

Historic Centers in Springfield, Missouri as socio-cultural factors for learning English as a second language

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to show the reader the way in which historic centers of a city are useful at the time of learning and acquiring a second language, such as English, in this case through the immersion experience in a country where English is the native language, specifically in the city of Springfield, Missouri in the United States of America.

Some theoretical references will be shown during the development of this article, which have been found to support the ideas about the influence that historic centers have when learning a second language. The qualitative approach which will guide this research uses a sample of “volunteer participants” and data collection material, such as the semi structured interview.

As a conclusion, it is determined whether the Historic Centers located in Springfield, Missouri have an influence in the process of learning a second language, taking into account suggestions and/or general recommendations such as looking for alternatives that provide a constructivist pedagogical approach with a socio-cultural interaction and perspective for the development of student’s linguistic skills. Keeping in mind that all these aspects are relevant during future academic processes and that are developed as a consequence of using historic centers as a vehicle for learning English.

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Key words: Learning, immersion, culture, historic center, Missouri

Resumen

El presente artículo pretende ilustrar al lector sobre la forma en que los centros históricos de una ciudad sirven como medio de aprehensión de una segunda lengua como el inglés, en este caso por medio de la experiencia de inmersión realizada en un país angloparlante específicamente en la ciudad de Springfield, Missouri en Estados Unidos.

Durante el desarrollo del artículo se mostrarán algunos referentes teóricos encontrados para dar soporte a las ideas que se tienen sobre los centros históricos como medio de aprendizaje de una segunda lengua y su influencia en este tipo de procesos académicos. También se expondrá el enfoque de tipo cualitativo con el que se direcciona esta investigación, con una muestra de “participantes voluntarios” y materiales de recolección de datos como la entrevista semiestructurada; todo ello con el fin de sustentar las ideas planteadas y finalmente el respectivo análisis de cada información obtenida como prueba de este proceso.

En la conclusión se determina si los centros históricos de Springfield, Missouri influyen dentro del proceso de aprendizaje de una segunda lengua dando a su vez algunas sugerencias y/o recomendaciones generales, tales como la búsqueda de alternativas que ofrezcan un enfoque pedagógico constructivista bajo una perspectiva sociocultural y de interacción social para el desarrollo de las capacidades lingüísticas del estudiante. Todo ello, es relevante para futuros procesos académicos relacionados con los centros históricos de una ciudad como medio de aprendizaje del inglés.

Palabras Clave: Aprendizaje, Inmersión, Cultura, Centro histórico, Missouri.

Introduction

This research article exposes the idea of learning a second language, such as English, by making use of pedagogical resources that are based on historical topics of a specific place; in other words, through the cultural immersion experience in a city like Springfield, Missouri in the United States. It presents specifically how the immersion and culture programs in that North American country are useful for students at the time of interacting directly with a language different than their mother tongue, and the way in which the historic centers, such as the Conservation Nature Center, the Museum of Native American History, the Crystal Bridges museum of American Art, among others, allow students to acquire certain knowledge and apply this knowledge by expressing ideas through their linguistic skills in the target language.

Complementing the information above referring to the historic centers previously mentioned, this article pretends to be compared with theories cited within. The analysis shows the influence that some educational activities have with the common context of each person and their ability at the time of acquiring what they learn in a practical and successful way.

Finally, this reflection article suggests some hypothesis that can be taken into account. First, what makes historic centers important when it comes to immersion and interaction and second, how can these places help recognize the difficulties or advances that appear during the learning process of a student, according to his or her communicative skills in the target language.

Objectives

General objective

- To demonstrate the influence that historic centers in Springfield, Missouri have in the process of learning English as a second language.

Specific objectives

- To identify the main historic centers of Springfield, which will be the aim of study and analysis in the current research.
- To look for theoretical references that support the hypothesis given to prove the success in the language learning process and its relation with the knowledge acquired through the historic centers shown in this article.

Problem statement

In recent years, education in Colombia has been assessed through institutions such as: the Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education (ICFES, 2013) and with the support of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCDE, 2013), who showed in their National Performance Report of 2013, that a deficit in educational systems exists in some Latin American countries. This is a consequence of the results that they obtained after making and analyzing the tests that were presented by 15 year old students from the year 2000 to 2012. This report indicates that Colombia is in the ranking of the countries that had the lower academic performance. And even though when minimum and maximum scores do not exist in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) exam. It has a reference scale that consists of three assessed areas (mathematics and reading, with 500 points and sciences with average of 498 points).

According to the article written by Julián De Zubiría Samper (2014) presented in the magazine *Razón Pública*, there is little that has been done to achieve and exceed the increasing decline in Colombian education. As evidence of this, he shows the last PISA tests, done in 2012, in which 62 countries participated and Colombia occupied the 61st place, a very upsetting result because it was expected that in the '90' s, academic processes would be exposed to a change with the ideas of improvement. For example, what was thought would be the “revolution of education” during Alvaro Uribe’s government (2002-2006) which would get over the problematical situation, unfortunately did not have success, due to the lack of training for teachers, and students which resulted in the bad scores obtained in the PISA exam of 2012.

Consequently, to improve the quality in the educational systems, there still exists the opportunity and possibility to improve the way of learning, and with this the idea of looking for new techniques to increase academic competence levels and critical thinking among students. On top of that, focusing on a less basic and more guided educational formation that applies knowledge into real life situations, together with places which are

correctly adapted for teaching, it could be possible to reach a successful educational and intellectual progress in an educational community.

Julián De Zubiría Samper said:

The best way to achieve results is quite simple, but involves a profound change in educational system. We need to take the basic capability to develop education based on critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, analysis and skills to communicate and live with others. Unfortunately, this is not possible while not completely transforming the current teacher's training, curriculum and pedagogical models that continue in most educational institutions in Colombia (De Zubiría Samper, 2014).

This is intended to change their academic parameters in education through the implementation of environments that catch students' attention and motivation to learn, making the knowledge and learning processes more productive and significant

This brings the idea of raising the potential to improve academic spaces that are used in the learning process in some English-speaking countries. Making a point specifically in North America, where the city of Springfield, Missouri is located. Here it is possible to notice the autonomy that educational institutions have, to manage and control their selection of academic processes. According to an article published in the journal *International Student Guide to the USA* by Susan E. Hume, Ph.D. (2002), Department of Geography professor at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, each and every one of the states that make up the United States of America are free to develop their own system and curriculum, but rather supported financially by local government in each state. However they receive funding from the federal/national government and universities need to adhere to national guidelines of certification for higher education. This means that in America there is a way of support in which educational institutions can choose the form of content to be taught and how it is intended to be done, which supports the idea of an academic process that creates teaching for life and not just as a pastime.

