

ESCUELA SUPERIOR POLITÉCNICA DEL LITORAL
Centro de Lenguas Extranjeras
CELEX

**LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR
UNIVERSITY UNSUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE
LEARNERS IN ECUADOR**

Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

A thesis submitted to the Master's
Thesis Committee in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master in Teaching English as
a Foreign Language

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Guayaquil- Ecuador
2011

Acknowledgement

To God who is love that sustains everything in the world

To my husband Ramón and my children Erika and Juan Ramón who have supported me not just with words but with actions.

To my parents for their unconditional love that inspired me to believe in teaching as a good way to reflect this feeling.

To my dearest teacher and friend Dr. Dara Shaw who has been my support from the beginning and who has been the biggest blessing that happened during the Masters program.

To my friend Catalina who shared this long path with me with courage and persistence.

To my teachers Msc. Jorge Flores and Msc. Dennis Maloney, who have shared generously all their knowledge and experiences.

To my dear students who participated in this study because they were the reason and the engine that fires the searching for new methodologies and resources in learning and teaching.

To all the people who encouraged me to do this study and who helped me to reach this goal.

All my gratitude

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the main learning difficulties that university unsuccessful students face in EFL. A remedial intervention was designed and implemented by explicit training in appropriate learning strategies. The participants were 89 novice students from Engineering and Technology, 28 females and 61 males from an Ecuadorian university who were enrolled in general language courses as part of their degree programs. Two treatment groups were formed of 62 students who received explicit instruction in language learning strategies during 12 weeks; the control group was formed of 27 students. The study was designed as classroom action research and the data required the employment of quantitative methods as well as qualitative. Quantitative methods selected for this study included the Learning Style Survey (SAS) as well as the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL); both aspects were analyzed by relating them with students' gender, educational background, major, and proficiency. Qualitative methods to collect data included semi-structured interviews, learners' diaries, strategy checklists and teacher's observation records. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 16.00) was used to analyze data came from the questionnaires and the McNemar test was used to determine the significance level of the strategies after the instruction. Results regarding exploratory study showed that however students who had more language learning difficulties came from public schools, within both educational contexts it was found that all the strategies were used at medium level of frequency; metacognitive strategies as well as compensatory and social ones are the most used by these students, and cognitive strategies are the least used; however the same kind of

strategies were reported by high and low proficient students. On the other hand kinesthetic or haptic- sensory learning style represented the highest preference (22.6%). Gender differences in strategy use, as well as in learning styles were also observed. Effectiveness of strategy instruction was also demonstrated in this study, since within the treatment group a total of 11 strategies proved to be significant after the instruction. It also improved language learning, increased motivation, and metacognitive awareness, and students reached greater autonomy and more self-confidence.

KEY WORDS: Unsuccessful language learning, learning styles, language learning strategies

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement	i
Abstract.....	ii
Table of contents	iv
Table of appendix	vi
Table of figures.....	vii
Table of tables	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Purpose of the study	3
Research questions	3
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	5
Learning styles	8
Language learning strategies.....	28
Instruction in language learning strategies.....	53
Chapter 3: Methodology	61
Research design.....	61
Setting	62
Participants of the study.....	63
Instrumentation	65
Data analysis	68
Course design.....	70
Chapter 4: Results and findings.....	83
Language learning strategies of novice learners	84

Effectiveness of instruction in language learning strategies.....	98
Results about tutorial group	126
Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusions	172
Learning styles, language learning strategies and gender	178
Learning styles, language learning strategies and major	183
Unsuccessful language learning	185
Chapter 6: Implications for teaching	217
References.....	222

Table of Appendix

Appendix A: Learning Style Survey (Oxford, R. 1993)	239
Appendix B: Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, R. 1989, adaptation in Spanish made by Roncel, 2007).....	241
Appendix C: Semi- structured interviews.....	244
Appendix D: Samples of entries for the learner’s diary	246
Appendix E: Language learning strategy checklist	251
Appendix F: Consent Form	252
Appendix G: Information handouts – Activities	254

Table of Figures

Figure 1	Framework for examination of second language learning (Stern, 2003)	6
Figure 2	Preliminary classification of learning strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 2002).....	36
Figure 3	Diagram of the Strategy System (Oxford, 1990)	38
Figure 4	Language learning strategies selected for the instruction	76
Figure 5	Sensory learning styles – Treatment group	102
Figure 6	Learning Styles- How I deal with other people.....	103
Figure 7	Gender differences in learning styles	105
Figure 8	Personality and gender differences	106
Figure 9	Educational backgrounds and learning styles	108
Figure 10	Major and learning styles	110
Figure 11	Learning Styles - Tutorial Group	138
Figure 12	Types of personality – Tutorial Group.....	138

