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BACHELOR THESIS

The Cultural Impact of Attending All-English Schools for ESL Speakers

Kulturní dopad navštěvování škol s výhradně anglickou výukou na žáky

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis, titled "The Cultural Impact of Attending All-English Schools for ESL Speakers", is my own work. I confirm that I have independently completed it under the supervision of my thesis advisor, using the sources and literature cited in this work. The tool "jamovi" was used for statistical data processing, and "ChatGPT4" was used for data analysis and correction. I also declare that this work has not been used to obtain another or the same degree.

Prague, April 15th, 2024

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the impact of all-English education on English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, focusing on language learning, cognitive development, cultural identity, and educational outcomes. By employing quantitative research methods, this investigation explores the distinctions between language learning and acquisition experienced by ESL learners in immersive environments. The analysis is grounded in reviewing second language acquisition theories and examining the cognitive implications and socio-cultural impacts of learning English as a second language.

The findings, derived from a diverse participant pool, reveal significant shifts in language dominance, indicating a profound effect on cognitive skills and cultural identity among ESL learners. Most participants reported a change in the dominant language of their thoughts and dreams, providing empirical support for theories suggesting that bilingualism and linguistic immersion enhance cognitive flexibility. The research further highlights the roles of classroom learning and engagement with English media in facilitating language acquisition.

Moreover, the study explores correlations between these educational experiences and students' satisfaction with their academic achievements. It finds a positive relationship between immersive educational experiences and enhancements in self-perception, suggesting that the educational environment plays a major role in shaping students' identities. Through this investigation, the thesis aspires to contribute to the broader understanding of the power of language education.

ABSTRAKT

Tato práce zkoumá dopad výhradně anglické výuky na studenty angličtiny jako druhého jazyka (ESL), se zaměřením na kognitivní rozvoj, kulturní identitu a výsledky vzdělávání. S využitím kvantitativních výzkumných metod se tato studie zabývá rozlišením mezi učením se jazyka a jeho osvojením, které zažívají studenti ESL v imerzním prostředí. Analýza je založena na přezkumu teorií osvojování druhého jazyka, společně s průzkumem kognitivních důsledků a sociokulturních dopadů učení se anglicky jako druhého jazyka.

Zjištění získaná z různorodých skupin účastníků odhalují významné posuny v dominanci jazyka, což poukazuje na hluboký vliv na kognitivní dovednosti a kulturní identitu mezi studenty ESL. Většina účastníků zaznamenala změnu v dominantním jazyce ve svých myšlenkách a snech, což empiricky podporuje teorie tvrdící, že bilingvismus a jazyková imerze zvyšují kognitivní flexibilitu. Výzkum dále zdůrazňuje roli výuky ve třídě a zapojení anglických médií do výuky k usnadňování osvojování jazyka.

Studie také prozkoumává korelace mezi těmito vzdělávacími zkušenostmi a celkovou spokojeností studentů s jejich akademickými úspěchy. Zjistila pozitivní korelaci mezi imerzními vzdělávacími zkušenostmi a sebepojetím, což naznačuje, že vzdělávací prostředí hraje významnou roli při formování identit studentů. Prostřednictvím tohoto výzkumu práce aspiruje k přispění širšímu pochopení síly jazykového vzdělávání.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

identita, bilingvismus, kultura, získávání řečových dovedností, sebepojetí

Table of contents

List of Tables

List of Graphs

Introduction

This thesis examines the impact of attending all-English schools on students who are English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, focusing on their cognitive development, cultural identity, and educational outcomes. The study is conducted within the context of increasing globalisation, where English has become the primary language in education for non-native speakers worldwide. The objective of this research is to uncover the impact of full immersion in an all-English educational environment on ESL students, particularly in terms of their language acquisition, cognitive processes, and the integration of cultural identities. Additionally, it seeks to determine whether these impacts can be linked to the theories discussed in the following chapters.

At the core of this investigation is an analysis of second language acquisition theories, with an emphasis on distinguishing between the process of language learning and acquisition as experienced by ESL learners in an immersive environment. This distinction is critical in understanding these students' challenges and opportunities. The study explores various theoretical frameworks to provide a comprehensive overview of how ESL learners acquire a second language in an all-English school setting. The thesis also researches the cognitive implications of learning English as a second language, investigating whether immersion in an all-English environment leads to cognitive advantages or challenges.

The socio-cultural impact of attending an all-English school on ESL learners is another significant aspect of this research. This entails the effect of language proficiency and immersion in an English-dominated environment on students' cultural identity and their ability to make sense of their native culture and the culture linked to the English language. In simpler terms, the study seeks to understand the role of language in cultural integration and identity formation among ESL learners.

This thesis employs quantitative research methods to empirically assess the educational outcomes of ESL learners in all-English schools, focusing on language proficiency and cognitive development. Through this analysis, the research intends to contribute to the debate on the efficacy of all-English education for ESL learners and its implications for language policy and educational practices.

Also central to this investigation is the distinction between language learning and acquisition processes, especially as experienced by ESL learners in immersive environments. The first chapter lays the theoretical groundwork, exploring second language acquisition theories.

The second chapter explores the role of language in shaping identities and the process of cultural assimilation among ESL students. Additionally, it discusses how language is not only a means of communication but is also a component of expressing cultural norms. This chapter touches on different cultural learning theories, such as the social identity theory or acculturation theory. It attempts to understand these nuances within the context of ESL students.

The third chapter scrutinises the influence that learning English as a second language has on the self-concept of students. The fundamental concept of this chapter is language dominance, referring to a preference for one language over another. As students become more proficient in the English language, they can sense a shift in self-confidence, self-esteem and their sense of authenticity, which can lead to a multicultural identity. Another key concept is the deterioration of the native language, which is addressed as language attrition, noting the challenges of maintaining the native language. In contrast, the second language becomes more dominant, especially in an all-English environment.

The fourth chapter focuses on the connection between school environment and identity development. It examines the role of educational settings in shaping the identities of students, particularly those learning English as a Second Language (ESL) in all English schools. It also attempts to consider how various aspects of the school environment—such as peer interactions, relationships between students and their teachers and curriculum content—contribute to the identity formation and enculturation of these students.

The final chapter presents the empirical findings of the thesis, revealing how all-English education influences ESL learners across cognitive, cultural, and educational dimensions. The responses from a diverse participant pool offer insights into the experiences of ESL learners and highlight significant shifts in the aforementioned aspects. The results of these findings are elaborated upon and interpreted according to the presented theory.

In exploring bilingual education's cognitive and socio-cultural dimensions, this thesis attempts to contribute to comprehending the complicated relations between language learning and identity development. By examining the effects of linguistic immersion and the nuanced perceptions of ESL learners regarding their educational experiences, the purpose is to shed light on the broader implications of learning English. This investigation not only contributes to the theoretical discourse on second language acquisition and bilingualism but also offers empirical findings. These findings allow further implications for educational purposes, as this last chapter also establishes.

1 Theories of Second Language Acquisition

Language acquisition and language learning are often referred to interchangeably. However, they refer to slightly different processes. According to Lightbrown and Spada (2006), the preschool years are crucial for language development. In their book *How Languages are Learned*, they propose that children in this age experience rapid language comprehension, understanding of grammatical structures, and how to ask questions or even share stories. As Lightbrown and Spada (2006) claim, children during these years gain metalinguistic awareness, as they explain in their book,

"In the preschool years they also acquire metalinguistic awareness, the ability to treat language as an object separate from the meaning it conveys. Three-year old children can tell you that it's silly to drink the chair, because it doesn't make sense" (p. 8).

Language acquisition refers to the unconscious process by which people, especially infants and children, acquire the ability to perceive, produce, and understand language without explicit instruction. This natural process occurs as individuals engage with their linguistic environment, allowing them to pick up grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in a manner that seems effortless. The term is often associated with first language acquisition.

However, it can also apply to aspects of second language learning, particularly in immersive environments, such as all-English schools.

Conversely, language learning entails a deliberate, structured effort to grasp a language, typically through formal instruction. This method emphasises the systematic comprehension

of linguistic rules, including grammar and vocabulary, often requiring memorisation and practice. Language learning is commonly associated with acquiring a second or additional language, especially in contexts where the learner is not fully immersed in a linguistic environment that naturally endorses the acquisition process.

Within the domain of second language acquisition theories, the debate between behaviourist and nativist perspectives offers essential insights into the learning mechanisms of ESL students. By examining these contrasting theories, it becomes easier to appreciate better the complexities of language learning processes and their implications for cognitive and cultural identity development.

1.1 Behaviourist Theories

The first concept of modern behaviourism is commonly attributed to John B. Watson, thanks to his seminal paper published in 1913. Within this groundbreaking work, Watson laid the fundamentals of behaviourism, advocating a shift towards scrutinising observable behaviours over exploring internal mental processes.

Consequently, he posited psychology as a science primarily concerned with behaviour, emphasising the significance of environmental factors and learning mechanisms. This work subsequently encouraged the usage of behaviourist principles by many linguists.

To support the behaviourist theory of language acquisition comes B.F. Skinner, with his book *Verbal Behaviour* (1959). His conceptualisation of language is rooted in the empirical examination of behaviour within its immediate environmental context, capturing both internal and external elements and in formulating behavioural interaction as contingent relationships. Various private roles, including the listener's role, may be identified within the internal elements. Regarding external elements, environmental stimuli and different types of reinforcement can be included. Exploring the relationships within verbal behaviour extends beyond just how individuals interact directly with each other and includes how broader society influences and shapes these interactions.

