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Foreign Language Learning in Autism: Perceptions from a Group of Costa Rican English Learners on the Autism Spectrum

Aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras en autismo: Percepciones de un grupo de personas autistas costarricenses aprendientes de inglés

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ABSTRACT

An autism diagnosis often prompts concerns regarding the suitability and feasibility of raising autistic children bilingually. Despite this, the existing research on bilingualism and autism suggests that bilingual child-rearing does not negatively impact language development among autistic children. Most of this research, however, has been conducted in *second language acquisition contexts* and with autistic *children*. Therefore, little is known about *foreign language learning* among autistic individuals from other age groups, particularly as understood by autistic foreign language learners themselves. To contribute to fill this gap, 24 autistic adults were recruited to participate in a questionnaire study aimed at investigating their experiences at learning English as a foreign language (FL). Results shed light on (a) the participants' rationale, settings, resources, and strategies for learning English, as well as (b) their perceptions regarding the contribution of different factors to foreign language learning, their ability and success at learning English, and the ease/difficulty with which they perform specific actions associated with different linguistic skills and micro-skills in both their first and target language. Implications for FL teachers and directions for future research on autism and foreign language learning are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Autism, Bilingualism, Foreign Language Learning, Second Language Acquisition, English as a Foreign Language, Perceptions.

RESUMEN

Un diagnóstico de autismo frecuentemente genera preocupaciones respecto de la viabilidad e idoneidad de criar a los niños y niñas autistas como bilingües. A pesar de esto, la investigación existente sugiere que el bilingüismo no tiene ningún impacto negativo sobre el desarrollo del lenguaje entre niños y niñas autistas. Sin embargo, la mayoría de estas investigaciones se han llevado a cabo con *niños y niñas* en contextos de *adquisición de una segunda lengua*. Por esta razón, se sabe poco sobre el *aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras* entre individuos autistas de otras edades, particularmente desde la perspectiva de las personas aprendientes en el espectro. Para contribuir a llenar este vacío, se reclutaron 24 personas autistas adultas quienes participaron en un estudio de cuestionario sobre sus experiencias en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera. Los resultados obtenidos (a) arrojan luz sobre las razones, espacios, recursos y estrategias utilizadas por las personas participantes para aprender inglés, y (b) permiten entender sus percepciones respecto de la contribución de diversos factores al aprendizaje del inglés, su habilidad y éxito en el aprendizaje de este idioma y la facilidad/dificultad con la que ejecutan acciones relacionadas con diferentes habilidades y micro-habilidades tanto en su lengua nativa como en la lengua meta. Se discuten las implicaciones de los resultados del estudio para docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera y se sugieren direcciones para investigaciones futuras.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Autismo, Bilingüismo, Aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras, Adquisición de una segunda lengua, Inglés como lengua extranjera, Percepciones.

INTRODUCTION

People on the autism spectrum often present with atypicalities in speech, language, and communication (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). For this reason, parents and professionals often experience concerns regarding the suitability and feasibility of raising autistic children¹ bilingually (Beauchamp & MacLeod, 2017). They fear that exposing these children to an additional language at home may cause confusion, exacerbate difficulties, (further) delay language acquisition, or altogether truncate language development (Angulo-Jiménez, 2018).

Though sparse, the extant literature suggests that autistic children can learn two languages and that bilingualism does not have a negative impact on the quality and speed of the language acquisition process; see Prévost and Tuller (2022) and Wang et al. (2018) for the latest reviews of research on autism and bilingualism—more specifically, autism and second language acquisition—among autistic individuals. In fact, some correlational studies have highlighted potential benefits in different areas (e.g., verbal fluency, vocabulary, gestures) (González-Barrero & Nadig, 2017; Petersen et al., 2012).

Despite its remarkable contributions, the bulk of research on autism and bilingualism has focused on *second language (L2) acquisition contexts* where autistic children become bilingual “through life circumstances” (Nolte et al., 2021, p. 316). Consequently, little is known about *foreign language learning* in contexts where *older* autistic individuals become bilingual “through ... education, or by choice” (Nolte et al., 2021, p. 316). This gap is more pronounced when it comes to first-person perspectives on foreign language learning (FLL) in autism and leaves language instructors and other professionals who serve the autistic community with little information regarding—among other topics—preferences, strengths, and challenges faced by FL learners on the spectrum. Such information is necessary to comply not only with evidence-based practice (EBP) guidelines (Liu, 2017) but also with one of the tenets of the autism rights movement: giving center stage to autistic voices (Bertilsdotter et al., 2020). The very few studies on FLL and autism that are available to FL instructors and other professionals are presented below.

Literature Review

To date, the very few studies on autism and FLL can be sorted into following three categories: professional accounts, researcher accounts, and first-person accounts (Angulo-Jiménez et al., 2024). Since this study focuses on the perspectives of autistic individuals themselves on their FLL process, studies belonging in the third category will be discussed in greater detail.

¹ Identity-first language is used in this article, given the preference of many autism rights advocates for this construction (Kapp et al., 2013).

Professional accounts include studies that center on the experience of FL teachers who have most often worked with autistic children (Angulo-Jiménez et al., 2024). Among these are the studies conducted by Bradley (2019), Grosso (2020), Padmadewi and Artini (2017), Tomoko (2010), Wire (2005), and Yusoff et al. (2019). As stated in Angulo-Jiménez et al. (2024), this work has emphasized (a) the thinness of resources and information about FLL among autistic individuals, (b) the perceived benefits of FLL for autistic learners (e.g., better socio-interactional skills), and (c) the need for FL instructors to learn about autism and adjust their teaching practice to the special interests, learning strategies (e.g., visualization), strengths (e.g., comfort with repetitive activities), and weaknesses (e.g., lack of flexibility) of their autistic learners.

Researcher accounts of FLL among autistic individuals include experimental and interventionist studies as those conducted by Golshan et al. (2019), Johnson (2017), and Karimi and Chalak (n.d.). As argued by Angulo-Jiménez et al. (2024), overall this work has suggested that (a) autistic learners who receive FL instruction outperform autistic individuals who do not receive said instruction on scales of social skills and willingness to communicate (Golshan et al., 2019); (b) some didactic strategies (e.g., having autistic students work with a stable partner) may lead to increased engagement and attainment in FLL, not only among autistic students but also among non-autistic learners (Johnson, 2017); and that (c) visual prompts (e.g., images of target words) might be more effective than enhanced input (e.g., boldfaced key words) for teaching vocabulary to autistic FL students (Karimi & Chalak, n.d.)