Table of Tables

Table 1: Demographics for the treatment groups	64
Table 2: Demographics for the control group.....	64
Table 3: Demographics for the tutorial group	65
Table 4: Averages use of strategies (total sample)	84
Table 5: Language learning strategies used at high level of frequency (total sample).....	85
Table 6: Language learning strategies vs. kind of school.....	87
Table 7: Direct Strategies used at high level of frequency and educational backgrounds.....	89
Table 8: Indirect language learning strategies and educational background	90
Table 9: Direct language learning strategies and gender.....	92
Table 10: Indirect language learning strategies and gender	93
Table 11: Direct language learning strategies and major	96
Table 12: Indirect language learning strategies and major.....	97
Table 13: Averages use of strategies- treatment group	99
Table 14: Language learning strategies used at high level of frequency (Treatment group).....	100
Table 15: Gender differences in learning styles	105
Table 16: Personality and gender differences.....	106
Table 17: Educational backgrounds and learning styles	107
Table 18: Educational backgrounds and personality.....	108

Table 19: Major differences and learning styles.....	109
Table 20: Significant memory strategies- Treatment group.....	112
Table 21: Significant cognitive strategies- Treatment group	113
Table 22: Significant compensatory strategies- Treatment Group	114
Table 23: Significant metacognitive strategies- Treatment Group.....	115
Table 24: Significant affective strategies- Treatment group	116
Table 25: Significant social strategies- Treatment group	117
Table 26: Significant memory strategies- Control group	120
Table 27: Significant cognitive strategies- Control group.....	121
Table 28: Significant compensatory strategies- Control group	122
Table 29: Significant metacognitive strategies- Control group.....	123
Table 30: Significant affective strategies- Control group.....	124
Table 31: Significant social strategies- Control group	125
Table 32: Scores and overall average obtained at SILL.....	136
Table 33: Educational background vs. students proficiency	137
Table 34: Memory strategies vs. proficiency – Tutorial group	140
Table 35: Cognitive strategies vs. proficiency - Tutorial group.....	141
Table 36: Compensatory strategies vs. proficiency – Tutorial group.....	143
Table 37: Metacognitive strategies vs. proficiency- Tutorial group.....	145
Table 38: Affective strategies vs. proficiency- Tutorial group.....	146
Table 39: Social strategies vs. proficiency- Tutorial group.....	147
Table 40: Averages use of strategies before and after LLS instruction.....	149
Table 41: Students’ grades and overall averages in strategy use.....	150
Table 42: Learning Styles and proficiency levels- Tutorial Group	152
Table 43: Effectiveness of instruction and proficiency	153

Table 44: Significant memory strategies- Tutorial group.....	154
Table 45: Significant cognitive strategies – Tutorial group	155
Table 46: Significant compensatory strategies- Tutorial group	156
Table 47: Significant metacognitive strategies- Tutorial group	157
Table 48: Significant affective strategies- Tutorial group.....	158
Table 49: Significant social strategies- Tutorial group	159
Table 50: Summary of monitoring of language learning.....	161
Table 51: Enhancement in language skills and proficiency levels	167

Chapter 1

Introduction

Undergraduate students in most universities in Ecuador are enrolled in general language courses as part of their degree programs. EFL like any other subject in the curriculum is considered a requirement for all the degree programs, therefore students must earn a certain number of credits according to the rules of the higher education institutions. It can mean that a student who fails in English might be at the risk of not being allowed to continue in their university program.

Some students normally have problems in fulfilling the requirements of their English language studies. When they get to university, the problems become bigger, because the course load requires new responsibilities from them. On the other hand, it is manageable for them to pass any other subject in their native language, but English seems to be a much more complicated issue for many of the students, especially for those with learning difficulties. Many try several times to pass the same English course, but they fail anyway.

In a Foreign Language Department at a major Ecuadorian Technical University, general language courses for all the students are required, from basic to upper-, intermediate levels. The curriculum is based on communicative language learning and it has with a well qualified teaching staff. Administrators and teachers are really concerned about the percentage of students (15%-20%) who drop out of their university programs because they fail English courses.

