

The challenges and opportunities of foreign-born professors and their students

(science paper)

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Abstract: *The focus of this article is the challenges and opportunities that foreign-born professors at U.S. universities face along with their students who also encounter challenges and opportunities. A survey that was done by the author of this article is included as well. The article concludes with recommendations for foreign-born professors.*

Keywords: *foreign-born professors at U.S. universities, students of foreign-born professors, challenges, opportunities*

1 Introduction

According to the 2020 Open Doors report, there were 123, 508 international scholars in the USA during the 2019–2020 academic year. Compared to the prior academic year (2018–2019) there is a 9,6% decrease in the number of international scholars. There are probably a couple of reasons that could explain this reality (e.g., drastic changes in foreign policies under the Trump administration) but it is not the intent of this article to cover that.

“Foreign-born faculty – all faculty members who were not born in the United States and earned their undergraduate or graduate degree or both in their home country – are an invaluable asset to U.S. higher education institutions” (Goodroad, 2002, p. 20). There are many benefits that foreign-born professors bring to U.S. universities. According to O’Hara (2009, p. 41), *“U.S. institutions, research programs, scholars and students benefit significantly from the perspectives, research methods and skills visiting scholars bring”*. According to Kim, Wolf-Wendel, Twombly (2011) international faculties tend to be more productive than their local counterparts. Kim, Twombly, Wendel (2012) talk about the importance of defining what constitutes international faculty. Many studies define them by place of birth (foreign – born) or by citizenship

(non-U.S. citizens). These definitions can bring some issues such as underestimating or overestimating such faculty members which affect studies' results. For instance, studies that take citizenship as a factor do not include faculty members that were born abroad and completed their studies abroad, but who eventually became U.S. citizens. The author of this article conducted a survey and used the term foreign-born professors. The survey will take place later in this article. The term foreign-born professors, is used by the author of this article, in case of citation of other sources, the original terms are kept.

2 Literature review

Many studies have been done on the topic of international faculty and their students; some of which focus on the challenges that international faculty face (e.g., Hutchinson et al., 2018; Omiteru et al, 2018) while others focus on students' perceptions of international faculty solely (e.g., Clay, 2020). *"Few studies have examined issues from both the students' and instructors' perspectives"* (e.g. Alberts, 2008). This article includes both the challenges and opportunities of foreign-born professors and their students.

It is clear that foreign-born professors face challenges when teaching at U.S. universities. As Stigler and Hiebert (1999) pointed out, teaching is a cultural activity. Our cultural background influences our teaching style, teaching strategies, etc. Hutchinson, et al., (2018) conducted a survey of expected versus actual pedagogical challenges experienced by international faculty. The purpose of the study was to compare what international faculty members expected before arriving at their respective institutions and what challenges they actually ended up experiencing during their first three years of working at U.S. institutions. The most frequent issues that international faculty expected to face were ease of scholar-student communication, proficiency of spoken English, and cultural differences. *"These three issues were also the most frequently reported pedagogical issues that they experienced, along with a sense of being unprepared for different institutional strategies that they did not anticipate"* (Hutchinson, et al., 2018, p. 56). Support for different instructional methods was the most frequently reported support. Specifically, international professors needed support with teaching (lectures vs. seminars), guidance in using peer observation in teaching, and a broad overview of academic expectations in the U.S. universities (grading system, assessments, etc.). Cultural background influences how people see the world, how they learn, how they are evaluated, etc. It is clear that professors coming from traditionalist societies (e.g., Europe, China) will more likely use lectures and therefore need assistance with adaptation to western pedagogical teaching styles (in *ibid*).

