

## East or West, home is the best?: a comparative study of reading proficiency and strategy use on learners with and without study abroad experiences\*

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## Abstract

Previous research has shown that generally the learners who studied in foreign countries outpaced their peers in domestic contexts in terms of productive language proficiency, but used fewer strategies. This study explored the effects of study abroad on receptive proficiency and strategies in reading forms of undergraduate students majoring in Spanish. Proficiency test and strategy questionnaires were administered to students, who were first divided into 2 groups: at-home and study-abroad; the later was then subdivided into 3 subgroups according to the host country. The results showed that the study-abroad group's reading proficiency was significantly higher than at-home group. Additionally, they used similar strategies. Significant differences of proficiency and skills were also found among students who studied in Mexico and those who studied in Spain or other countries. This study supported that study-abroad generally has positive effects on reading proficiency and the differences among host countries' programs have become a decisive factor.

**Keywords:** second language acquisition; Spanish; reading proficiency; study abroad; strategy use.

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## 1. Introduction

For nearly 50 years, the effects of study abroad and domestic context on second language development has been the focus of research (Brecht et al., 1993; Freed, 1995; Marriot, 1995; Regan, 1995; Simões, 1996; Isabelli, 2004; Dewey, 2004; Díaz-Campos, 2004; Freed et al., 2004; Lafford, 2004; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004; Gao, 2006; Sasaki, 2007; Llanes & Muñoz, 2009; Collentine, 2009; Sasaki, 2011). Generally speaking, the majority of previous studies showed that in comparison to at-home context, the study abroad context had a more positive impact on second language competence (Freed, 1995). While there is a growing body of literature that recognizes the crucial role played by study abroad in order to improve the learners' language proficiency, it only has been challenged by few studies demonstrating opposite results.

For instance, the researchers examined the students' vocabulary and grammatical development: Isabelli (2004) showed that English speaking students who studied Spanish in Argentina had achieved significant improvement in grammatical proficiency. However, one of the controversial issues in the literature is that other studies have reported contradictory findings. According to Marriott (1995), English speakers exposed to foreign settings did not perform as well as those in domestic settings in terms of appropriate honorific use of Japanese. Regan (1995) didn't find differences in grammatical elements among students who learned French as L2 in foreign countries and at-home contexts. This means uncertainty still exists about the benefits of study abroad in terms of grammatical achievement.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on productive proficiency in speaking and writing forms. The majority of these studies showed that the learners benefit from study abroad in terms of oral fluency, phonology gains and writing achievement. Díaz-Campos (2004) reported the better performance of phonology of students who studied in Spain. Simões (1996) found that the learners who participated in an abroad program in Spanish had better performance in fluency. Llanes and Muñoz (2009) showed that the Spanish of Catalan native speakers had better performance in oral fluency after studying abroad. Segalowitz et al. (2004) compared the gains of different contexts for English native speakers who learned Spanish; the results showed that the studying abroad group had higher oral proficiency and oral fluency. Freed, Segalowitz and Dewey (2004) found that students of French with abroad experiences outpaced their peers at home in terms of oral fluency. The benefits of study abroad have been only challenged by Freed, Segalowitz and Dewey (2004), who found that learners in intensive language programs at home had significantly higher L2 oral fluency compared to study-abroad learners. This indicates a need to further understand the differences that exist among at-home and study-abroad learning programs and contexts of speaking. So far in the literature, some research has also been conducted on writing proficiency. For instance, Sasaki (2007, 2011) confirmed that the Japanese learners of English who studied abroad improved their L2 writing ability and fluency whereas the at home group did not.

The research to date has tended to focus on productive proficiency rather than receptive proficiency. In regard to listening competence, Llanes and Muñoz (2009) found that the Catalan or Spanish native speakers had acquired higher level of listening competence after being exposed to foreign contexts. There have also been a handful of related studies in reading. Dewey (2004) investigated the role of contexts of learners of Japanese as L2. He found that the students in foreign contexts significantly felt more confident reading in L2 than their peers at home. Brecht, Davidson and Ginsberg (1993) found that the immersion experiences of Russian language produced significant gains in reading proficiency. Apart from these two studies, there is a general lack of research about reading improvement. Therefore, the evidence that the study abroad experiences are associated with reading improvement is still inconclusive.