According to ETU rules, a student who fails in a subject is allowed to take the same course up to three times. After that, they must leave the university, no matter how advanced or well they have done in their majors. From the student point of view,

these rules might be considered unfair because EFL does not constitute a specialization area for their degrees. Many protest that failing English is not a valid reason to give up their studies.

As a teacher at this university I have heard conversations among many of my colleagues who feel that they offer quality English instruction. They use different techniques, strategies, methodologies, and attend lots of training courses. Some allege that the high failure rate is the fault of the students who teachers perceive as lazy or careless. They do not take responsibility for the students'. There are many students, who though they have successfully completed most of their core degree courses, need special support to enable them to pass the English language requirement in order to graduate as engineers, economists and information technology specialists.

Teachers can not leave aside the commitment to education. In Ecuador only the 30% of university students get a degree (Cedeño, 2008) so, it is a serious issue that must concern us as educators, and a problem for which we should find a solution. The attrition problem is of constant concern to those teachers whom are always looking for improvement in their practice. In analyzing this problem it seems to be pretty clear that if those students had been exposed to the same course for two or three times and they are not able to pass and learn, it could be that some individual differences have not been taken into account. Study of language learning difficulties is better approached if researchers and practitioners are able to frame a teaching – learning model in which identifying factors related to language learning, will enable them to grasp the interaction of these factors and the learning styles of the students are mismatched.

Individual learning difficulties probably do not have to do with content matter, but rather with coping with the learning skills and challenges required in their

careers. Teachers and researchers must reflect on our daily practice, in the learning-teaching process, as well as on those kinds of complex matters that are intrinsic and variable in language learning. Understanding the complexity of the relationship between language learning process, and individual learning styles and capacities are worthy of research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study will be to investigate the main learning difficulties that unsuccessful students face in EFL. A remedial intervention will be designed and implemented by explicit training in appropriate learning strategies which may improve English language learning for unsuccessful ELL.

Research Questions

Finding language learning problems is really hard work, because it has myriad variables in complex relationship. For the purpose of this research, variables that dealt with learner factors, such as learning style, educational background, gender, major, and personality characteristics were studied. The main focus of this study was on finding out how the use of language learning strategies could improve language learning in unsuccessful learners. For the purpose of this research unsuccessful learners are considered those students who have failed a course level within the Foreign Language Department and they need to take it again.

An important starting point was to search for what are the language learning strategies that novice students bring to their initial course, not just because this issue would mean to fill a gap in research about LLS, but also to determine how these strategies related to their learning styles.

Language learning strategies have been carefully studied with the assumption that the analysis of their use and frequency by students supported on the one hand by the knowledge about their own learning styles, and on the other hand by the expectations that the instruction in language learning strategies (LLS) might empower them to discover their own inner resources and practice language learning strategies, thus allowing them to overcome their language learning difficulties..

In this study the following questions were explored:

RQ 1: What are the main language learning problems that unsuccessful learners face at a rigorous technical university?

RQ2: What are the learning styles of unsuccessful learners?

RQ3: How does the use of language learning strategies differ among students with different proficiency levels?

RQ4: How effective was the instruction in language learning strategies for novice learners and for unsuccessful learners?

RQ5: How will learning strategies influence unsuccessful language learners` (ULL) perceptions towards English?

RQ6: What should be considered in designing a remedial course for unsuccessful university language learners?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Any research process requires finding out the previous literature available about the topic selected for the study. In this chapter it was synthesized the most relevant information encountered about findings in learning styles, language learning strategies and the factors related to both, like culture, gender, major and educational background. It was also included a review about effectiveness of instruction in language learning strategies (LLS).

Language learning difficulties are inherent to language learning and teaching. A principal *raison d'être* of educational research is accepting the challenges of these difficulties by studying them through different lenses. Research enables teachers to open up to a more objective reflection about the challenges of learning and teaching a language. Subjective perspectives of the researcher emerge because these are based on their daily practice and experiences.

