

Silent language and the teaching of Spanish for specific purposes in intercultural service-learning programs

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ABSTRACT: The objectives of this research are aimed at analysing the key factors for the elaboration, creation and design of exercises made for training American higher education students in the area of silent language. The target group consists of a total of 62 students who participated for eight academic years in an intercultural Service- Learning program at the University of Granada.

The analysis has been carried out using the Nvivo program, a software program used for qualitative and mixed methods research.

It was possible to verify that the group was not homogeneous, since there were cases in which the students' origin was characterised by the culture of their parents who came from Spanish speaking countries and others with parents coming from the USA.

The conclusions corroborated that silent language is an essential area in the teaching practice of Spanish for Specific Purposes.

Keywords: Silent language; Spanish for Specific Purposes; Spanish as a Foreign Language; Spanish as a Heritage Language; Intercultural Service Learning.

Lengua silenciosa y enseñanza del español para fines específicos en un programa de aprendizaje servicio intercultural

RESUMEN: Los objetivos de este estudio están orientados a analizar los factores clave para la elaboración, creación y diseño de materiales dirigidos a un alumnado de la educación superior estadounidense en el área del lenguaje no verbal. El grupo meta consta de un total de 62 estudiantes que participaron durante ocho cursos académicos en un programa de inmersión cultural corporativa en la Universidad de Granada.

El análisis se ha llevado a cabo por medio del programa Nvivo, un programa de software utilizado para la investigación cualitativa y de métodos mixtos.

Se pudo comprobar que el grupo no era homogéneo, ya que se detectaron casos en los que el origen del alumnado estaba marcado por progenitores de origen hispano y otros con progenitores de origen estadounidense.

Las conclusiones corroboraron que la lengua silenciosa es un área esencial en la práctica docente del español para fines específicos.

Palabras clave: Lenguaje no verbal; Español para Fines Específicos; Español Lengua Extranjera; Español como Lengua de Herencia; Aprendizaje Servicio Intercultural.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalisation is a phenomenon that has left no one indifferent, as, to a greater or lesser extent, it has exerted a profound influence on how we understand the world and, consequently, has allowed many people to diversify their daily lives. This phenomenon implies a series of needs that are even more necessary in certain areas, such as the business world. It is evident that negotiation between members of different communities involves a series of skills management, various kinds of competencies and abilities that allow for a successful negotiation process for both parties. This requires a specific type of training that allows not only the development of plurilingual but also pluricultural competences. Furthermore, this process, which is expanding throughout the planet, also allows for the establishment of new methodologies that provide teachers with the means to equip students with these competencies, which can be achieved through learning-by-doing processes at the same time. This challenge involves finding the appropriate ways and means to facilitate the way for fostering citizenship and social agency awareness in the students' skills. This teaching system should obviously take place through projects that allow learners to contribute to the society in which they live.

This research aims to identify areas of silent language that, for one reason or another, generate a considerable number of cultural clashes within a corporate Service-Learning program focused on teaching Spanish for Specific Purposes. These areas that generate the greatest number of cultural clashes will provide essential information for establishing cultural components that serve as the foundation for creating materials when teaching Spanish for Specific Purposes.

The analysis and investigation of the contexts in which the greatest number of cultural misunderstandings occur serves as an essential database for establishing mandatory training areas for a target group determined by common nationality characteristic. The target group participated in an internship Service-Learning program in companies located in the city of Granada (Spain). The total number of participants was composed of 62 American undergraduate students who were undertaking various types of university degrees. The program was focused on developing strategies that enable the students to perform within the everyday context in the workplace in Spain, bearing in mind that they were immersed in an intercultural Service-Learning environment. The strategies were related mainly to solving situations that caused culture shocks connected to the area of silent language.

There are certain areas of analysis used to study human non-verbal communication. In this research, silent language can be examined through three specific categories: chronemics, kinesics, and 'miscellaneous'.

- a) In the chronemics category, a distinction will be made between polychronic and monochronic perspectives of time, and the divergences between the points of view of the students and host companies in terms of punctuality, task completion and working hours will be analysed.
- b) In the kinesics category, aspects such as the possibility of hugging, caressing, and general social conventions related to greetings and farewells will be analysed. Therefore, the focus will be on physical contact and on the culture shocks experienced by students.