In the field of reading, strategy use also constitutes a complementary dimension in the research. Studies over the past two decades have shown that metacognitive or cognitive strategy use is a direct or indirect predictor of reading proficiency (Carrell, 1989; Paris et al., 1983; Kunnan, 1995; Purpura, 1997; Phakiti, 2003; Song & Cheng, 2006; Phakiti, 2008). For example, Phakiti (2003) reported that the metacognitive and cognitive strategy use was positively correlated with reading performance. Purpura (1997) showed that the metacognitive strategy use has a direct and positive effect on cognitive strategy use, which is correlated with reading performance.

Although several studies have produced estimates of the relationship between study abroad and strategy use, there is still insufficient data for a sound conclusion. For instance, Lafford (2004) showed that the learners of Spanish in foreign contexts used fewer communicative strategies than their classroom counterparts. Gao (2006) compared Chinese learners' language learning strategies use before and after they moved from mainland China to Britain. The analyses showed that some learners had been acquiring new strategies in language learning after studying abroad.

To sum up, it is still difficult to obtain completely satisfied reports about the positive effects of studying abroad for learners worldwide. In addition, further research needs to be conducted to investigate the effects of learning abroad, particularly on reading proficiency and strategy use. Moreover, to our knowledge, apart from Pérez-Vidal's (2014) study, far too little attention has been paid to transnational comparison studies in learning abroad.

Thus, in light of these gaps, the present study formulated two research questions:

1. Compared to domestic contexts, do the study abroad experiences account for the reading proficiency and strategy use achievements of the Chinese undergraduates majoring in Spanish?
2. Do Chinese undergraduates majoring in Spanish who studied in different Spanish-speaking countries differ in terms of reading proficiency and strategy use?

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Reading proficiency as a componential concept

Is variable the number and the nature of the components of reading proficiency that have been theorized? Hoover and Gough (1990), Carver (1992), Rost (1993), Kintsch and Rawson (2005), Meneghetti et al. (2006) and Alderson et al. (2015) claimed that reading consists of two components. According to different scholars, the two parts involved are designated such as decoding and comprehension, microskill and macroskill, etc.

Other studies found that reading is a multidimensional construct. For example, Davies (1968) identified eight kinds of reading related skills. Anderson et al. (1991) pointed out that reading skills can be divided into five types, which are respectively supervising, supporting, paraphrasing, establishing coherence and test-taking. According to Grabe (1991), the reading process can be divided into five knowledge and skill areas: automatic recognition skills, vocabulary and structure knowledge, formal discourse structure knowledge, content and background knowledge, synthesis and evaluation skills, metacognitive knowledge and skills monitoring. Other researchers who contended the multidimensional view include: Spearritt (1972), Lunzer et al. (1979), Nevo (1989), Lumley (1993), Alderson (2000), Weir et al. (2000), etc. On the basis of the existing literature, in order to better adapt to the related language proficiency test settings in this study, we hypothesized that reading is a multidimensional construct in test contexts.

### 2.2. Metacognitive and cognitive strategy use in testing situation

Following established theories of language learning strategy taxonomy of O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Paris and Winograd (1990) and Wenden (1998), the metacognitive strategy involved those with executive function, such as planning, evaluating, monitoring. And cognitive strategy refers to the strategies which are more related to the manipulation of information in specific tasks, such as making inference, summarizing, memorizing, etc. However, researchers have not come to a consensus on the classification of metacognitive and cognitive strategy use in test contexts. Song and Cheng (2006) found that the test takers used evaluating, monitoring and assessing as metacognitive strategies. Phakiti (2003) defined two types of cognitive strategies such as comprehending and retrieval, and two types of metacognitive strategies as planning and monitoring; his later study (2008) concluded that metacognitive strategies are divided as planning, monitoring and evaluating. Zhang et al. (2014) claimed that four types of cognitive strategy use are involved, such as initial reading, identifying important information, integrating and inference making.