Alberts (2008) looked at both the challenges of foreign-born instructors and the students' challenges. Professors' foreign accents were the biggest issues for students

in this study. Over 70% of students reported that the accent of their foreign-born professors made understanding harder at the beginning, but to their surprise they ended up adjusting and understanding their professors. It is not actually the accent by itself that has a negative impact on the learning experience, but the students' attitudes towards the accent. On the other hand, some students took the professor's foreign accent as a learning experience. Some students reported that professors' vocabulary was not complex enough to explain certain topics clearly. Also, how the foreign-born instructor handled the language issues influenced the students' attitudes toward the accent. Many students appreciated having PowerPoint presentations along with the lecture so they could have a visual aid to offset the presence of the accent. The foreign-born instructors reported language as an issue as well. However, they did not mention accent as excessively as the students did, instead they mentioned the ability/decreased ability to express themselves in a way they wanted. Also, they reported that this issue was only temporary. Furthermore over 10% of students reported that foreign-born professors have different teaching styles and interact with them differently. For some students this was an advantage and for others a disadvantage. The reason for using a different teaching style is probably influenced by receiving a degree in a different country than the U.S. The foreign-born faculty mentioned different teaching styles much more frequently. For instance, they were not accustomed to multiple-choice questions, and they would rather teach their students critical thinking. Many foreign-born professors were frustrated about students' behaviors (being dressed appropriately, feeling entitled to receive a good grade, etc.). It is clear that foreign-born instructors have to adjust to teaching styles in the U.S. because they teach in the U.S. Some students found foreignness as a disadvantage but many found it as an advantage. Many students reported that it was important to get different perspectives on certain topics, and they enjoyed the unique viewpoints that foreign-born professors brought to the classroom discussion. The majority of professors reported that they felt uncomfortable about criticizing the United States. Some of them stayed away from potentially problematic topics or presented it in a neutral way (in *ibid*).

Collins (2008) conducted surveys that focused on challenges that foreign-born faculty and their students face. The faculty members reported three major challenges: obtaining the 'Green Card', addressing cultural differences, and coping with loneliness. Getting the legal document(s) including employment rights is fundamental to getting hired. Every case is different, but obtaining a permanent resident card can be very difficult and expensive. Faculty reported stress related to cultural differences. They came to the U.S. with different worldviews, religious beliefs, familial relationships, expectations and social and cultural conventions. Those cultural differences in educational practices can lead to misunderstanding between faculty members and students. More than half of faculty members who completed this survey, did not cope well with loneliness. They reported feelings of isolation, loss of relating

to friends, family and past lifestyle. Students who completed this survey in general appreciated having a foreign-born professor and listed more positive aspects than negative. Higher education is definitely benefiting from having foreign-born faculty members, but these faculty members are missing support from their departmental chairs, international offices and administration. Mentoring and facilitating networking for foreign-born faculty members could be a solution.

Alsulami and Sherwood (2020) conducted a multi-country scoping review about the experience of culturally diverse faculty in academic environments. Based on this review faculty members did not feel they got enough support in ways that promote their professional development. *“Intercultural communication challenges and tensions existed among faculty members from different cultural backgrounds in current work environments. These challenges have negatively impacted job satisfaction levels, which in turn, have led some faculty members to leave their school”* (Alsulami and Sherwood, 2020, p. 9). Most of the studies from this review concluded that faculty diversity can benefit all faculty members, administrators, and students if implementing a number of evidence-based strategies to assure all are treated equally, respectfully, and hospitably.

Omiteru, Martinez, Tsemunhu and Asola (2018) conducted a study about the experiences of international faculty in the southern part of the U.S. where authors of this article work. This study focused on *“international faculty’s perceptions and examined both their positive and negative experiences to help explain why the rural Southeast might be a uniquely challenging environment for them”* (in *ibid*, p. 2). There were four themes: perceptions about administrators, perceptions about their communities, perceptions about their colleagues and co-workers, and finally perceptions about students they teach. The survey was available either face-to-face or online. *“All the international faculty interviewed had positive and negative experiences, not only with colleagues, staff, and students, but also with top administrators. From the online survey, almost 48% of international faculty described their experiences as positive, and almost 16% of international faculty reported their experiences as negative, and almost 37% claimed they had both positive and negative experiences since working in the South”* (in *ibid*, p. 7). Participants dealt with prejudice from colleagues and administrators. Some participants mentioned that students were too laid-back and did not prioritize school, course workload. Most faculty perceived students as pleasant and respectful. The international faculty felt pressure in some aspects of their work. They had to adapt to their new environment and work twice as hard as their colleagues. International faculty bring their unique diversity, but they must adapt, learn, and adjust to the culture of their new surroundings (in *ibid*). We have to take into account that American students pay for their education, either with their parents’ money, scholarship or bank loan. It is clear that they expect much more from their professors, more than students in other countries (Gahungu, 2011).