Skinner proposed that language acquisition is learned through operant conditioning. He believed that children learn language through a system of reward and punishment, a process

where behaviours are reinforced or discouraged based on the responses they elicit from their environment. According to Skinner, when a child vocalises a sound or a word that approximates a form of meaningful language and that vocalisation is met with positive reinforcement, such as attention, praise, or a direct response from caregivers, the child is more likely to repeat that vocalisation. Over time, the child learns their language's vocabulary and grammatical structures through repeated interactions where certain sounds and word forms are systematically reinforced.

1.2 Nativist Theories

For a long time, behaviourist theories dominated the field of psycholinguistics, but this changed in the 1960s with the arrival of Noam Chomsky's theory about language acquisition device, which he introduced in his work *Syntactical Structures* (1957). Additionally, Chomsky published a critique (Chomsky, 1959) regarding Skinner's work. These two prominent figures in the linguistic field frequently engaged in intellectual disagreement, underscoring a profound discord in these theoretical perspectives.

Noam Chomsky's theoretical framework suggests that the human brain possesses inherent linguistic structures, providing individuals with a predisposition to acquire language rapidly. Key to this theory is the concept of the aforementioned language acquisition device, which asserts that every newborn enters the world equipped with fundamental grammatical principles and subsequently refines their linguistic skills through interaction with caregivers.

Additionally, Chomsky argues that despite the apparent diversity of languages worldwide, they share a common underlying structure characterised by consistent categories such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

While lexical items may vary across languages, these basic grammatical categories remain constant, reflecting a universal foundation for human language. Furthermore, Chomsky's theory asserts that children remarkably avoid specific linguistic errors, suggesting an innate understanding of grammatical rules. This framework underscores the notion that the essence of language acquisition lies predominantly in the biological predisposition for grammatical

organisation rather than semantic comprehension, thereby emphasising the natural capability of language acquisition.

1.3 Theories of Language Learning

Krashen (1982) defines acquisition and learning as the primary mechanisms by which individuals acquire languages. As elaborated on previously, acquisition denotes the natural grasp of a language, such as the process observed in children acquiring their first language. Conversely, learning involves conscious engagement in studying and memorising language rules and patterns, often facilitated in formal educational settings.

Krashen posits that acquisition holds greater significance in achieving fluency in a language, as it facilitates natural language usage and formulates five hypotheses to support these claims. In contrast, learning, or what he terms *the Monitor*, in one of his main hypotheses, primarily serves to rectify errors in acquired language, implying that rules have a limited role in second language learning.

Language learning includes systematically studying linguistic rules and patterns, contributing to accurate language usage. In contrast, language acquisition occurs through exposure to comprehensible language, wherein individuals naturally grasp language usage by focusing on understanding the meaning conveyed. This unconscious process enables individuals to acquire language proficiency effortlessly. Additionally, this process may be encountered by students at all-English schools, especially if their enrolment started at a younger age.

In summary, Krashen's framework amplifies the importance of language acquisition in fostering natural language fluency, opposing the more rule-based nature of language learning.

1.4 Bilingualism

To thoroughly grasp language acquisition and language learning, an investigation into the significance of bilingualism is necessary. Exploring the cognitive and socio-cultural

perspectives of bilingualism provides the background for analysing how bilingual education influences academic outcomes. This part of the theory lays the groundwork for understanding the relationships between language proficiency, cognitive development, and cultural identity in bilingual learners, which is central to evaluating the effectiveness of bilingual education programs.

Bilingualism, the ability to communicate proficiently in two languages, has gained attention in academic research due to its implications for cognitive development, cultural identity, and social integration, but also because of the varying interpretations of what bilingualism means. With the increasing globalisation and mass migration of people to and from different countries, it can be assumed that bilingual children are becoming a more frequent phenomenon.

It is necessary to note that bilingualism is a concept with definitions that vary significantly across different scholarly disciplines and according to different linguists, reflecting a wide range of perspectives on language proficiency, use, and cognitive processing. For some linguists, bilingualism is defined simply as the capability of communicating effectively in two languages. This perspective prioritises functional use over proficiency, suggesting that even basic communication skills in a second language qualify as bilingualism. For example, Grosjean's (1982) definition describes bilinguals as individuals who do not necessarily have equal proficiency in both languages but use two languages on a regular basis. This perspective emphasises the fluidity of language use and acknowledges that bilingual individuals might use each language for different purposes, contexts, or domains of life.

Moreover, research in psycholinguistics has demonstrated that bilingual individuals possess unique cognitive advantages compared to monolinguals, such as enhanced executive functioning or problem-solving skills (Bialystok, 2017). These cognitive benefits stem from the constant management of two language systems, which requires bilinguals to selectively activate and inhibit language representations, leading to heightened cognitive control and flexibility. Nonetheless, this thesis will not further explore the links between neurology and psycholinguistics; the mention simply highlights its relevance.

Another dimension to consider is that bilingualism is also crucial in shaping cultural identity and fostering intergroup understanding among societies. By being proficient in multiple

languages, individuals gain access to different cultural perspectives, enabling them to understand complex social contexts and develop empathy towards speakers of other languages (Grosjean, 2010). As Grosjean delineates, coming from a bilingual background may lead to a stronger appreciation of diverse cultures and a stronger sense of belonging among more communities. Furthermore, bilingualism promotes inclusivity by facilitating communication and collaboration among speakers of different linguistic backgrounds, connecting cultural divides, and promoting intercultural exchange, as Grosjean (2010) explains.

Cummins (2000) emphasised the power potential of multilingual education, arguing that it can significantly enhance cognitive abilities and academic outcomes for bilingual students. As of high importance, Cummins considered valuing students' native languages in educational settings, suggesting that such an approach supports linguistic and cultural identity and contributes to more profound cognitive engagement and learning. Cummins (1976) also differentiates between the fundamental skills for everyday communication and proficiency in academic language tasks, suggesting that true bilingualism involves not only casual language use but also the ability to engage with abstract and academically challenging content in both languages.

These varied definitions of bilingualism reflect the debates about being bilingual, ranging from simple, functional use to academic proficiency. These definitions will be incorporated into the research framework, enabling the identification and adoption of the most suitable approaches for the thesis' objectives.

2 Language, Identity, and Enculturation

This chapter examines the relationship between language, identity formation and cultural assimilation processes. It also suggests that language is critical in developing individual and collective identities as one of the primary conduits for internalising and expressing personal cultural standards. By examining linguistic practices, this chapter seeks to uncover how language reflects and influences the continuous process of shaping identity and conveying cultural values. The assumed relationship between language and the processes of identity

formation and cultural assimilation is based on the idea that language is a vital medium through which individuals and communities negotiate and express their identities and cultural affiliations.

As Giles and Johnson (1987) highlight, language is not merely a tool for communication but also a marker of social identity, playing a significant role in forming in-groups and out-groups. This presented ethnolinguistic identity theory draws from the influential work of Tajfel and Turner (1979), which will be examined in the following subchapter.

This perspective is supported by the notion that language carries cultural meanings and values, making it integral to how individuals understand their place within cultural contexts. The intertwining of language with social, ethnic, and national identities suggests that linguistic practices are deeply implicated in how individuals and groups establish and understand their identities.

Identity formation is linked to linguistic expression and comprehension. Language mirrors the myriad aspects of an individual's identity, including personal, social, ethnic, and national dimensions. It provides the lexicon through which individuals understand not only themselves but also their relationships with the communities they are connected to (Giles & Johnson, 1987). Giles & Johnson exemplified this by researching bilingual individuals of Welsh and English living in England. This dynamic process allows for the continuous evolution of identity in response to changing linguistic and cultural contexts. It plays a crucial role in understanding the function of language within the context of an all-English educational environment, suggesting that cultural transformations are likely to follow from the insights of this research.

Similarly, enculturation—the process by which individuals learn and embody the cultural norms of their society—is mediated through language. From the earliest stages of development, language acquisition is intertwined with the absorption of cultural norms, practices, and values, facilitating an individual's integration into their cultural environment (Rogoff, 2003). Language is both a tool for cultural transmission and a space for cultural innovation, enabling individuals to participate in cultural continuity while contributing to cultural change.

2.1 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) offers a robust framework for understanding the role of language in shaping social identities and intergroup relations. Language, as a key marker of group membership, significantly contributes to social categorisation, one of the core mechanisms described by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in their groundbreaking work, the formulation of SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This subchapter explores how language functions within the context of SIT to influence individuals' self-concept, group dynamics, and intergroup perceptions. As Giles and Johnson (1987) explain,

"We categorise the social world and, hence, perceive ourselves as members of various groups. Such knowledge of ourselves as group members is defined as our social identity, and it may be positive or negative according to how our ingroups fare in social comparison with relevant outgroups" (p. 70).

For instance, accents, dialects, and language choices can signal group membership, leading to in-group favouritism or out-group discrimination. This linguistic categorisation can enhance group cohesion and personal identity within the in-group but may also contribute to stereotypes, prejudices, and social exclusion of out-group members. Basic lexical choices, such as using *we* and *them* can wield power in deepening divisions among people.

This dynamic can also be notably present in all-English schools, where students from diverse national backgrounds strive for integration, employing the English language as a means to social inclusion.