Taken together, most of the previous studies supported that the metacognitive strategies include planning, monitoring and evaluating. Although researchers have not come to a consensus on the detailed classification of cognitive strategy use, the empirical study conducted by Phakiti (2003) provided convincing statistical evidence of a dual classification of retrieval

and comprehending. On the basis of this framework, we hypothesized that the metacognitive strategies include planning, evaluating, monitoring, and the cognitive strategies are divided into retrieval and comprehending.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Instrumentation

We used two instruments in the current study: the EEE's (*Examen de Especialidad Española* in Spanish) reading section and a metacognitive and cognitive strategy questionnaire.

**EEE's reading section.** The EEE test is a nationwide, large-scale, high-stake, standardized Spanish language proficiency test administered in China targeted at all of the university undergraduates majoring in Spanish Language and Literature. It was developed by the National Advisory Committee for Foreign Language Teaching (NACFLT) on behalf of the Higher Education Department, Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China.

The purpose is to measure Spanish language proficiency of Chinese university undergraduates majoring in Spanish Language and Literature and to examine whether these students meet the required levels of Spanish language abilities as specified in the National College Spanish Teaching Syllabus for Spanish Majors (NACFLT, 2000). In light of the syllabus, the program consists of the foundation stage (the first and second year) and the advanced stage (the third and fourth year), therefore the test developers divide the test into EEE level 4 and EEE level 8, assessing correspondingly the Spanish language proficiency at the end of these two stages. The EEE level 4 was formed in 1999 following the publication of the first national teaching syllabus for Spanish majors for the foundation stage in 1998. EEE level 8 was officially launched in 2004 after the publication of the national syllabus for the advanced stage.

The first undergraduate Spanish major was established in 1952. The number of relevant institutions has been developed rapidly over the past decades to 60 in 2015. The similar growth pattern can be identified for the number of Spanish major undergraduates, which increased to 14,000 in 2015 (Zheng & Liu, 2015). In 2015, around 4,327 students took EEE level 4 and EEE level 8 was administered to about 2,049 students. After years of development, the EEE has grown into the predominant Spanish language proficiency test in China.

The current EEE aims at testing variety of knowledge and skills, ranging from listening, reading, writing, translation, language knowledge and general knowledge. In the current study we adopted the EEE level 8's version of 2016. We conducted analysis to examine the validity and reliability evidences. The results demonstrated that the coefficient of internal consistency is 0.912, the test-retest reliability is 0.903, and the criterion related validity is 0.922. Validity evidences were also found in verbal protocol study for test takers.

The reading section adopted in this study comprises 20 items: 3 items to measure recognizing and integrating syntactic and logic elements, 3 items of paraphrasing implicit information, 3 for scanning and skimming for main ideas and details, 3 for deducing, 3 for summarizing major ideas and 5 for integrative skills (see examples in the appendix). The test method is four-option multiple choice questions and the total score is 20 points. Before performing the analyses, to validate the reading section, exploratory factor analysis was also conducted at item level and 6 subscales were generated, accounting for 41.86% of the total variance.

**Metacognitive and cognitive strategy questionnaire.** The current study employed a Zhang, Goh and Kunnan's (2014) questionnaire with an adopted 5-point Likert-scale: 1 (never), 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4 (often), 5 (always). It was pilot tested on 40 undergraduate students and then revised based on the results. The reliability coefficient was reported to be 0.939.

The quantitative data were analyzed by using SPSS 17.0. We conducted Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test for sampling adequacy assumption testing and the results (KMO = 0.96, Bartlett's test  $\leq .001$ ) showed adequacy of submit all the items to an exploratory factor analysis. A five-factor solution was found to classify the potential subscales, which contributed to 48.25% of the variance:

**TABLE 1**

Subscales of strategy use questionnaire

STRATEGY USE	NO. OF ITEMS	ITEMS USED	RELIABILITY
Planning	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	0.77
Evaluating	5	6, 7, 8, 9, 18	0.76
Monitoring	10	10, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24	0.84
Retrieval	5	11, 12, 13, 14, 25	0.72
Comprehension	13	26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38	0.90
Total	38		0.94

The reliability displayed in table 1 showed satisfactory consistency.