Very interesting contribution to this topic was brought by Williams and Case (2015). Their article describes the use of videotaping during teaching classes by international teaching assistants. First, initial interviews were conducted where the international teaching assistants were asked about their learning experiences to teach in the U.S. After that each participant was recorded when teaching his/her class. *"The second interview focuses on clarifying information from the first interview and events from the observations. As the participants watched the video, the interviewer used 'stopping points' to pause the tape and elicit further descriptions or clarifications about what was happening in the video"* (Williams, Case, 2015, p. 438). Each question was designed either to get more information from the instructor or to help the instructor notice different elements of his/her teaching. For many instructors the observations were a great source of gaining self-awareness of how they appeared in the classroom. During the observations the participants were able to notice an event that could have stayed unnoticed during their teaching. *"Reviewing an incident allowed the international teaching assistant to move from recount to analysis through focusing more on interpreting student behavior because they already knew their own mindset as the teacher"* (Williams, Case, 2015, p. 439). Authors of this study recommend using videotapes as a basis for teaching training for international teaching instructors. The international teaching instructor should watch and discuss his/her tape with a mentor so he/she is trained to recognize noticing.

The relationship between students and their foreign-born professors could be another issue that both parties can face. Wang (2000) conducted a study about American students' rapport with their foreign-born non-native-speaker college instructors. She interviewed forty-nine university students who had experience with foreign-born professors. All students believed that verbal and nonverbal behaviors in and outside of the classroom were important because they both contributed to the whole picture of the faculty member. It is important that foreign-born faculty members pay attention to their attitudes and behaviors in and outside of the classroom if they want to maintain good rapport with their students. *"In order to be competent and effective, it is crucial for these faculty members to acquire a deep understanding of the American culture with which they are then able to compare and contrast their own cultures with that of their students"* (Wang, 2000, p. 42). Intercultural sharing will increase mutual understanding between the instructor and his/her students and students will gain something compensatory from their foreign-born instructors. Goodroad (2020) concluded her study about foreign-born faculty at two-year U.S. institutions with similar results. *"Although the majority of participants in the study stated they experienced socialization barriers, all participants were bridging cultural gaps through creating awareness about the differences in value systems and cultural norms between students' and instructors' home cultures"* (Goodroad, 2020, p. 49).

The author of this article has been teaching at U.S. universities since August 2018, first psychology and later communication disorders. Before that, she was an assistant professor at Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic where she taught communication disorders. Also, she used to work as a certified speech-language pathologist and a psychologist at a private clinic in the Czech Republic. Having experiences of teaching at European and American universities gives her a unique opportunity to compare both educational systems. She had to adjust in many ways because the U.S. style of teaching is very different compared to European style of teaching.

This article mentions some of the challenges and opportunities that she has faced when teaching at U.S. opportunities:

- **Language issues:** accent could be an issue when teaching as a foreign-born faculty. She does not feel that her accent is a problem for her students, but she is aware that maybe at the beginning of the semester before her students get used to it, they may have a difficult time understanding every word. The author suggests that the reason her accent may not be a big issue in her classrooms is because her students' major is communication disorders and they have to be trained for working with clients from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. She recognizes that at the beginning of her teaching career in the USA, she struggled with vocabulary sufficiency and fluency of spoken English, but it was temporary.
- **Teaching style:** the author of this article had to definitely change her teaching style. In the USA, students have to be engaged. They like discussion and engaging in different activities. Solely lecturing as the sage on the stage is not efficient. Also, the U.S. grading style is different. During the entire semester, students are expected to complete a series of graded assignments that help the students learn and have more chances to positively affect the final grade. Also, teacher and course expectations have to be made clear from the beginning of the semester – grading system, grading rubrics for each assignment. A syllabus is extremely important! Multiple-choice tests are very common at U.S. universities. This was something new that the author of this article had to learn and got used to quickly. Creating tests with precise wording and question clarity is extremely important and it could be problematic for a foreign-born faculty professor. At the beginning of her career, this part was challenging for her.
- **Communication and interaction with students:** the professor – student relationships are very different in the USA. It is more open and more personal. Professors have to be approachable and willing to help their students. Even when they both meet outside of the classroom, openness and kindness is expected. It was not difficult for the author of this article to adjust to this style of interacting with students. The author does admit that some students are sometimes too friendly and do not seem to be aware of the teacher-student boundaries. Also, sometimes

