engage in activities, so that they choose to do it for their own interest and satisfaction.

Extrinsic motivation. “External regulation behaviors are typically induced by the offer of reward or punishment” (Link, 2019). Contrary to intrinsic motivation, the extrinsic counterpart relies on elements out of the individual. Take, for example, a badge or points become instruments to get students engaged in activities. The problem is to keep interest when the reward is removed. Another approach is the use of threats by promising punishments if the task is not completed, but this can produce lack of interest or anxiety.

Teachers can also contribute to the external factors that play a role in students’ motivation. According to Wei (2007), educators can favor more welcoming environments where students do not feel anxious for achieving idealistic goals or competing against their classmates. Instead, collaborative approaches are highly encouraged to make students be more interested in learning English. Teachers, then facilitate learning through the recognition of pupil’s improvement in opposition to comparisons among them.

ARCS Model of Motivational Design

Dr. John Keller (1987) formulated this model to increase learners’ motivation and thus, produce better outcomes. Keller focused on four elements: Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction (ARCS).

Attention. Teachers should get learners' interest through perceptual arousal with the use of songs, videos, or unusual activities such as cartoons, or funny anecdotes. Also, teachers can use inquiry arousal with debate, leading questions, and dilemmas to stimulate their curiosity and active participation. Whereas variability is suggested not to make classes predictable and monotonous. Instead, educators can use different modalities every class.

Relevance. It helps make the learning contents significant to students. Then, it is important to present the learning goals and explain how they can use that knowledge in their lives to meet their needs and make connections with their previous experiences.

Confidence. Students should be aware of their probabilities to succeed with provided syllabus, objectives, and prerequisites to foresee if they can have control over their learning process. If they feel they can perform well, they will be highly motivated, otherwise, they will not try hard. Content must be organized gradually and consistently with scaffolding. This gives them the feeling they can achieve the learning goals. Moreover, learners need feedback to make improvements and grow.

Satisfaction. When the learner meets the learning goals, they can feel rewarded by a high score (extrinsically), but when they feel satisfied because they achieve their own learning goals or they feel capable and worth, it is intrinsic motivation. However, teachers must keep equity when rewarding students and provide the same level of incentive in proportion with difficulty.

Gamification

It has been defined as “the use of video game elements in non-gaming systems to improve user experience and user engagement” (Deterding, Sicart, Nacke, O’Hara, & Dixon, 2011, p. 1). In education, this concept has used a series of categories related to the nature of games and transfer these features to classroom activities. The purpose is to get students engaged

with learning tasks by providing the conditions and excitement of games to achieve deeper learning. These transferable characteristics were identified as the game attribute taxonomy, introduced by Wilson and colleagues (2009). According to these authors there are 18 game characteristics applicable to classroom contexts, but Bedwell and collaborators (2012) have classified these attributes into 9 categories. However, other studies have pointed that “only 6 of these game attributes (fantasy, rules/goals, sensory stimuli, challenge, mystery, and control) were essential for learning based on the input-process-outcome game model” (Garris, Ahlers, & Driskell, 2002).

Teachers can implement game-like elements when setting unusual activities for students to make them produce deep knowledge while playing games that are sensory appealing and challenge them to compete among their partners in simulated scenarios conditioned by certain rules, but still, they can make their choices and have some feedback and control over their progress.

Culture

It is “the sum total of the social environment in which we are raised and continue to be socialized” (Symbaluk & Bereska, 2016, p. 49). Furthermore, we have learned and practice culture within the society that surrounds us, so that impacts our reality, lifestyles, and conception of the world. These authors define some aspects of culture such as nonmaterial culture as “intangibles that are the end product of intellectual and/or spiritual development, or the meanings that people attach to artefacts”, and material culture as “all of the tangible or physical items that people have created for use” (p. 51). Subsequently, nonmaterial culture includes language, beliefs, and values, whereas some elements of material culture are food, clothing, and technological artifacts and they vary from society to society.

Racial discrimination

It is the prejudice and harmful practices of predominant community individuals against members of minority groups. This kind of discrimination “has cognitive, affective, and behavioural components” (Symbaluk & Bereska, 2016, p. 182–184). The cognitive component of racial discrimination reveals our opinions and mindset about minority groups. The affective factor is the way we feel about these communities and the behavioral component has to do with our actions and attitude towards these ethnic and racial demographics. Racial discrimination can be encountered as *de jure* and *de facto* forms of discrimination (Murray et al. 2012). Unfortunately, there is racial discrimination in Canadian society. Some of these *de jure* forms are Indian Act (1876), Residential Schools (1831), and Chinese Exclusion Act (1923). All these laws created by the government ruled against the rights of these minority groups and increased the power of white members of the Canadian society while current laws on migrant labor in Canada make immigrant workers vulnerable to exploitation. One example of *de facto* discrimination is islamophobia, described by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2015) as:

Stereotypes, bias or acts of hostility towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general. In addition to individual acts of intolerance and racial profiling, Islamophobia leads to viewing Muslims as a greater security threat on an institutional, systemic, and societal level.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

As this monograph focuses on determining the challenges face by Hispanic students when learning ESL in Canada, this study has qualitative and quantitative elements. The qualitative approach analyzes several concepts and theories to establish connections that help understand the nature of these barriers and the actions that educators can take to tackle them. This documental research explores varied perspectives from experts in education, psychology, and sociology to provide a holistic comprehension of this issue.

Another qualitative research methodology is the use of descriptive data, based on learners' conversations and interactions (Taylor and Bogdan, 2000).

The quantitative analysis is centered on learners' perception of their communicative skills and proficiency, difficulties to acquire and learn the target language, the role of ESL in providing opportunities to use English for their learning goals, motivations, and their social realities. A survey is used to collect information and visualize the findings through graphs.

Survey

A questionnaire was administered to a sample group of 25 out of 39 Hispanic students drawn from 4 different classes (IELTS, CLB 1-2, CLB 3-4, CLB 5-6) at New Hope ESL School in Edmonton, Canada. Through the *Survey to Identify Difficulties Hispanic ESL Students Face in Edmonton, Canada* (See Annex No. 1), they were asked 11 questions to help determine their perceptions on their communicative skills in English, their motivations to learn the target language, as well as problems regarding cultural, pragmatic, and cognitive elements that have an impact on their learning process. The instrument was delivered in their mother tongue (Spanish)

to make it more effective. This survey also asked about students' perceptions on the ESL teachers support and their own efforts for improving their English level.