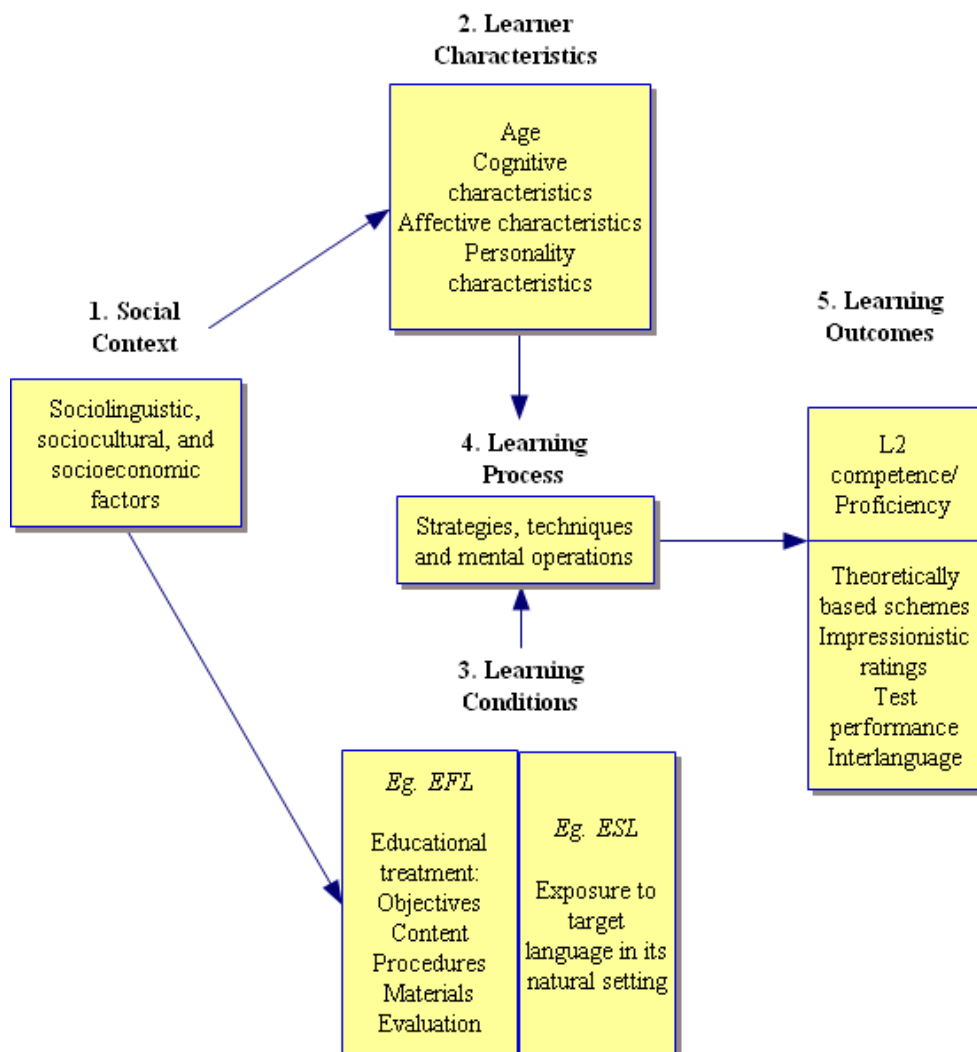
Stern's (2003) model of second language learning shown in Figure 1 provides a good starting point for visualizing all the factors that are involved in every learning teaching language theory. His model allows us to identify some of the main variables which are essential parts of this literature review.

According to Stern (2003) in this diagram three sets of variables: 1) social context variables; 2) learner characteristics and 3) learning conditions are represented as determiners of the learning process and of the learning outcomes. These learner outcomes are what concern us when unsuccessful language learning is analyzed. Stern also questions what factors in the model or combination of factors contribute to the success of some learners and the failure of others. For instance, Madeline Ehrman

(1996) in her book *Understanding Second Language Learning Difficulties* devotes more than three chapters to learning styles, in which she states:

...when there is a mismatch between the learner’s styles (that is one of learner’s characteristics) on any of its dimensions and the curriculum and teaching style of the course, there will be effects on the efficiency and effectiveness of the learning” (Ehrman, 1996, p.50).

Figure 1. Framework for examination of Second Language Learning



Framework for examination of second language learning. Taken from *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*, by H. Stern, 2003, p. 338.

A sizable body of empirical research suggests that students learn best when they are taught in ways that match their way of learning (Lovelace, 2005; Mahlios, 2001; Ogden, 2003 as cited in Naimie, Siraj, Abuzaid, & Shagholi, 2010; Domino 1979; Dunn and Dunn 1979 as cited in Isemonger and Sheppard, 2003).