students can be too laid-back and dress inappropriately. In Europe, it is expected that when the professor or a student enters a classroom, they greet each other. This is not a norm in the USA, and it was problematic for the author of this article to accept the lack of an acknowledgement of others when entering the classroom.

- **Communication and interactions with colleagues, administrators:** culture plays a big role when communicating with others. In this case the relationships are more personal, but still respectful. The choice of words plays an important role when communicating with administrators (chair, dean, provost, president). At the beginning of the authors' career, she felt anxious when communicating with administrators, but just like with other challenges, with time, experience, and practice, she was able to overcome it.
- **Requirements of the U.S. institutions:** the requirements are different compared to Czech universities, and it really depends on the U.S. institution, too. At Valdosta State University, teaching is expected to be excellent, the students' evaluations count as well. Research, publishing and service are other requirements that have to be met. Each college has some differences as well.
- **Foreignness:** the author of this article does not feel that coming from a different country is an issue for her and her students. She likes to share her culture, customs, language, and teaching experience with her students which they find interesting and appreciate.

Clay (2020) conducted a study solely about college students' perceptions of instructors whose language is not English. Specifically, the intent of this study was to "*discover any positive or negative beliefs that students may have toward instructors who speak with foreign accents and how those beliefs can influence the students' behaviors in the classroom*" (Clay, 2020, p. 24). Most participants had issues with comprehending the lectures of these instructors, but they did not believe that their instructors are less intelligent and effective than their native-born counterparts. The comprehension issues did not cause most students to drop the class, pay less attention or even skip the class. The author of this article had the same experience. Her students did not drop the class because she was a foreign-born professor. In one of her students' evaluations, one student mentioned that the professor's accent was actually a plus.

The studies above establish that foreign-born professors and their students face some challenges and opportunities. The study that was done by the author of this article focused only on students' challenges and opportunities when having foreign-born professors. The research question was "What challenges and opportunities students of communication disorders face when having foreign-born professors during their undergraduate program?"

3 Foreign-born Professors at Valdosta State University

As mentioned above, the author of this article used to teach communication disorders at Palacky University in Olomouc, and she worked as a certified speech-language pathologist as well. Since August 2018, she has been teaching communication disorders at Valdosta State University. As a foreign-born professor she was always interested in this topic (foreign-born professors and their students). In April and May 2021, she conducted a survey. The survey was created for the authors' students – seniors who were majoring in communication disorders at Valdosta State University (VSU). VSU is located in southern Georgia, USA. In the last academic year, approximately 12,500 students studied at VSU.

4 Research method

Participants could choose an online or a paper version of the survey. All students ($N = 45$) received an email at the beginning of April 2021 informing them about this survey, the format, etc. The survey was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human research participants. This survey contained 26 questions. In total 45 students were asked to complete the survey and 24 students completed it ($N = 45$, $n1 = 24$). This represents a 53% response rate.

4.1 Results of the survey

Question 1: What is your age?

- **20 years** ($N = 24$, $n1 = 1$)
- **21 years** ($N = 24$, $n2 = 7$)
- **22 years** ($N = 24$, $n3 = 14$)
- **25 years** ($N = 24$, $n4 = 1$)
- **30 years** ($N = 24$, $n5 = 1$)

The majority of students' age was 22.

Question 2: What is your gender?

- **Male:** $N = 24$, $n1 = 1$
- **Female:** $N = 24$, $n2 = 23$

As was expected, females dominated (twenty-three students were females).

Question 3: Were you born in the USA?