To Inquire about their English proficiency and communicative difficulties, the questions were based on The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which is an international standard for describing language ability. It describes language ability on a six-point scale with upper and lower categories in some levels, from A1 (beginners), up to C2 (advanced).

CONVENTION	DESCRIPTOR
A1 Beginner	Can easily interact by asking basic personal information questions.
A2 Elementary English	Can make simple transactions (at shops, banks, medical appointments, etc.), ask for basic information, ask and explain directions.
A2+ Elementary English	Can clarify information and exchange information about simple situations with help.
B1 Intermediate English	Can have a spontaneous conversation, but sometimes have a hard time explaining exactly their point.
B1+ Intermediate English	Can give specific information in an interview or consultation (how to describe symptoms to a doctor).
B2 Upper- Intermediate English	Can understand in detail what is being said and explain a point of view on a current issue.
B2+ Upper- Intermediate English	Can effectively use a variety of connectors to clearly explain ideas.

C1 Advanced English	Express fluently and spontaneously when speaking, almost effortlessly. Know a large vocabulary.
C2 Proficiency English	Has a good command of idiomatic and colloquial expressions. Rarely makes mistakes while speaking.

Table 1. CEFR Conventions and descriptors.

CHAPTER IV

Results and Discussion

The results obtained from the quantitative survey previously described in the methodology and the qualitative analysis of concepts and theories regarding motivation, learning styles, bilingualism, didactic strategies, etc., lead us to significant findings to determine Hispanic students' main problems when learning English in Edmonton, Canada. Therefore, the following charts portray relevant information with a thorough interpretation of the gathered data.

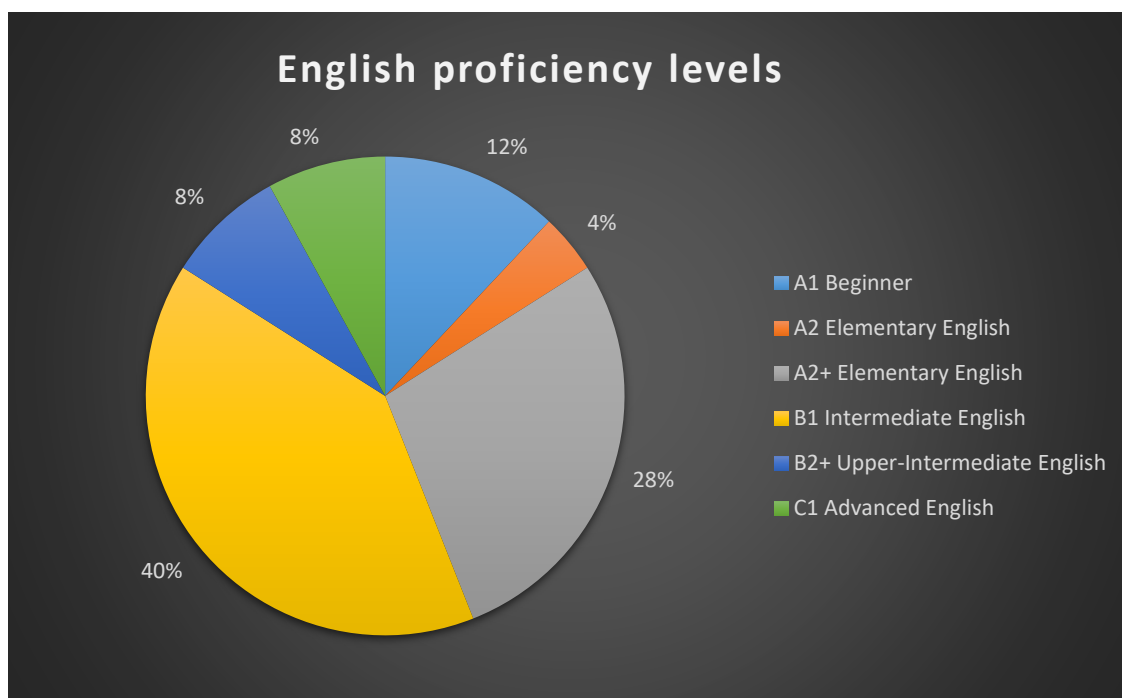


Figure 1. English proficiency levels of Hispanic ESL students.

More than the half of the students (56%) have an independent English level: Intermediate English (40%), B2+ Upper-Intermediate English (8%), and C1 Advanced English (8%). On the other hand, A2+ Elementary English (28%), 12% A1 Beginner and 4% A2 Elementary English are in the lowest levels. No one has reached the last level: Proficient English (C2).

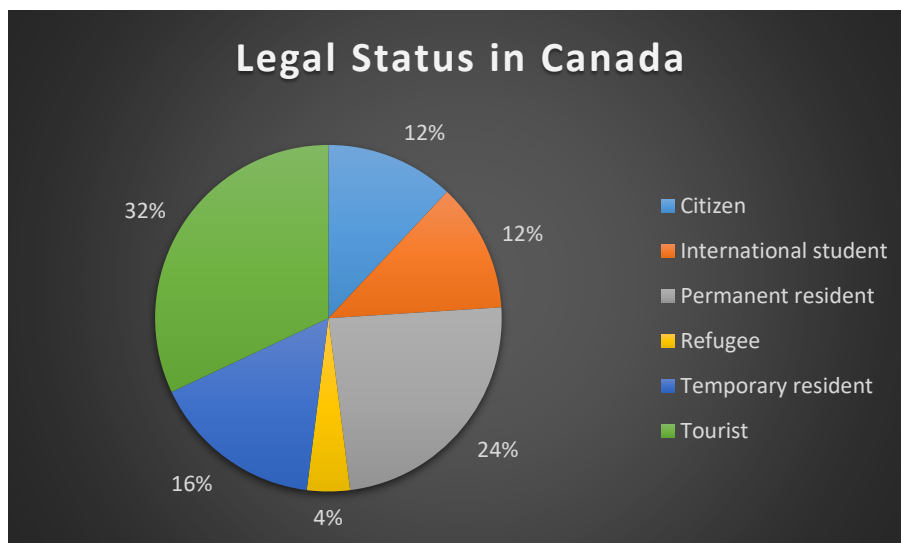


Figure 2. Legal status of Hispanic ESL students in Canada.