The third group of autism and FLL studies includes research focusing on first-person perspectives. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are only four studies of focusing on first-person perspectives on FLL in autism: Angulo-Jiménez et al. (2024), Caldwell-Harris (2022), Digard et al. (2020) and Nolte et al. (2021). This research has evidenced that the language history profiles of bilingual autistic individuals are more diverse than those most often mentioned in the literature (i.e., polyglots and autistic children raised in L2 acquisition contexts) (Angulo-Jiménez et al., 2024; Nolte et al., 2021).

First-person accounts have also shed light on the reasons behind an autistic individual's decision to learn a FL and the benefits of doing so. The reasons include a perceived predisposition for FLL, the goal of establishing social relationships with people from other countries, and increased employment, education, leisure, and travel opportunities (Caldwell-Harris, 2022; Nolte et al., 2021). As for the reported benefits of FLL, autistic participants have mentioned an improved social life; greater access to information about autism and other topics of their interest; more self-confidence, self-understanding, comfort and trust in their interactional abilities; as well as more opportunities to travel, study, find a job, and interact with other autistic individuals worldwide (Caldwell-Harris, 2022; Nolte et al., 2021).

Lastly, studies focusing on first-person accounts have increased our understanding of how autism could both facilitate and interfere with FLL. More concretely, autistic FL learners have reported that

their autism endows them with a logical mind, an outstanding memory, a natural gift and interest for FLL, and an enhanced ability to remember information, imitate (e.g., accents), learn new words, discover patterns (e.g., across grammatical structures), engage in repetitive behaviors and routines, and conscientiously focus on a task for sustained periods of time (Angulo-Jiménez et al., 2024; Caldwell-Harris, 2022; Nolte et al., 2021). As an interfering factor, autistic learners have said that autism may cause difficulties at speaking, joining conversations, spelling words correctly, focusing and switching between tasks, comprehending non-literal uses of language, using context clues (e.g., to infer the meaning of unknown words), and understanding what others say (speech processing), particularly in noisy settings or in the presence of perceivably fast or accented speech (Angulo-Jiménez et al., 2024; Caldwell-Harris, 2022; Nolte et al., 2021).

The Present Study

Up to this point, the perspectives of autistic adults on FLL has been largely missing in research on autism and bilingualism. This questionnaire study was conducted to help fill this gap through the investigation of the experiences of twenty-four Costa Rican autistic adults in learning English as a FL. The study set to (a) shed light on the participants' rationale, settings, resources, and strategies for learning English as a FL; and (b) describe their perceptions regarding the contribution of different factors to FLL (autism included), their ability and success at English language learning (ELL), and the ease/difficulty with which they perform specific actions associated with different linguistic (micro) skills in both their first language (L1) and English.

Theoretical and Conceptual Considerations

Given its largely descriptive—and exploratory—nature, no theory will be used to interpret the data collected for this study. Nevertheless, the study is framed and responds to both evidence-based practice (EBP) guidelines and central tenets of the Neurodiversity Paradigm.

In education, EBP refers to the integration of research evidence, professional expertise, and learner perspectives, to make informed decisions and provide best quality services (Liu, 2017). In this sense, the present study focuses on the perspectives of the autistic participants to better understand their experiences (e.g., challenges, strengths, motivation). It is hoped that FL teachers will use their professional judgment, other research, and the results presented herein to make informed decisions and improve the service they provide to autistic FL learners.

The Neurodiversity Paradigm is closely related to the autism rights movement and understands autism as a valuable neurological difference, not a disorder (Bertilsdotter et al., 2020). One of the tenets of this movement is the slogan “nothing about us, without us” (Autistic Self-Advocacy Network, 2016, párr. 1), which suggests that autistic voices are to be given center stage when attempting to understand phenomena (Bertilsdotter et al., 2020). In this sense, the present study seeks to enhance

understanding of FLL in autism by asking autistic individuals about their experience with it directly and in so doing contribute to amplify their voices.

In closing this section, it is a must to define two concepts frequently used in this paper. Firstly, second language acquisition is understood here as the process through which individuals naturally (i.e., often by exposure in their environment and without explicit study or instruction) develop skills in a language that is different from their L1 (Crystal, 2008). This additional language or L2 is oftentimes spoken natively and/or plays an important social role in the country or community where such individuals live (e.g., Spanish is often a L2 to children born to native speakers of English who live in Costa Rica). Secondly, *foreign language learning* is understood as the process whereby individuals *consciously* develop skills in an additional language by receiving *explicit* instruction in such language, either from others or themselves (self-teaching) (Crystal, 2008). This foreign language is not spoken natively by most members of the community, or widely used in education, religion, the government, or the media (Angulo-Jiménez et al., 2024).

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Inclusion criteria, recruitment, and participants

To accomplish the goals of this, the researcher sought to recruit people who had an official autism diagnosis, lived in Costa Rica, were at least 18 years old, represented themselves legally, spoke Spanish natively, and had preferably studied English in the year prior to their participation in the study. In addition to these inclusion criteria, potential participants had to be willing to share their diagnosis document(s) and other relevant documents with the researcher and to fill in a questionnaire. It is worth highlighting no specific level of proficiency was requested to be partake in the study. Participants were only asked to have studied English at some point in their life and, as just mentioned, to have preferably studied English during the year preceding the study.

Recruitment efforts focused on (1) the advertising of the study through Facebook's ad center, (2) the publication of a flyer in relevant Facebook pages (e.g., La Página del Profe Henry, ASCOPA-AUTISMO, Autismo Costa Rica, Familias en el Autismo Costa Rica, Adultos Autistas Costa Rica, Colegio de Profesionales en Psicología de Costa Rica); and (3) the distribution of said flyer to potential participants in the email distribution list of the Centro de Asesoría y Servicios a Estudiantes con Discapacidad of the University of Costa Rica (UCR). In addition, autistic people who met the inclusion criteria were asked to assist the researcher in the identification of other autistic individuals with similar characteristics and potential interest in participating in the study (snowball sampling).