- **Yes:** $N = 24$, $n1 = 24$

All participants were born in the USA. This question was asked because VSU has a good number of students who were born outside of the USA, and this reality could

definitely influence their experience with different cultures (open minded versus close minded, etc.).

Question 4: If you were not born in the USA, where were you born?
All students were born in the USA.

Question 5: Were your parents born in the USA?

- **Yes:** $N = 24$, $n1 = 23$
- **No:** $N = 24$, $n2 = 1$

In one case, student's parents were not born in the USA. We think that having parents who were born overseas can affect the exposure to different cultures and openness to different cultures.

Question 6: If your parents were not born in the USA, where were they born?

- **Mexico:** $N = 24$, $n1 = 1$

Parents of one participant were born in Mexico. This result was not surprising because if VSU students' parents were not born in the USA, usually they were born in South or Central America.

Question 7: Do your parents speak other language(s) than English?

- **Yes:** $N = 24$, $n1 = 2$
- **No:** $N = 24$, $n2 = 22$

Two participants mentioned that their parents speak other language(s) than English. We believe that exposure to different languages is beneficial and it can be accompanied with exposure to different cultures as well.

Question 8: If your parents speak another language(s) than English, what language(s) do they speak?

- **Spanish:** $N = 24$, $n1 = 1$
- **No answer:** $N = 24$, $n2 = 1$

One student reported Spanish, in one case there was no answer.

Question 9: Do you speak other language(s) than English?

- **Yes:** $N = 24$, $n1 = 1$
- **No:** $N = 24$, $n2 = 23$

The majority of participants do not speak any other language than English, only one student speaks another language other than English.

Question 10: If you speak other language(s) than English, what is/are the languages you speak?

- **Spanish:** $N = 24, n1 = 1$

One student speaks Spanish in addition to English. Being a bilingual speech-language pathologist is very beneficial. In this case, one student speaks Spanish and in some US states it means a big advantage, including Georgia.

Question 11: Have you had a foreign professor at VSU (not in your major)?

- **Yes:** $N = 24, n1 = 21$
- **No:** $N = 24, n2 = 3$

The majority of participants (twenty-one) reported that they had a foreign professor at VSU (outside of their major). The results are not very surprising because VSU is quite diverse in terms of foreign faculty.

Question 12: What was his/her gender?

- **Female:** $N = 21, n1 = 7$
- **Male:** $N = 21, n2 = 12$
- **Both:** $N = 21, n3 = 2$

The majority of students' foreign professors were males (twelve), only seven students reported that their professors were females (seven) and two students reported that they had both, males and females.

Question 13: What was his/her age? Approximately.

- **30–40 years old:** $N = 21, n1 = 2$
- **41–50 years old:** $N = 21, n2 = 8$
- **51–60 years old:** $N = 21, n3 = 9$
- **61 years old and older:** $N = 21, n4 = 4$

In total, nine students reported that their foreign professors' age was between 51 and 61 years.

Question 14: What was his/her country of origin?

- **India:** $N = 21, n1 = 4$
- **Taiwan:** $N = 21, n2 = 4$
- **Asia:** $N = 21, n3 = 4$
- **Unsure:** $N = 21, n4 = 3$
- **China:** $N = 21, n5 = 2$
- **Nigeria:** $N = 21, n6 = 1$
- **Russia:** $N = 21, n7 = 1$
- **Turkey:** $N = 21, n8 = 1$
- **Lebanon:** $N = 21, n9 = 1$

- **Dominican Republic:** $N = 21, n_{10} = 1$
- **Greece:** $N = 21, n_{11} = 1$

The majority foreign professor's countries of origin were India, Taiwan, and Asia. We have decided to keep all the categories that students mentioned even though some countries (e. g. China and Taiwan) are Asian countries.