- c) In the miscellaneous category, the possibility of discovering new aspects of the silent language will be left open. This section consists of factors such as noise, temperature, tone of voice, eye contact, and dress code. The aim is for students to develop strategies in order to adapt to the target corporate culture.

It is important to establish a clear definition of the concept Service-Learning as in this paper it will be used as an important factor to bear mind. Consequently, the accepted definition was the one offered by Bringle and Hatcher, who understood this term in this way:

Service Learning is a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain a further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (1996, p.222).

According to Opazo et al. (2016) Spanish universities need to facilitate the learning and acquisition of competencies that lead learners to adapt to professional situations:

Spanish universities are engaged in a process of change. The adaptation of university degrees to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) demands that universities offer educational framework centred in the acquisition of competencies and this process deeply affects teaching and learning. It demands a change in the planning and structuring of curricular subjects, which need to increase practical aspects for developing professional competencies. (p. 75)

It is important to mention that Service-Learning leads to an increase in the consciousness of citizenship of the students. As Bolivar (2008) claims:

The implementation of Service-Learning projects in the university promotes citizens’ commitment with the transformation of the environment, and an active and responsible citizenship. Indeed, one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century is to respect personal autonomy while, at the same time, promoting democratic values and establishing “organizational conditions that allow [one] to experience learning of democratic values. (p. 226)

Service-Learning Programs allow teachers to lead the students towards different paths that incorporate important factors such as collaboration and social change. In some way, there is a reciprocal component that produces certain benefits for the students such as the different social institutions they collaborate with. In fact, in this research it was observed that several corporations that participated in this project managed to establish clients in our students’ homeland. At the same time, students not only improved their Spanish for Specific Purposes linguistic competence and their knowledge of the world of work, but they were also able to experience an evolution concerning their intercultural and pluricultural competence.

According to Bukas et al. (2020) Service-Learning provide the students with quite beneficial situations as it is an opportunity of experiencing real-life contexts that presents similar characteristics to the ones they will experience in their future jobs:

Either way, Service Learning can create an authentic learning experience among students that connect technology integration with teaching content provided that instructors support students with project orientation and valuable feedback. (p. 10)

Other voices such as that of Chanda (2024) specify the importance that Service- Learning offers to students, among which they highlight the ability to shape the community in which they live by becoming agents of social change:

By engaging in service learning, students not only learn about social issues but also gain the tools and confidence to become agents of change in their communities. Moreover, service learning can serve as a catalyst for broader social change by fostering a culture of civic responsibility and activism within educational institutions and beyond. As students become more engaged in addressing community needs, they inspire others to join their efforts and advocate for systemic reforms. Service-Learning initiatives have the potential to mobilize diverse groups of individuals around shared goals, leading to more inclusive and sustainable approaches to community development. (p.7057)

As for the literature we can find in relation to silent language, it is necessary to mention that Charles Darwin, in his book *The Expression of Emotions of Men and Animals*, was one of the pioneers in raising awareness about the importance of this field when he stated the following:

I have endeavoured to show in considerable detail that all the chief expressions exhibited by man are the same throughout the world. This fact is interesting, as it affords a new argument in favour of the several races being descended from a single parent-stock, which must have been almost completely human in structure, and to a large extent in mind, before the period at which the races diverged from each other. No doubt similar structures, adapted for the same purpose, have often been independently acquired through variation and natural selection by distinct species, but this view will not explain close similarity between distinct species in a multitude of unimportant details. (1872, pp. 359-360)

On the one hand, this contribution by Darwin marks a turning point in establishing this typology of communication, both human and animal, from a perspective of universality. On the other hand, Edward T. Hall established the original paradigm for intercultural communication in collaboration with George L. Trager, based on the Whorf-Sapir theory of linguistic relativity and Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. His work "The Silent Language" (1959) allowed other researchers to become aware of the hidden elements of human communication, such as proxemics and chronemics. In "The Hidden Dimension" (1966), he developed an empirically-based theoretical approach to explain the underlying nature of different cultural values and how they affect intercultural communication. In "Beyond Culture" (1976), he presented his contextual model to explain how factors such as context, time management and space influence intercultural communication. In their work "Understanding Cultural Differences" (1991), Edward and Mildred Hall examined the communication problems that arise between business people from different countries, and highlighted the importance of non-verbal communication, which often occurs unconsciously. Hall identified two classic key cultural dimensions in cross-cultural studies: the high/low communication dimension and the contextual/explicit communication dimension.