The procedures listed above led to the recruitment of $n = 24$ individuals, 12 men and 12 women, whose ages ranged from 18 to 46 years old ($M = 27.25$, $SD = 8.98$). Regarding level of scholarship, 58.32% (14/24) of the participants had completed high school, 20.82% (5/24) had a college bache-

lor's degree, and 20.82% (5/24) had a college *licenciatura*². All the participants provided evidence of experiencing an autism spectrum condition that was described in their diagnosis documents as *síndrome de Asperger* (Asperger Syndrome; 11 participants), *trastorno del espectro autista* (autism spectrum disorder; six participants), and *trastorno del espectro autista, grado 1* (autism spectrum disorder in first degree; seven participants). Importantly, 58.32% (14/24) of the participants said to experience other forms of neurodivergence, including Attention Deficit or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (eight participants), some form of anxiety (seven participants) or depression (five participants), epilepsy (two participants), and a learning disability (two participants).

Regarding their linguistic profiles, all the participants spoke Spanish as their L1, and all had studied English as a FL at some time in their life; see below for further details on the participants' language profiles.

The research instrument

The researcher drew on previous research on autism and bilingualism (e.g., Angulo-Jiménez et al., 2024; Caldwell-Harris, 2022; Digard et al., 2020; Nolte et al., 2021) and existing questionnaires (e.g., Digard & Fletcher-Watson, 2023; Kaushanskaya et al., 2019; Li et al., 2020) to design a 24-item instrument that included both close- and open-ended questions distributed across three sections: sociodemographic information, native language, and English as a FL.

The first section of the questionnaire centered on the participants' name, age, gender, level of schooling, occupation, and diagnosis. The second section focused on the participants L1 and the perceived ease/difficulty with which they performed specific actions in this language. Finally, the third section gathered information about the age at which the participants started studying English, the number of years studying this language, the ways they had learned the English they knew, the self-study resources they had used, the reasons for studying English, their perceived ability and success at ELL, the ease/difficulty with which they perform certain actions in English, and the perceived effect of autism on their FLL process.

Prior to its administration, the questionnaire was piloted with a bilingual autistic man who provided feedback on the time it took him to complete it as well as the clarity of the instructions and questions. This individual's comments on his answers to the close-ended, multiple-choice questions also lent important insight into the quality and variety of the options presented to participants. Further feedback on the questionnaire was gotten from the Research Committee of the School of Modern Languages at UCR and UCR's Ethical-Scientific Committee. No other validation procedure (e.g., expert judgment) was implemented before the administration of the questionnaire.

All in all, the feedback obtained from these parties led to a significant shortening of the instrument (from 39 to 24 items), a shift in focus (from asking about FLL in general to ELL in particular), and

² A Licenciatura is an undergraduate degree above a bachelor's and below a Master's degree.

slight wording modifications. Once piloted and revised by the corresponding committees, the instrument was completed by the 24 participants, in Spanish, either in physical or digital format, without assistance from the researcher, and between April 2023 and April 2024. The instrument is included as an appendix.

Data extraction and analysis procedures

Data was extracted from the diagnosis documents shared with the researcher and the questionnaire. This data was first tabulated in Excel and then entered in IBM SPSS Statistics, which was afterwards used to compute different descriptive statistics.

Ethics

This study was approved by UCR's Ethical-Scientific Committee in Session #281 on November 9, 2022. All potential participants were informed about the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of taking part in the study, via informed consent form. They were also encouraged to talk to their trusted ones and to ask as many questions as necessary before accepting the invitation to participate in the study. To preserve anonymity, all participants have been assigned random initials.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

ELL History

As mentioned above, the 24 participants said to have studied English at some time in their life, and 75% (18/24) reported to have studied the language within the year prior to their participation in this study. Regarding the onset of ELL, the participants started to study the language between the ages of three and 24 ($M=8.67$, $SD=5.29$). Relatedly, 58.32% (14/24) of the participants said to have studied English for more than 10 years, 29.17% (7/24) for seven to 10 years, 4.17% (1/24) for five to six years, and 8.32% (2/24) for one to two years. In sum, the average participant started to study English around age eight and a half, had studied English for more than 10 years, and studied English within 12 months before taking part in this study.

Reasons for ELL

The participants identified their reasons for learning English from a list of 11 reasons provided by the researcher. They were allowed to choose as many reasons as applicable and were also given the chance to add any other reason not listed in the questionnaire by checking the option other and then specifying what their reason for learning English was.

As shown in [Table 1](#), among the top five reasons for the participants to learn English were the obligatory nature of this subject in school, the prospect of better jobs, the fact that most audio-visual productions the participants watch or listen to are in English, and the identification of English and FLL as a special interest

Table 1.

Participants' Reasons for Learning English

| Rank | Reason | $f(n = 24)$ | % |
|------|---|-------------|--------|
| 1 | It was an obligatory subject in school, high school, or college | 14 | 58.32% |
| | To have better job opportunities | | |
| 2 | Most music, podcasts, audiobooks, and other audio productions I listen to are in English. | 13 | 54.17% |
| | Most series, movies, videos, and other audio-visual productions are in English. | | |
| 3 | Languages are one of my special interests. | 12 | 50% |
| 4 | Learning foreign languages is a hobby or pastime for me. | 11 | 45.82% |
| 5 | I like some cultural aspect of English-speaking countries. | 10 | 41.67% |
| 6 | I have friends, relatives, or acquaintances who use English to communicate. | 9 | 37.5% |
| 7 | Most books, blogs, or other texts I read are in English. | 8 | 33.32% |
| 8 | I need English to travel. | 7 | 29.17% |
| 9 | It is required at my workplace. | 6 | 25% |
| 10 | Other | 4 | 16.67% |

Note. Reasons listed under *other* included: *for acting and better diction and to improve speech; English is a lingua franca; to get better at it; and to be able to communicate well with other videogame players in videogame communities.*

Source: Own elaboration.

FLL Strategies and Settings

In addition to the reasons for learning English, participants were asked to identify the strategies (e.g., exposure to text materials) and settings (e.g., in high school) where they had learned their English. They were given 16 options and were allowed to choose other and then specify how/where they had learned their English. As shown in Table 2 below, formal instruction in primary and secondary school, multiple forms of exposure (e.g., through audio-visual materials, videogames, and text), self-study, and social networks/ online communities were among the FLL strategies and settings cited by at least 58.32% (14/24) of the participants.