Furthermore, language policies and practices within multilingual societies often reflect and reinforce social hierarchies and power dynamics between groups (Tollefson, 1991). To illustrate these social inequalities, Tollefson uses various case studies. Language proficiency and choice become tools for social comparison, with dominant language groups holding greater power and prestige, thereby influencing intergroup relations in line with SIT's predictions about group status and competition (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The concept of linguistic intergroup bias illustrates how language use can subtly convey biases and perpetuate in-group versus out-group distinctions. This bias manifests in communication practices favouring the in-group, using more positive language to describe

in-group actions and negative or neutral terms for out-group behaviours (Maass et al., 1989). Such practices reflect existing social identities and actively shape them, reinforcing social categorisation and identity processes outlined in SIT.

Educational settings, particularly in language learning and bilingual education, serve as important settings for examining the implications of SIT concerning language. Language education policies can either exacerbate social divisions by privileging certain languages (and, by extension, their speakers) or promote social integration and cross-group understanding by valuing linguistic diversity and encouraging multilingualism (Cummins, 2000). Social Identity Theory highlights how individuals' sense of self is shaped by their social group members, including linguistic communities.

2.2 Acculturation Theory

Within the framework of this thesis, the concept of acculturation is central to understanding the experiences of students attending all-English schools. Acculturation, as defined by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936), involves the transformations that take place when groups with varying cultures interact directly. Although Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) originally directed this statement toward the indigenous peoples of North America, it can also be considered relevant to groups from various cultures. This process is particularly relevant for ESL learners who face the advantages and obstacles of immersion in an all-English educational environment. Berry's (1997) acculturation strategies—assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation—offer a valuable lens to analyse how these learners adapt to and integrate within their new linguistic and cultural settings. This lens may be used for further research to determine which acculturation strategies are the most prominent among ESL students, given that the thesis aims to explore how ESL learners employ these acculturation strategies in the context of their education and daily lives. For instance, integration or biculturalism may be particularly relevant for students striving to maintain their cultural heritage while embracing their English-speaking educational environment's cultural and linguistic norms.

Berry (2005) emphasises the importance of these strategies in influencing individuals' mental health and academic success, indicating that students who successfully manage both their original and adopted culture may experience more positive educational outcomes. This theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals adapt to a new cultural setting, incorporating or resisting the new culture's norms and values. This theory is particularly pertinent for exploring how immersion in an all-English school affects ESL learners' cultural identities and their integration into or separation from the host culture.

2.3 Cultural Learning Theory

Incorporating Cultural Learning Theory into the analysis of ESL learners' experiences in all English schools offers a nuanced perspective on language acquisition, cognitive development, and cultural adaptation. Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, a cornerstone of Cultural Learning Theory, posits that social interaction is fundamental to cognitive development. This perspective is particularly relevant for understanding how ESL learners construct knowledge and develop language skills through interactions within the educational context (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory asserts that learning unfolds within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), meaning that learners can attain greater understanding and proficiency under the mentorship of individuals with more advanced knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). This concept highlights the importance of the educational environment and teacher support in facilitating ESL learners' language acquisition, assuming native speakers supervise the students.

Furthermore, Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, which emphasises the role of observation, imitation, and modelling in learning, underscores the significance of the classroom as a social context where ESL learners observe linguistic behaviours. Bandura (1977) claims that a significant portion of human learning occurs through social mechanisms, indicating that interactions among peers and classroom dynamics significantly influence ESL students' language learning journey. This aligns with the experiences of ESL learners in all-English schools, where daily immersion provides opportunities for observational learning.

The relevance of Cultural Learning Theory to this thesis extends to exploring cultural identity and acculturation processes among ESL learners. Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice emphasises the value of participation in social and cultural practices for learning and identity formation. ESL learners in all English schools continuously negotiate their identities, balancing their native cultural backgrounds with the norms and values of the English-speaking school environment. This negotiation is a form of enculturation, where learners adapt to and adopt new cultural practices while maintaining connections to their cultural heritage (Rogoff, 2003).

Moreover, the adaptation strategies identified within Berry's (1997) Acculturation Theory in the previous subchapter provide a base for analysing how ESL learners manage the challenges of cultural and linguistic adaptation. Berry's (1997) delineated strategies can be applied to understand the diverse experiences of ESL learners as they navigate the complexities of learning in an all-English environment. These strategies reflect the learners' efforts to reconcile their native cultural identities with the demands and opportunities of their educational context.

In summary, cultural learning theory and its associated concepts offer a comprehensive perspective that makes it possible to examine the experiences of ESL learners in all-English schools. By focusing on the social and cultural dimensions of language learning, this theoretical framework supports the understanding of the cognitive, linguistic, and socio-cultural challenges and opportunities these learners face. It also illuminates the importance of creating supportive, culturally sensitive educational environments that recognise and leverage the diverse backgrounds of ESL learners to facilitate their academic success and cultural integration (Vygotsky, 1978; Bandura, 1977; Wenger, 1998; Berry, 1997).

3 Second Language Impact on Self-Concept

Exploring the profound impact that second language (L2) acquisition exerts on self-concept holds a central place in the discourse on bilingual education and its broader implications. This inquiry also intersects deeply with the lived experiences of individuals navigating the complex environment of language learning, identity formation, and cultural integration.

Building upon the understanding of language's link to identity and enculturation, the profound impact second language acquisition has on the self-concept of ESL students can be explored. The exploration of how second language (L2) acquisition influences self-concept illuminates the deep connection between language learning and personal identity. This part of linguistic study delves into the transformations individuals experience as they acquire proficiency in an L2, a process that extends beyond linguistics to encompass changes in how individuals perceive themselves and their interactions with the world around them.

Acquiring an L2 is an experience that impacts learners' self-concept by introducing them to new cultural paradigms and modes of expression. This linguistic journey fosters self-identity formation as learners integrate the new language into their personal and social identity (Mercer, 2011). Mercer also posits that as learners acquire L2, their sense of self-confidence deepens, especially in the context of cross-cultural communication, whilst primarily focusing on the pedagogical implications.

Besides the effects on cognition, balancing two linguistic systems encourages individuals to reflect on their values, beliefs, and cultural assumptions, often leading to a more complex and enriched sense of self (Ortega, 2009). Exposure to this phenomenon is a common experience among ESL students attending all-English schools, particularly those who enrolled at a young age. Ortega also notes that the ability to communicate in a second language can broaden students' social networks and enhance their social standing.

3.1 Language Dominance

The concept of language dominance—the preference for and proficiency in one language over another—plays a critical role in shaping self-concept among bilingual or multilingual individuals. Changes in language dominance, particularly as learners become more proficient in an L2, can influence their confidence, self-esteem, and the contexts in which they feel most authentic, as established by Mercer (2011). This shift often results in a nuanced bicultural or multicultural identity, where individuals learn to reconcile the cultural and linguistic aspects of their original and newly acquired languages.

However, the impact of language dominance extends into the realm of social interactions and educational achievement. As learners' proficiency in the L2 improves, they often experience a boost in self-efficacy related to academic and social communication in the L2 environment (MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997). This enhanced self-efficacy contributes to a more positive self-concept, as learners perceive themselves as competent members of the L2 community. That said, MacIntyre, Noels and Clément also point out that emotional distress or even anxiety may arise from low self-efficacy evaluations, which might also impact the learner's success.

Self-efficacy, as discussed in the context of language dominance, refers to an individual's belief in their own ability to successfully perform tasks and communicate effectively in a second language (L2) environment. This concept, rooted in the work of psychologist Albert Bandura (1997), underscores the role of cognitive self-assessment in determining one's capacity to execute actions required for specific achievements. In the realm of language learning, as learners' proficiency in an L2 increases, they typically report an increase in self-efficacy specifically related to academic tasks and social interactions within that language. This heightened sense of self-efficacy is crucial, as it enhances the learner's confidence in using the L2 and positively influences their overall self-concept, impacting the dominance shift.

When learners view themselves as capable and effective communicators in the L2, they are more likely to identify as a part of the L2 community, fostering a sense of belonging and competence. This process illustrates the significant impact of perceived self-efficacy on learners' motivation, engagement, and their success in mastering a second language (MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997).

As Grosjean (2010) argues, bilinguals exhibit a spectrum of linguistic proficiency. Some display dominance in their primary language, some in their secondary language, and few maintain a balance between both languages. To underscore this statement, Grosjean (2010) says,

"In various writings, I have insisted on what I call the bilingual or holistic view of bilingualism, which proposes that the bilingual is an integrated whole who cannot easily be decomposed into two separate parts" (p. 75).

3.1.1 Language Attrition

L1, or the first language, also known as the native language, is the language a person learns first, typically from birth or during early childhood. It forms the foundation for cognitive development and cultural identity, ingrained through early and constant exposure. L1 is usually a primary means of communication.

L2, or the second language, refers to any language learned after the first language. The acquisition of an L2 can happen at any age and is often motivated by factors such as education, work, migration, or personal interest. Learning an L2 involves formal instruction and practice, and the level of proficiency can vary widely among individuals, depending on exposure to the language and personal effort.

The deterioration of the first language in the context of acquiring a second language, particularly among students attending all-English schools, raises important questions about the interplay between language acquisition and language attrition. This phenomenon, where aspects of a speaker's native language may become less proficient over time due to the dominant use of another language, is critical for understanding the full impact of bilingual education. L1 attrition can be seen as a linguistic adaptation that occurs as the brain accommodates and becomes more proficient in an L2, potentially at the expense of L1 (Köpke & Schmid, 2004). As Köpke and Schmid explain, one of the factors influencing attrition appears to be language use, attitude, and motivation, rather than simply the period of disuse. The connection between attitude and motivation can be traced back to the ethnolinguistic theory (Giles et al., 1977). This theory asserts that ethnolinguistic vitality can prevent attrition. Consequently, it is plausible that the socio-cultural environment also influences language attrition.