Poyatos defines silent language as "the emission of active or passive signs, whether or not they constitute behaviour, through the non-lexical somatic, object and environmental systems contained in a culture, individually or in mutual construction" (2013, p. 234), which demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of the science of silent language and its connection with verbal communication.

Altogether, these authors laid the foundation for the analysis and study of different aspects of silent language, such as proxemics, kinesics, and chronemics, and demonstrated how silent language is essential for effective intercultural communication. Julius Fast defined the term kinesics as follows:

The study of the blend of all body movements, from the most deliberate to the totally unconscious, from those that correspond to a particular culture to those that cross all cultural barriers. (1984, p. 16)

More recently, Teresa Pont suggests the importance of non-verbal language in the communication process by stating the following:

According to some research, of all the information that reaches the brain, 87% does so through the visual pathway, 9% through the auditory pathway, and 4% through other senses. That's why we know it's so useful, when teaching, to use complementary objects such as a laser, a ruler, or a pen to visually point out or emphasize what we're talking about. (2008, p. 48)

Corrales gives his opinion on silent language from the following perspective:

Understanding and mastering the rules of silent language is vital not only for social interaction but also for motivating and convincing masses to act in a certain way. You can't convince or build emotional relationships or alliances within a troop if you don't know how to react, read, and interact with others on a non-verbal level. (2011, p. 50)

It is evident, based on the previous statement, that the usefulness of silent language and its importance in both mass and social communication, deserve special attention. Particularly noteworthy is the idea that silent language can be used to persuade and convince. It emerges from the previous statement that cross-cultural corporate work is largely influenced not only by the intercultural and pluricultural components but also by the ability to use and interpret the non-verbal codes that emerge from communication in work teams immersed in intercultural or pluricultural contexts.

Currently, these previously described features of silent language are still maintained, but an emphatic allusion is made to the affective component in relation to this area of study. Thus, De Sotto and Mambié (2023) suggest the following point of view:

The great development and scientific interest in non-verbal communication was forged in the last century by five disciplines: psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, sociology, and ethology. But interest in non-verbal communication also encompasses the need to reconnect with our emotional world, which, in most cases, requires no words. (pp. 434-435)

As has been seen in this brief historical overview, the analysis of communication, both human and animal, is directed and influenced by verbal and non-verbal factors, which, together with other components such as context, situation, interlocutors, affective and emotional factors, etc., allow us to obtain a broader understanding of this important area: worldwide pluricultural communication.

2. METHODOLOGY

For the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, the target group was divided into two subgroups that were categorised by their context of use of the target language. This division allowed a detailed descriptive analysis of the reality of the subgroup under study. The two studied subgroups were, on the one hand, the SFL subgroup, composed of users of Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL hereinafter), and on the other hand the SHL subgroup, composed of users of Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL hereinafter). After studying each subgroup separately, the similarities and differences found with respect to the established analytical variables were compared. Based on the conclusions obtained, teaching materials could be created and analysed more rigorously with the aim of meeting the educational needs of both groups.

Among the different types of methodologies, action research was chosen. This method was defined by Kemmis and McTaggart as follows:

Action Research is a form of self-reflective inquiry, carried out by participants in social situations (including educational ones), to refine the logic and fairness of:
a) the social or educational practices in which these practices are carried out;
b) understanding of these practices; and
c) the situations in which these practices are carried out. (1988, p. 42)

The objectives pursued in this study are aimed, therefore, at answering certain questions that arose during the various periods of this Intercultural Service-Learning program. Thus, the following research questions (RQ) were posed:

RQ 1. In which areas of silent language do American students, participating in an Intercultural Service-Learning program, experience the greatest number of culture shocks?

RQ 2. Is there a convergence or divergence between the culture shocks experienced in the area of silent language by American students of Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL) and students of Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL)?

The answers obtained from both research questions will allow us to establish the two basic objectives of this study. On the one hand, it will be possible to determine which aspects of the non-verbal linguistic complex need the most reinforcement when teaching and training Business Spanish to American students. On the other hand, it will be possible to determine whether training should have the same characteristics in the two subgroups identified within the target group or, on the contrary, whether the formative and academic instruction should have the same characteristics.