An example of this educational system is Missouri State University (MSU), which is the second largest university in the state, according to its official website (2014). It is a public institution founded in 1905, with the purpose to provide students with the necessary training to work in fields related to cultural competences, leadership, and relationship with the community. Moreover, students have the chance to choose between the undergraduate and postgraduate careers that this institution offers.

At Missouri State University, students have the opportunity not only to learn about the culture of the city where they are, but also they can get knowledge through several means and resources that teachers have around them. Consequently, the city of Springfield in Missouri has some historic centers that the university has incorporated into their academic programs as a tool for study due to the cultural content, which is at the same time a way to teach different topics which are presented in each class and are given to native and foreign students.

In order to confirm the success of the resources used by the university for this experience, it is necessary to notice some arguments that are presented by the educational community involved in the cultural immersion program. Examining a question that arises from the need to know how these processes occur, because each person is a different world, learns differently, and has different views or conceptions of these educational processes.

According to that, education through this type of experiences contributes and supports students in their academic and educational processes, raising the following question: **How can the historic centers of a city influence or contribute to the process of learning a second language?**

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this article is informed by the experience of some students from La Gran Colombia University in the US and is based on some historical and well recognized places in the city of Springfield, Missouri. The development of the theory occurs to support this research article, in which some references help to visualize more deeply the hypothesis presented on learning a second language through interacting with places that serve as educational and cultural tools.

Taking into account that a place or historic centers can be taken as part of the cultural history of a city or country, this research presents an idea close to the concept of culture, understanding that: "Culture is everything created, made (developed, improved changed) by man, unlike all that nature has given. It encompasses the whole sphere of human social activity, including both material and spiritual forms" (Mezhuiev, 1980, cited from Cabrera, Mestre, Nuñez, & Rodríguez, 2010, pag. 31). It is possible to say in the first place, that a historic center that has been created by a society contributes to the cultural knowledge of a city.

From this, the philosopher Vygotsky (1925-1934), presents his sociocultural theory of learning, arguing that the individual learns in a social and cultural environment and therefore in the medium within which the process unfolds. Added to that, he also presents that history and culture play an important role in the development of thinking and language skills.

With the historic-cultural theory by Vigotsky (1925-1934) it is important to show that mental processes of a person are developed and influenced by socio historical and cultural events which are immersed in the educational environment. Because it is considered that historic centers are easy for people to reach, and they contribute to the development of activities, tools and emotions, making these places very significant in the academic processes.

According to the Vigotsky's sociocultural theory of learning, this article wants to show that historic centers in Springfield, Missouri have a considerable role in the learning process that Missouri State University offers. Developing some ideas like for example, presenting the most recognized historic places to promote knowledge about American history and a language practice for foreign students. Besides that, historic places are part of the socio-cultural environment, that allows people to share and interact with others, which ends up in a cognitive activity based on the historical events of the city.

The Vigotskian theory also takes place in the higher mental processes of a person, it is to say, the ones who are mediated by culture, as this provides symbolic elements that stimulate the construction of themselves. With this, it is proposed that the impact of the historic sites of Springfield is determined by the same social interaction in which humans are exposed, as it develops processes like verbal thinking, logical memory, selective attention, among others, with the ability to obtain and apprehend the knowledge through applying a second language.

In relation to the information above, there is work can also be understood based on the hypothesis of 'input', in which it is exposed that "an important condition for language acquisition happens when the learner can understand (when listening or reading) the language entry containing the structure a bit beyond his or her current level of comprehension "(Krashen, 1978 cited in Brown, 2000, p.278). Whereupon, Krashen recommended that an acquired skill such as "speaking" fast does not occur directly in the classroom, but the individual speeches made, will be reflected after having acquired the arrival of some information that he or she can understand.

Connection between knowledge and context

There is a sociocultural theory that is based on the assumption that "the cognitive development cannot take a place independently of a person's social context" (Darhower, 2004, cited in Mejia, 2009, p. 17), which tries to show that the development of knowledge should be mediated by those cultural tools serving as a basis for the apprehension of it. Then, it is possible to say that the learning process of a person is formed not only by what happens between individuals with whom they interact, but also through the social, cultural, and historical context in which the interaction takes place.

Mediation in sociocultural theory

Mediation is an essential element in the educational process of human beings, as it allows a person to reach knowledge through the appropriation of some instruments or mechanisms that are significant and timely in the development of learning (Darhower 2004, cited in Mejia, 2009, p. 18). This is consistent with the mediation process proposed by Vigotzky (1934), which is based in the fact that human actions are formed by the use of cultural tools, as well as the interaction between the environment of these tools and people.

Marcela Mejia Guzman (2009), Master in education from Los Andes University says: The use of learning strategies comes from the spontaneous interaction of learners in a context that provides opportunities for participation, where planning is more focused on those instruments that generate dynamic mediation catching student's interests (p. 23).

It can be inferred that learning a second language is based on the socialization of it and marks the development of this process through different spaces in which it is produced that can be defined socially. Therefore, it is necessary to use social instruments such as the historic centers of Springfield, which provide the construction of knowledge, and more meaningful set the time of learning, developing learners' critical thinking through reflection on various themes that learners observe.

Interaction based on obtained tools

Moreover, (Long, 1985, cited in Brown, 2000) discloses in his "theory of interaction", that previous understanding of knowledge leads to a modified interaction in which native speakers create changes directly or indirectly during the communication when interacting with others, in order to facilitate the comprehension and understanding by the foreigners. In addition, the author states that, "The interpersonal context in which a student performs, takes an important place, and therefore, the interaction between students and others is the focus of observation and explanation" (p 287).

Referring to the interaction as a means for understanding knowledge, this author seeks to show that the prospect to acquire a second language is emphasized by stimulating the learning process naturally through the exchange of ideas, better known as interaction, which occurs between students and teachers or the socio-cultural environment in which they are immersed.

Knowledge brought to the context

Learning processes are based on a cognitive sense, due to the fact that affective factors such as motivation may appear, which can play an important role in observing this dimension in the student. Ausubel (1978) states that "learning is a process through which information is related to an important aspect of the structure of knowledge of a person." (p. 84). This affirmation determines if a person links up what he or she learns with his or her environment that could help him or her to develop the ability to comprehend and the attainment of knowledge in a successful way.