The above pie chart shows that a third of the students are tourists (32%). Permanent residents are ranked second at 24%. International students and citizens are equally in the third place (12%) and Temporary residents at fourth (16%). While refugees are significantly at the bottom (4%).

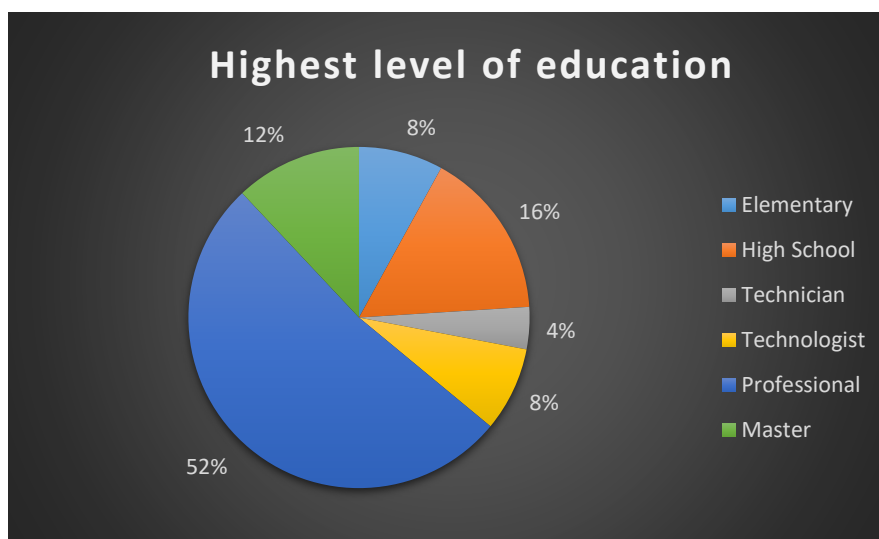


Figure 3. Highest degree or level of education completed by Hispanic ESL students.

Noticeably, most of the Hispanic ESL students have post-secondary education degrees (76%), including bachelor (52%), Master (12%), Technology (8%), and technician (4%), but none of them have a Ph. D. degree. In contrast, 8% of the students are at the elementary level.

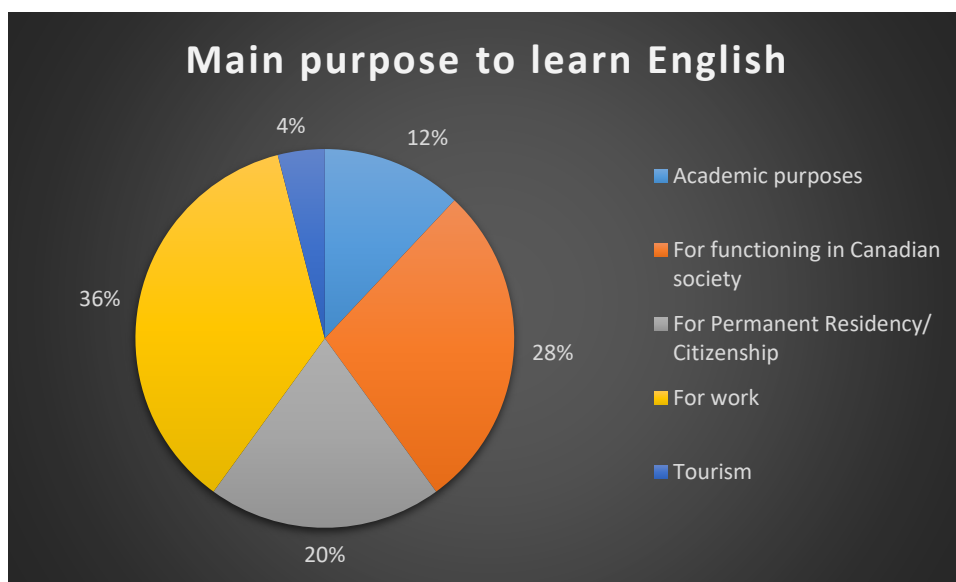


Figure 4. Main purpose to learn English.

From the fourth graph we can ascertain that most of the students are interested in learning English for work (36%) and to function in Canadian society (28%). It also shows that the need for getting prepared for English proficiency tests required for Permanent Residency/ Citizenship is lower (20%). Whereas Academic purposes and tourism were the least common motivations with 12% and 1% respectively.