The codes used in this research, regarding the analysis of the different units, will be based on the following criteria:

- a) Student's last name.
- b) Number occupied in the general list.
- c) Number of references coded based on the studied variable in question.
- d) Study group membership.
- e) Coverage percentage.

The analysis of the texts will be established through a typology known as intra-case semantic content analysis. Within the typologies that emerge from this analytical variant, we will use semantic analysis, since our objective focuses on investigating the themes and codes proposed by the previously established variables. Similarly, an intra-case analysis will be established to subsequently proceed to a comparative inter-cases analysis between the two study groups (SFL and SHL).

2.1. Participants

The target group participated in a Service-Learning Program in companies located in Granada, Spain. The total number of participants was 62 American undergraduate students from various programs. Regarding gender, the group members were composed of 38 female participants and 24 male participants.

The Corporate Service-Learning program used in this research is part of the internship program, which is immersed in the Hispanic Studies courses in the Centro de Lenguas Modernas at the University of Granada (Spain). The participating companies belong to a diverse group of multisectoral areas, ranging from tourism to IT, marketing, and business administration.

The members of the target group were selected during a school term and comprised two distinct groups. The first group was analysed during the pre-pandemic academic years, from 2011-2012 to 2019-2020. The second group was composed of participants belonging to the post-pandemic period, which covers the 2021-2022 school year.

In both groups, a fairly homogeneous age ratio was detected, as participants ranged in age from 19 to 23. The cultural and social idiosyncrasy of the target group homeland was an essential factor in determining its main characteristics. On the one hand, it was determined that the members of one of the subgroups had some prior relationship with the target language (30 participants in total), primarily one or both parents coming from a Spanish-speaking country. Furthermore, in this group of members whose family heritage is Spanish, a heterogeneous factor was also detected in relation to their place of birth, as some members were born in Spanish-speaking countries and others in the United States. On the other hand, it was found that another part of the group consisted of members who have no family connection to the target language and whose parents were English speakers. This group has been referred to as Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) and is composed of a total of 32 participants.

2.2. Instruments

The analysis consisted of a final project in which students needed to describe situations in which they had experienced culture shocks in the corporative environment. In analysing the culture shocks experienced, they should identify the dimensions of cultural values related to silent language and an understanding of their own intercultural or pluricultural competences. They also had to describe the culture shock experienced, the strategies used to address it, and, as an exercise in developing empathy, describe the cultural perspective of the other person involved in the misunderstanding. Also, to assess the level of their corporate intercultural competence, it was considered important for students to complete a self-assessment.

The procedure for obtaining data through sample analysis was as follows:

1. Establishment of the structure of the final project.
2. Establishment of a comprehension guide for students. This guide establishes the content to be included in each section of the final project.
3. Data collection and archiving at the end of each quarter.
4. Once 62 samples have been obtained from the target population, the components of silent language to be analysed for a mixed-language study are determined.
5. Identification of variables related to silent language. In the analysis of cultural clashes arising from silent language, priority is given to the three areas described in the introduction to this research: kinesics, chronemics, and other areas related to this field of study. The objective is to determine the specific areas in which cultural divergences have arisen.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Qualitative analysis

The qualitative analysis was carried out using Nvivo, a program used to analyse qualitative and mixed data. First, the coding process began using the initials of the participants' first names and surnames. Second, the students were classified into two groups based on the origin factor. Third, information on each participant was selected and classified according to the study variables. Finally, the basic elements comprising each of the actions were identified. These basic elements consist of information such as the participant's group, the code assigned to them, the number of coded references detected in relation to each variable, and the percentage coverage of that sample relative to all those presented by the participant for that particular variable.

Table 1. *Samples of opinions on the three detected variables of silent language*