The initial idea is that the student will have a theoretical part to learn, but then he or she will have to create a relation between the environment and the knowledge given, which is very important within the educational process. Understanding that the student feels more identified with a nearby site versus what he or she learns, the student will feel somehow motivated to continue learning and use resources that were given, in order to lead a dignified process according to his or her expectations. Recognizing motivation as a relation of some "techniques that promote the goals of a person, related to his or her behavior and

making this complex and so there will be many different ways to promote it" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 28).

The role of knowledge

As an addition to this, it is important to recognize that in the book *Communicative Language Teaching*, Littlewood (1981) states: "Students should pay great attention to both social significance and transmitting functional language" (p. 43). Supporting the previous statement, it explains that the level of learning about obtaining knowledge is closer when students perform activities outside the classroom as this process must not be just a functional tool but also a form of behavior in the midst of society.

In other words, it explains the way how social aspects are taken within the educational process, taking these as references in the apprehension and effective understanding of a person, because socializing with the context could strengthen the skills and capabilities of a student to internalize new concepts every day.

The idea of recognizing the context as a useful mean for learning a language can also be developed with the various interpersonal relations that people make through the learning process as they are immersed in the culture of a particular place. It allows people to acquire knowledge in a way and then applying it in different real life events, which contribute to improve and advance their learning skills.

The utility could be discarded of the knowledge that has been acquired, this theory is based on the book *Affect in Language Learning*, where Arnold (1999), states that learning a language and its use are basically interactive activities that depend on the individual's relations and culture itself, as a maximum mean to carry out an academic process. Thus, it is evident that culture is a factor that contributes to the development of learning a language, and that while people are immersed in it regardless of location, they will be willing to use those socio-cultural media as material and/or methods according to the needs and possibilities they have when learning a language, thanks to the characteristics of the medium in which they are immersed.

Methodological framework

Investigative processes, as the one that is presented in this article, are made to study a specific case. Accordingly, the main objective of this article is to investigate if historic centers in Springfield, Missouri are useful tools or not when learning a second language. This research is oriented by a qualitative approach to confirm or explain the assumptions held about the immersion experience.

The qualitative approach is useful in this research paper because it helps to test hypotheses or ideas previously raised regarding the contribution that some historical places have in an academic process. Moreover, this approach is interested on the points of view of researchers and students, due to the fact that they are involved in this process, but under a theoretical framework that supports the reconstruction of ideas from the events occurring within the American context.

It is considered that this approach in the research process helps to develop the ideas proposed in this article in a more complete way, and also aims at the creation of innovative forms of study by observing the social environment established in the city of Springfield. It also helps to complement and support the theories of the authors previously mentioned, with the purpose of generating better understanding on the reason of this study.

Applying the qualitative approach to the topic which is related to the immersion experiences in a country like the United States of America, in the city of Springfield, it is possible to say that such trips help to study and recognize the influence that historic centers have in the learning process and how the most relevant aspects are part of the subject matter in this case. Therefore, the qualitative approach of this research paper helps to know and establish different hypotheses about learning in a foreign country through the personal stories from a student's group in an immersion program, taking into account that these ideas are supported by a theoretical framework.

Case study

The methodology of this research focuses on **simple analysis** (class 1), which is a type of case study, due to the fact that it analyzes one or more experimental conditions given to a study group. This type of case study requires an analysis of some factors that are immersed in the same context (Nielsen, 2015). In this case the observation that was made in the immersion and culture program inside of an American context serves as a tool for building a new theory that complements the way how an apprentice gains knowledge through a new language such as English.

Furthermore, the experience of immersion in a country such as the USA, emerges as a different learning situation, where the possibility of investigating and analyzing the process that takes place in the American context allows learners to receive feedback according to their ideas during the development of their skills during the immersion program at Missouri State University.

Through the qualitative approach of this investigation, certain concepts are built from different places and historic centers in Springfield, Missouri, which refer to the assessment of different social environments as a means and resource for learning a second language.

Additionally, this approach is adapted to the investigation because it starts from a problem question, created by a personal vision and the research that is being done in the development of that question using a platform of experiences within certain social places that are observed continuously, and the presentation of the theoretical framework as an accreditation to strengthen the ideas raised.

During the research of historic centers, five specific places were taken as a reference. These are: the historical center of Springfield, the Conservation Nature Center, St. Louis Arch, the Crystal Bridges museum of American Art and the Museum of Native American History.

Also, the research about the places was developed in natural environments with the possibility of obtaining information through continuous monitoring during the different activities, facilitating the emergence of several opinions according to each moment experienced in a city of the United States of America.

Sampling

The type of sample selected for this process is the **sample of willing participants**. Taking into account that education is involved in a social dynamic of free participation and it is therefore, referred to the heterogeneous characteristics of the student population that are participating in the immersion program.

The place where the development of this study started is the city of Springfield, Missouri, in the United States. This is the city in which the Missouri State University is located and the place where twenty-two students were placed from the Faculty of Education of the Gran Colombia University. Five of these students were taken as objects of study for this research. They were between their seventh and eighth semester of their English bachelor studies.



Figure 1. Map of the geographical location of the City of Springfield, Missouri, U.S.

Taken from: http://pix.epodunk.com/locatorMaps/mo/MO_270892.gif (Maps)



Figure 2. Location of the city of Springfield on the map of the political division of the U.S.
Taken from: <http://www.idcide.com/i/mc2/mo/springfield.gif> (Springfield)



Figure 3. Downtown map of the city of Springfield.
Taken from: <http://www.itsalldowntown.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/DowntownSGF2012map.jpg>
(Springfield, Downtown)

At the English Language Institute (ELI), there are between twenty-two and twenty-five thousand students from different countries and range in age from eighteen years old to even into old age. These students can take the academic program of their choice and the course of culture and immersion is offered by the Missouri State University (MSU) with the intention of helping participants to improve their English level, either for professional, personal or academic purposes (MSU, 2015).

It is important to recognize that the ELI offers different academic programs involving several fields of knowledge where people can participate voluntarily in the American culture immersion program. The aim of this program is to show participants historical aspects in their surroundings, while they acquire new concepts.

For an immersion course, held every six months and lasts 4 to 8 weeks, depending on the choice of each person, the ELI receives about 200 students. These students that have the opportunity, from the first week, to learn the importance and historical facts that took place in the city of Springfield, Missouri. Teachers are mostly American, they provide students cultural information in order to contextualize and at the same time begin to develop the skills and goals that participants should have.

For the classes during the week, students develop text-based activities that allow them to have prior knowledge about the conception, activities, and places that they will visit. These activities and visits are performed during Saturdays, where students from the ELI interact with and entrench ideas previously learned in class.