For the purpose of this study, some learner characteristics were considered as crucial variables to be analyzed not just because learner is the center of learning process but because my personal belief that supporting students in discovering themselves is a good way to empower them to become them active participants of their own learning process. In this sense, the current literature review will cover previous research about learning styles considering them as individual differences. It has been also taken into consideration the complexities and elusiveness of the interaction of factors of learning- teaching process (Stern, 2003). According to Lightbown and Spada (1999) “the study of individual learner variables is not easy and results of research are not entirely satisfactory; this is partly because of the lack of clear definitions and methods for measuring the individual characteristics” (p.68).

Some studies focusing on learning styles can be confused with or regarded as closely related to language learning strategies because these are considered as the concrete demonstration of certain specific learning styles which are innate and inherent to each individual. Reid (1995), comparing learning strategies and learning styles asserts that:

“The difference between learning strategies and learning styles has often been unclear. In this anthology learning strategies are defined as external skills that students use, often consciously, to improve their learning; we might describe

them as study skills that students can be taught that can enhance or expand their existing learning styles” (Reid, 1995) .

Therefore, the literature review about language learning strategies including in this study was selected by considering learning strategies as complementary or additive to learning styles, since both of them support to each other in learner self-knowledge about how they acquire learning. Demographic variables like gender, age, as well as educational background and major of learners will be also taken into account in this theoretical framework, all of them associated with learning styles and language learning strategies.

Other factors, some related to personality and affective dimension of learners, and others like learning conditions or social context should be also taken into account as possible causes of language learning difficulties. (Ehrman, 1996). Ehrman (1996) states that “student feelings have as much power to affect their learning success as their styles and strategies” (p.135); she pays special attention to motivation, anxiety, and self-efficacy.

Attitudes and beliefs also belong to the affective dimension of learner and they have been object of important pieces of research too. However this study has mainly focused in the study of language learning strategies and learning styles, it can not neglect these aspects which besides of having relevance to the study of unsuccessful language learning, they actually appeared as important variables in the middle of the way while this research was carried out.

Learning Styles

Learning style literature is really very extensive. Research in this field started with the arrival of different learner-centered approaches, later “with the development

of constructivist views of learning, many researchers began to be interested in depicting individual differences in the way people process information and gain understanding from different constructs” (Chalmers & Fuller, 1996 as cited in Wang, 2007, p. 409).

The term *style* was applied in psychology the first time by Allport in 1937 “to describe patterns of behavior that are consistent over long periods of time and across many areas of activity” (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 1997 as cited in Sadler-Smith, 2001). As a wider concept in educational psychology, *learning style* “generally refers to consistent individual differences in the way individuals set about learning something” (Adey, Fairbrother, William, Johnson, & Jones, 1999, cited in Sadler-Smith, 2001, p. 1).

Literature about learning styles describes some problems like the lack of agreement about the definition (Reid, 1995; Sadler-Smith, 2001), the educational application of learning style concept and the reliability and validity of learning style instruments (Sadler-Smith, 2001; Eliason, 1995), especially within EFL or ESL research, for instance according to Eliason (1995) both culture and the language itself affect the questionnaires. (Cited in Chiya, 2003)

Concerning the lack of agreement about the definition of the concept of learning styles, which confuses learning strategy with learning style, is the difficulty which has prevailed for a long time about the distinction between cognitive styles and learning styles. Since cognitive psychology is concerned with how information is processed, cognitive style was the first term coined by some authors to explain individual differences in such processing. Later, other educational psychologists with a wider conception about learning shifted to the concept of learning styles by providing a multidimensional perspective. Sadler-Smith (2001) claimed that there is

a conceptual confusion between cognitive styles and learning styles, that seems to be solved by understanding that cognitive styles applied within an educational context (e.g. Witkin, Riding, Myers, etc) are perceived as learning styles (Cited in Sadler-Smith, 2001,p. 34)

“The main similarity between learning styles and cognitive style has to deal with its common origin; both the two terms are derived from four areas of psychology. These areas are perception, cognitive controls and cognitive processors, mental imagery, and personality constructs, both having cognitive, affective and sociological features” (Sadler-Smith, 2001 as cited in Wang, 2007, p.408).

These diverse constructs belong to the complexity of human behavior and “there is not a consensus on what these constructs are, so that different researchers have produced different constructs and taxonomies of constructs” (Isemonger and Sheppard, 2003), “they have identified and labeled with different terminology at least 21 components of learning styles; these categories sometimes overlap and in other cases are contrasted becoming learning styles research less accessible and practical for classroom use” (Reid,1995, p.viii).