According to Montrul, the immersive experience of all-English schooling could significantly change how bilingual students use and perceive their native language. For instance, studies have shown that prolonged exposure to a second language can result in the first language's phonology, syntax, and lexical choices being influenced by the structures of the second language (Montrul, 2008). Montrul also touches on the concept of language attrition in the context of bilingual education and how lack of use leads to L1 attrition.

However, the extent of L1 attrition can vary widely among individuals and is influenced by several factors, including the level of L1 proficiency prior to L2 immersion, the age at which L2 acquisition begins, and the frequency of L1 use both within and outside educational settings (Schmid, 2011). Importantly, Schmid explores various aspects that could cause language attrition, including the frequency of use and level of proficiency, as well as the emotional connection to the language. The findings conclude that while internal factors such as motivation are essential, societal conditions are equally important in determining whether a language is maintained or undergoes deterioration.

Furthermore, the socio-cultural context plays a crucial role in L1 maintenance. The value and support given to the native language within the family, community, and educational system can bolster L1 use and proficiency, counteracting potential attrition effects (Cummins, 2000). This highlights the importance of creating educational policies and practices supporting bilingualism and maintaining L1 alongside L2 acquisition.

In summary, L1 attrition among ESL learners in all-English schools underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of bilingual education's cognitive and sociolinguistic dimensions. It emphasises the importance of fostering an educational environment that values and promotes the active use of both languages, thereby supporting balanced bilingual development and minimising the risk of L1 deterioration. However, the facilitation of maintaining both languages presents challenges, given the diversity of students' linguistic backgrounds at all-English schools, where the primary languages vary. Consequently, it becomes imperative for students' families to play a crucial role in sustaining their native language proficiency.

4 School Environment and Identity Development

The school environment is essential for identity formation and enculturation, profoundly influencing how students perceive themselves and their cultural standings within society. This influence is mediated through various dimensions of the school experience.

Socialisation within schools plays a critical role in shaping students' identities. Peer interactions provide a context for developing social identities as students are subjected to

inclusion and exclusion within various groups, which can significantly affect their self-esteem and sense of belonging (Brown & Larson, 2009). The importance of peer relationships and group affiliations in schools underscores the social aspect of identity formation, highlighting how peer acceptance or rejection can impact students' self-concept and cultural identity. The inclusion or feeling of acceptance, therefore, links to the educational outcomes or overall academic achievements.

Moreover, the curriculum and pedagogical approaches schools adopt are instrumental in enculturation. The curriculum exposes students to specific cultural narratives and values, which can either reinforce dominant cultural identities or introduce and validate diverse cultural perspectives (Banks, 2004). This educational content conveys academic knowledge and transmits cultural norms and values, significantly shaping students' cultural and national identities. The inclusion of multicultural education practices can further enhance students' understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, fostering more inclusive identity formation (Gay, 2010).

Language policies and practices within the school setting also significantly affect identity development and enculturation. For students from bilingual or multilingual backgrounds, the language of instruction and the languages valued or marginalised by the school's policies can influence their linguistic identity and proficiency in both their first language and the language learned (Cummins, 2000). Schools that support bilingual education and linguistic diversity can bolster students' confidence in their cultural identities and promote positive attitudes towards multilingualism (García, 2009).

Teachers are crucial in mediating the relationship between the school environment and students' identity formation. The interactions between teachers and students and teachers' attitudes and expectations can significantly influence students' academic self-concept and identification with their cultural or linguistic heritage (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). Educators who recognise and affirm students' diverse backgrounds and implement culturally responsive teaching practices can positively impact students' identity development and academic achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Institutional policies and practices, including those related to discipline, academic tracking, and celebrating cultural diversity, further shape the school's role in students' identity

formation and enculturation. Schools that foster an inclusive environment and recognise and celebrate cultural diversity contribute to developing positive cultural identities among students (Banks, 2004). Conversely, schools that enforce assimilationist policies or fail to acknowledge cultural diversity may hinder students' ability to maintain their cultural identities, potentially leading to cultural dissonance and even alienation (Zhou, 1997).

In conclusion, the school environment is a critical context for identity formation and enculturation, with profound implications for how students navigate their social, cultural, and academic worlds. Through the interplay of curriculum content, language practices, teacher-student dynamics, peer interactions, and institutional policies, schools can shape students' identities in ways that either affirm or challenge their cultural backgrounds and personal experiences.

5 Research

The empirical segment of this thesis is structured around a quantitative survey designed to explore the theoretical implications delineated in the preceding chapters. This research aims to critically assess the validity of the propositions derived from the linguistic theories discussed within the context of the data collected from respondents. The following chapters will thoroughly describe the entirety of the research, including the research objectives, methodology, respondents, questionnaire, and results.

5.1 Research objectives

The research objectives are divided into three parts. The first research question was built around the theoretical framework of language and cognitive development. The initial question examines the influence of all-English school settings on the linguistic and cognitive domains of the students who participated in the survey. This involves investigating shifts in language dominance, especially if the dominant language in thoughts and dreams has changed. The main goal is to assert whether these theories can be applied to the participants. The first research question that is examined sounds:

1) "Does attendance at an all-English school affect the linguistic and cognitive domains of multilingual students, specifically regarding changes in dominant language and perceived cognitive enhancements?"

Based on Bialystok's (2001) findings, the constant management of two languages should enhance the cognitive flexibility of these particular students. The expected result is that the participants can noticeably feel a dominant language shift and cognitive enhancement.

The second main goal is to clarify the significance of the effectiveness of classroom learning, interactions with native speakers, engagement with English media and participation in cultural events. By drawing from theories of social interaction and cultural learning and applying them to the personal experiences of the survey's participants, it assesses how different contexts of language exposure contribute to the overall language skill development within educational settings. The second research question is:

2) "How do language learners perceive the importance of classroom learning, interaction with native speakers, engagement with English media, and participation in cultural events in their language acquisition process?"

Drawing from the presented theory, this paper assumes a high importance in all of these learning opportunities. The anticipated results should align with theories presented in subchapter 2.3., specifically with research done by Vygotsky (1978) and his ZPD theory, assessing that students under the supervision of more proficient speakers have a higher chance to succeed in language development. Furthermore, based on Bandura's work (1977), this paper assumes the participants will perceive classroom learning and socialisation as of high importance in the context of their education.

The last goal of this research is to inquire about the effects of all-English education on ESL learners' identity through the dimensions of self-perception, social relationships, cultural practices and values. It also examines the correlation between these factors and the student's satisfaction with their academic achievements. This concluding research question aligns with the theoretical considerations of identity formation in bilingual and multilingual contexts, assessing the importance of educational experiences in shaping students' self-concept. The last research objective this thesis asks is:

3) "Does attendance at an all-English school influence ESL learners' identity across dimensions of self-perception, social relationships, cultural practices, and values, and how do these influences correlate with their satisfaction with academic achievements?"

The research aspires to contribute insights into the debates surrounding language policy, educational practices, and nurturing bilingual and multilingual abilities through these three inquiries. Although Vygotsky (1978) did not discuss language immersion, his theory provides a foundation for understanding how immersion could influence this process, more specifically because he argued that language is a tool that serves as a means for internalising cultural norms and values.

5.2 Methodology

Research in the form of a survey was constructed for this research. A questionnaire was designed to align with each chapter in the theoretical part of this thesis (see appendix).

The following subchapters dedicated to the methodology elaborate on detailed information about the research, respondents, and additional considerations.

5.2.1 Description and implementation of research

The practical implementation of this research was structured to closely align with the theoretical constructs explored in the thesis's theoretical part. Using a quantitative approach, the survey was designed to illuminate the intersections of language acquisition, cognitive development, cultural identity, and educational outcomes experienced by ESL learners in all-English schools. The survey was constructed to correspond directly to the nuanced discussions in the theoretical framework, hoping for a coherent transition from theory to empirical investigation.

5.2.2 Data collection

The participants were solicited through social media platforms and several English-speaking high schools located in Prague and Brno. A voluntary and informed consent process was followed. Consent to process and analyse said data was given by completing the survey, which was aforementioned to the participants before taking part.

The data were collected via the well-known website survio.com, which comprised a structured questionnaire designed to elicit detailed information on participants' demographics, linguistic backgrounds, and educational experiences in an all-English setting, which can be found in the appendix of this thesis. The data were subjected to quantitative analysis, using Spearman's rho and graphs to visualise the results in chapter 5.3.

5.2.3 Research sample

The study involved 83 participants who are not native speakers of English but had undergone an all-English education in their forming years, from kindergarten to secondary school. The length of their studies varies, ranging from 2 to 15 years of all-English education. The participants ranged across various age groups, most falling within the 18-24 age category. The gender distribution comprised 64.63 % of females and 35.37 % of males. Participants of this study come from diverse national backgrounds. The native languages reported were similarly diverse; however, the prevalent native language of said participants is Czech, accounting for up to 75.9%, as seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Native languages of Participants

Native language	Count	Percentage
Czech	63	75.9%
Greek	1	1.2%
Filipino	1	1.2%
Spanish	2	2.4%
Slovak	1	1.2%
Swedish	1	1.2%
Indonesian	1	1.2%
Mandarin	1	1.2%
Bengali	1	1.2%
Urdu	1	1.2%
Arabic	1	1.2%
Dutch	1	1.2%
Hebrew	2	2.4%
Russian	4	4.8%
Czech/English	1	1.2%
Hungarian	1	1.2%

5.2.4 Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 34 questions in total, including various measures to assess, such as demographic information, language proficiency and multilingual capabilities, focusing on the participant's ability to speak languages other than their native language and English, their proficiency levels in those languages and the educational background focused

on experiences within all-English academic settings. This included the number of years spent in such settings, the period since graduation, the participants' self-assessed English proficiency level on the CEFR scale, and their academic satisfaction and the perceived impact of these experiences on their academic performance.