The historic centers that are part of the city of Springfield and that are also object of this study, are the Crystal Bridges Museum, the Museum of Native American History, the Conservation Natural Park, the Downtown of the city, and the St. Louis Arch which are the focal point in this research, along with the twenty-two students from the Gran Colombia University who participated in the immersion experience of 2013. In the following sections, it will be provided a brief description of each historic center.

***Historical center of Springfield**

The center of Springfield is a place where students were able to tour several streets and recognize some of the most important facts that stand out in the history of the city. This city is known as "The Queen City of the Ozark Mountains" and it is also known as the birthplace of Route 66, as well as, home of several universities, including Missouri State University and Drury University.

***Conservation Natural Center**

The Conservation Natural Center is under the direction of the Missouri Department of Conservation, which is responsible for the protection and proper treatment of natural forests, resources and wildlife, and giving visitors the opportunity to participate in resource management activities that are promoted for the use, enjoyment, and learning of nature (Missouri, 2015).

***Gateway Arch in St. Louis**

The Gateway Arch in St. Louis monument is 192 meters tall. It is the most important and representative icon of the Jefferson National Expansion in the city of St. Louis, Missouri. It is located on the banks of the Mississippi River and its construction began in 1963 to commemorate the US westward expansion. This idea was created by Thomas Jefferson and the Arch is also known as the gateway to the west of this country.

Visitors can see the arch from inside by walking up to the top through modern capsules with space for up to 5 people. Moreover, people have the opportunity to visit an underground museum where they will know the history and the most important data of its construction (Hernández, 2010-2015).

***Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art**

The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is located in Bentonville, Arkansas. It was designed by architect Moshe Safdie and founded by Alice Walton in November 2011. In this place people can find important paintings and prominent works from the Colonial Era to modern times, photographs and paintings by renowned artists such as

Charles Wilson Peale, Gilbert Stuart, Asher Brown Durand, and take part in classes named in culture and art: 'Rosie the Riveter' of Norman Rockwell. All of these activities have the aim of promoting in the visitors an understanding and appreciation of the artistic heritage of the nation (Google Museum, 2015; Arkansas, 2015).

***Museum of Native American History**

At the Museum of Native American History visitors can learn about American history and the lifestyle of early Native Americans who lived in that specific area. Here people can find relics with more than 14,000 years of existence. Besides this, people can recognize the differences between ancient and current Indians through a visual and chronological tour. Additionally, visitors have the possibility to see the exhibitions in detail and learn about the lifestyle that American Indians had in certain periods of time (Museum, 2015).

Data Collection

During data collection of this research about the historic centers of Springfield, Missouri, as a means of learning, some factors are taken into account. One of those is context, understanding that this research is developed in an academic environment that served as a support for the learning process.

In this part of the research process, the perception and opinion conveyed through interviews of students of the English bachelor program from the Gran Colombia University about the educational process that they had as foreign students in the United States. When collecting the information, two instruments were established of, which the first one is the qualitative observation and the second one is the semi-structured interview.

Qualitative observation

According to (Cuevas, 2009, cited in Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2010, p.424), this type of observation raises the necessity for the researcher do not limit only to

take note of what observes, but to put in practice the ability to highlight every single detail of the study carried out and that it could use into every event that has as a reference.

For this process of observation, held for a month in the city of Springfield was considered the development of the communicative, sociological, psychological, and educational dimensions in students of the English bachelor program from the Gran Colombia University. This way allowed an active participation in each activity performed inside of the immersion course and according to this was possible to make an analysis and reflection about the different experiences that learners lived.

Additionally, it is important to recognize the manner in which this research was conducted and the effects of this process, due to the fact that from direct participation in the program, it was easier to take accurate and verifiable information based on the Gran Colombia University students' testimonies.

A detailed observation about each outstanding aspect was made in order to achieve the comprehension and development of this research about historic centers in Springfield, Missouri. For this reason, the particular experiences and the dialogue with each of the Gran Colombia University students were means to achieve this.

During this observation, it was possible to perceive the particular characteristics of the academic immersion process, such as the interest in courses, topics seen, taking into account the students motivation towards the environment in which they lived and the means used to learn a second language such as English, through the basis of interacting with historic centers of Springfield. This induced in students to gain knowledge from a real English speaking context.

Semi-structured interview

The next step was the direct conversation with some English bachelor program students from the Gran Colombia University, who participated in the Immersion and

American Culture Program. To make this connection with these students more effective, the semi-structured interview was made with the idea of seeking and collecting as much information as possible for the examination and analysis.

In this type of interview, the researcher has the possibility to increase the number of questions to specify, clarify, or amplify any given topic to achieve a thorough understanding for both the interviewed and people who know the procedure. This allows them to have a natural dialogue, without pressure, transmitted spontaneously and resolve any concerns about the topic (Grinnell & Unrau, 2007, cited in Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2010, p. 418). In this case, the interviewer was free to interact in a natural way with the Gran Colombia University students, so that they could explain clearly their testimonies, ideas, and opinions regarding what they lived and learned in the immersion and American Culture program at Missouri State University.

It was a conversation, in which they described their experiences and perceptions about learning through historic centers in Springfield. They also told how through historic centers of Springfield, Missouri it is possible first, to go into the culture of a country, in this case United States, and second, to develop and increase their level and skills during English comprehension.

The main objective of the interview is to thoroughly know the reasons students had when they decided to come on this immersion journey and investigate if their goals had been reached through the support of historic centers located in Springfield, Missouri. It also took into account the personal opinion of interviewed students. Making use of these stories was possible to get an experiential understanding of the reasons and ways in which students learned being immersed in a culture different from their usual context, and the impact that recognizing these historic places had to enrich the process of learning English.

On the other hand, it is important to highlight the images that illustrate historic centers that students visited, as well as, the recorded videos that were part of this investigation, making this research more reliable because it is based on real data.

It relates as well, the case of five English bachelor program students from the Gran Colombia University, who shared this experience of immersion under the same parameters and expectations that were developed during the American Culture Program.