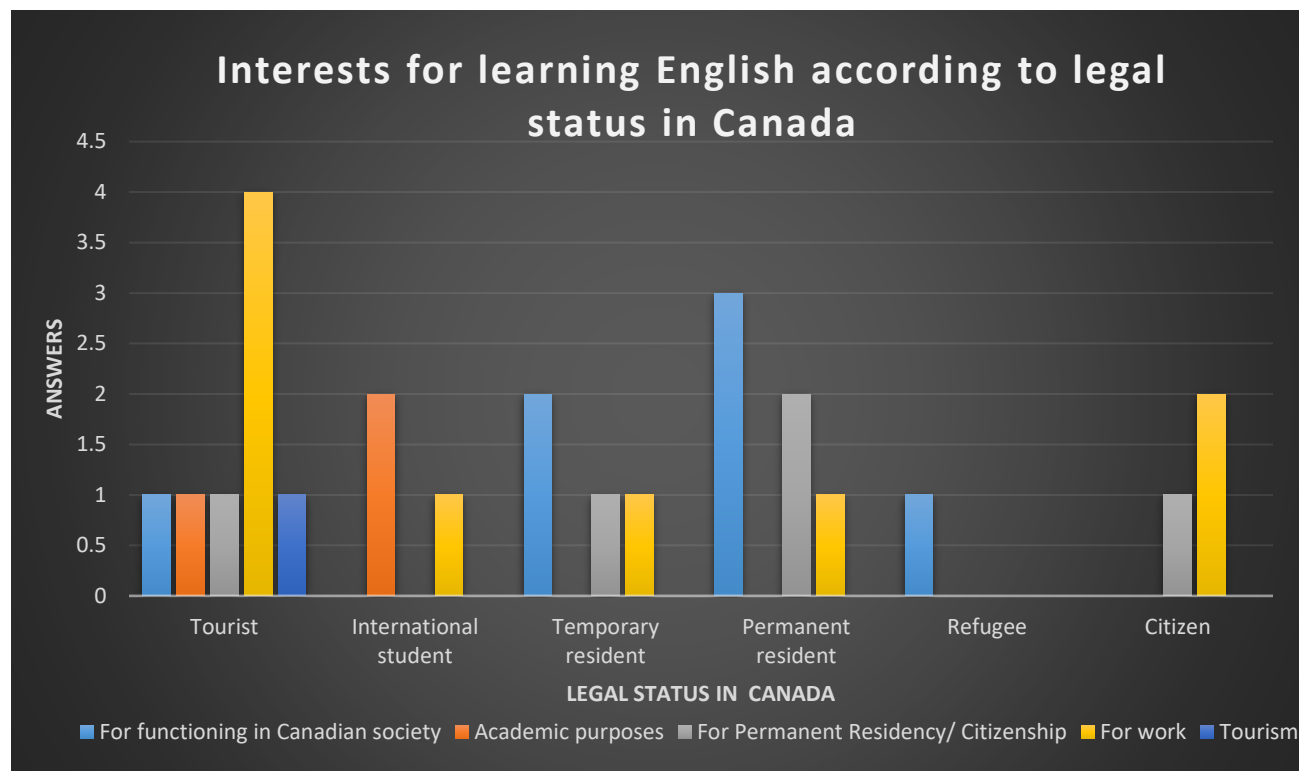


Figure 5. Interests for learning English according to legal status in Canada

From the above bar graph, we can see that of those interested in learning English for work, Tourists are the most interested (50%) even though they are not allowed to work legally in Canada; Permanent residents are the most likely to learn English for functioning in Canadian society (43%) and for getting citizenship (40%), while international students for academic purposes (33%).

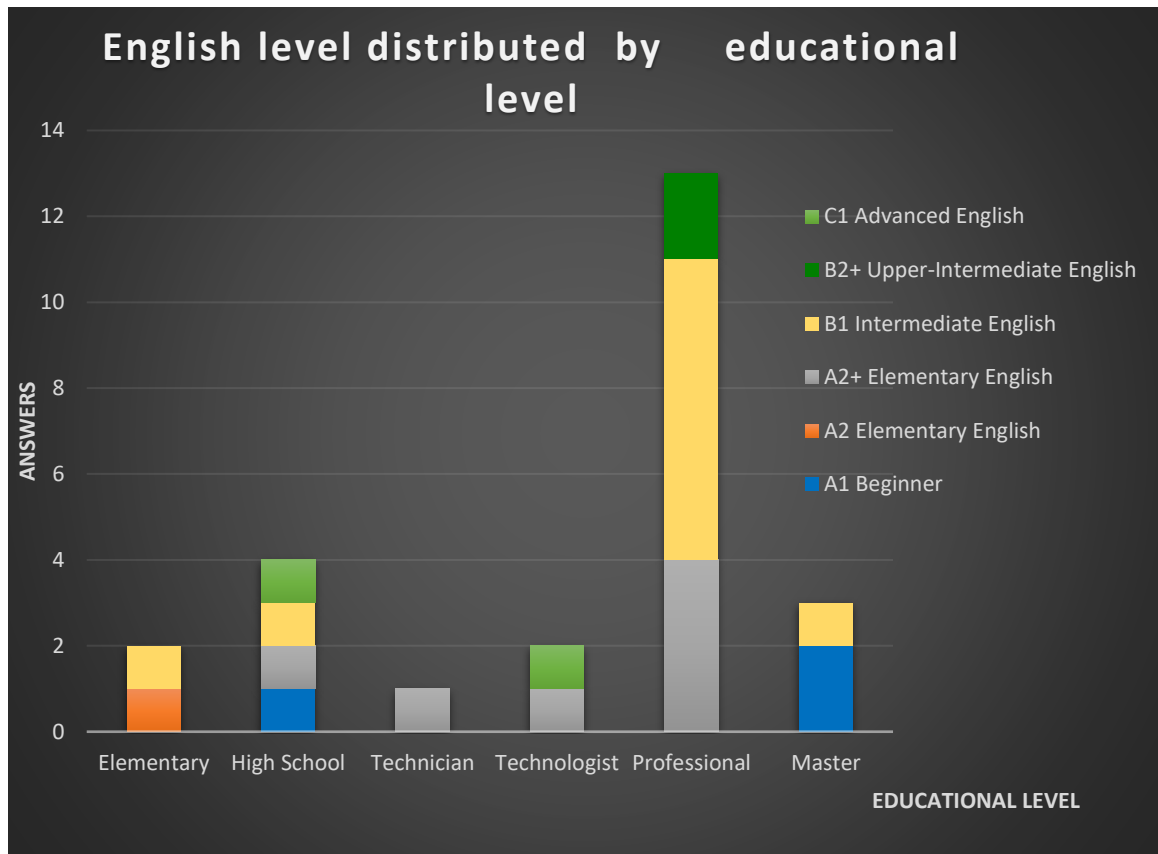


Figure 6. English level distributed by educational level.

From this chart we can gather that despite having the highest level of education, those who have studied a master's degree don't have higher English levels, but professionals outnumber better English levels in other categories.

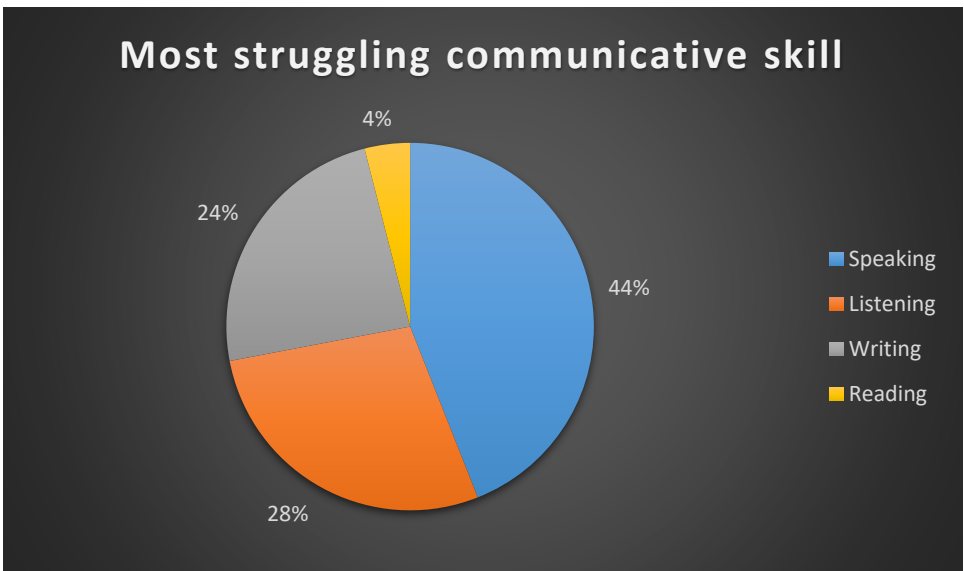


Figure 7. Most struggling communicative skill.