Twenty participants identified self-study as one of the ways in which they had learned their English. These individuals were then further asked to identify the resources they had used to teach themselves from a list of six options provided by the researcher. As in previous questions, they were also encouraged to choose other and then specify the resources they had used. The self-study resources identified by the participants included in order of importance: dictionaries (13 participants), websites (11 participants), textbooks (eight participants), mobile apps (e.g., Duolingo, nine participants), ins-

structional videos (seven participants), others (e.g., watching YouTube videos; two participants), and instructional audios (two participants).

Table 2.

FLL Strategies and Settings

| Strategy/Setting | $f(n=24)$ | % |
|--|-----------|--------|
| High school | 21 | 87.5% |
| Exposure through audio-visual materials in English | 20 | 83.32% |
| Self-study | 20 | 83.32% |
| Primary school | 19 | 79.17% |
| Exposure through audio materials in English | 17 | 70.82% |
| Exposure through videogames | 16 | 66.67% |
| Social networks and online communities | 16 | 66.67% |
| Exposure through texts in English | 14 | 58.32% |
| Informal, out-of-class conversation with English speakers | 11 | 45.82% |
| Immersion (living or travelling to English-speaking countries) | 7 | 29.17% |
| Friend, relative, or acquaintance who taught them | 7 | 29.17% |
| Language institute/school | 6 | 25% |
| College as a major | 6 | 25% |
| English courses in college | 4 | 16.67% |
| Other | 2 | 8.32% |
| Private instructor or tutor | 1 | 4.17% |

Note. Immersion included living or travelling to English-speaking countries. Among other strategies were listening to music, watching YouTube videos, reading subtitles in movies and videogames, and observing/listening to other people.

Source: Own elaboration.

Perceived Contribution of Different Actions to ELL

The FLL strategies and settings presented in the previous sections can be subsumed under six actions conducive to FLL: (1) exposure through text materials, (2) exposure through audio-visual materials, (3) informal interaction with people who speak or write the language, (4) self-study with digital and physical resources, (5) immersion by living or travelling to countries where the target language is spoken, and (6) explicit instruction (e.g., with private teachers, at language institutes). Consistently, participants were asked to report the perceived contribution of each of these actions to their ELL process by choosing one of the following options: *nada* (0 = no contribution), *poco* (1 = little contribution), *mucho* (2 = a lot), and *muchísimo* (3 = quite a lot of contribution).

Per the participants, the actions mentioned above can be ordered from the one with the biggest to the one with the smallest contribution as follows: exposure to English through audiovisual materials, exposure to English through text materials, self-study and informal interaction, explicit instruction,

and immersion. Table 3 presents the number of participants who rated each action as contributing nothing, little, a lot, or quite a lot to ELL, and includes the median, mode, and mean score for each action.

Table 3.

| | | Perceived Contribution of Different Actions to ELL | | | | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------|--------|------|
| Rank | Action | 0 = | 1 = | 2 = | 3 = | Mode | Median | Mean |
| | | No con- tribution | Little con- tribution | A lot of contribution | Quite a lot of contribution | | | |
| 1 | Exposure (au- dio-visuals) | 4 | 2 | 6 | 12 | 3 | 2.5 | 2.07 |
| 2 | Exposure (text) | 2 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 2.03 |
| 3 | Self-study | 2 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 1.82 |
| | Informal inte- raction | 2 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 1-3 | 2 | 1.82 |
| 4 | Explicit ins- truction | 6 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1.46 |
| 5 | Immersion | 13 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0.82 |

Source: Own elaboration.

Perceived Relative Ability for ELL

Participants were asked to compare their ELL ability with that of both non-autistic and other autistic learners that they know. They were given five options to describe their ability relative to that of the individuals to whom they were comparing themselves: 1 = *pésima* (very bad), 2 = *mala* (bad), 3 = *promedio* (average), 4 = *buena* (good), and 5 = *sobresaliente* (outstanding).

From the 23 participants who compared themselves to non-autistic learners, 34.77% (8/23) described their ability as outstanding; 30.42% (7/23) as good; 26.09% (6/23) as average; 8.69% (2/23) as bad; and none as very bad. Put differently, when compared to non-autistic learners, most participants (15/24) think of their ELL ability as being above average. One participant did not answer this question. Interestingly, results differed slightly when participants compared their ability to learn English with that of other autistic people they know. More concretely, in this case, from the 22 participants who answered the question, only 18.17% (4/22) described their ELL skills as outstanding; 36.35% (8/22) as good; 40.91% (9/22) as average; and 4.54% (1/22) as bad. None of the participants described their ELL abilities as very bad. In other words, when compared to other autistic learners they know, most participants (17/22) think of their ELL skills as being either average or just slightly above average (i.e., good). Two participants did not answer this question.

Overall, the findings presented above and summarized in Table 4 suggest a tendency among participants to describe their ELL ability more favorably when they are asked to contrast it with that of non-autistic individuals.

Table 4.

| Relative to | Perceived Relative Ability for ELL | | | | | Mean | Median | Mode |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------|------|--------|------|
| | 1 = Very bad | 2 = Bad | 3 = Average | 4 = Good | 5 = Outstanding | | | |
| Non-autistic learners ($n = 23$) | 0 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 3.90 | 4 | 5 |
| Other autistic learners ($n = 22$) | 0 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 3.67 | 4 | 3 |

Source: Own elaboration.

Perceived Ease and Difficulty to Perform Actions Associated with Different (Micro)Skills in the L1 and FL

Participants assessed their ease or difficulty to perform the following actions associated with different linguistic (micro)skills: understand what they are told (listening comprehension) and what they read (reading comprehension); express themselves orally (speaking) and in written form (writing); pronounce English sounds (pronunciation); speak without hesitation, excessive pauses, or outbursts (fluency); initiate, sustain, and close a conversation (conversational skills); write words correctly (spelling); use punctuation marks (punctuation); learn new words and use them when speaking or writing (vocabulary); and learn grammatical rules and apply them when speaking or writing (grammar). To report perceived ease or difficulty, participants were given four options: 1 = *muy difícil* (very difficult), 2 = *difícil* (difficult), 3 = *fácil* (easy), and 4 = *muy fácil* (very easy).