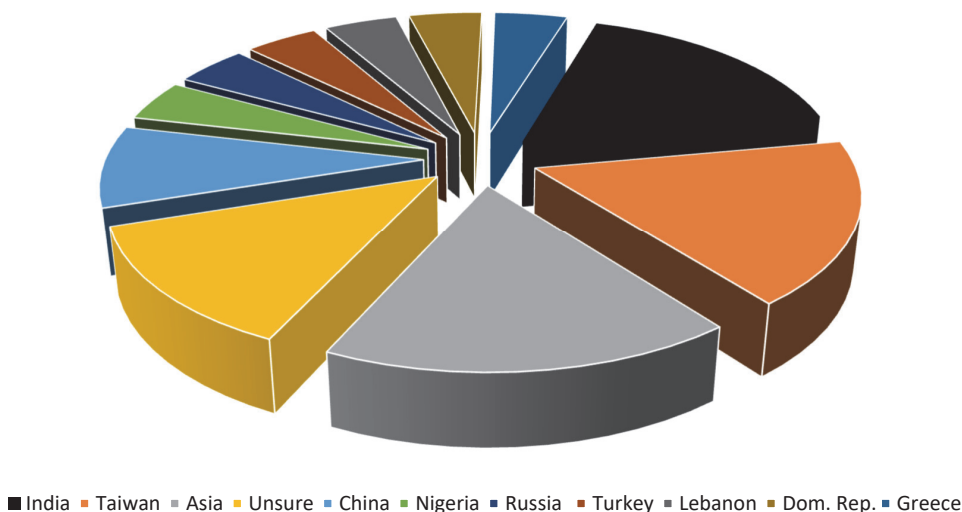


Chart 1: *Countries of origin*

Question 15: In your opinion what was the fluency level of spoken English of this professor?

Non fluent in English 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Excellent fluency in English

- **Level 1:** $N = 21, n_1 = 1$
- **Level 3:** $N = 21, n_2 = 3$
- **Level 4:** $N = 21, n_3 = 2$
- **Level 5:** $N = 21, n_4 = 2$
- **Level 6:** $N = 21, n_5 = 3$
- **Level 7:** $N = 21, n_6 = 4$
- **Level 8:** $N = 21, n_7 = 3$
- **Level 9:** $N = 21, n_8 = 1$
- **Level 10:** $N = 21, n_9 = 4$

Four students reported that the fluency level of spoken English of their foreign professors was 7 out of 10 and another four students reported level 10 out of 10. It is a very high level of fluency of spoken English which is expected from a college professor.

Question 16: Was fluency a positive or negative factor of your learning experience with this professor?

- **Positive:** $N = 21, n1 = 12$

- **Negative:** $N = 21, n2 = 9$

Twelve students out of twenty-one reported that their experience with foreign professors was positive.

Question 17: List positive factors related to the international background of this faculty member if any:

- *Very kind & cooperative.*
- *Willing to help with anything.*
- *Empathetic.*
- *Made sure class understood directions.*
- *Wrote directions.*
- *Always asked for class feedback.*
- *Perspective on education from other cultures, perspectives on parenting from a different culture.*
- *Bringing different perspective.*
- *Knowledge about other cultures.*
- *I learned about a different culture.*
- *Sharing his/her experience coming from a different culture Did projects that related to her culture.*
- *Open to new ideas, accepting non-discriminatory.*

There are some participants' comments about positive factors related to their foreign professors. Many students reported that their professors not only brought different perspectives to the class content, but they were also helpful, open minded, empathetic, etc.

Question 18: List negative factors related to the international background of this faculty member if any:

- *Sometimes trying to understand certain terms was difficult.*
- *Sometimes the accent was hard.*
- *Communication barriers.*
- *It was difficult to understand certain words.*
- *He spoke very fast so if you were not paying attention you could miss what he said.*
- *Zero tolerance for being unprepared (unless death situations).*
- *Hard to hear and understand as a hard of hearing individual.*
- *Very quick speech, difficulty understanding social cues.*
- *Difficult to understand, sometimes problems with comprehension, extremely low speech volume.*

- *Difficult to understand.*
- *Difficult to understand sometimes. Sometimes did not consider other backgrounds besides hers.*
- *Hard to understand, instructions were not clear.*
- *She could not spell well – causing some confusion and misinformation. She did not speak well and did not understand well English. She looked down on American parenting.*
- *Broken English affected the assignments. The answers would be wrong due to misunderstanding. It was hard to communicate with her.*
- *We could not understand and we did very poorly in this class because of this.*
- *Hard to understand at times. Took longer to explain topics.*
- *Heavy accent.*

Many comments were related to pronunciation, accent and vocabulary usage. Students had issues with understanding some words, terms due to these issues.