From Fig. 7 we can analyze that speaking (44%) and listening (28%) are the areas where ESL Hispanic students face more difficulties and slightly lower is writing (24%). It is worth noting that reading is their strength (4%).

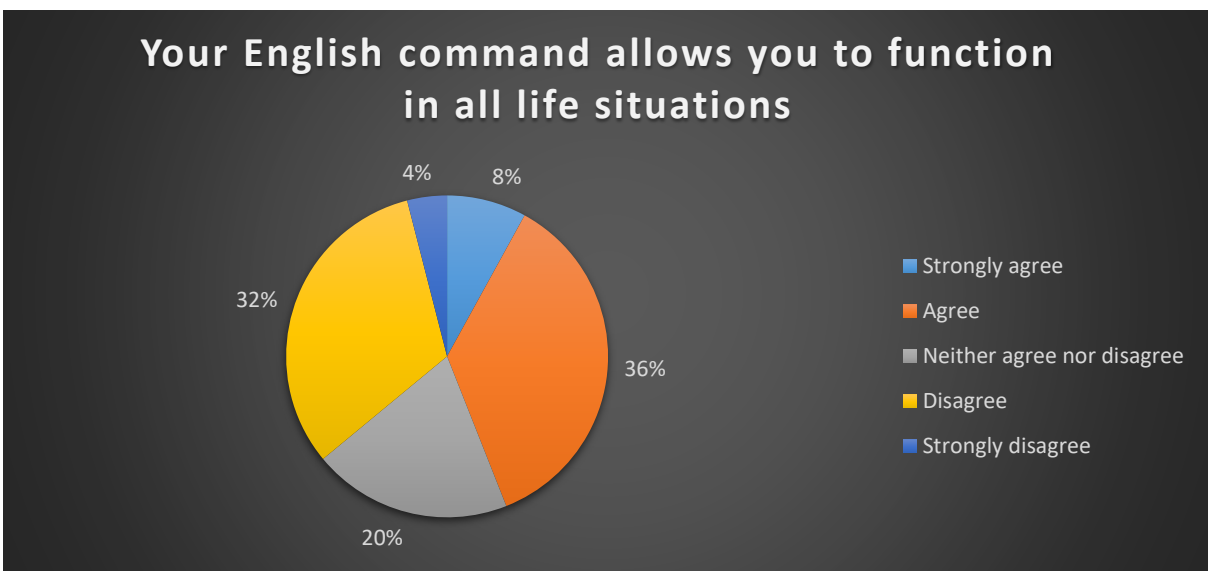


Figure 8. English communicative skills and effectiveness in daily life.

From this pie chart, we can say that despite most students have a favorable perception of their performance to navigate their encounters in English (Strongly agree and Agree 44%), there is a significant portion of students who are not confident at all (Strongly disagree and Disagree 36%). Whereas some others are indifferent (20%).