Per the participants, the three easiest actions to perform in English are pronouncing English sounds, learning new words, and understanding what they read. In contrast, expressing themselves orally, speaking fluently, and initiating, sustaining, and closing a conversation were reported to be the three most difficult actions to perform. Table 5 presents a ranking of the actions associated with each skill and micro-skill, from the easiest to the most difficult. To create the ranking, the researcher considered the lowest and highest score for each action as well the mode, median, and mean score.

Table 5.

Ranking of Actions from Easiest to Most Difficult in English

| Rank | Action | Lowest Score | Highest Score | Mode | Median | Mean |
|------|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------|--------|------|
| 1 | Pronouncing English sounds | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.28 |
| 2 | Learning new words | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.25 |
| 3 | Understanding what they read | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3.21 |
| 4 | Understanding what they are told | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.16 |
| 5 | Using punctuation marks | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3.12 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|------|
| 6 | Using new words when writing | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.12 |
| | Expressing themselves in writing | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.12 |
| | Writing words correctly | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.12 |
| | Using new words when speaking | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.12 |
| 7 | Applying grammar rules when writing | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.03 |
| 8 | Applying grammar rules when speaking | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3.03 |
| 9 | Learning grammar rules | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2.92 |
| 10 | Expressing themselves orally | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2.67 |
| 11 | Speaking fluently | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2.42 |
| | Initiating, sustaining, and closing a conversation | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2.42 |

Source: Own elaboration.

For the sake of making crosslinguistic comparisons, participants were also asked to assess the ease/difficulty with which they performed the actions in Table 5 in Spanish. In this sense, participants described the following as the easiest actions to perform: pronouncing Spanish sounds, writing words correctly, learning new words, and understanding what they are told. Regarding difficult actions, the participants highlighted: starting, sustaining, and closing a conversation; speaking fluently; applying grammar rules when speaking or writing; and expressing themselves orally. Table 6 below presents a ranking of the actions from the easiest to the most difficult. The procedure followed to create the ranking was the same as that followed to create the ranking in Table 5.

A comparison of the information presented in Tables 5 and 6 above reveals at least four important findings. First and foremost is the relative ease with which participants report to pronounce sounds and learn new words in both English and Spanish. The second interesting finding is the participants' reported struggle with conversation and fluent speech, *regardless* of the language in which these actions are performed. In addition to the apparent lack of variation in the actions located on the extremes of ease and difficulty, there are other actions whose location in the rank *does not vary or does not vary much* across languages. This is the third interesting finding. Among such actions are understanding what they are told, using new words when writing, and using new words when speaking. Last is the fact that the ease or difficulty with which some actions are executed *does vary* across languages. Per participant report, reading comprehension and punctuation are—interestingly—more difficult in Spanish, while written communication and spelling are more difficult in English.

Perceived Overall Level of Success, Standardized Tests, and Effects of Autism

Participants were asked to rate their overall level of success at ELL, share if they had taken any standardized test to measure their level of proficiency in this language, and report whether they believed that their autism had positive or negative effects on their ELL process.

Table 6.

Ranking of Actions from Easiest to Most Difficult in Spanish

| Rank | Action | Lowest Score | Highest Score | Mode | Median | Mean |
|------|--|-----------------|------------------|------|--------|------|
| 1 | Pronouncing Spanish sounds | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3.57 |
| 2 | Writing words correctly | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3.37 |
| | Learning new words | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3.37 |
| 3 | Understanding what they are told | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3.5 | 3.37 |
| 4 | Expressing themselves in writing | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.37 |
| 5 | Using new words when speaking | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3.5 | 3.32 |
| 6 | Understanding what they read | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3.5 | 3.32 |
| 7 | Using new words when writing | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3.5 | 3.25 |
| 8 | Using punctuation marks | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3.5 | 3.21 |
| 9 | Learning grammar rules | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.17 |
| 10 | Expressing themselves orally | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.12 |
| 11 | Applying grammar rules when speaking | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.12 |
| | Applying grammar rules when writing | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.12 |
| 12 | Speaking fluently | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2.82 |
| 13 | Initiating, sustaining, and closing a conversation | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2.57 |

Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding overall level of success at ELL, participants were given four options: *nada exitoso* (not successful at all; 1), *poco exitoso* (slightly successful; 2), *exitoso* (successful; 3), and *muy exitoso* (very successful; 4). From the 24 participants, 50% (12/24) described their language learning process as very successful, 33.33% (8/24) as successful, 12.50% (3/24) as slightly successful; and only 4.2% (1/24) as not successful at all. Consistently, for this question, $M = 3.28$ (i.e., somewhat above successful), the mode = 4 (very successful), and $Mdn = 3.50$ (halfway between successful and very successful). Altogether, the data suggests that the participants think their ELL process was rather successful.

Only 33.33% (8/24) reported to have taken a standardized test assessing their level of proficiency in the English language. Among the tests taken by these participants were Linguaskill, the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC, 3), Cambridge English Flyers (YLE Flyers), Business English Language Test (BELT), the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Examen de Dominio del Inglés (EDI), and the Prueba de Dominio Lingüístico MEP-UCR. On these tests, the participants were placed on levels B2 and C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Interestingly, from the eight participants who had taken standardized tests, five described their ELL process as very successful, and three described it as successful.

In relation to the perceived positive or negative effect of autism on ELL, 58.33% (14/24) of the participants reported that autism had *only positive effects*; 16.67% (4/24) said it had *only negative*

effects; 16.67% (4/24) claimed autism had *neither positive nor negative effects*; and 8.33% (2/24) stated that it had both *positive and negative effects*. In sum, most participants (83.33%, 20/24) acknowledge that autism had an impact of ELL, and for many participants this impact is positive.

DISCUSSION

Twenty-four native speakers of Spanish on the autism spectrum, ages 18 to 46, were recruited via Facebook, emails, and snowball sampling, to complete a 24-item questionnaire focusing on their experiences learning English as a FL. On average, the 12 men and 12 women had started to study English around age eight and a half, and by the time the study was conducted, they had studied the language for about 10 years.