Each category under investigation consists of several questions in alignment with the theoretical constructs discussed in the initial chapters of this thesis. Predominantly, the questionnaire employed single-option questions but also included open-ended questions, particularly in the demographic section, allowing participants to specify their nationality, languages known, and similar information. Also, a 1-5 scale was employed. Utilising the quantitative survey method, respondents rated each factor's importance on a scale from 1 (Not important) to 5 (Very important). Correlation analysis was employed to explore the relationships between these factors and outcomes. The questionnaire was carefully constructed to avoid suggestive questions in hopes of raising the authenticity of the responses.

As seen in the appendix of this thesis, the questionnaire is structured to apply the theoretical frameworks found in the literature review, grounding the empirical investigation within established academic discourse.

For instance, in engaging with Berry's (1997) acculturation strategies, question 23 under the "Identity Formation and Enculturation" section explicitly inquires which acculturation strategy the participant identifies with the most. Question 28 probes whether participants feel a heightened sense of belonging within the all-English educational context, directly relating to the concepts discussed in Chapter 3.1 regarding language dominance.

5.3 Results

This chapter focuses on presenting the findings from the quantitative survey. Each subsection thoroughly describes the outcomes, employing numerical data.

5.3.1 Research Question 1

The first research question is designed to answer whether or not the participants feel that attendance at an all-English school changed their dominant language and if they noticeably feel cognitive enhancements. As seen in Graph 1 below, this survey showed that 50 out of 83 participants answered positively to question 19, meaning that 60.24% of respondents have indeed reported a change in the dominant language of their thoughts and dreams after attending an all-English educational institution. This significant number shows language immersion's profound influence on cognitive processes and linguistic adaptation.
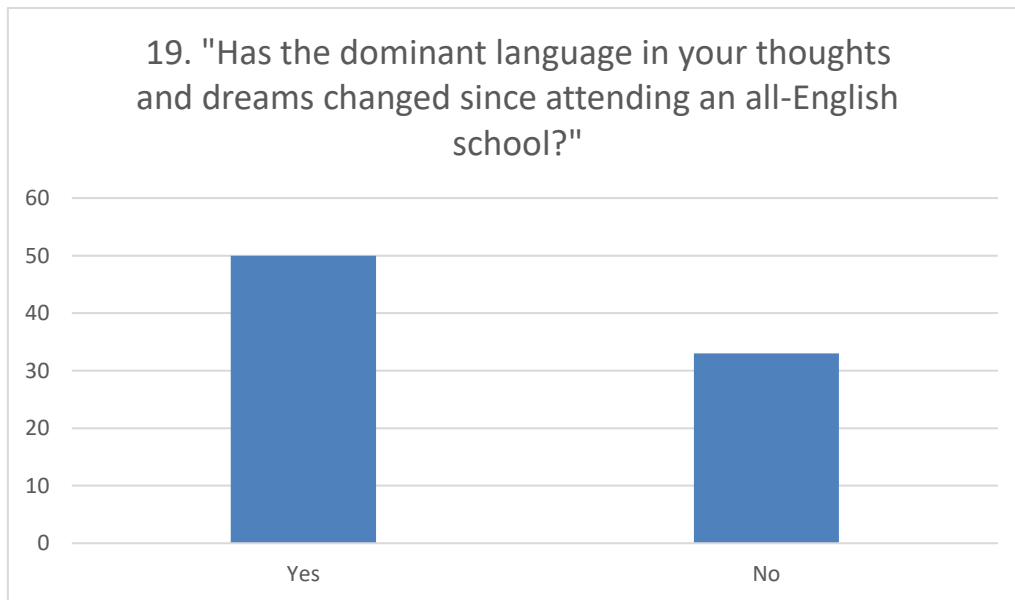
Graph 1 Change of dominant language among participants

Another interesting result is drawn from question 18. In response to the question regarding respondents' comfort level in using their native language versus English for cognitive processes, the data collected shows significant insights into dominant language perceptions. As seen in Graph 2 below, 43.47% of participants prefer to think in English, slightly or substantially more comfortably than their native language. Conversely, 32.53% of

respondents reported no marked difference in comfort, suggesting an equivalency in their ease of thinking between English and their native language.

Only 24.09% of the survey participants expressed greater comfort in engaging in cognitive processes in their native language.

18. Do you feel more comfortable thinking in your native language or in English?
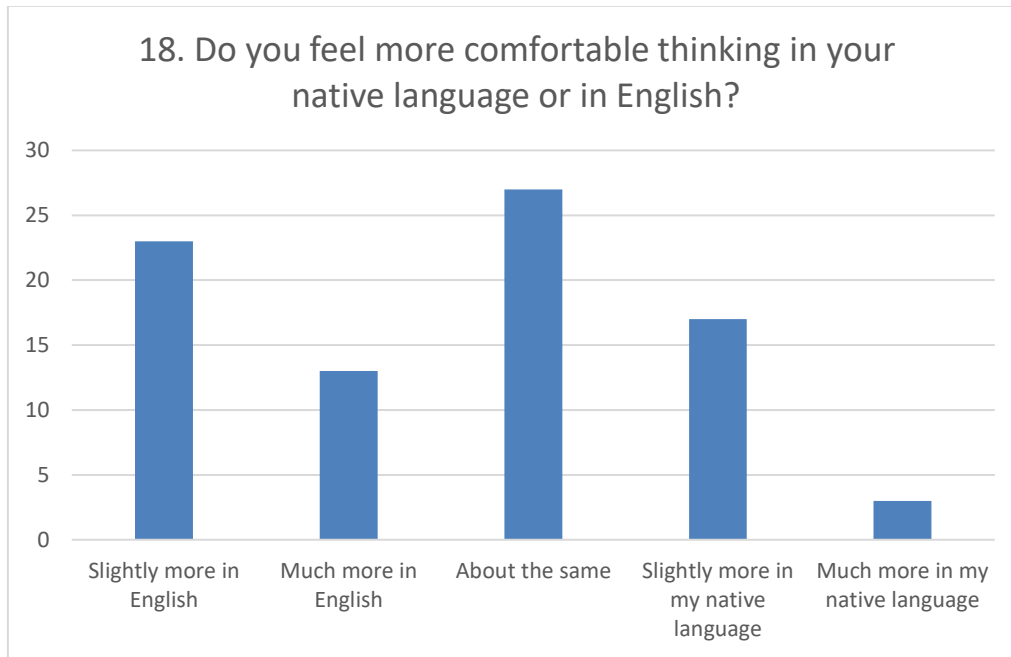
Graph 2 Level of comfort of thinking in English versus native language

Another question related to language dominance the participants were asked was how much their L1 deteriorated while attending an all-English school. Although most participants reported that attrition is non-existent, a combination of answers slightly, moderately, significantly, and extremely culminated at 74.7%. See Graph 3 below for a visualisation of the results.
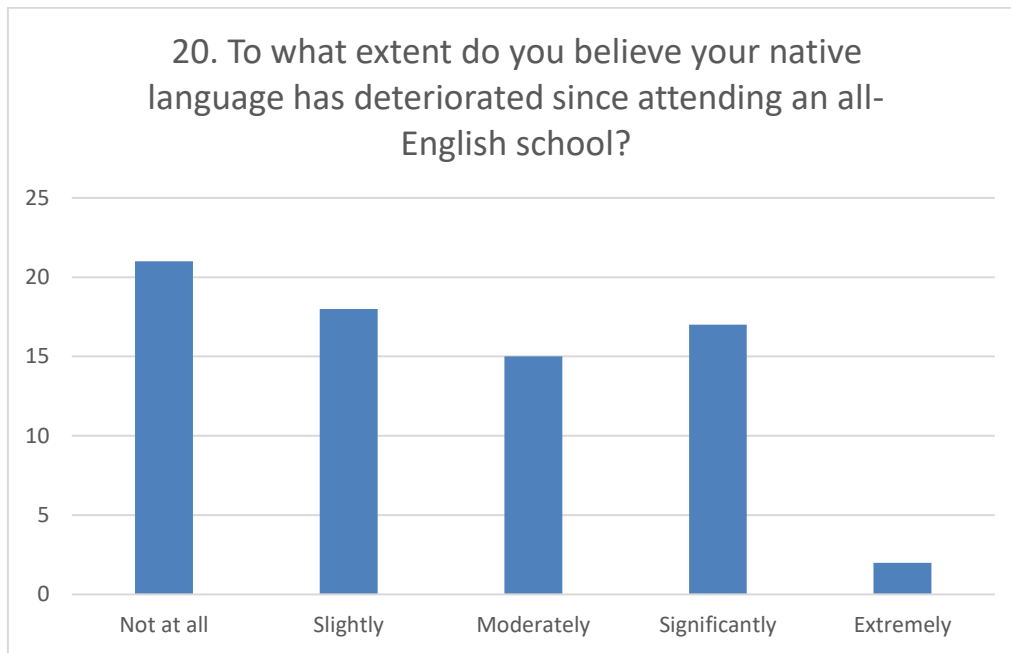
Graph 3 Level of native language deterioration among participants