Chronemics	<p><Internals\\SFL\\DF11> - § 1 reference coded [0,69% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0,69% Coverage</p> <p>Me quedé impresionado porque ellos tardaron mucho, pero entendía la situación. Además, sabía que la puntualidad no era una cosa tan importante, sino que la calidad y la cantidad del trabajo.</p> <p>[I was impressed because they took so long, but I understood the situation. I also knew that punctuality wasn't as important as the quality and quantity of the work].</p> <p>Internals\\SHL\\NF54> - § 1 reference coded [1,53% Coverage] Reference 1 - 1,53% Coverage</p> <p>En el área del tiempo mi choque cultural fue como mis compañeros se tardaban más de la media hora estipulada para desayunar, pero también como había veces que no salían al tiempo acordado de trabajar y se quedaban más de una hora trabajando. Creo que en ambos casos yo no podía intervenir en cuanto a sus comportamientos, pero por mi parte me mantuve a la agenda y mis horarios de trabajo.</p> <p>[In terms of time, my culture shock stemmed from the fact that my colleagues took longer than the allotted half hour to eat breakfast, but also from the fact that they sometimes didn't leave work at the agreed-upon time and stayed for more than an hour. I think in both cases, I couldn't intervene in their behaviour, but for my part, I stuck to the schedule and my work hours].</p>
Kinesics	<p><Internals\\SHL\\JR46> - § 1 reference coded [0,91% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0,91% Coverage</p> <p>Área: doble beso. Descripción: hay este acto al que aún no me acostumbro, al saludarse se dan doble beso, y el beso en general me parece normal pero no estoy acostumbrado al doble y muy seguido termino dando solo uno. Lo cual podría llegar a causar inconvenientes y mal entendidos.</p> <p>[Area: two kisses. Description: There's this act I'm still not used to: When greeting each other, people kiss twice. I generally find kissing normal, but I'm not used to double kissing, and I often end up giving just one. This can cause problems and misunderstandings].</p> <p><Internals\\SFL\\DB12> - § 1 reference coded [0,70% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0,70% Coverage</p> <p>Área: Saludos habituales (besos en las mejillas). Descripción: Cuando inicialmente vine a España, no estaba acostumbrada a besar las mejillas como una presentación, y en el primer día de mi práctica, me sorprendí un poco que aun mis tutores me besaran.</p> <p>[Area: Common greetings (cheek kisses). Description: When I first came to Spain, I wasn't used to cheek kisses as an introduction, and on the first day of my internship, I was a little surprised that even my tutors kissed me].</p>

Dress Code	<p><Internals\\SFL\\NT23> - § 1 reference coded [1,68% Coverage] Reference 1 - 1,68% Coverage</p> <p>Llevé mi mejor ropa y estaba nerviosa por si mi ropa no estaba bien. Me di cuenta de que X estaba llevando pantalones cómodos, un suéter, y zapatos que parecen como zapatillas. Yo aprendí rápidamente que la ropa no es de gran importancia. Desde el punto de vista de X probablemente pensó que yo quería impresionarle. En los Estados Unidos las universidades y empresas dicen, “vestirse para impresionar”, pero en España la ropa no es algo que causa una gran impresión.</p> <p><i>[I wore my best clothes and was nervous that my outfit wouldn't be right. I noticed that X was wearing comfortable pants, a sweater, and shoes that looked like sneakers. I quickly learned that clothes weren't that important. From X's point of view, he probably thought I was trying to impress him. In the United States, universities and companies say, "dress to impress," but in Spain, clothes aren't something that makes a big impression].</i></p> <p><Internals\\SFL\\XW32> - § 1 reference coded [0,97% Coverage] Reference 1 - 0,97% Coverage</p> <p>También, en los Estados, no hay tanta gente que se puede vestir en una manera tan liberal. En mi experiencia, siempre había un código muy estricto para decirnos en la manera propia que nos debemos vestir donde trabajaba en el pasado.</p> <p><i>[Also, in the States, there aren't as many people who can dress so liberally. In my experience, there was always a very strict dress code where I worked in the past].</i></p>
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Table 1 shows the opinions of participants from the two identified subgroups. This shows the similarities in the perspectives expressed by both types of participants.

In each of the samples, various analytical components can be observed. The first section shows the location of the file in which the samples are organized, along with the group they belong to and the coding of their name and position on the general list. Next, the number of coded references for the subject in relation to the variable in question and the percentage of total coverage can be seen.

Related to chronemics, various factors were detected, such as punctuality or delay in completing activities. Thus, subjects DF11 and AI35 respectively stated: “I knew punctuality wasn’t that important” or “My boss cancelled on me every time we were supposed to meet.” In addition to these two factors derived from chronemics, others have been detected, such as tasks related to work: breakfast, snacks, smoking, etc., and the lack of specific schedules or flexible hours.