Regarding the reasons for studying English, participants highlighted the obligatory nature of the subject in school, the prospect of better jobs, the fact that most audio-visual productions they consume are in English, and their special interest in English and FLL. The latter three reasons have all been documented in previous studies about bilingualism among autistic individuals (e.g., [Angulo-Jiménez et al., 2024](#); [Caldwell-Harris, 2022](#); [Nolte et al., 2021](#)). The compulsory nature of English as a subject in schools might, however, be particular to Costa Rican and similar EFL contexts, as this societal reason for learning a FL has not been recognized in the existing literature. Nevertheless, it is also worth acknowledging that individuals who are originally from or live in non-English speaking countries have not been widely represented in extant studies.

As mentioned above, participants reported that one of the main reasons for them to learn English was the obligatory nature of this subject in school. In tune with this, primary school and high school featured among the top five settings where participants had studied English. Interestingly, though, explicit instruction was reported to have contributed little to ELL. Regrettably, in the questionnaire completed for this study, participants were not presented with the different types of explicit instruction (e.g., with private teachers or tutors, or in schools or language institutes) *separately*. Instead, they were asked to rate the contribution of explicit instruction overall. It is thus impossible to identify the specific explicit instruction setting to which their answers applied.

Asides from school, other settings and strategies used by at least 50% of the participants to learn English included self-study, social networks and online communities, and exposure through videogames as well as audio-visual and text materials. Very few participants (less than 50%) reported to have used learning strategies involving face-to-face interaction (e.g., informal out-of-class conversations, immersion). These findings—contrary to what was observed in the case of explicit instruction—are consistent with the participants' perception that exposure, self-study, and informal interaction (perhaps in social networks and online groups) have contributed the most to their ELL process. The findings also echo those of [Angulo-Jiménez et al. \(2024\)](#), [Caldwell-Harris \(2022\)](#), and [Ralston \(2016\)](#),

according to whom there seems to be a preference among autistic individuals for online settings and exposure-based, self-guided FLL strategies.

In previous research, though not asked directly about the topic, some autistic individuals have claimed that FLL might be easier for them than it is for non-autistic people (Angulo-Jiménez et al., 2024; Caldwell-Harris, 2022; Nolte et al., 2021). Responses to the questionnaire completed for this study suggest a similar stance. More concretely, when *directly* asked to compare their *general* FLL ability with that of non-autistic and other autistic learners they knew, participants seemed to assess it more favorably when they compared themselves to non-autistic individuals than when they compared themselves to other autistic individuals.

When it comes to *specific* strengths and challenges of ELL, participants reported to have greatest ease with pronunciation, vocabulary learning, and reading comprehension. Contrarywise, they said to have greatest difficulty with speaking, fluency, and conversation. Findings from the only other study to explore this topic (i.e., Caldwell-Harris, 2022) suggest similar areas of ease and difficulty. Note, however, that Caldwell-Harris did not ask autistic FL learners directly. Instead, she analyzed 169 discussion forum posts made by self-identified autistic learners of multiple languages and concluded that individuals on the spectrum may have fewer challenges with reading and writing while exhibiting more difficulties with speaking, listening, and conversation. Caldwell-Harris (2022) related the greater ease with reading and writing to the offline nature of these activities and their “amenability to self-study” (Caldwell-Harris, 2022, p. 12). Similarly, the greater difficulties with speaking, listening, and conversation were associated with the online nature of these activities and the “multitasking” they require (Caldwell-Harris, 2022, p. 13).

For the present study participants were also asked to assess their linguistic abilities in the L1. Crosslinguistic comparisons suggest a similar pattern of strengths and challenges. More concretely, pronouncing Spanish sounds, learning vocabulary, spelling words right, and understanding what they read featured among the easiest actions for participants to perform. In contrast, starting, sustaining, and closing a conversation; speaking fluently; applying grammar rules when writing or speaking; and expressing themselves orally turned out to be the most difficult actions for participants to execute.

It is worth highlighting that pronunciation, vocabulary learning, and reading comprehension feature among the areas of ease in *both* English and Spanish, while speaking, conversation, and fluency are included in the areas of most difficulty *regardless of the language*. It would then not be farfetched to suggest that these areas of ease and difficulty might be traced back to the autistic neurotype—or to a mismatch between the autistic neurotype and current FL teaching practices. One might also hypothesize that the participants’ (greater) ease with spelling in Spanish might be language-specific, given the comparably greater regularity of Spanish orthography. Finally, the difficulties with the application

of grammatical rules when speaking or writing in Spanish are difficult to explain, considering that Spanish is the participants' L1 and that all of them have formally studied Spanish grammar in school.

CONCLUSIONS

This study's findings (a) shed light on the rationale, settings, resources, and strategies for learning English as a FL, implemented by a group of 24 autistic learners, and (b) allowed for a description of said participants' perceptions regarding the contribution of different factors to FLL, their ability and success at ELL, and the ease/difficulty with which they perform actions associated with specific (micro)skills in both their L1 and the target language. In closing, it is worth highlighting the implications of the results of this study for FL teachers, and discussing the study's contributions, limitations, and associated directions for future research. It is to this task that this paper now turns.

Implications for FL teachers

Results from this questionnaire study have at least two implications for FL teachers. The first implication relates to the need to gather information about autistic students' reasons and preferred settings, resources, and strategies for learning other languages. Clearly, collecting this information is key regardless of student neurotype, but it might be particularly helpful when teaching autistic students, as their rationale and preferences associated with FLL might be less familiar to teachers than those of non-autistic learners. Such data might turn out to be especially informative to boost student motivation, design appealing instructional materials and mediation activities, and eventually increase chances of success at FLL altogether. Results from this study and the body of research herein reviewed might work as a source of ideas about what to ask.

The second implication concerns the possibility of making informed predictions based on results from this study and previous research to eventually cater to autistic learners' specific needs and capabilities. In this sense, the emergent literature suggests that learners on the spectrum might, for instance, experience little difficulty with pronunciation, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, while facing challenges with speaking, fluency, and conversation. FL teachers can then tap into strengths while simultaneously reinforcing areas of potential weakness. Of course, given the sparsity of research and the great variability within the autism spectrum, such findings must be taken with caution, and teachers are advised to collect information specific to the autistic learners in their classrooms. Relevant findings from the present study and the research reviewed here might once again function as a source of ideas regarding what to ask, observe, and measure.