To examine further, question 16 inquired to which extent the participants agree with the statement that learning subjects in English enhanced their memory skills. As seen in Graph 4 below, 37 respondents remained neutral. However, when combining answers categorised as "agree" and "strongly agree" the total reaches 28 respondents.
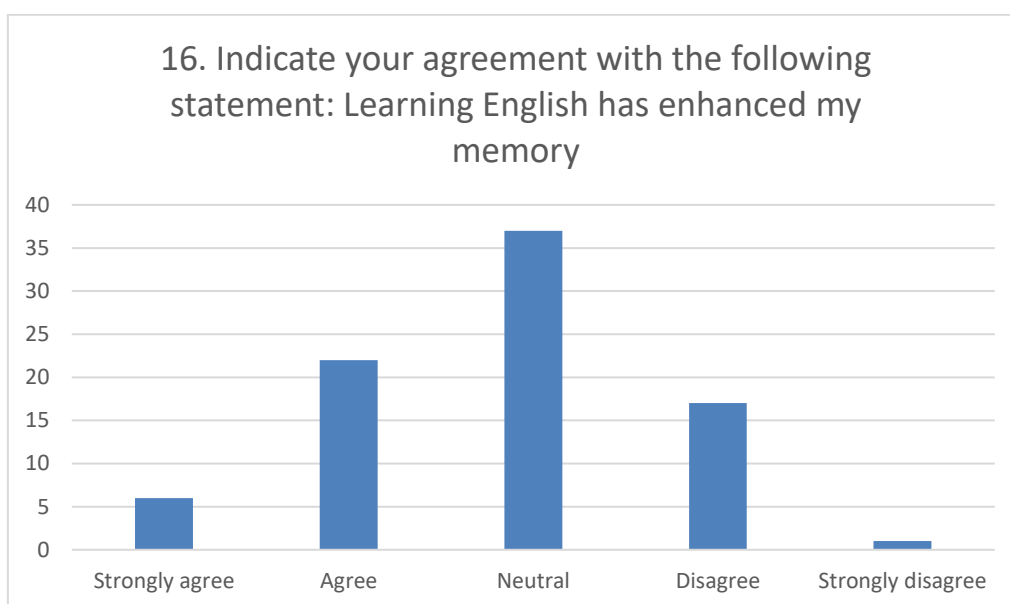
Graph 4 Attitude of participants toward learning English and memory enhancement

5.3.2 Research Question 2

The second research question is designed to evaluate language learners' perceptions regarding the significance of various elements in their English language acquisition process. These elements include classroom learning, interaction with native speakers, English media engagement, and cultural event participation. In order to investigate this further, the study employed Spearman's rho correlation coefficient to analyse responses to question 12, where participants rated the importance of these factors in enhancing their language skills on a scale from 1 (Not Important) to 5 (Very Important). This approach aimed to quantify and understand the relative significance learners attribute to each of these language acquisition components.

The analysis explored the correlation between the importance of classroom learning and interaction with native speakers. The correlation matrix showed a very weak positive correlation that is not statistically significant, which suggests that according to the survey respondents, the value placed on classroom learning does not strongly correlate with the perceived importance of interacting with native speakers.

A more significant relationship, r=0.231, p=0.035, was observed between classroom learning and engagement with English media. It is a weak correlation, nonetheless statistically significant and deserving of interpretation.

The connection between interaction with native speakers and engagement with English media indicated a very weak correlation.

The association between classroom learning and participation in cultural events on school grounds revealed a weak positive correlation, suggesting a possible link between formal learning environments and the value seen in cultural participation. The statistical value is not large enough to be explored further within this research sample.

Similarly, the correlation between participation in cultural events and engagement with English media was very weak. The correlation between participation in cultural events and interaction with native speakers was also weak.

To sum up, the only statistically significant value worth exploring is the correlation between engagement in English media and classroom learning.

Table 2 below contains all data regarding Spearman's rho and p-value. Since the degree of freedom was 81 for all, it was not incorporated into the table.

Table 2 Correlation matrix for the importance of presented aspects perceived by participants

Question 12.		Classroom learning	Interaction with native speakers	Engagement with English media	Participation in cultural events
Classroom learning	rho	—			
	p-value	—			
Interaction with native speakers	rho	0.074	—		
	p-value	0.506	—		
Engagement with English media	rho	0.231*	0.138	—	
	p-value	0.035	0.212	—	
Participation in cultural events	rho	0.211	0.072	0.018	—
	p-value	0.055	0.516	0.873	—

5.3.3 Research Question 3

In conclusion, the final set of findings related to the last research question is analysed. For this purpose, Spearman's rho correlation coefficient is employed, as in the earlier analysis. This involved an integration of responses from question 33, which required participants to evaluate their overall satisfaction with their academic achievements, with those from question 21. Question 21 solicited participants' reflections on the impact of attending an all-English school on various dimensions of their identity, instructing them to rate the influence on self-perception, social relationships, cultural practices, and values and beliefs on a scale from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Significantly).

A statistically strong positive correlation exists between students' satisfaction with academic achievements and self-perception. The correlation matrix showed r=0.356, p<.001. This suggests that students with a more positive perception of themselves tend to be more satisfied with their academic performance in an all-English learning environment. This implies that education in a second language can enhance students' confidence and self-esteem.

The correlation between satisfaction with academic achievements and the impact on social relationships is not statistically significant, indicating no meaningful relationship between these two variables. This result suggests that students' contentment with their academic progress in the all-English environment does not necessarily reflect or influence their social dynamics and interactions within or outside the educational setting.

A weak correlation exists between satisfaction with academic achievements and the influence on cultural practices. Therefore, it will not be subjected to further investigation.

The correlation between satisfaction with academic achievements and the impact on values and beliefs. This result is very weak and not statistically significant. This finding suggests that the degree to which attending an all-English school shapes students' values and beliefs does not have a direct or significant correlation with how satisfied they are with their academic achievements in such settings. However, the correlation between values, beliefs, and cultural practices emerges as strong.

Table 3 below contains all data regarding Spearman's rho and p-value. Since the degree of freedom was 81 for all, it was not incorporated into the table.

Table 3 Correlation matrix between academic satisfaction and impacts on identity formation

Question 33. and 21.		Overall satisfaction	Self-perception	Social relation ships	Cultural practices	Values and beliefs
Overall satisfaction with academic achievements	rho	—				
	p-value	—				
Self-perception	rho	0.356***	—			
	p-value	<.001	—			
Social relationships	rho	0.012	0.089	—		
	p-value	0.913	0.423	—		
Cultural practices	rho	0.201	0.208	0.189	—	
	p-value	0.069	0.059	0.087	—	
Values and beliefs	rho	0.055	0.268*	0.134	0.420***	—
	p-value	0.622	0.014	0.228	<.001	—

Additionally, to test out Berry's (1997) acculturation strategies, question 23 inquired about applicable strategies. As seen in Graph 5 below, this can also be proven for this participant pool because the vast majority, accounting for an astonishing 77.11%, claims that the learning strategy that applies best to them is through integration, aligning with research conducted by Schmitz and Berry (2011).
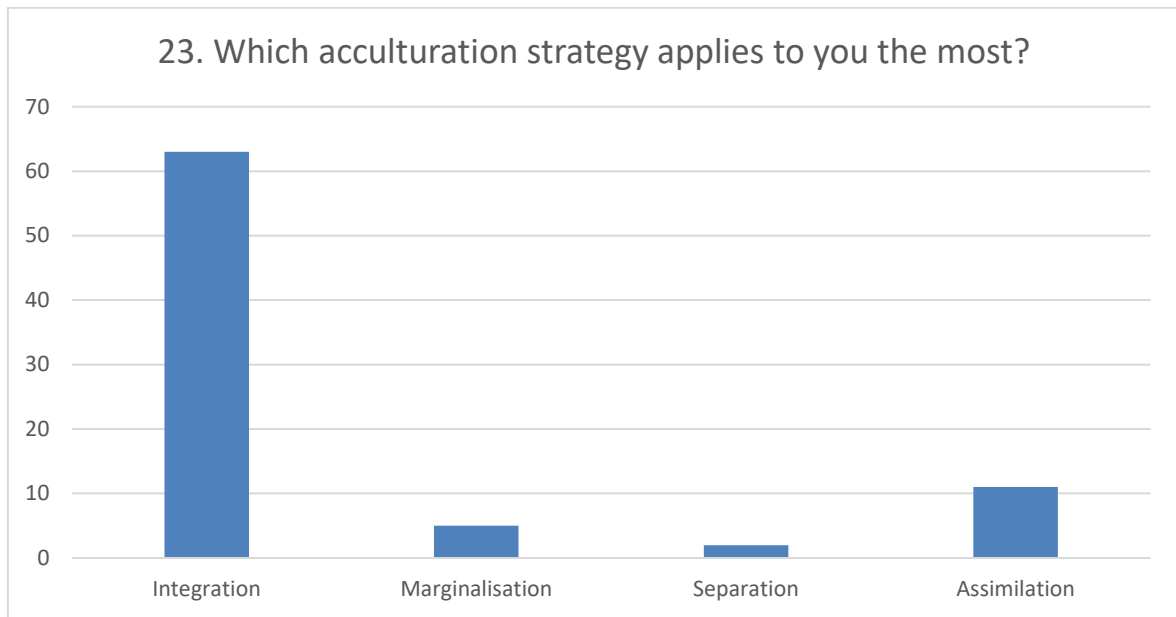
Graph 5 Preferred acculturation strategy among participants

5.4 Discussion

This subchapter will attempt to interpret the results drawn from the survey. The responses from the participants offer valuable insights.