DATA ANALYSIS

	Interviewed N. 1	Interviewed N. 2	Interviewed N. 3	Interviewed N. 4	Interviewed N. 5	General ideal
Springfield- Missouri Historical Center	He met people within the context and language, which were important for the enrichment of his English Language acquisition.	He took the classes based on the history of the city. He learned about its culture and he remembered Route 66 particularly.	She learned new vocabulary about the most important places in the city and she linked these up during the tour.	She knew the most iconic places and relevant historic events that took place in the city of Springfield, such as Route 66.	It seemed very good for her to learn about the history of the place where she was going to be and all what it means to the city.	In this historic center students agreed on what they learned about the events that are part of the history of Springfield.
Conservation Natural Center	He had the opportunity to learn about some animals of the region and also about the reserves and natural resources that the city has.	He learned about the lack of consciousness that we have on the environment. He learned about hunting and its features.	She met the natural part of the city and its most recognized and appreciated animals that they protected.	She learned about the importance of preserving and protecting forests and local animals such as the deer and the cardinal.	She learned about the importance of taking care of the environment, wildlife and the significant vegetation of that area.	At this point, the visiting students agreed on that they could develop a thought based on the awareness about wildlife and the natural resources for the preservation of the city.
Gateway Arch in Saint Louis	He related the Mississippi River with jazz music. He highlighted the beautiful view he had from the top of the arch.	She learned that this place was the gateway to the western United States at the time of the expansion.	She learned about this symbolic arch, which is closely related to US history and expansion. She highlighted the spectacular view on the Mississippi River.	She expressed her love for the beautiful view from the top and highlighted the Mississippi River as something that means a lot to Americans because it is the second longest river in the United States.	She learned about the historical aspects of its construction and how this contributed to the industrial development of the city.	Three of these students emphasized the importance of the Mississippi River in US history. In addition they commented about the beauty of the landscape seen from the top of the arch.

Crystal Bridges Museum	He said that the art was the complement of the visit as he could see great displays of art.	He learned many vocabulary about culture and important artists.	She said that she made a presentation about US main artists and she learned a lot of vocabulary related to museums.	She related the visit to the types of American culture and the most well-known artists, such as Norman Rockwell, who was an icon of art in the Second World War.	She learned about the most famous works of art and US artists.	After the visit to the museum, all the interviewed highlighted that they had learned about the US most famous artists.
Native American History Museum	He commented that the tour was very convenient, due to the fact that it was related to the topics in each class.	He learned about the origins of Native Americans.	She learned many vocabulary about American history in both classes and field trips.	She learned about the history of the first habitants of the United States and their ancestors.	She learned about some relevant factors in the history of the US ancestors	Three of the interviewed agreed on that this visit gave them knowledge about the origin of the first Native Americans.

Table 1. Analysis of the answers given by the English bachelor students from the Gran Colombia University.

Created by the author to support the research of this article.

Information Analysis

According to the observations and the five interviews, which give a more detailed opinion and judgment on the assumption that this research presents about the contribution of the historic centers of Springfield, Missouri as a tool for learning English in an American context, it appears that the five students interviewed have common ideas and perceptions about what they learned and their success within their immersion experience. The following describes the ideas raised by the learners:

- *Historic Center of Springfield:*



Figure1. Corner at East Walnut Street- South Robberson Avenue, MO. Photograph (Medina, 2013)



Figure2. Founders Park Lofts at Springfield downtown. Photograph (Medina, 2013)

Interviewed **N. 1**, remarked that the experience of immersing into the city of Springfield was gratifying for him because he could make use of what he had learned in the classroom and interact when he was outside. He stressed the importance of culture in the learning process since it was determined by people he met within the context with their own dialects, and the fact of getting to know about the city of Springfield, contributing in the development of his speaking skills.

Interviewees **N. 2** and **N. 4**, witnessed the knowledge that they acquired during the downtown city tour, and both agreed these spaces full of history had an impact in their learning in the way that they somehow changed their way of thinking, due to the fact that they learned a lot about the most important historical events of Springfield, backing up the theory previously seen in class. Also, both of them particularly mentioned the historic Route 66 as one of the most important aspects of their visit. This shows that they in fact acquired considerable knowledge.

For interviewee **N. 3**, all the things that she and her classmates learned during their downtown city tour , were closely related with the theory previously seen in classes and therefore she was able to acquire vocabulary relating to the history of the city.

Interviewee **N. 5**, showed satisfaction about knowing the history of the places where she was going to be during the immersion program, and additionally, she agreed with her classmates that the previous knowledge from the place where they were going to be contributing to the development of their language learning process.

The above relates to the Vygotskian theory (1925, 1934), because people develop their mental processes better when they learn and comprehend their socio-cultural environment and the most relevant facts of it. Also; because history directly related in this process acts as a reachable resource within the tools and activities that could significantly contribute to the academic process.

- Conservation Nature Center:



Figure 3. Conservation Nature Center at Springfield. Photograph (Medina, 2013)



Figure 4. Natural lake inside of Conservation Nature Center. Photograph (Medina, 2013)

For this second visit, interviewee **N. 1** stated that he was able to know about nature, animals, and natural resources that are part of Springfield. In addition, he highlighted how getting to know this natural environment generated interest and understanding the significance of the area in him.

Interviewee **N. 2**, as well as, interviewee **N. 5**, were both grateful for this visit, because they were made aware about the importance of taking care of nature and the environment. They also said that they had a practical experience. One of them recognized the wildlife and vegetation of the area and the other one clarified some preconceptions he had about hunting animals.

Likewise, interviewees **N. 3** and **N. 4**, linked up their previous knowledge about natural sources of the city of Springfield and the habitat of the most recognizable animals with the things they had seen there. This made them agree on the idea about protecting and preserving tropical forests of a specific place.

As a general comment and taking into account the testimonies about this place, these ideas are related to the theory that Littlewood (1981) provides, where it is

demonstrated that the social meaning within the learning processes of people are relevant due to the fact that they help to move out of the functionality of a theory, and create the necessity to develop reflection and thinking in people through things that are outside the classroom. So in this way people can improve their communication skills and acquire significant knowledge when socializing with others in an unconscious way.

- Gateway Arch at Saint Louis, Missouri:



Figure 5. The Gateway Arch at St. Louis, Missouri. Photograph (Medina, 2013)

As for the experience in Saint Louis, interviewees **N. 1**, **N. 3** and **N. 4** defined the creation of the gateway arch as interesting, due to its construction has become part of the history of the United States and highlighted the relation that they found between this monument and the Mississippi River that passes nearby and that is also part of the state.

Furthermore, interviewee **N. 2**, said that he learned about the significance that was involved in the creation of the Saint Louis Arch in the history of this city. Likewise, interviewee **N. 5** said he gained significant knowledge about the general construction of the Arch. He also understood the contribution of this to the industrial development of the city of Saint Louis.