Contributions, limitations, and directions for future research

In closing, it is a must to highlight the contributions of this study, its limitations, and associated directions for future research. The first contribution of the study relates to the development of a Spanish questionnaire to investigate the experiences of autistic learners of English in a FLL context. To date,

most questionnaires are written in English, lack a Spanish translation, and focus on L2 acquisition settings. Unfortunately, though the questionnaire was piloted, several areas for improvement are still apparent. Among these are the rewording of certain questions (e.g., question about the contribution of explicit instruction), the close-ended nature of most questions (which restrains the possible responses of participants), and the development of a digital—not a digitalized— and thoroughly validated version of the questionnaire. Forthcoming research could thereby center on revising, further piloting, and validating this data collection instrument through the implementation of different validation procedures, expert judgment among them.

A second contribution of the study is the increase in the representation of autistic voices in autism and FLL research. More specifically, this is only the fifth study to focus on first-person accounts of FLL in autism, only the second study to ask autistic learners directly, and the first study to focus exclusively on the experiences of autistic individuals who live in a non-English speaking country. Unfortunately, much remains to be done in terms of representation of the many autistic voices that occupy the spectrum. To illustrate, for the present study it was not possible to recruit non-verbal or minimally verbals autistic learners (i.e., potential receptive bilinguals), and self-selection bias may have led to greater participation of individuals who have been rather successful at ELL. Future research could focus on non- or minimally-speaking FL learners and autistic people who describe their FLL process as unsuccessful.

Despite its relatively small number of participants and the exclusive focus on questionnaire data, the third notable contribution of the present study concerns the generation of questions to be investigated in upcoming qualitative (e.g., interview and focus group studies), quantitative (e.g., group comparison studies), and, preferably, mixed-methods research with a larger number of participants. The following are only some of those questions: is there an autistic advantage/disadvantage for FLL in general? Is there an autistic advantage/disadvantage for specific FL (micro)skills (e.g., pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, conversation)? How do autistic individuals assess their general ability for FLL, and is there a statistically significant change in this assessment when they are asked to compare themselves to other autistic and non-autistic individuals? If so, how do autistic learners explain this change? How do parents, teachers, and other professionals who work with the autistic community assess the ability of autistic individuals for FLL vis a vis the ability of non-autistic people? How does the performance of autistic learners on standardized tests assessing different skills compare to the performance of non-autistic learners? To what extent does the autistic neurotype explain reported ease and difficulty at performing actions associated with different linguistics (micro)skills in the L1 and the target language?

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire



Pry01-1722-2021

Foreign Language Learning: The
Experiences of Autistic Individuals

UNIVERSIDAD DE COSTA RICA FACULTAD DE LETRAS

ESCUELA DE LENGUAS MODERNAS

Instrucciones generales

Este cuestionario consta de 24 preguntas distribuidas en tres partes. El propósito de este es conocer sobre usted y su experiencia en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras, con especial atención al aprendizaje del idioma inglés. Sírvase por favor leer las siguientes instrucciones antes de completar el instrumento.

- Durante el llenado del cuestionario, puede acompañarle una persona de su confianza.
- Lea cuidadosamente las preguntas.
- Conteste las preguntas de la manera más honesta y sincera posible.
- Tenga presente que puede dejar en blanco las preguntas que no desee contestar.
- Recuerde que la información que usted proporcione será tratada de forma estrictamente confidencial y que haré el mayor esfuerzo por proteger su identidad.
- Tres emojis de campana (🔔🔔🔔) marcan el momento en que es RECOMENDABLE que tome un receso. Sin embargo, usted puede tomar todos los recesos que necesite. Siéntase en la libertad de tomar un recreo cuando lo necesite.
- Si alguna pregunta le hace sentirse muy mal emocionalmente, puede decírselo a su acompañante. También puede comentárselo al investigador. Durante el llenado del cuestionario, nos acompañará un psicólogo que podrá ayudarnos a sentirnos mejor en caso de que lo necesitemos.

- Si tiene preguntas o dudas, solo indíquese al investigador y él con gusto le atenderá. También puede pedirle ayuda a la persona de confianza que le acompaña.
- Cuando haya terminado de llenar el cuestionario, por favor revíselo y asegúrese de haber contestado todas las preguntas.
- Cuando esté listo, devuelva el formulario debidamente completado al investigador.

Parte I. Información Sociodemográfica y de Contacto

1- Nombre completo:

2- Género: () Hombre () Mujer () Otro. Especifique:

3- Nivel de escolaridad o grado (seleccione el más alto que haya obtenido)

() Escuela primaria completa

() Colegio completo

() Bachillerato universitario

() Licenciatura universitaria

() Maestría universitaria

() Doctorado

() Otro. Especifique:

4- Ocupación:

5- ¿Tiene usted un diagnóstico de trastorno del espectro autista?

() Sí

() No

6- ¿Además de autismo, tiene usted alguna otra condición o discapacidad que se considere relevante mencionar?

() Sí. Especifique: () No

Parte II. Lengua Nativa

7- ¿Cuál es su primera lengua (el idioma al que ha estado expuesto en su hogar desde su nacimiento)?

Mi primera lengua es:

8- ¿Qué tan difícil o fácil es para usted realizar las siguientes acciones en su primera lengua? Coloque una (X) en la celda de su elección.

| Acción | Muy difícil (1) | Difícil (2) | Fácil (3) | Muy fácil (4) |
|---|--------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|
| Entender lo que se le dice | | | | |
| Expresarse de manera oral (hablando) | | | | |
| Pronunciar los sonidos de su primera lengua | | | | |

Hablar de manera fluida, sin titubeos, pausas
excesivas o exabruptos

Iniciar, sostener y cerrar una conversación

Expresarse de manera escrita

Escribir correctamente las palabras

Usar signos de puntuación

Entender lo que lee

Aprender palabras nuevas

Usar palabras nuevas cuando está hablando

Usar palabras nuevas cuando está escribiendo

Aprender reglas gramaticales

Aplicar reglas gramaticales al hablar

Aplicar reglas gramaticales al escribir



Parte III. Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

9- ¿Ha estudiado inglés como lengua extranjera?