5.4.1 Research Question 1

"Does attendance at an all-English school affect the linguistic and cognitive domains of multilingual students, specifically regarding changes in dominant language and perceived cognitive enhancements?"

The results allow the elaboration of the potential implications of these findings. The substantial proportion of individuals experiencing a shift in their cognitive linguistic domain suggests adaptability to immersive linguistic environments. This reflects a broader phenomenon, where linguistic immersion is a matter of acquiring communicative means and contributes to enhanced cognitive flexibility (Bialystok, 2001). The shift in the dominant language of thought and dreams among the respondents highlights the extent to which immersion can catalyse said phenomena. This suggests significant implications for theories

of bilingualism and cognitive flexibility, which will be further discussed in subchapter 5.4.4, which discusses the implications this may have for education.

This survey reveals that most respondents experienced a change in the dominant language of their thoughts and dreams after immersion in an all-English educational setting, which is also supported by Bialystok's findings on the cognitive implications of bilingualism. This parallel suggests immersive language learning enhances linguistic abilities and triggers significant cognitive adaptation. Specifically, the change in dominant thought language among the respondents may indicate enhanced executive control functions, as managing a new dominant language requires continuous cognitive effort and flexibility. This aligns with Bialystok's claim that bilingualism and immersion in a new linguistic environment can enhance cognitive functions beyond language acquisition.

Bialystok's findings on enhancing cognitive functions can also be supported by the survey's findings that a combined 33.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that English has enhanced their cognitive skills, as seen in Graph 4. These respondents obviously acknowledge the positive impact of English language proficiency on their cognitive abilities, such as memory enhancement, which was the expected result based on the presented theory.

However, a significant proportion of respondents, 44.6%, remained neutral regarding the impact of English on enhancing their cognitive skills. This might suggest a level of uncertainty in personal experiences related to cognitive benefits derived from language learning.

The responses suggest a positive link between attending an all-English school and cognitive enhancement. This supports the idea that language education can contribute to broader cognitive development, especially in immersive environments, reinforcing the argument for integrating language learning into the school curriculum.

In the context of the discussion on the cognitive implications of bilingualism, the results provide empirical support for the claim that language learning, particularly in immersive environments such as all-English schools, can have positive cognitive outcomes for some individuals. While perceptions of these benefits vary among individuals, the overall data contribute to understanding how language acquisition can influence cognitive functions.

These insights underscore the need for further research to explore how language learning impacts cognitive development and identify factors contributing to the variability in perceived benefits.

Additionally, the significant percentage of respondents who reported a preference for thinking in English aligns with the theoretical insights provided by Bialystok (2001), who highlighted the cognitive benefits of managing two linguistic systems. This management leads to enhanced cognitive control and flexibility, a phenomenon supported by the fact that many participants find themselves comfortably thinking in English.

When asked about the deterioration of their native language using question 20, the vast majority noted that attrition, ranging from slight to extreme, occurred during their studies. This finding corroborates research by Köpke & Schmid (2004), which noted that proficiency in the second language can be higher at the expense of the native language.

5.4.2 Research Question 2

"How do language learners perceive the importance of classroom learning, interaction with native speakers, engagement with English media, and participation in cultural events in their language acquisition process?"

The expectations for the second research question were not met, and the correlations were too weak to interpret. The weak correlations could be attributed to individual variability among the respondents, or they might have been more significant if the research sample had been larger.

The only noteworthy correlation regards engagement with English media and classroom learning. The correlation suggests that ESL learners see a complementary relationship between the structured learning environment provided by the classroom and the more informal experiences offered by engaging with English media. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, which emphasises the importance of the Zone of Proximal Development and suggests that learning is most effective when it occurs within a social context that provides a suitable environment for the learner. Contrary to the initial hypothesis that interaction with native speakers would be the primary component of this environment,

the findings reveal that English media might be an important aspect. These findings also highlight the potential for media as a complementary resource that English teachers may consider. They also suggest that students who are more engaged in English media might be more interested in the language, which could facilitate better engagement with the classroom if used effectively as part of the learning process.

5.4.3 Research Question 3

"Does attendance at an all-English school influence ESL learners' identity across dimensions of self-perception, social relationships, cultural practices, and values, and how do these influences correlate with their satisfaction with academic achievements?"

Similarly to research question 2, the expectations for the last research question were not met either, and the correlations were too weak to interpret. The reasons might be the same, such as individual variability among the respondents, or they might have been more significant if the research sample had been more extensive.

However, a significant correlation was found between overall academic achievement and self-perception. The positive correlation between the influence of attending an all-English school on self-perception and academic satisfaction aligns with theories of second language acquisition that emphasise the role of self-confidence and identity in language learning. Krashen (1982) suggests that emotional factors such as motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety can impact language acquisition. The correlation suggests that improved self-perception, possibly reflecting higher self-confidence and motivation, is associated with greater satisfaction with academic achievements, underscoring the importance of positive self-identity in educational outcomes.

The strong correlation between cultural practices, values, and beliefs suggests a positive relationship. This indicates that individuals who report a significant influence of an all-English school on their cultural practices tend to associate it with their values and beliefs. The correlation between the influence on cultural practices, values, and beliefs can be linked to theories of enculturation and identity integration. The data hints at the possibility that engagement with new cultural practices through language learning environments contributes

to a sense of belonging and cultural integration, which may affect the values and beliefs of these students. This is consistent with the notion that language learning is not just about acquiring linguistic skills but also involves adopting new cultural frames that enrich learners' cultural identities. When asked about their cultural shift, one participant said, "I married a catholic American Asian. I'm Jewish. I think that says it all."

Moreover, this linguistic shift also has implications for the cultural identity of ESL learners, as language is tied to cultural identity and self-concept. These findings support the ideas formed by Berry (1997) regarding acculturation strategies, particularly integration, where individuals adopt elements from both their native and the new culture. The results show that most respondents consider integration the most applicable acculturation strategy. This could mean that these participants are trying to find a balance between maintaining their native culture and adapting to the culture surrounding the English language. This can be considered a positive outcome as it indicates a desire and ability to live in two cultures.

Notably, Schmitz and Berry (2011) also found that integration emerges as the most adaptive acculturation strategy, which aligns with the findings presented in this research paper. Among other things, Schmitz and Berry (2011) imply that people who favour integration, as opposed to those scoring lower in this aspect, tend to have higher levels of emotional stability. They display more social skills and friendliness, lower impulsiveness, and increased levels of seeking new experiences, open-mindedness, and energy.

5.4.4 Implications for education

The observed cognitive enhancements and linguistic advancements among ESL learners in immersive all-English environments affirm the efficacy of these settings in language acquisition and the importance of cognitive diversity in educational settings. Integrating learners from various linguistic backgrounds can enrich the learning environment, offering unique perspectives that enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Additionally, as students recognise the significance of English media in classroom learning, it may be worthwhile to pay some attention to this area. As society increasingly relies on technology, it is imperative that the educational sector also progresses. Educators must stay

aware of technological advancements, particularly since an engagement with English media in schools is highly valued. This approach could enhance student engagement with content in general, and if approached successfully, it could enhance engagement with educational content. It is essential to teach educators and students to use technology as a tool without becoming overly dependent on it.

However, the process of language acquisition is deeply connected to the process of cultural identity formation, as evidenced by the nuanced experiences of cultural identity negotiation reported by participants. These findings illuminate the relationship between language learning and cultural integration, encouraging educational systems to adopt an approach incorporating language immersion. Policies must transform the conventional focus on linguistic proficiency to address the broader socio-cultural dimensions of language education. This involves not only recognising the cultural identities of ESL learners but also validating them, ensuring that language education does not inadvertently lead to cultural assimilation or loss of identity.

One might endorse the principles of culturally responsive teaching as outlined by Gay (2010). Gay emphasises key elements of culturally relevant pedagogy. This includes creating a curriculum that represents students' ethnic and cultural diversity, ensuring cultural compatibility in education, and utilising culturally informed communication styles. Furthermore, the book emphasises the importance of culturally sensitive care and fostering strong, positive teacher-student relationships, essential for achieving academic success.

To this end, curricula development must be grounded in inclusivity and cultural diversity principles. Incorporating multilingual resources not only aids language learning but also serves as a connection between cultures, ensuring mutual understanding and respect. Celebrating cultural diversity through school-wide events can create a sense of community and belonging, allowing students to share their heritage and learn from each other. This approach benefits ESL learners and enriches all students' educational experiences, fostering a global mindset and preparing them for a diverse world.

Teachers should accommodate students' diverse learning needs and cultural backgrounds. This process includes adopting culturally responsive teaching methods, hoping all students feel seen, heard, and valued in the classroom. Project-based learning, collaborative

assignments, and discussions on students' experiences and cultural knowledge can enhance engagement and learning outcomes.

Teacher training programs play a crucial role in realising these goals. Training should equip educators with the skills and knowledge to navigate cultural diversity sensitively but effectively. These trainings should be offered explicitly to educators in all-English schools, where there is a higher likelihood of teaching culturally diverse students.

This includes understanding the cultural dimensions of language learning, employing inclusive teaching practices, and creating an environment where all students can thrive. Teachers should advocate for their ESL learners, supporting their language development while encouraging them to maintain and celebrate their cultural identities.