Practitioners, researchers and educational actors can make use of learning styles within the classrooms in many ways. As teachers the first thing they can do in Eliason (1989, cited in Reid, 1995, p.32) words, is “to acknowledge and celebrate the various types and processes we and our students bring to the classroom while continuing to both accommodate and diverge”. They might also know why some students are “out of sync” with methodology, the teacher, or the other students in the class (Ehrman, 1996, p.126). It is also important to allow students stretch beyond their “comfort zones” (Oxford,2003, p. 7) or experience various alternative learning styles, even “mismatches”, of course once they have been aware of their learning

styles and with their cooperation and understanding (Grasha, 1984, cited by Eliason, 1989 in Reid,1995).

Measuring learning style characteristics

A lack of clarity arises in determining the most important characteristics in a person's learning style and how best to measure them. Some inventories, questionnaires and instruments have been designed to achieve this goal but as “we always view a fragmented picture of what we are measuring and cannot even agree about how best to measure learning styles” (Galloway and Labarca as, cited in Reid, p. 21) the validity and reliability of some instruments still remain fuzzy, not just because some of them are able to measure only one or two isolated aspects, but because some others have little if any theory –based rationale behind them (Bonham,1988;Corbett & Smith,1984; Grasha,1984 as cited in Reid, 1995, p. 20) .

Yamauchi (2008) cited in her study that however learning style inventories have a potential limitation because they can not measure all the dimensions of styles, they seem to be pretty effective to diagnose individuals' learning styles. She also cited Kienzl (2008) who claims that other authors (e.g. Brookfield, 1990; Cross, 1981; Jarvis, 1995; Kemp, 1996; Knowles, 1990, McKeachie, 1994, Peters, 1991) agreed that these inventories have allowed educators to recognize the diversity of the learners in the classroom, and it has contributed to improve the quality of ESL learning communities.

Therefore, the goal is to develop a more comprehensive learning–style assessment by taking into account on the one hand the multidimensional nature of individuals, and on the other hand by choosing valid and reliable instruments, such as

learning style inventories which supposedly provide style profiles of learners on the basis of individual differences.

However information obtained from learning styles inventories should be delivered to learners because it helps them to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses, many authors warn about the risk of “stereotyping” learners. “Learning styles should not be used as just another way of classifying, categorizing, labeling or “pigeonholing” people” (Mariani,2007)

Reid (1995) suggests that it is essential to take special care in explaining to learners that no instrument is perfect, that students and styles grow and change. Furthermore learners and teachers must understand that “learning styles should be viewed as on wide continuums as a result of both nature and nurture in one’s experience”. (Reid, 1998, as cited in Yamauchi, 2008, p.4)

Definitions and Classifications

Learning style studies have influenced the course of the educational system in general and the acquiring of the ESL in particular so that research on learning styles in the ESL classroom is now a broad domain of inquiry with some pedigree, as Isemonger and Sheppard (2003) cite in their study.

“Research has diversified into more specific avenues such as the learning styles of different cultures (e.g. Reid 1987; Hyland 1993; Nelson 1995; Stebbins 1995), the relative effectiveness of learning styles (e.g. Trayer 1991; Hansen and Stansfield 1982), the reliability and validity of instruments used to measure learning styles (e.g. Bowman 1996; Corbett and Smith 1984; Eliason 1995); the role of gender in learning styles (e.g. Oxford 1995) and the pedagogical implications of learning styles (e.g. Violand-Sanchez 1995;

Bassano & Christison 1995; Kinsella 1995; Ehrman 1996; Leaver & Oxford 2001; Oxford and Anderson, 1995)

Most definitions of learning styles seem to be pretty similar in the sense that they are

...different ways of acquiring, processing and transforming knowledge that individuals have...For a given person, the style used in language learning is likely to be a direct reflection of the individual's overall learning styles- the style that is normally applied in most learning or working situations. (Oxford, 1994, cited in Reid, 1995, p.34).

Main divergences in defining learning styles as well as its categories arise because of the different dimensions that authors have given it. For the present study, eighteen research papers about learning styles within EFL and ESL and several other sources have been analyzed, so these are the definitions that were cited the most in these studies.

Witkin (1971) defines cognitive style as a “characteristic self-consistent mode of functioning which individuals show in their perceptual and intellectual activities” (cited in Stern, 2003, p.373)

The term .learning style, as is used by Kolb (1984) and Honey and Mumford (1986), describes an individual's preferred or habitual ways of processing knowledge and transforming the knowledge into personal knowledge. According to Kolb individual differences derive from the psychological attributes that determine the strategies a person chooses while processing information. (Cited in Wang, 2007).