() Sí

() No

10- ¿A qué edad empezó a estudiar inglés?

Empecé a estudiar inglés a los años

11- ¿Ha estudiado inglés durante el último año, ya sea en un curso, con profesores, o de manera independiente?

() Sí

() No

12- ¿Por cuánto tiempo ha estudiado inglés? Marque la opción correspondiente.

() Menos de un año

() 1-2 años

() 3-4 años

() 5-6 años

() 7-8 años

() 9-10 años

() Otro. Especifique: _____

13- ¿Cómo ha aprendido el inglés que sabe? Marque TODAS las opciones que apliquen.

() En la escuela

() En el colegio

() En la universidad porque en mi carrera tengo que llevar cursos de inglés () En la universidad como carrera

() En la universidad como un curso adicional a los cursos de mi carrera

() En un instituto o escuela de idiomas

() Con un tutor o profesor privado

() Con un amigo, familiar o conocido que me ha enseñado

() Por inmersión, viviendo o visitando lugares en los que se habla inglés

() Por exposición, viendo series, videos, películas, u otras producciones audiovisuales en inglés

() Por exposición, jugando videojuegos

() Por exposición, escuchando canciones, podcasts, audiolibros, u otros materiales de audio en inglés

() Por exposición, leyendo libros, blogs, posts, u otros textos en inglés

() Por medio de redes sociales (e.g., Facebook) u otras comunidades en el internet

() Por medio de conversaciones informales (fuera del aula) con personas que hablan inglés

() De manera autodidacta (estudiando por usted mismo)

() Otro. Especifique:

14- Si ha estudiado inglés por su propia cuenta, ¿cuáles de los siguientes recursos ha utilizado para aprender inglés? Marque TODAS las opciones que apliquen.

() Sitios web

() Aplicaciones móviles

() Diccionarios

() Libros hechos para enseñar inglés

() Audios hechos para enseñar inglés

() Videos hechos para enseñar inglés

() Otro. Especifique:

15- Del inglés que usted sabe, ¿qué tanto ha aprendido a través de las siguientes acciones? Coloque una (X) en la celda de su elección.

| Acción | Contribución | | | |
|---|--------------|------|-------|-----------|
| | Nada | Poco | Mucho | Muchísimo |
| Exponiéndose al idioma a través de la lectura de textos (por ejemplo, libros) | () | () | () | () |

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Exponiéndose al idioma a través de materiales audiovisuales (porejemplo, series de Netflix) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Interactuando informalmente con personas que hablan o escriben en inglés | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Estudiando de forma autodidacta con recursos físicos o digitales | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Viviendo o viajando a lugares en los que se habla inglés | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tomando clases con profesores privados o tutores, o en instituciones educativas o institutos | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

16- ¿Por qué razones ha estudiado inglés? Marque TODAS las opciones que apliquen.

- Porque la mayoría de la música, los podcasts, los audio-libros u otras producciones de audio que escucho están en ese idioma
- Porque la mayoría de las series, películas, videos u otras producciones audiovisuales que veo están en ese idioma
- Porque la mayoría de los libros, blogs, u otros textos que leo están en ese idioma
- Porque era o es una materia obligatoria en la escuela, el colegio o la universidad
- Porque me gusta o algún aspecto de la cultura de países donde se habla inglés
- Porque tengo amigos, parientes o conocidos que se comunican en ese idioma
- Para tener mejores oportunidades de trabajo en el futuro
- Porque los idiomas son uno de mis intereses especiales
- Porque aprender idiomas es un hobby o pasatiempo
- Porque me lo pedían o piden en mi trabajo
- Porque lo necesito para viajar
- Otra. Especifique:



17- Si se compara con las personas NO AUTISTAS que conoce, ¿cómo describe su habilidad para aprender inglés?

| Pésima | Mala | Regular | Buena | Sobresaliente |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

18- Si se compara con las personas AUTISTAS que conoce, ¿cómo describe su habilidad para aprender inglés?

| | | | | |
|--------|------|---------|-------|---------------|
| Pésima | Mala | Regular | Buena | Sobresaliente |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| () | () | () | () | () |

19- ¿Qué tan difícil o fácil es para usted realizar las siguientes acciones en inglés?

| Acción | Muy difícil | Difícil | Fácil | Muy fácil |
|--|-------------|---------|-------|-----------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Entender lo que se le dice | | | | |
| Expresarse de manera oral (hablando) | | | | |
| Pronunciar los sonidos del inglés | | | | |
| Hablar de manera fluida, sin titubeos, pausas excesivas o exabruptos | | | | |
| Iniciar, sostener y cerrar una conversación | | | | |
| Expresarse de manera escrita | | | | |
| Escribir correctamente las palabras | | | | |
| Usar signos de puntuación | | | | |
| Entender lo que lee | | | | |
| Aprender palabras nuevas | | | | |
| Usar palabras nuevas cuando está hablando | | | | |
| Usar palabras nuevas cuando está escribiendo | | | | |
| Aprender reglas gramaticales | | | | |
| Aplicar reglas gramaticales al hablar | | | | |
| Aplicar reglas gramaticales al escribir | | | | |

20- A nivel general, ¿qué tan exitoso ha sido su aprendizaje del inglés?

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------|-------------|
| Nada exitoso | Poco exitoso | Exitoso | Muy exitoso |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| () | () | () | () |

21- ¿Ha tomado algún examen estandarizado para evaluar su nivel de inglés (por ejemplo, el TOEFL o el TOEIC)?

- () Sí
() No

22- Si su respuesta a la pregunta 21 fue “sí”, indique el nombre del examen, el año en que lo tomó el examen y el puntaje obtenido. Si no recuerda el puntaje exacto, indique el puntaje aproximado. Puede agregar más filas si las necesita.



| Nombre del examen | Año | Puntaje real | Puntaje aproximado |
|-------------------|-----|--------------|--------------------|
| () | () | () | () |

23- ¿Cree que el autismo ha afectado NEGATIVAMENTE su aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera?

() No

() Sí

24- ¿Cree que el autismo ha afectado POSITIVAMENTE su aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera?

() No

() Sí

¡Gracias por su ayuda!