Another area in which cultural divergences in silent language have been detected is kinesics. The predominant factor causing these clashes is determined by greetings and farewells. Thus, JR46 and DB12 state that “when greeting each other, they kiss twice, and kissing in general seems normal to me, but I’m not used to double kisses” or “When I first came to Spain, I wasn’t used to kissing cheeks as an introduction.” Furthermore, regarding greetings and farewells, some statements related to the invasion of personal space have been found, although it is true that this area has been mentioned to a lesser extent.

Finally, the area in which the fewest cultural clashes have been found is related to dress code. Both participants NT23 and XW32 agree that the level of informality in dress code in their homeland is lower and hence there is a tendency to be more rigorous in dressing more formally.

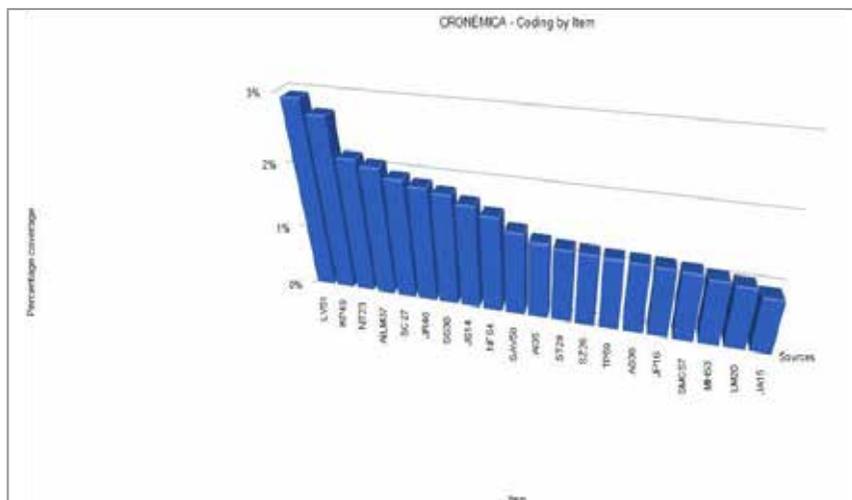


Figure 1. Data on chronemics variable

Figure 1 shows the total number of participants in whom cultural clashes were detected in the variable related to chronemics. It can be observed that the most notable component related to this variable is the homogeneity observed in the number of SFL and SHL members who experienced cultural divergence in this analysis factor.

It is worth reiterating that this was the section of silent language in which the greatest number of cases of cultural differences were found.

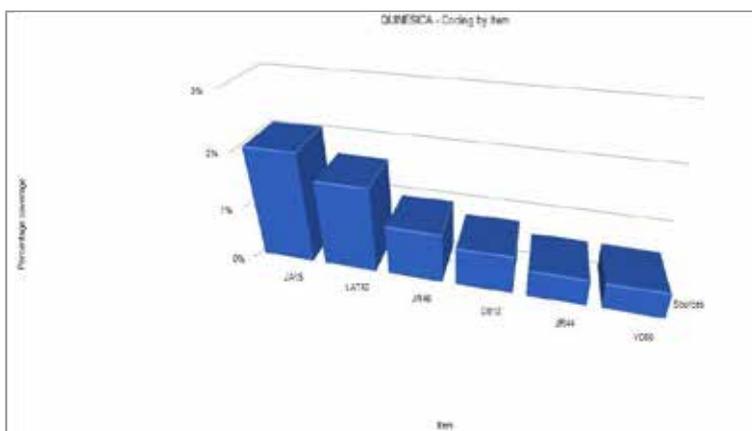


Figure 2. Kinesics variable data

It should be noted that the variable related to kinesics shows less homogeneity than the previous one as it was found that the number of participants in the SFL subgroup experienced half the cultural divergences found in members of the SHL subgroup.

The kinesics variable was the area with the second highest number of cases detected, below chronemics and above dress code.