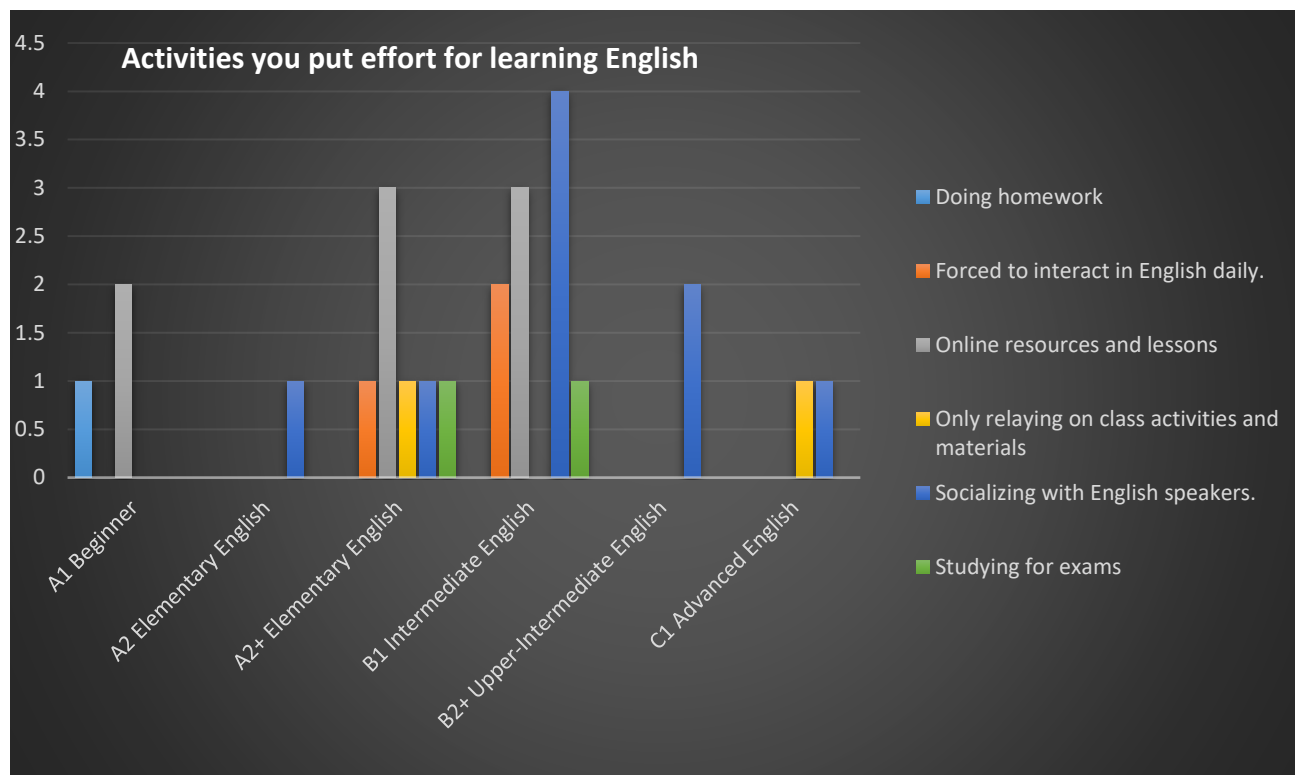


Figure 9. Activities you put effort for learning English

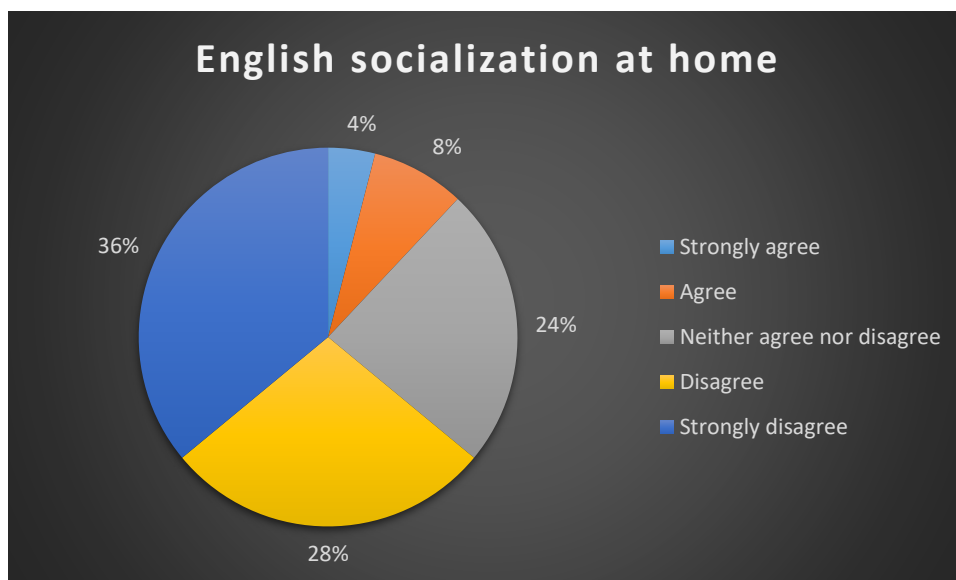


Figure 10. English socialization at home.

From figure 9, we can ascertain that, students from different English levels prefer to Socialize with native speakers (36%) to improve their skills and 32% use Online resources to learn and practice English. But only beginners do homework to practice. However, from figure 10, we can notice that most of their socialization in English does not occur within the household (64%).

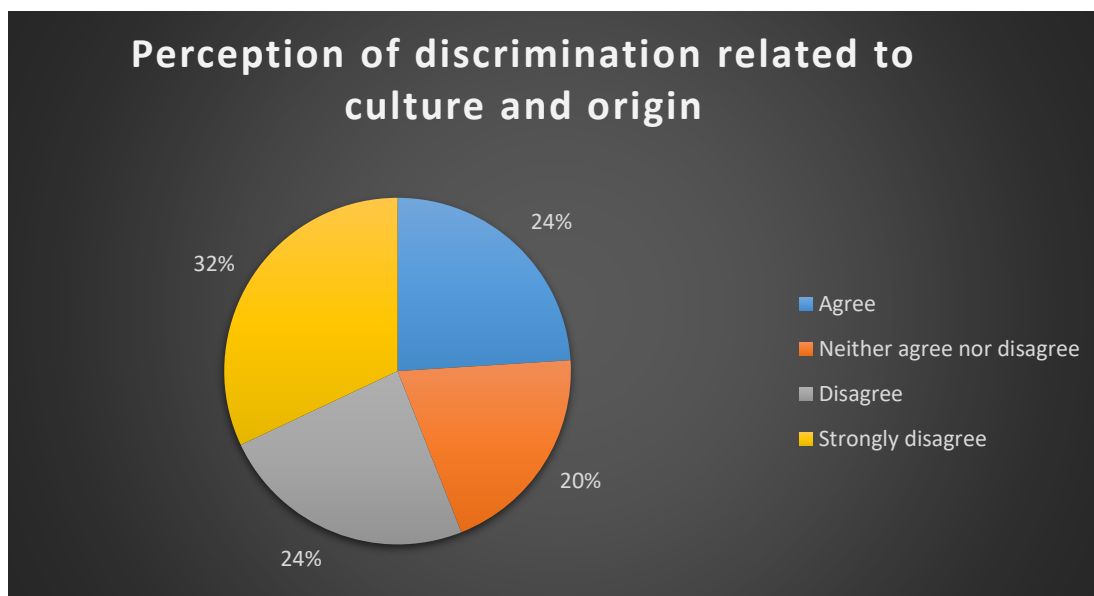


Figure 11. Perception of discrimination related to culture and origin.