### 3.2. Subjects

Data from all the test takers of nationwide EEE level 8 in 2016 were used for the current study. Among these individuals, 1,934 provided all the information of the questionnaire; thus, in order to generalize the findings, they constituted the study sample. The following data reflects the test takers' natural state: 97.3% of the test takers reported that they have spent four years studying Spanish as major and 2.7% of them began to study Spanish in high school. Regarding the gender, 80.9% of them are female, and 19.1% are male. In terms of host countries of the

study-abroad program, all of the participants chose the programs on their own will. 41.5% of them have ever studied in Spanish-speaking countries. In particular, 32.4% of these students have studied in Spain, 4% in Mexico and 5.1% in other countries. Regarding the amount of time they spent in host countries, 22% of them have studied 9-12 months upon test taking, 10% have studied 6-9 months, 6.9% have studied 3-6 months and 1.9%, 1-3 months. There was no significant linear relationship between the length of study abroad and language proficiency test scores.

These test takers were first classified into two groups: Group AT comprised 1,131 students who had never studied in Spanish-speaking countries. Group SA is consisted of 803 test takers who had been studying in Spanish-speaking countries at least a month but no more than a year. According to the results of a T test, there was no significant difference of reading score of EEE level 4 test (SA's mean is 18.63, AT's mean is 20.31,  $p = 0.06$ ) between the two groups, which showed that the students' reading proficiency is not significantly different before studying abroad in the advanced stage.

Turning to the second research question, the researcher classified the test takers into 3 subgroups with regard to the host countries, namely ES (Spain), MX (Mexico) and OC (other countries), which comprised respectively 627, 77 and 99 students, whose reading score of EEE level 4 test (ES's mean is 18.41, MX's mean is 18.7, OC's mean is 19.96,  $p = 0.75$ ) are not significantly different.

## 4. Findings

**Research question 1.** With the aim of answering the first research question about differences in reading proficiency between group AT and SA, independent T tests were employed and the results were showed in table 2.

**TABLE 2**

Means and standard deviations for reading section scores

	GROUP AT		GROUP SA		T	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Reading	11.12	4.74	14.21	5.19	-13.56	0.00*

\*Significance is at the 0.05 level.

Learners of group AT scored lower points of reading section than students of group SA. The SA test takers scored 3.09 points higher than the AT learners. According to Cohen (1988), the comparison provides a medium-large effect size value (Cohen's  $d = 0.62$ ,  $r^2 = 0.30$ ). The results showed that the differences were significant.

Differences were also found in 6 subscales between both groups. The results found are presented in table 3.

**TABLE 3**

Means and standard deviations for reading subsection scores

	GROUP AT		GROUP SA		T	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Recognizing and integrating	1.91	1.34	2.40	1.42	-7.49	0.00*
Paraphrasing	1.22	1.20	1.53	1.30	-5.40	0.00*
Skimming and scanning	1.70	1.31	2.18	1.28	-8.03	0.00*
Deducing	1.72	1.31	2.14	1.39	-6.77	0.00*
Summarizing	1.79	1.22	2.12	1.26	-5.62	0.00*
Integrative skills	2.78	4.74	3.84	5.19	-13.36	0.00*

\*Significance is at the 0.05 level.

In light of Cohen's (1988) scale, the reading subsections provides small-medium effect size value: recognizing and integrating ( $d = 0.35$ ,  $r^2 = 0.17$ ), paraphrasing ( $d = 0.25$ ,  $r^2 = 0.12$ ), skimming and scanning ( $d = 0.37$ ,  $r^2 = 0.18$ ), deducing ( $d = 0.31$ ,  $r^2 = 0.15$ ), summarizing ( $d = 0.26$ ,  $r^2 = 0.13$ ), integrative skills ( $d = 0.21$ ,  $r^2 = 0.1$ ). The largest effects are found in recognizing and integrating, skimming and scanning subsections.

In regard to strategy use, the data in the following table reveal that the study-abroad experience had a significant effect. The SA test takers reported more use of strategy in comparison with the AT group. In addition, the standard deviation reveals that the SA group was more homogeneous in their use of strategy than AT group.