All interviewees reported having a really good feeling when they were on the top of the arch, and enjoyed a beautiful and spectacular view of the city of Saint Louis. According to

this, it is possible to say that there is a relation with Ausubel's statement (1978), in the sense that these students gained knowledge based on previous ideas learned in class, which made comprehension of information easier to achieve while being in the place that they described. Also it is important to point out that their affective factor is shown when describing the view while in that place.

- Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and Museum of Native American History:



Figure 6. Crystal Bridges Museum at Arkansas.
Photograph (Medina, 2013)



Figure 7. Museum of Native American History.
Photograph (Medina, 2013)

In these last visits, students expressed their opinions through semi-structured interviews as such:

Interviewees **N. 1**, **N. 2**, **N. 4** and **N. 5**, all said that they had an American culture lesson before their visit, in which they learned many particular aspects about art by which all of them got familiar with the work of Norman Rockwell, who is one of the most important figures of American art, also because his works and its significance were related to the working women of the industrial era and could be seen in these museums.

Interviewee **N. 3**, said that she had previously done some presentations about the main artists of the United States, which enabled her memory to relate and acquire vocabulary related to the topics which were displayed in the museums.

As for the previous idea, Vygotsky's historic-cultural theory is retaken (1925-1934), which shows that the tools that intervene in a specific topic, represent an obtainable activity that complements a development and significant process in students, and also because these elements when influenced by culture, turn out to be symbolic, therefore they boost knowledge building.

Also, the perspectives given point to Krashen's Input theory (1981), by which students show that they have acquired a second language because they comprehended when listening or reading about a specific topic. Therefore, in the presentations about important artists, students developed their oral production ability (speaking), after receiving previous theory and having perfectly understood.

Conclusion

In this research article the main historic centers of the city of Springfield were identified, which served as a way of transmission and comprehension of the English language. When determining these places, it was necessary to point out and confirm the hypothesis that was related to the aim of this article by making use of theoretical reference of some authors, who by their statements, allow for a better perspective toward the result of this study in relation to the historic centers of the city and the language acquired within them.

According to the general objective, it could be determined that the influence that historic centers have in the learning process is not only a great help but it particularly becomes a necessary tool within the process of immersion and interaction with a second language, such as English.

This learning experience offered the Gran Colombia University students a different way of acquiring knowledge through the most important historic centers of the city of Springfield, Missouri, which resulted from simultaneous methodologies applied in the classrooms of Missouri State University with the help of teachers and students that lived this experience. It was possible to see that knowledge taken into practice influences positively in the acquisition of a second language such as English.

In this matter and according to the testimonies given by students who lived this process in the city of Springfield, it could be evidenced that the places visited during the culture immersion program helped them to put certain skills of communication in practice by being in direct contact in an English Speaking context, because they gained new knowledge consciously and unconsciously, and they also learned how to develop their communicative competences within the process of language acquisition.

Most of the interviewed students agreed that they had theoretical knowledge previous to their visits. Therefore, comprehension and assimilation of information in these

places was successfully gained. It is safe to say that these encounters with the history of the city of Springfield were one of the best tools for learning a second language.

In this sense, it is recommended to have a pedagogical alternative, which gathers a constructivist approach under a socio-cultural perspective that allows students to improve their abilities and develop their linguistic, intellectual and social capabilities through social interaction.

Finally, it is possible to say that when an immersion program like the one that was done in the city of Springfield expects is to make students feel comfortable with strategies proposed in the classroom and in a space that allows them to carry out their language acquisition without feeling the pressure to memorize everything that they hear, but instead feel that everything learned is done in an indirect way. This experience gives students free time where their interaction with others allows them to learn spontaneously and finally understand without having to do standardized activities to acquire knowledge and overall comprehension of a second language.

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APPENDIX
INTERVIEW FORMAT

La Gran Colombia University
Faculty of Education Sciences

**INTERVIEW ABOUT THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE IMMERSION AND
CULTURE PROGRAM AT MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY.**

- 1- What is your name?
- 2- Please tell me how your experience was when you participated in this immersion program in the United States.
- 3- According to the visit made to the Historic Center of the city of Springfield, Missouri, What kind of relation did you find in this place with your learning process?
- 4- What was the objective of the visit to the Conservation Nature Center at Springfield?
- 5- Tell me please what you learned about the St Louis Arch in the city of St. Louis, Missouri.
- 6- How do you relate the visit to the Cristal Bridges Museum and the Museum of Native American History with the classes at the institution, inside of the language center?
- 7- According to your experience in this immersion trip and the way of learning at Missouri language institute, which recommendations would you give to all the educational community?

- **Interviews**

Up next the textual transcription of five interviews made.

INTERVIEW #1: Edward Sanabria

Interviewer: Good morning, my name is Viviana Medina and now I am going to make you some questions about the Immersion and American culture trip that was made on July 2013, in Springfield, Missouri in the United States.

What is your name?

- **Interviewee:** Good morning, my name is Edward Fabian Sanabria Suárez.

Interviewer: Ok Edward, please tell me how was your experience when you participated in this immersion program in the United States.

- **Interviewee:** It really was a rewarding experience for my life, because I met some touristic and important places for the optimal development of the intellectual side and of course of the language, in this case English. I had many expectations when I traveled because it was the first time that I left the country and fortunately for my level and my intellectual growing I arrived to a good place and it was very productive and constructive for my life.

Interviewer: Ok, according to the visit made, talking specifically about the Historic Center of the city of Springfield, Missouri, What kind of relation did you find in this place with your learning process?

- **Interviewee:** Ok, as I told you before, I arrived there with many expectations, in this case I met many people in their context, it is maybe so different from an academic environment to speak in English, so when we went out of our academic

context, we found people from the society, common people, with common languages and dialects and this is important for our language enrichment.

Interviewer: What was the objective of the visit to the Conservation Nature Center at Springfield?

- **Interviewee:** Obviously the objective in this case is to know about the nature that is part of Springfield, in this case the city of Springfield in the State of Missouri, also to know some of the typical animals of the region such as the Cardinal, to know maybe some natural reserves that still exist; we knew that United States is a country that has very few natural reserves and the objective was to know those kind of reserves and how these help to the good management of a society inside of this field where we were. In addition to that, I remember some of the natural parks and some academic programs that were for children; so I think it is very important, also due to the knowledge about other natural resources in other countries.

Interviewer: Good, Tell me please what you learned about the St Louis Arch in the city of St. Louis, Missouri.

- **Interviewee:** Ok. It was very interesting because I am really an addict of Jazz music, I like Jazz so much and, from the top of the arch there is a beautiful view of the Mississippi River, and for me the Mississippi has some influences inside of the jazz and blues music, so it was gratifying, apart from that when we were on the top, we found some American tourists that arrived to that touristic place in order to see the beautiful view that St Louis offers.