Dunn & Griggs (1988) defined learning style as “the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others”

Reid (1995) defines learning style as “an individual’s natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills (cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Yamauchi, 2008; Nathan, 1998). Keefe (1979) defines a learning style as “characteristic cognitive, affective and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment” (cited in Binti, 2007; Isemonger & Sheppard, 2003; Reid, 1995, Wang, 2007;)

Incorporating the many features of learning style, the author holds that learning style is the habitual preference learners demonstrate in their learning activities; formed from the interaction of factors such as individual experience, cognition, personality and environment; and having the characteristics of individuality, consistency and stability (Wang, 2007, p. 409)

Gregorc (1979) defined learning style as distinctive behaviors which serve as indicators of how a person learns from and adapts to his environment. Learning styles also give clues as to how a person’s mind operates. Although most people operate to some extent in all four styles (e.g. perception, ordering, processing, and relating), 90% of the general population use one or two learning styles much better than the others (Gregorc & Ward, 1977, cited in Binti, 2007)

Ehrman (1996): “Learning styles are broad preferences for going about the business of learning. They are general characteristics rather than specific behaviors. They are made concrete (“realized”) by specific learning strategies.” (p.49)

The multidimensional nature of learning styles is what makes its study fascinating and complicated too, and it is also what has allowed different authors to come up with diverse categories. Within EFL/ESL contexts Reid (1995) and Ehrman (1996) have considered three main categories into which the diversity of learning

styles constructs might be divided: cognitive learning styles, sensory learning styles and personality learning styles. There are some of these dimensions which are measured individually with instruments designed specifically for them while there are also other researchers who have applied instruments or inventories able to measure more than one dimension. Some groups of researchers seem to overlap terminology and taxonomies though. Most learning styles models are bipolar, they have two clearly established end points, but such classification can only be seen as “convenient oversimplification for those of us who teach, train teachers, do research design programs and build models” (Ehrman, 1996, p.51) but they really represent a continuum of behavior. Learning style is a personality disposition, but they are also preferences, which means that they are value-neutral, that is no one style is better than the others (Ehrman, 1996; Reid, 1995).

However most of definitions are pretty similar and contain the same elements, for the purpose of this research Reid’s (1995) and Keefe’s (1979) definitions of learning styles have been adopted.

Cognitive Learning Styles

Several cognitive styles have been identified in EFL /ESL. One of the early constructs that was studied is the field-dependent vs. field-independent which according to Witkin, Goodenough and Atkin (1979) measures divergent tendencies to use either an external or internal frame of reference in processing information (cited in Isemonger and Sheppard, 2003, p.197); Violland-Sanchez (as cited in Reid, 1995) stated that:

Individuals with a field dependent (FD) of perception are unable to perceive elements (or themselves) as separate from their background or environment.

In contrast, field-independent individuals (FI) perceive the field (and themselves) as separate from the surrounded environment (p.49). These cognitive dimensions are also known as global vs. analytical (p.88).

Generally talking, the FD individual is a global learner who is socially oriented and extrinsically motivated; while the FI individual is an analytic learner who tends to work independently, as it was claimed by Ramirez and Price-Williams (1974, as cited in Kang, 1999).

However, results tend to show that FI correlates positively and significantly with language success in the classroom (Brown, 1994; Chapelle, 1995; Chapelle and Roberts, 1986; Chapelle and Abraham, 1990, as cited in Kang, 1999), successful language learning seems to need both characteristics because learners sometimes need to understand language items in context, and they also require isolating items from their field in order to use them in other contexts. This field-dependence/independence ability is assessed as grammatical sensitivity in the aptitude tests. (Stern, 2003, p. 373), so this positive correlation depends on the type of assessment, for instance Abraham (1985) found that L2 learners with FI styles were more successful in deductive lessons, while those with FD styles performed better in inductive lessons (Cited in Kang, 1999). Ellis (1989) suggested that the analytic learner might prefer formal language learning with an emphasis on accuracy, while the global learner might prefer a more communicative approach. (Isemonger & Sheppard, 2003, p.198). In the same line of research findings, Salmani-Nodoushan (2011) also found that FD subjects compared to their FI counterparts, performed much better on the communicative tests. He also cites that Roberts (1983), in a study conducted with adult ESL learners in an American university, discovered that field-independence predicted success for this group on traditional tests of an analytic

nature. In the same study he cites Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) who indicate that more analytical field-independent characteristics are related to the conscious learning of metalinguistic skills, while field-dependence seems to serve the development of communication skills through subconscious acquisition. This finding has to deal with Ellis' (1989) "who has suggested that the analytic learner might prefer formal language learning with an emphasis on accuracy, while the global learner might prefer a more communicative approach." (Cited in Isemonger and Sheppard, 2003)