**TABLE 4**

Means and standard deviations for total score of strategy use

	GROUP AT		GROUP SA		T	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Overall strategy use	149.06	18.69	151.51	17.69	-2.94	0.00*

\*Significance is at the 0.05 level.

Cohen's  $d$  for this T test is 0.13, and  $r^2$  is 0.06, which means the effect size value is very low. Overall, that the study-abroad experiences did not affect the test takers differently in these measures of strategy use.

To understand more about the types of strategy use, we performed another T test, the results in table 5 indicate that the SA group relied more on three types of metacognitive strategy, including monitoring, evaluating and planning strategy use. The SA group also used significantly more comprehending strategies belonging to cognitive dimension. However, Cohen's  $d$  and  $r^2$  showed that the effect sizes are pretty small. The results are consistent with the above findings of overall strategy use.

**TABLE 5**

Means and standard deviations for subscale scores of strategy use

	GROUP AT		GROUP SA		T	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Monitoring	41.56	5.46	42.28	4.96	-2.97	0.00*
Evaluating	18.25	3.56	18.67	3.47	-2.57	0.01*
Planning	20.27	3.32	20.76	3.16	-3.27	0.00*
Comprehension	52.71	7.80	53.51	7.32	-2.27	0.02*

\*Significance is at the 0.05 level.

**Research question 2.** The current study used ANOVAs to examine the differences among the three subgroups. The results indicated that the three groups showed significant differences in the overall score of reading section,  $F(2,800) = 6.544$ ,  $p = 0.002$ . Effect size value  $f$  is 0.601. According to Cohen (1988), the effect is very large. The students who had studied in Mexico scored 16.23 points, the learners in Spain scored 13.99, the students with experiences in other countries scored 14 points. In addition, the learners who had stayed in Mexico scored significantly higher than their counterparts in Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries. Cohens'  $d$  are 0.414 and 0.422, which indicate medium-large effect.

We also conducted a triangulated analysis in order to check the consistency of these results. The reading section scores of DELE (*Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera* in Spanish) test also match these of the EEE test. DELE are official titles certifying degrees of competence of Spanish, according to the common European framework of reference for languages (CEFR), granted by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of Spain. The levels of the test takers with different study-abroad experiences also show that the MX group had more percentage of students with higher levels. Among the MX group students who had DELE diploma ( $N = 77$ ), 11.7% had level C1 and 1.3% had level C2. Among the ES group students who had DELE diploma ( $N = 627$ ), 6.2% had level C1 and 0.5% had level C2. Among the OC group students who had DELE diploma ( $N = 99$ ), 7% had level C1 and 2% had level C2. These findings also validated the previous results.

To understand more about the differences in subsection scores, other analyses were performed. The ANOVA analysis determined that the recognizing and integrating subsection

scores differed significantly,  $F(2,800) = 7.23$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . Cohen's  $f = 0.17$  (it means the effect value is small-medium), with the MX group surpassing the ES group mean score. The skimming and scanning subsection and summarizing scores also showed significant differences among the groups, respectively  $F(2,800) = 6.373$ ,  $p = 0.002$ , Cohen's  $f = 0.14$  (the effect size is small-medium),  $F(2,800) = 4.522$ ,  $p = 0.011$ , Cohen's  $f = 0.25$  (which means the effect size is medium), with the MX group surpassing not only the ES group but also the OC group.

Regarding the strategy use, the ANOVA analysis indicated that the metacognitive and cognitive strategy use of these three groups was approximately the same. The significant difference was only found in comprehension process strategy use,  $F(2,800) = 3.83$ ,  $p = 0.02$ , Cohen's  $f = 0.64$  (it means the effect size is very large). The MX group used significantly more strategies than OC group.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

The current study investigated the effects of the study abroad on reading proficiency and strategy use of the undergraduate students majoring in Spanish.