Interviewer: How do you relate the visit to the Cristal Bridges Museum and the Museum of Native American History with the classes at the institution, inside of the language center?

- **Interviewee:** Ok, I remember very good each American culture class, we had parameters about culture divided into facets, for that time we were looking specifically the art, and it was like a complement for the classes because we had seen the work of painter Norman Rockwell, who is one of the great painters and exhibitors about the industrialization of women inside American culture; so it was very important, of course, it was a complement. First, we were with the theory learning about those artists and then we went to the practical part to really see their work, and particularly in this museum there were two works of that painter which are the most outstanding and I think something very significant and convenient.

Interviewer: Ok, according to your experience in this immersion trip and the way of learning at Missouri language institute, which recommendations would you give to all the educational community?

- **Interviewee:** Ok, I would have a pair of recommendations, first it would be of course to make an invitation, if it is not to Missouri but also be in a context where the language spoken is English, in this case as English students it is important because we can introduce ourselves inside cultures and societies where people speak English; second recommendation is that if you make a trip like this one you can enjoy it a lot, obviously at Missouri people offered us a variety of programs that were very consistent with education, first with theory and then with the practice. I think it is very important and I tell you again, enjoy all what you learn and do it with pleasure but not because we must fulfill a program or because of the grade that we want to receive; and the third one, which also is important, is the interaction with many people within that context, not only in educational centers but also out in the parks and if you have the opportunity to talk to a native person it could be very nice, obviously in these places many people accepted this kind of activities and other people don't. But those would be the recommendations.

Interviewer: Ok, good Fabian, thank you so much for your time and your attention.

Interviewee: Thank you for the invitation to your honorable interview.

INTERVIEW #2: Juan Camilo Correa

Interviewer: Good morning, my name is Viviana Medina and now I am going to make you some questions about the Immersion and American culture trip that was made on July 2013, in Springfield, Missouri in the United States.

What is your name?

- **Interviewee:** My name is Juan Camilo Correa.

Interviewer: Juan Camilo, please tell me how was your experience when you participated in this immersion program in the United States.

- **Interviewee:** It was really one of the best experiences that an English student could have, and personally it was something that I didn't expect to do so soon, I mean, to travel to other country.

Interviewer: Ok, according to the visit made, talking specifically about the Historic Center of the city of Springfield, Missouri, What kind of relation did you find in this place with your learning process?

- **Interviewee:** Ok, first of all, the classes before going to the Historic center were based on all the history that these places had, so the vocabulary that was used, what we had to say, what we listened was related with the same topic, so when we arrived to the historic center, I remember that a lot was about Route 66, there was many culture about what learned there.

Interviewer: Ok, What was the objective of the visit to the Conservation Nature Center at Springfield?

- **Interviewee:** One of the objectives was to us be aware of nature, in that moment I had a wrong concept about hunting and we got an explanation as to why they practice that kind of hunt, how it was made, which were the conditions, the statutes that regulate all that, and I found out that it is something that is done in order to maintain the regulation for the environment.

Interviewer: Ok, Tell me please what you learned about the St Louis Arch in the city of St. Louis, Missouri?

- **Interviewee:** First, the Gateway Arch is known as “The gate to the west” which was known as the door to the west, so it was the moment where found all people that would conquer... I mean, the West in that moment.

Interviewer: How do you relate the visit to the Cristal Bridges Museum and the Museum of Native American History with the classes at the institution, inside of the language center?

- **Interviewee:** The same, I mean, everything was very... that is like a lot of culture, in that class that we learned about American culture, all what happened in that context, all the vocabulary that we learned, it was showed there, so for example in the Cristal Bridges Museum I remember so much the Rosi’s picture which was made by Norman Rockwell, this work represented the woman in World War II, that is, that kind of knowledge that we got and also in the Native American History museum in which I learned about the origins of that culture.

Interviewer: Ok, to finish, according to your experience in the immersion trip and this way of learning that you got at the Missouri language institute, what kind of recommendations would you give to all the educative community in general?

- **Interviewee:** In general for they travel, for the moment to the trip?

Interviewer: Yes, about the trip and about the academic expectations, about the influence that these historic places had in your way of learning.

- **Interviewee:** Ok, what happened is that we had a big problem which is like an inhibition when we speak. We have that fear and we always think that we will make mistakes; I always say that a recommendation would be try to speak, I mean, no matter if we make mistakes, no matter if we do wrong, what matters most about learning a language is the communication, that moment in which we have the opportunity to communicate with others; but I saw that many people who traveled got that fear for speaking or interacting... is like to lose the fear, I mean, try to do it in order to improve vocabulary and pronunciation that is what we need.

Interviewer: Ok Juan Camilo, thank you so much for your time and your attention.

- **Interviewee:** Ok.

INTERVIEW #3: Zenaida Rojas Ramírez

Interviewer: Good morning, my name is Viviana Medina and now I am going make you some questions about the Immersion and American culture trip that was made on July 2013, in Springfield, Missouri in the United States.

What is your name?

- **Interviewee:** Zenaida Rojas.

Interviewer: Ok, please tell me how was your experience when you participated in this immersion program in the United States.

- **Interviewee:** It was a completely positive experience for my academic and personal perspective.

Interviewer: Ok, according to the visit made, talking specifically about the Historic Center of the city of Springfield, Missouri, What kind of relation did you find in this place with your learning process?

- **Interviewee:** Well, all that we learned at the Historic Center had much relation with what we learned during the classes and we acquired a lot of vocabulary related to the city of Springfield.

Interviewer: What was the objective of the visit to the Conservation Nature Center at Springfield?

- **Interviewee:** To know the natural side of the city and learn why in that warm season birds and other animals immigrate to Springfield looking for fresh temperatures due to the change of weather.

Interviewer: Ok, Tell me please what you learned about the St Louis Arch in the city of St. Louis, Missouri?

- **Interviewee:** Well, I learned that is a symbolic arch, which has a lot of relation with the history of United States, with its expansion. We saw that the Mississippi river passes close to the arch and it is a spectacular monument and very beautiful.

Interviewer: How do you relate the visit to the Cristal Bridges Museum and the Museum of Native American History with the classes seen?

- **Interviewee:** Well, during the classes we had to do many presentations about the principal artists and authors in United States, and we complemented them with the visits to those museums and also we learned a lot of vocabulary related to these kind of topics.

Interviewer: Ok, to finish, according to your experience in the immersion trip and the way of learning that you had at Missouri language center, what kind of recommendations would you give to all the educative community in general?