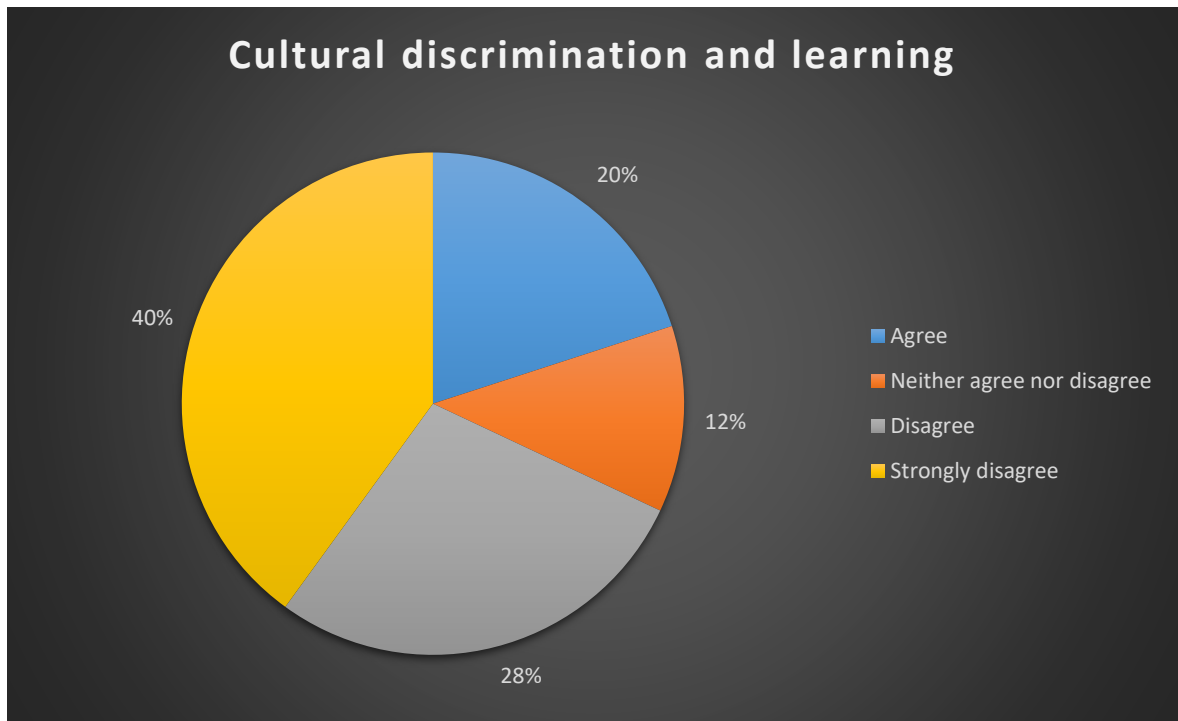


Figure 12. Cultural discrimination as a negative factor in ESL learning.

From the above figures (11 and 12), we can gather that almost a quarter (24%) of the Hispanic learners has suffered cultural discrimination and 20% of them feel that this discrimination has interfered with their ESL learning process. In contrast, a vast majority thinks they haven't experienced cultural discrimination (66%) nor interference with their ESL learning process (68%).

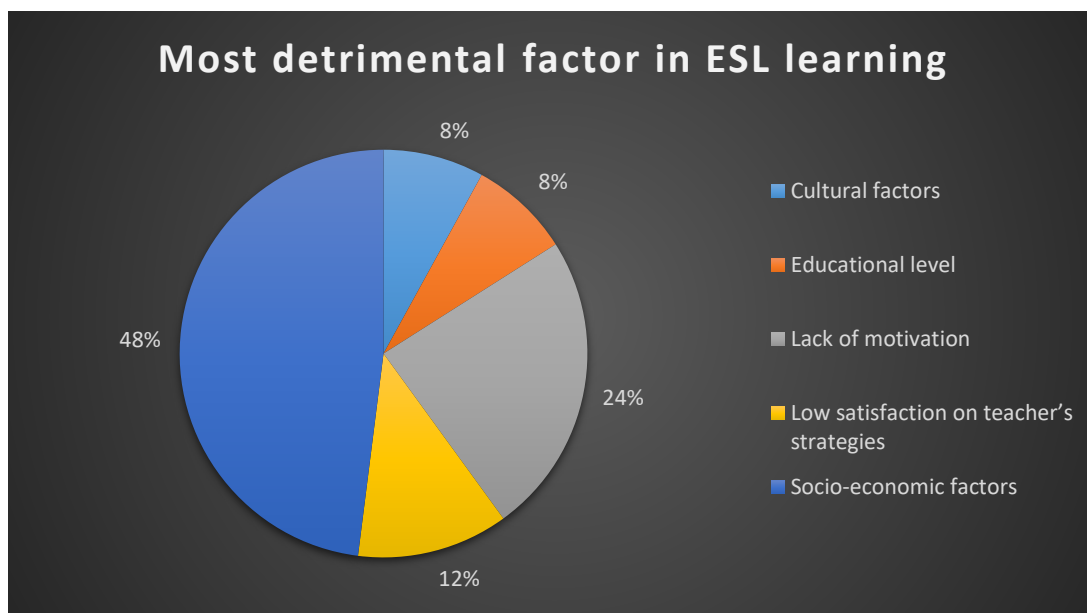


Figure 13. Most detrimental factor in ESL learning.

From the above pie graph, we can gather that personal and economic problems are the most significant factors that prevent students from learning English according to their perception (48%), which doubles the lack of motivation (24%). However, we cannot overlook the Low satisfaction on teacher's strategies (12%) as the third factor.

These are the most relevant findings after analyzing the survey results: Among the Hispanic community of learners, more than the half (56%) have an independent English level: Intermediate English (40%), B2+ Upper-Intermediate English (8%), and C1 Advanced English (8%). This means that they can maintain conversations and function in Canadian society due to their English proficiency levels, which can be linked to their underlying proficiency skills they have in their mother tongue.

Noticeably, most of the Hispanic ESL students have high educational attainment with post-secondary education degrees (76%). But despite having the highest level of education, those who have studied a master's degree do not have the highest English levels (C1 and C2), but

professionals outnumber better English levels in other categories. This could be a barrier because high qualified jobs require high proficiency levels and might prevent these individuals from assessing their professional skills in English and getting job opportunities according to their specialization level.

Regarding their legal status, a third of the students are tourists (32%). Regarding students' motivations, most of them are interested in learning English for work (36%) and to function in Canadian society (28%) to fulfill their safety needs. Surprisingly, of those interested in learning English for work, Tourists are the most interested (50%) even though they are not allowed to work legally in Canada.

As for their communicative skills in the target language, speaking (44%) and listening (28%) are the areas where ESL Hispanic students face more difficulties. To improve these verbal competencies, active students from different English levels prefer to socialize with English speakers (36%) such as native users and other immigrants through social learning interactions while other students are self-determined to learn at their own pace with online resources (32%). But only beginners do homework to practice. Though, most of their socialization in English does not occur within the household (64%) to preserve the mother tongue and favor bilingualism for their children as they are exposed to Spanish at home and English at school.

Even though most students have a favorable perception of their performance to navigate their encounters in English (Strongly agree and Agree 44%), there is a significant portion of students who are not confident at all (Strongly disagree and Disagree 36%). This negative perception can impact students' self-esteem and lessen their intrinsic motivation, which can also be affected by racial discrimination since almost a quarter (24%) of the Hispanic learners has suffered cultural discrimination and 20% of them feel that this discrimination has interfered with

their ESL learning process. In contrast, a vast majority thinks they haven't experienced cultural discrimination (66%) nor interference with their ESL learning process (68%).

It is worth noting that personal and economic problems are the most significant factors that prevent students from learning English according to their perception (48%), which doubles the lack of motivation (24%). Still, we cannot overlook the Low satisfaction on teacher's strategies (12%) as the third factor.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Socio-economic problems are the most significant factors that prevent Hispanic students from learning English in Edmonton, Canada. Consequently, the school should think of incentives such as scholarships and discounts based on students' academic performance and participation.