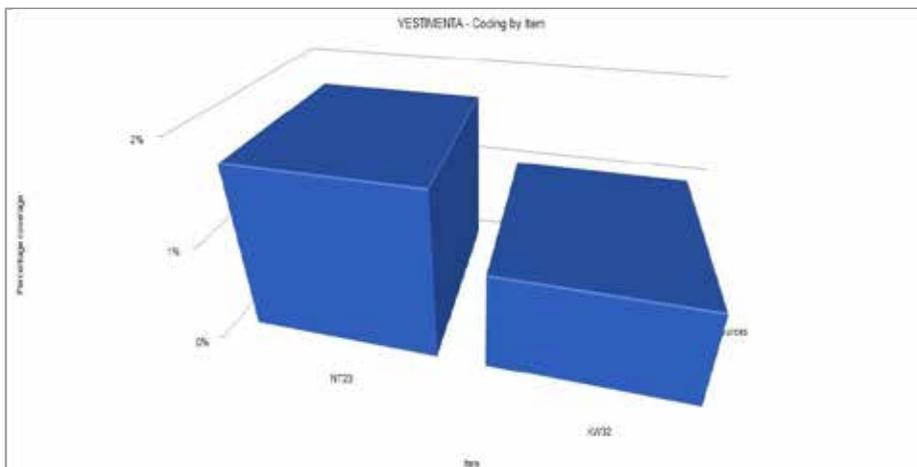


Figure 3. *Variable dress code data*

Finally, dress code was the variable with the fewest cases found in both subgroups. A significant finding regarding this factor is that the cultural clashes observed in this variable were associated solely and exclusively with participants belonging to the SFL group, as no divergence was detected among members of the SHL subgroup.

3.2. Quantitative analysis

The same software used in the qualitative analysis was used in the quantitative analysis, along with Excel. In this case, the correlation between the number of sources and the number of references for each of the study variables was analysed, with the aim of identifying the most referenced and developed factor, together with the one most frequently mentioned by participants. Variables with the lowest scores in both parameters were also measured.

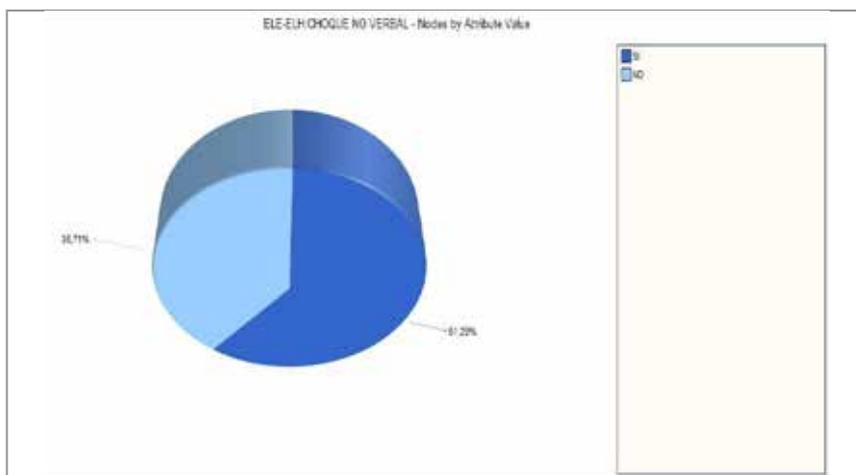


Figure 4. Group percentage with level of culture shock in the area of silent language

Figure 4 shows that the study variable related to silent language certainly specifies an area immersed in the teaching of Spanish for Specific Purposes that must be addressed in Intercultural Service-Learning programs.

As can be seen in the graph in Figure 4, 61.29% of participants in the corporate cultural immersion program reported having experienced culture shock in at least one of the three sub-areas of silent language analysed in this research. Consequently, 38.71% of participants reported not having experienced cultural divergences.

It is worth noting that a large proportion of the members belonging to this latter percentage stated that they were born in a Spanish-speaking country, which has allowed them to feel a certain familiarity with the target corporate culture. They have even commented that they have felt more comfortable there than in American culture.