The purpose of the first research question was to examine the similarities and differences between the learners who studied in Spanish-speaking countries and their counterparts at home. The results pointed out that the study-abroad group's overall reading proficiency was significantly higher than the at-home group's, which is consistent with the literature on reading proficiency (Brecht et al., 1993). Additionally, the results also demonstrated that the study-abroad and at-home groups used similar related metacognitive and cognitive strategies, which is not consonant with Lafford's (2004) finding that the learners who study abroad used fewer strategies than their peers at home. The findings in the current study were not expected. It is interesting to note that the results of this research may lead to implications for different kinds of stakeholders.

For the students in domestic contexts, the implications of such findings suggest that emphasis should be placed on the improvement of reading proficiency and skills. In order to enhance them, they should consciously set the corresponding reading tasks in their autonomous learning, especially recognizing and integrating information and skimming and scanning the details, which were demonstrated to be the main achievements of study abroad.

For teachers in the domestic contexts, reading teaching should be carried out in a more diversified way, skills training programs should be implemented in each specialized course.

The education administrators could learn from the curriculum design and institutional practices of study-abroad programs. It is worth considering the effects of reading proficiency and skills as a variable in the evaluation and selection of foreign study programs.

The second research question examined if the students' reading proficiency and skills is related to the Spanish-speaking country where they studied. Significant differences of reading proficiency were found between students who studied in Mexico and those who studied in Spain and other countries.

The students of Mexico appeared to perform relatively better than those of Spain and other countries in terms of the overall proficiency and skills like recognizing and integrating, skimming, scanning and summarizing. Moreover, the results also show statistically significant mean differences on strategy use. The current study provided a new insight into country-specific effect on reading proficiency and strategy use.

The interviews with 10 students who have been in Spain and another 10 who have been in Mexico helped us to know why the students who have been in Mexico had better performance in some of the reading skills. The first reason appears to be that, according to the program, the students in Mexico had approximately 13 hours of classes per week, while the students in Spain had a weekly average of 15 hours. However, the instructional practice was different. In Mexico, the learners were required to read from 120 to 140 pages per week, but in Spain, from 25 to 75, which is less than in Mexico. The larger amount of reading tasks in Mexico put forward higher requirements on the learners' reading speed and fluency, which indirectly enhance the students' recognizing and integrating, skimming, scanning and summarizing skills.

Secondly, formative and summative evaluation yielded the difference of performance in the reading skills. In Spain, after reading, students need to complete tests, participate in the discussion or make presentation in the class. A few courses required review or essay. In Mexico, in addition to the above tasks, the majority of the courses asked the learners to write papers based on the reading content, which aimed to enhance their skills like summarizing main ideas, critically analyzing the content and creating new perspectives. Although grammatical knowledge were never directly taught in the class, the learners must pay attention to the accuracy and authenticity of expressions of their essay writing, which is related to the skill of recognizing and integrating syntactic elements.

Last but not least, the courses chosen in Mexico were related to more disciplines. For instance, it was interesting to find that the interviewees who studied in Spain chose linguistics, literature, art and history. But those in Mexico, in addition to the above courses, also selected politics, international relations and economics, which gave rise to a wider range of reading and a deeper understanding of issues of more research areas.

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## 7. Appendix

Example items of the EEE level 8 reading subtest

Lee el texto y responde a las preguntas.

### Cuando los niños se aburrían

POR CRIS VAQUERO

Recuerdo aquellos veranos en los que salíamos por la puerta a las 12 de la mañana y no volvíamos hasta las 12 de la noche. Tan sólo hacíamos una parada para comer y aguantar estoicamente las dos malditas horas de la digestión, una norma<sup>1A</sup> que se respetaba como si fuese un dogma religioso.

Nuestros padres no nos veían el pelo ni sabían dónde estábamos. ¡Ni falta que les hacía<sup>1B</sup>! Lo único que querían era perdernos de vista durante un rato. Aquello no nos causó ningún complejo infantil ni tuvimos que acudir al psicólogo ni tan siquiera se nos diagnosticó ningún estrés postraumático. Jamás vi a mi padre preocupado un solo segundo por si yo o alguno de mis hermanos nos aburríamos. Ése era nuestro problema.

Las cosas han cambiado mucho en estos últimos 40 años. Si antes estábamos educados bajo un lema grabado a fuego en nuestras mentes "No molestar a los mayores", ahora parece que el *leiv motiv* es justo el contrario: "Molestad a los mayores, si es posible cada cinco minutos".