In summary, this study's findings call for re-evaluating educational policies and practices to ensure they support ESL learners' development. By embracing linguistic and cultural diversity, academic institutions can create enriched learning environments that prepare all students for success in a multicultural world. Education in the English language offers significant benefits to non-native speakers, particularly when their own culture is celebrated alongside it. This underscores the importance of making English education more accessible to a broader range of students. Notably, most of the schools attended by these students are private, reflecting the high cost of English education in non-English speaking countries. This shift would also require efforts from policymakers.

5.5 Limits of the Results

While this thesis's findings contribute to the discourse, they have inherent limitations that can suggest directions for future research. The reliance on self-reported data and the demographic concentration of participants highlights the need for further studies with broader, more diverse samples to explore the long-term impacts of bilingual education. Additionally, investigating ESL learners' psychological well-being and social integration in all-English schools could offer valuable insights into the broader effects of such educational environments.

Exploring the role of digital media and online interactions in supporting language acquisition and cultural integration in the context of modern technological advancements presents another promising field for future inquiry. This direction could provide critical insights into how digital environments complement traditional educational settings in the process of language learning and cultural adaptation.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the impacts of all-English education on English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, with a particular focus on cognitive development, cultural identity, and educational outcomes.

Central to this investigation was a nuanced analysis of second language acquisition theories, drawing a distinction between language learning and acquisition processes, especially as experienced by ESL learners in immersive environments. Through carefully exploring various theoretical frameworks, the study attempted to provide a broad overview of how ESL learners face the challenges and opportunities presented by their educational contexts. Moreover, the thesis delved into the cognitive implications and socio-cultural impacts of learning English as a second language, investigating whether immersion in an all-English environment fosters cognitive advantages or presents unique challenges.

By employing quantitative research methods, this thesis aimed to empirically assess the educational outcomes of ESL learners in all-English schools, focusing on language proficiency, cognitive development, and the various ways in which language learning intersects with cultural identity formation. Through collecting and analysing data from a diverse participant pool, the research unveiled significant insights into the experiences of ESL learners, highlighting notable shifts in language dominance, cognitive skills, and cultural identity.

Even though not all theories were corroborated, the findings from this study validate the profound cognitive and socio-cultural transformations that accompany immersion in an all-English educational environment. Notably, a substantial proportion of participants reported a shift in the dominant language of their thoughts and dreams, affirming theories on the cognitive flexibility of bilingualism and linguistic immersion. Furthermore, the research illuminated the essential role of classroom learning and engagement with English media in the language acquisition process, affirming the importance of authentic linguistic and cultural experiences.

Importantly, the thesis illuminates the impact of all-English education on learners' cultural identity and self-perception. The positive correlations observed between immersive

educational experiences and shifts in self-perception highlight the significant role of the educational environment in shaping students' identities. These findings advocate for educational practices that promote cultural and linguistic inclusivity, offering valuable insights for educators and policymakers interested in the dynamics of language learning, bilingual education, and identity development in a globalised world.

Despite its contributions to the field, this research acknowledges inherent limitations. These limitations suggest directions for future research. Additionally, investigating ESL learners' psychological well-being and social integration in all-English schools could offer valuable insights into the broader effects of such educational environments.

The insights derived from this thesis aspire to contribute to the ongoing debate on the efficacy of all-English education for ESL learners. By delving into the relationships between language immersion, cognitive development, and cultural identity, this research attempts to enrich the theoretical discourse on second language acquisition and bilingualism but also offers practical insights for teachers and learners facing the challenges and opportunities of all-English education in a globalised context.

In conclusion, this thesis is a testament to the complexity and richness of language learning, offering a nuanced perspective on the multifaceted challenges and opportunities surrounding language, cognition, and culture in educational settings. It calls for continued exploration and dialogue to enhance our understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity in hopes of advocating for more inclusive and effective language education policies and practices in a rapidly globalising world.

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Appendix

The Cultural Impact of Attending all-English School for ESL Speakers - Questionnaire

Hello,

My name is Hana Nicholasová, and I am a bachelor's student at Charles University.

As part of my final year thesis, I am conducting a quantitative research study aimed at exploring the impact of attending all-English schools on students who are English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. This research focuses on various dimensions of this experience, including language proficiency, identity formation, cognitive development, and cultural integration. This questionnaire aims to gather valuable insights from individuals like yourself who have experienced education in all-English environments.

Your anonymous responses will be treated confidentially and used solely for this academic project. By completing this survey, you agree to participate and allow your data to be analysed for this study.

For questions or to receive the study's findings, contact me at hananicho@seznam.cz

Thank you for your valuable contribution!

Hana Nicholasová

Demographics

1) Please select your age rage

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-55

55-64

65+

2) What is your gender?

   Male

   Female

   Prefer not to say

3) What is your nationality?

4) What is your native language?

5) Do you speak any other languages besides English and your native language?

6) If you answered yes to the previous question, please list each language, your proficiency and how long you have been speaking it.

7) How many years did you attend an all-English school?

8) How many years have passed since you graduated from the all-English school?
   Less than a year
   Less than five years
   More than five years

9) What is your current level of English proficiency on the CEFR scale?
   A1: Beginner
   A2: Elementary
   B1: Intermediate
   B2: Upper-intermediate
   C1: Advanced
   C2: Proficient

Language Proficiency

10) How often have you used English outside of school settings during your studies?

Daily

Several times a week

Once a week

A few times a month

Less than once a month

11) Rate your English proficiency in the following areas before and after attending the all-English school. Please use the CEFR scale to answer.

Speaking: Before: A1-C2

After: A1-C2

Listening: Before: A1-C2

After: A1-C2

Reading: Before: A1-C2

After: A1-C2

Writing: Before: A1-C2

After: A1-C2

Language Acquisition and Learning

12) Reflecting on your language learning journey, how do you assess the role of the following in your English language acquisition?
Rate from 1 (Not important) to 5 (Very important):

Classroom learning

Interaction with native speakers

Engagement with media in English (e.g., movies, books, news)

Participation in cultural activities or celebrations on school grounds

13) What best describes your experience learning English in an all-English school?

Primarily natural language acquisition

A mix of natural language acquisition and formal language learning

Primarily formal language learning

Cognitive Development

14) Have you observed any specific changes in your cognitive abilities, such as memory, attention, or problem-solving, that you attribute to your experience in an all-English educational environment?

Yes

No

Not sure

Yes, and I wish to specify:

15) Do you find that learning in English has affected your ability to solve problems quickly and efficiently?
Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree

16) Please indicate your agreement with the following statement: "Learning subjects in English has enhanced my memory skills."
Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree

17) Rate the level of cognitive effort required to engage with academic content in English compared to your native language.

Much less effort in English

Slightly less effort in English

About the same

Slightly more effort in English

Much more effort in English

Language Dominance

18) Do you feel more comfortable thinking in your native language or English?
Much more comfortable in my native language
Slightly more comfortable in my native language
About the same
Slightly more comfortable in English
Much more comfortable in English

19) Has the dominant language in your thoughts and dreams changed since attending an all-English school?
Yes
No

20) To what extent do you feel that your proficiency in your native language has deteriorated since attending an all-English school?

Not at all

Slightly

Moderately

Significantly

Extremely

Identity formation and enculturation

21) To what extent has attending an all-English school influenced the following aspects of your identity? Rate each aspect from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Significantly):

Self-perception

Social relationships

Cultural practices

Values and beliefs

22) If you wish to elaborate on the previous question:

23) Which acculturation strategy applies to you the most?

Assimilation: Adopting the cultural norms of the dominant culture over the native language. For example, if you primarily adopt English ways of speaking, thinking, and living while minimising your native cultural practices.

Integration: Maintaining your original culture while interacting with and adopting aspects of the dominant culture. For instance, you balance speaking both your native language and English fluently and celebrate cultural traditions from both backgrounds.

Separation: Prioritize your original culture and minimise contact with the dominant culture. This could mean you stick closely to your native language and cultural practices and primarily socialise within your cultural community, avoiding much integration with English-speaking or local cultural contexts.

Marginalisation: Feeling disconnected from both your original culture and the dominant culture. An example would be struggling to identify with or feel part of either your native culture or the English-speaking community, leading to a sense of exclusion or isolation from both.

24) How has exposure to the English language and culture at school influenced your perceptions of your cultural identity?

25) Can you share a particular instance where you felt your understanding or appreciation of a different culture was enhanced due to your education at an all-English school?

Sociocultural Impact

26) How has attending an all-English school influenced your cultural identity?

Strengthened my native cultural identity

No significant change in my cultural identity

I feel more integrated into English-speaking cultures

Other (please specify)

27) Rate your ability to navigate between your native culture and the culture associated with the English language.

Very difficult

Somewhat difficult

Neutral

Somewhat easy

Very easy

28) To what extent do you feel a sense of belonging within the all-English school environment?

Not at all

A little

Moderately

A lot

Completely

29) How has attending an all-English school impacted your confidence in using English in academic and social contexts?
Not at all
A little
Moderately
A lot
Completely

30) How has attending an all-English school impacted your interest in pursuing further education or career opportunities in English-speaking environments?
Not at all
A little
Moderately
A lot
Completely

31) How has attending an all-English school impacted your sense of belonging to a global community?
Not at all

A little
Moderately
A lot
Completely

32) Please indicate your agreement with the following statement: "Being proficient in English makes me feel more confident."
Strongly agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Educational Outcome

33) On a scale of 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), how satisfied are you with your academic achievements in the all-English learning environment?

34) Overall, how has your experience in an all-English school setting impacted your academic performance?

Significantly improved

Moderately improved

No noticeable impact

Moderately declined

Significantly declined