Question 19: Have you had a foreign professor at VSU in your major (Communication Disorders)?

- **Yes:** $N = 24$, $n1 = 23$
- **No:** $N = 24$, $n2 = 1$

Twenty-three students reported that they had foreign professors when taking their classes in the major of communication disorders.

Question 20: In your opinion what was the fluency level of spoken English of this professor?

Non fluent in English 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Excellent fluency in English

- **Level 6:** $N = 23$, $n1 = 1$
- **Level 7:** $N = 23$, $n2 = 2$
- **Level 8:** $N = 23$, $n3 = 8$
- **Level 9:** $N = 23$, $n4 = 6$
- **Level 10:** $N = 23$, $n5 = 6$

The majority of participants (eight) reported that the professor's fluency level of spoken English was 8 out of 10. Level eight is a really high level and again it is expected from a college professor to be fluent in English when teaching in the USA.

Question 21: Was fluency a positive or a negative factor of your learning experience with this professor?

- **Positive:** $N=23$, $n1= 21$
- **Negative:** $N=23$, $n2 = 2$

Twenty-one students reported that fluency was a positive factor of their learning experience with this foreign professor. We believe students are aware of the reality

that they will be working with clients who speak other languages than English and having a professor with an accent could be actually helpful for them.

Question 22: List positive factors related to the international background of this faculty member if any:

Shared their experiences about their background and were open to discuss their lives.

- *Made some words easier to pronounce/remember.*
- *The professor is also interested in my culture and I feel easily relatable to her.*
- *Not completely influenced by mainstream American/Southern American culture. Ability to see from diverse viewpoints.*
- *She shared many interesting facts about her culture and how many things in her culture relate to our culture.*
- *Knowledgeable, experienced, gentle teaching style.*
- *Continues to educate us about being culturally competent.*
- *Accepting, invested in learning, took time explaining.*
- *Cultural perspectives in education, parenting and our field, resources beyond the USA.*
- *Learned more about her background, culture. It was cool to hear her experience. She compared her experience from her country and the USA.*

Many participants enjoyed that the foreign-born professor shared his/her experiences, cultural perspectives, was knowledgeable, accepting, etc.

Question 23: List negative factors related to the international background of this faculty member if any.

- *N/A – 11 times.*
- *Some words used by the professors could have been substituted for a word that better expressed their intent.*
- *Test questions/assignments were sometimes difficult to comprehend because of the word uses.*
- *Heavy accent. Rhythm of speech slightly altered.*
- *It was difficult to understand certain words if you could not read their lips.*
- *Cultural differences.*
- *Had to re-ask questions if not understood.*
- *Some communication errors.*
- *As a hard of hearing individual, it was hard to understand at times, especially with the requirement of masks.*
- *If we do not have a PowerPoint to read, sometimes certain words are hard to understand.*
- *Sometimes misspelling or broken English on exams.*

- *Some errors in grammar or word choice.*
- *Made some words easier to pronounce.*

Almost half of the participants (eleven) did not mention any negative factors related to this foreign professor. Some of them mentioned heavy accent, mispronunciation, misspelling and grammar errors or difficulties to comprehend assignments/questions.

Question 24: Do you think having a foreign professor who teaches courses in CSD is beneficial for you?

- **Yes:** $N = 24$, $n1 = 23$
- **No answer:** $N = 24$, $n2 = 1$

Twenty-three students thought that having a foreign professor in their major was beneficial for them.

Question 25: What are the benefits of having a foreign professor in the field of CSD in your opinion?