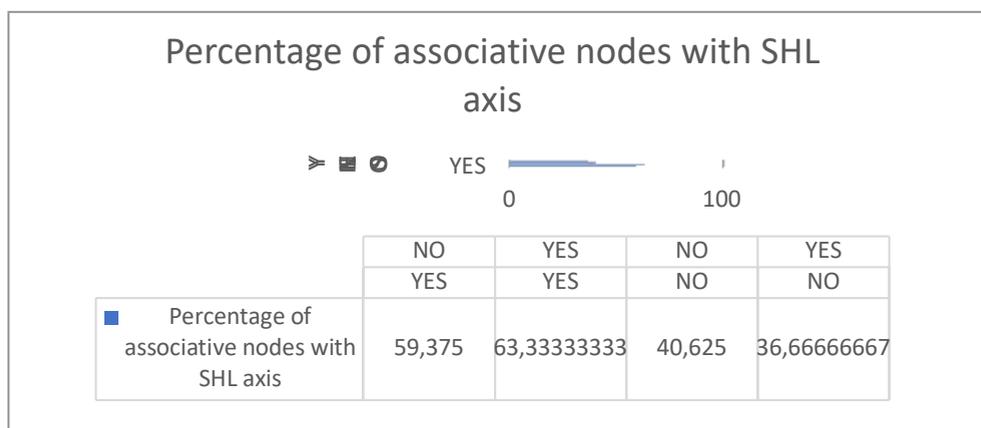


Figure 5. Percentage of associative nodes with SHL axis

Finally, Figure 5 shows the percentage of associative nodes with an SHL axis. This figure determines two related variables: on the one hand, determining whether the data was associated with members of the SHL group or not, and on the other hand, referring to the factor related to having experienced culture shock based on silent language.

Thus, the first bar determines that the members represented in it do belong to the SHL group, but have not experienced culture shock. The percentage reached in this double variable reaches 36.6% of the total.

The second bar represents a group of participants who do not belong to the SHL group, therefore, corresponds to the SFL group, and also specifies that they have not experienced any type of divergence. The percentage for this double variable reaches a total of 40.6%. A slightly higher percentage than that reached by the SHL subgroup. Third, it can be established that the third bar relates to those participants who do belong to the SHL subgroup and who, in addition, have experienced culture shock in relation to silent language. The total percentage reached for this double variable reaches 63.3%, which represents the highest value reached among all the variables analysed.

Besides that, it can be observed that 59.3% of the members of the SFL subgroup have experienced culture shock in silent language. This percentage is slightly lower than the number of participants in the SHL subgroup. Specifically, the degree of heterogeneity reached in both subgroups corresponds to 4% of the total, a figure that exactly coincides with the degree of divergence found between both subgroups in relation to the factor corresponding to not having experienced cultural differences.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Silent language is an essential aspect of language teaching, as knowledge of it, along with verbal language, determines how to interact more successfully in a target language community from two different dimensions.

The objectives of our study were aimed at determining answers to questions related to the areas of silent language in which a greater number of culture shocks occur among American students participating in a corporate cultural immersion program (CCI). It should be noted that the areas identified in this research are related to chronemics, kinesics, and dress code.

Initially, it was possible to determine that the group was not homogeneous, as some cases were detected in which the students' origins were marked by parents of Hispanic origin and others with parents of American origin. Furthermore, a high level of need for such practice is perceived in the area of silent language, due to the high rate of culture shocks exposed. Regarding PI2, which aimed to detect whether there was a convergence or divergence between the cultural clashes experienced in the area of silent language in American students of Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL) and students of Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL), it was observed that the degree of divergence is very low (4%), which allows us to conclude that instruction in both groups is not necessarily biased, but rather that both subgroups constitute a perfectly homogeneous group due to the fact that they do not offer significant discrepancies in the study variable analysed.

The conclusions corroborate that silent language should be an area of emphasis in the teaching practice of Spanish as a Foreign Language to American higher education students.

The limitations found in this research are aimed at increasing the number of participants in future studies conducted in the same area in order to corroborate whether the findings differ from those found in this area. Future lines of research arising from this study aim to maintain attention and identify new areas of interest in the production of culture shock related to silent language in a variety of cultures compared to those associated with Spanish-speaking countries.

A phenomenon that warrants further exploration within the scope of this study is related to the area of e-Service Learning, as it opens new horizons within university training courses within the European Union. This field of knowledge would allow for an increase in collaborative spaces between different sectors within the workplace, such as healthcare, marketing, business, translation, and so on. Further exploration in this area could produce a synergy between collaborative institutions and students, as both would mutually enrich each other. For students, their pluricultural competence would develop and the previous experiences along with the strategies put into practice could widen their skills in future jobs. For corporations, they could benefit from the up-to-date knowledge these students provide.

To sum up, Bukas et al. specify the need to delve deeper into the possibilities that e-Service Learning offers after expressing the following opinion:

While there is an abundance of literature on service-learning benefits to student's personal outcomes, the area of studies regarding students' learning outcomes in e-Service Learning is under-researched. In reality, e-Service Learning with technology rich environment is able to influence students' learning outcomes especially their generic skills. (2020, p. 10)

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