- **Interviewee:** An excellent way to know the history and the culture of a country is just by visiting its cultural centers. In those guided visits to the Historic Center of Missouri, we could learn and know a lot about the history of the United States and it made us increase the vocabulary, the best recommendation that I can do for the Gran Colombia University community is that people can be part of this kind of immersion trips in order for they to increase their vocabulary and knowledge.

Interviewer: Ok, Zenaida thank you so much for your time and your attention.

- **Interviewee:** It was a pleasure.

INTERVIEW # 4: Alejandra Poveda

Interviewer: Good morning, my name is Viviana Medina and now I am going make you some questions about the Immersion and American culture trip that was made on July 2013, in Springfield, Missouri in the United States.

What is your name?

- **Interviewee:** Hi, good morning my name is Alejandra Poveda, I got my degree from the Gran Colombia University.

Interviewer: Alejandra, please tell me how was your experience when you participated in this immersion program in the United States.

- **Interviewee:** Well, it was very fulfilling on a personal, cultural and professional level, due to the fact that through this immersion program my acquisition level of

this foreign language improved, making use of all the abilities, was excellent and I could realize that my level of learning English increased notably.

Interviewer: Ok, according to the visit made, talking specifically about the Historic Center of the city of Springfield, Missouri, What kind of relation did you find in this place with your learning process?

- **Interviewee:** Well, when we were in the Historic Center, we visited some museums, where we had the opportunity to learn about some historic events that are emblematic for the city of Springfield, such as Route 66 which is also known as “The main Street of America”, “The Mother Route”, and this route started in Chicago, Illinois and passes by some cities, in this case Missouri; some others like Kansas, Oklahoma or Texas, and ends in Los Angeles.

Interviewer: Ok, what was the objective of the visit to the Conservation Nature Center at Springfield?

- **Interviewee:** In the Nature Center, I think that they have as an objective protect and preserve the forests, fishes, all natural resources, wildlife that is inside of the city of Springfield ; also we enjoyed and learned about natural resources. In addition to that, what caught my attention was that there are two types of animals that are so important for Springfield citizens as for example the deer and the cardinal. Remember that the cardinal is the most important baseball team in the city of St. Louis, due to what it represents to all the State of Missouri.

Interviewer: Tell me please, what you learned about the St Louis Arch in the city of St. Louis, Missouri.

- **Interviewee:** Well, when we traveled to St. Louis, it was very interesting because I could see all the city from the top of the gateway arch, with a beautiful view, it is

also located on the banks of the Mississippi river and this river is very important for American people because it crosses through the middle of the country from north to south.

Interviewer: How do you relate the visit to the Cristal Bridges Museum and the Museum of Native American History with the classes taken?

- **Interviewee:** I relate it with the classes, because we had some classes about American culture. A woman as an emblematic figure that we mentioned is called Rosie “The riveter”, painted by Norman Rockwell; this woman was a cultural icon because she represented American women who worked in factories during World War II.

Interviewer: Thank you. To finish, according to your experience in this immersion trip and with the way of learning that you had inside of the Missouri language institute, what kind of recommendations would you give to all the educative community in general?

- **Interviewee:** Well, my recommendation in general about this immersion program is that we must propose ourselves to be in an intercultural experience, where we can acquire a second language in a significant way, due to it helps to improve the knowledge of English as second language in a rapid and effective way, and also because we are in a learning process.

Interviewer: Ok Alejandra, thank you so much for your time and your attention.

- **Interviewee:** Ok, it was a pleasure.

INTERVIEW # 5: Viviana Valderrama

Interviewer: Good morning, my name is Viviana Medina and now I am going to make you some questions about the Immersion and American culture trip that was made on July 2013, in Springfield, Missouri in the United States.

What is your name?

- **Interviewee:** My name is Viviana Valderrama.

Interviewer: Viviana, please tell me how was your experience when you participated in this immersion program in the United States.

- **Interviewee:** The immersion program offered me and all my classmates, the opportunity to use directly the knowledge that we already had about English language on the context in which it is spoken, because all the teachers and all the classes were always in English; also the places we visited and people who guided us during the tours were always communicating in English with us, which helped us a lot to improve all our skills at this language.

Interviewer: Eh, according to the visit made, talking specifically about the Historic Center of the city of Springfield, Missouri, What kind of relation did you find in this place with your learning process?

- **Interviewee:** Well, at the beginning, I consider it was very good to know about the place where we were going to be for during the immersion program, also to learn about American history. It was nice to visit important places, like the main square, where we could see many representative works related to the history of the place where we were.

Interviewer: Ok, what was the objective of the visit to the Conservation Nature Center at Springfield?

- **Interviewee:** The objective I think, first of all to be aware about the care of the environment and second, to meet all the wildlife and vegetation that is part of the natural context of Springfield; also to meet the Cardinal which is one of the iconic animals and of course to know to the deer. So, it was to recognize the nature that is part of the city of Springfield.

Interviewer: Thank you. Tell me please what you learned about the St Louis Arch in the city of St. Louis, Missouri?

- **Interviewee:** Well, we learned eh... we met the starting date of the works, how much time it spent to construct?, how the work contributed to the industrial development of the city and to the rest of the country that was in that moment in a development for the industrial growth.

Interviewer: How do you relate the visit to the Cristal Bridges Museum and the Museum of Native American History with the classes taken?

- **Interviewee:** Well, during all the classes each visit that we did was on weekends, so on the weeks we had the opportunity to study deeply the place where we were going to stay on weekend; so during all the week we were studying about works of art and especially about Norman Rockwell's works, who is one of the most recognized artists in United States. So when we arrived to the Cristal Bridges Museum we had the opportunity to see one of the most important works from him, the most emblematic which represents to the woman in her role as worker when the industrialization in United States began.

Interviewer: Ok, to finish, according to your experience in this immersion program and the way of learning that you had inside of the Missouri language institute, what kind of recommendations would you give to all the educative community in general?

- **Interviewee:** Well, it is very good to invest your money in these kind of trips, this is more than just luxury; it is an investment on our own education. It is important because in our context we do not have the opportunity to use the English language all the time, because not all the people speak in English; it is like to give us the possibility to go out, to explore other worlds, to use the language that we are learning and more with native people because we can learn more, being in the context where the language is spoken we are going to gain a lot of vocabulary, knowledge, and we are going to develop easier all the abilities that we need in order to understand the idiom.

Interviewer: Ok Viviana, thanks a lot for your time and your attention.

- **Interviewee:** No, Thanks to you Viviana.