- *We will have patients with other accents/cultural practices.*
- *Learning more about different cultures helps students to be more culturally responsive. Hearing individuals speak with an accent is always good practice for the future.*
- *They can offer different experiences & perspectives when coming from a different culture & country. Contributes to diversity representation in a field where diversity in ethnicity, gender, and national origin is low.*
- *We need a global perspective on communication disorders. We need to be culturally aware.*
- *Has different experiences/ knowledge. Cultural competence is first hand.*
- *Better knowledge on how to deal with future clients who may be foreign.*
- *Able to hear about differences in other countries. Cultural competence.*
- *Shared knowledge on dealing with clients of different cultures.*
- *Cultural competence.*
- *Language exposure. Resources.*
- *Wide variety of experience. Growing our cultural competence. Adding diversity. Allows us as students to be open-minded.*
- *Able to teach about the CSD in other countries. Real life examples when discussing cultural/dialectical issues. How to communicate appropriately.*
- *Totally new perspective on all we cover.*
- *Alternative experience in practicing.*
- *Help to gain respect for other cultures.*
- *Can answer questions from a different viewpoint.*
- *Prepares us for working with diverse clients.*
- *Allows us to see other cultures and languages.*

- *It is an excellent opportunity to learn more about multicultural perspectives in the field of Communication Sciences and Disorders.*

Participants were aware of the importance of being exposed to different cultures through foreign-born professors because they will probably have clients from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They understand that having a professor with an accent can help them to be better prepared for their future career. Students know that they must be culturally competent when working with their clients and having foreign-born professors can help them reach this goal.

5 Discussion

Having a foreign-born professor as a student can bring some challenges and opportunities to grow. The results of this survey presented results that resonate with results of other studies that were mentioned above. Students reported some challenges, e. g. issues with understanding some terms, accent and vocabulary usage. They appreciated foreign-born professor that included a Power-Point presentation along with the spoken content of the lecture. This way the students could see the words that were pronounced by the professor. Benefits or opportunities to grow when having a foreign-born faculty included being exposed to different cultures, languages, and perspectives in addition to answering questions about practicing speech-language therapy overseas and dealing with clients from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

6 Limitations of this survey

The results of this study are valuable and bring important information, but the study has its limits. First, the number of participants was forty-five. Second, the study was done at one college in the southern part of the USA. Third, the participant pool only contained undergraduate students. We can't generalize the study's results due to these limits.

7 For future research

There are plenty of studies about foreign-born professors at U.S. universities, but there is a lack of research specifically related to foreign-born professors at U.S. universities who teach communication disorders. The USA is a very diverse nation and speech-language pathologists must be culturally competent when providing services to their clients. More studies have to be conducted about this topic and the studies have to be on a larger scale. It is very important to have foreign-born professors in the major of communication disorders because they can enrich their students not only in the regular topics, but specifically about different cultures.

We found the recommendations published by Alberts (2008) for foreign-born professors very helpful. The recommendations are about how to prepare students, adjusting their expectations and using their foreignness.

7.1 Recommendations for foreign-born professors: preparing for students

- Be honest with students. Acknowledge that you have an accent and that you may mispronounce some words.
- Encourage students to raise their hands if they do not understand you.
- Speak slowly.
- When lecturing, have extra notes on the blackboard as a visual aid for the students who may have difficulty adjusting to the accent.
- Assign “language police” – you can assign some students to help you with correcting you or finding words you can’t remember or you do not know.

7.2 Recommendations for foreign-born professors: adjusting expectations

- Get as much information about your institution before you start teaching there. If possible, visit your colleagues’ classes so you get a feeling for how classes are taught in the USA.
- Accept that standards are different than in your home country. Ask your colleagues for samples of syllabi, tests, and different assignments.
- Do not let your students lower your standards. If you need to make some adjustments, do not give up your standards completely.
- Explain your syllabus and your expectations clearly. Your syllabus is your contract between you and your students.
- Create a network with other foreign-born professors to exchange your concerns, ideas, etc. You get support from them as well.

7.3 Recommendations for foreign-born professors: using “foreignness”

- Make your foreignness a resource for your teaching. The majority of students appreciate hearing about different cultures, languages, etc., but do not overdo it.
- You can mention that you want to learn more about the USA and you want them to learn more about your home country.
- You can invite your students to come to your office when they have questions about your home country, culture, language.
- Tell your students that it is fine not to always agree with what was said but respect is very important.

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