Los padres nos hemos convertido en responsables de cada minuto de ocio de nuestros hijos y nos hemos transformado en un gran parque temático, obligados a buscar actividades cada media hora. Si el niño se aburre un rato porque se ha cansado de la tableta o de la consola, se extenderá<sup>1C</sup> el pánico, será una auténtica tragedia y la madre recurrirá a los siete grupos de WhatsApp para reclutar a algún amiguito del equipo de fútbol, las clases de ballet o de yoga.

Con este panorama, planificar las vacaciones para que no quede<sup>1-D</sup> ni un minuto libre al azar puede convertirse en una misión imposible. Y, si no, que se lo pregunten a mi compañera Carmen que tiene que organizar un planillo con cuatro hijas, cada una de ellas en una punta diferente del planeta.

Y eso que la gama de campamentos de verano es ahora interminable. Antes, bastaba con apuntar a tu hijo a un campamento deportivo de nivel básico. Pero ahora si tu vástago se limita a jugar al fútbol o al baloncesto en vacaciones ser serrano es ahora interminable. Antes, bastaba con apuntar a tu hijo a un campamento con inmersión en inglés y clases de tenis, pádel, natación, golf, atletismo, patinaje sobre hielo y vóley, no se sentirá realizado. Y si no incorpora la programación o la robótica, tu hijo será un fracasado. Por supuesto, si no lo puedes completar con una cuidadora bilingüe que hable al niño en inglés o alemán aunque tenga sólo dos meses de vida, tu hijo nunca estará entre los elegidos ni se lo rifarán en las mejores universidades ni tan siquiera tendrá un puesto de trabajo nada más terminar la carrera.

La feroz competitividad que se ha instalado entre los padres ya no sólo afecta a los estudios en el colegio, sino también a las actividades extraescolares y veraniegas en una carrera eterna por optimizar el tiempo y ser más y más productivos.

Todavía me acuerdo de cuando el verano era sinónimo de descanso y el aburrimiento, una sana y casi obligatoria ocupación.

1. ¿Cuál de las siguientes afirmaciones es correcta?
  - A. La secuencia una norma se refiere a: la digestión.
  - B. El sujeto de hacía es: falta.
  - C. El sujeto de se extenderá es: el pánico.
  - D. El sujeto de quede es: el niño.
  
2. ¿Cómo se interpreta la frase “Aquello no nos causó ningún complejo infantil ni tuvimos que acudir al psicólogo ni tan siquiera se nos diagnosticó ningún estrés postraumático.”?
  - A. El hecho de que los padres se preocuparan poco por nosotros supuso una sombra en nuestra infancia. Dicho trauma ni se diagnosticó ni se curó.
  - B. Nuestra vida infantil no fue nada complicada. La vida sencilla y relajada fue la garantía de la mente sana y despejada.
  - C. De niño vivíamos a rienda suelta y la falta de preocupación por parte de los padres nos permitió crecer sanamente.
  - D. Les entraba a los padres una pereza de llevar a los niños al médico, lo cual nos ahorró los inevitables nervios.

3. Según el texto, los padres quieren que sus hijos se carguen las pilas en los campamentos de verano tanto para el siguiente curso como para el futuro mediante todo tipo de clases menos las de \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. música
  - B. deportes
  - C. lenguas
  - D. informática
  
4. ¿Qué tipo de madre será Carmen según el contexto?
  - A. Una madre despreocupada cuyas cuatro hijas van a la deriva.
  - B. Una madre hiperprotectora que suele cortar las alas a sus hijas.
  - C. Una madre eficiente para quien nunca existe ninguna misión imposible.
  - D. Una madre agotada que se las arregla para ofrecer lo mejor a sus hijas.
  
5. ¿Qué intenta demostrar el autor en este texto?
  - A. En general, el amor resulta ser una vanidad o un fraude.
  - B. Una vida exitosa no significa una vida feliz.
  - C. Los padres de hoy se preocupan de ampliar el horizonte de los hijos.
  - D. El peso de la vida nos hunde a todos como una losa.