For the second factor, which is the lack of motivation, some didactic activities that can help students be more motivated are games and problem-based tasks that challenge them to do their best and have the excitement of making progress while learning English. Also, debates and dilemmas stimulate their curiosity and participation.

As the third reason is low satisfaction with teacher's strategies, staff should address different learning styles, types of intelligence, needs, and motivations with tailored lesson planning, pedagogical strategies, and curricula to keep learners engaged in enjoyable and didactic activities such as interactive games and the use of realia alongside scaffolding and feedback that facilitate their learning process. Trainers must focus on speaking and listening as these are students' weaknesses, and ICT use as many of them are eager to practice online resources.

Equally in the fourth position, cultural factors and educational level are the challenges to overcome. The school must reassure their students they are in a welcoming and safe place where cultural diversity is embraced and create events to raise cultural awareness like potlucks, festivals, commemorating Canadian and Hispanic countries' historical events, and learning about Latin American traditions.

As for their educational level, instructors must activate learners' prior knowledge with unusual and fun activities, but this requires teachers to know their students' learning styles, needs, personality, and motivations through proficiency and psychological tests. Teachers should guide students by providing them with scaffolding and feedback to support their learning process.

Finally, educators are urged to connect with their students and their realities to understand the causes of their difficulties and think out-of-the-textbook lesson planning to better address students learning needs with differentiated learning.

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APPENDIX

Annex 1. Survey

Encuesta para identificar dificultades que enfrentan estudiantes hispanos de ESL en Edmonton, Canadá

Form description

Nombre completo *

Short-answer text

Edad *

Short-answer text

País de origen *

Short-answer text

1. Estatus legal en Canadá *

Estudiante internacional

Residente temporal

Residente permanente

Refugiado

Turista

Ciudadano

2. Seleccione su nivel de escolaridad *

- Ninguno
- Primaria
- Secundaria
- Técnico
- Tecnológico
- Profesional
- Especialización
- Doctorado

3. La razón principal por la que usted decidió aprender inglés en una escuela de ESL se debe a: *

- Propósitos académicos
- Propósitos laborales
- Desenvolverse en un país de habla inglesa
- Resolver estatus migratorio (residencia/ ciudadanía)
- Turismo

:::

4. Seleccione el enunciado que mejor describa su nivel de inglés:

*

- Puede interactuar de forma sencilla con preguntas básicas de información personal.
- Realiza transacciones sencillas (tiendas, bancos, citas médicas, etc.), pedir información básica, preguntar ...
- Se hace entender e intercambia información sobre situaciones sencillas con ayuda.
- Mantiene una conversación espontánea, pero a veces se le dificulta explicar exactamente lo que quiere.
- Da información concreta en una entrevista o consulta (sabe describirle a un médico sus síntomas).
- Comprende detalladamente lo que se le dice y explica su punto de vista sobre un asunto de actualidad.
- Utiliza con eficacia una variedad de conectores para explicar claramente sus ideas.
- Se expresa con fluidez y espontaneidad, casi sin esfuerzo. Conoce un amplio vocabulario.
- Tiene un buen dominio de expresiones idiomáticas y coloquiales. Rara vez comete errores mientras habla.

5. Seleccione la habilidad comunicativa que más se le dificulta:

*

- Lectura
- Escritura
- Habla
- Escucha

6. Considera que su manejo del vocabulario en inglés le permite desenvolverse efectivamente en todas las situaciones de su vida:

*

- Totalmente en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Totalmente de acuerdo

7. Usted se esfuerza realizando estas actividades para aprender y reforzar su nivel de inglés: *

- Solo con lo visto en clase
- Hace tareas
- Solo estudia para los exámenes
- Practica durante sus interacciones cotidianas porque le toca
- Socializa con personas que hablan inglés (club de conversación, deportes, universidad, trabajo etc.)
- Usa lecciones y recursos de internet para aprender por su cuenta

8. Cuando usted llega a su casa interactúa con los miembros de su familia en inglés. *

- Totalmente en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Totalmente de acuerdo

9. Se ha sentido discriminado por su origen y cultura: *

- Totalmente en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Totalmente de acuerdo

10. Siente que la discriminación hacia su cultura ha interferido con su aprendizaje del inglés. *

- Totalmente en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Totalmente de acuerdo

11. El factor que más afecta su aprendizaje del inglés es. *

- La falta de motivación
- Factores económicos y personales
- Nivel educativo
- Factores culturales (discriminación, dificultad para adaptarse a Canadá)
- Baja satisfacción con las estrategias por parte de los docentes.

Annex 2

Table 2. Census Profile of Latin, Central and South American origins by country, 2016

Census. Edmonton, Alberta and Alberta, Province.

	Edmonton Alberta			Alberta [Province]		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Latin, Central and South American origins	22,550	11,275	11,280	78,405	39,030	39,375
Aboriginal from Central/South America (except Arawak and Maya)	725	310	410	1,980	965	1,015
Arawak	15	15	0	105	30	70
Argentinian	305	180	125	1,385	705	680
Belizean	45	30	20	445	250	190
Bolivian	50	25	30	590	305	285
Brazilian	855	415	440	3,030	1,330	1,700
Chilean	3,640	1,815	1,820	8,105	4,115	3,990
Colombian	3,455	1,715	1,735	12,585	6,060	6,525
Costa Rican	135	65	65	575	270	305

Ecuadorian	245	120	130	890	405	485
Guatemalan	665	355	310	2,395	1,270	1,120
Guyanese	1,465	710	760	3,095	1,545	1,555
Hispanic	680	365	315	1,785	905	885
Honduran	155	90	60	760	405	355
Maya	220	110	115	580	310	275
Mexican	4,520	2,305	2,215	22,475	11,430	11,045
Nicaraguan	495	260	235	1,675	825	855
Panamanian	100	50	50	320	150	170
Paraguayan	25	15	10	340	155	190
Peruvian	810	390	420	2,740	1,245	1,495
Salvadorean	3,820	1,935	1,885	8,810	4,545	4,270
Uruguayan	125	75	45	315	180	135
Venezuelan	665	320	345	4,690	2,295	2,390
Latin, Central and South American origins, n.i.e. Census data footnote116	950	490	460	3,430	1,735	1,