The constructs of analytical / global are highly related to FI and FD; at the same time these learning styles "have been discussed in terms of brain-hemisphere specialization" (Kinsella, 1995 as cited in Isemonger & Sheppard, 2003). (Reid, 1995). "Brain theory research indicates that the two hemispheres of the brain process information differently (Williams 1983, Reiff 1992 as cited in Kang, 1999). Each hemisphere contributes its special functions to cognitive activities. The left hemisphere has the verbal, sequential, and analytical abilities. The right has the global, holistic, and visual-spatial functions (Levy 1983, cited in Kang, 1999). Learning styles based on brain-hemisphere specialization are sometimes classified as purely cognitive, but other models include it within the personality learning styles depending on whether learning styles are viewed, as simple or compound. A compound model, according to Reid (1995) that is classified within cognitive styles is the Kolb Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1976). The learning style questionnaire developed by Kolb categorizes learners as divergers, assimilators, convergers, or accommodators. This learning style model shows that divergers learn from concrete experience; assimilators learn from reflective observation; convergers learn from abstract conceptualization; and accommodators learn from active experimentation (cited in Chiya, 2003).

Sensory Learning Styles

In the mid- to late 1970s, paradigms began to be developed to identify the more external, applied modes of learning styles. Seminal research by Dunn and Dunn (1972) resulted in *The Learning Style Inventory* (Dunn, Dunn, & Price, 1975), a self-reporting questionnaire that enables public school students to identify their learning style preferences. R. Dunn (1983) and Dunn and Dunn (1979) defined perceptual learning styles as variations among learners in using one or more senses to understand, organize, and retain experience (cited in Reid, 1987). These perceptual constructions were “less abstract and less buried in the inner world of the individual. They are more accessible as they relate to the observable actions of learning, and consequently are easier to operationalize” (cited in Isemonger and Sheppard, 2003).

Influenced by the work of Dunn, Joy Reid developed the Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (Reid, 1987-1995), which attempts to identify perceptual preferences for six learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group and individual. Reid’s research represents a very important contribution not just to learning style theory, but because she was the pioneer in examining perceptual learning styles in relation to cultural background and “she developed the first published learning style measurement tool specifically developed for and normed on an ESL student population”(Nathan,1998,p.5).

The existence of sensory learning styles is based on the assumption that learners receive information through their senses and prefer some senses to others in specific situations (O’Brien 1989, Oxford and Ehrman 1993, Kroonenberg 1995, as cited in Kang, 1999). According to Reid, visual learners prefer seeing things in writing, auditory learners prefer listening, kinesthetic learners prefer active participation or

experiences, tactile learners prefer hands-on work, group students prefer studying with others, and individual learners prefer studying alone. These last two constructs have also been analyzed within other learning style models, the Sociological Styles, where other constructs like teacher authority, team, and pair can be found. (Reid, 1985).

Personality Learning Styles

Personality styles reflect more in the way of feeling and interpersonal relationships. (Ehrman, 1996, p.58) The most important constructions, which are also bipolar and they are not purely cognitive, are based on the four Jungian's dimensions of the Myers-Brigg type Indicator (MBTI) of extraversion- introversion, sensing-intuition, thinking-feeling and Judging-perceiving (Ehrman,& Oxford 1988,1990,1995; Moody,1988 as cited in Nathan, 1998). Sensing, intuition, thinking and feeling are mental "functions" in this model, whereas extraversion, introversion, judging, and perceiving are described as "attitudes". (Ehrman, 1996, p. 93). From the four dimensions, the concept of extraversion /introversion deserves more attention because it was assessed within the sample of the present research and because much of the Jung's work was devoted to this construction. This is interpreted in the Myers-Briggs model as referring to how one's energy flows. Isemonger and Sheppard (2003, p.199) states that "it is difficult to place this dimension as either cognitive or affective". As with the lay use of the terms, the extrovert is an outgoing person who seeks engagement with others, they learn more effectively through concrete experience, they store energy with contact with the outside world. The introvert is a more inward-looking person who might even shy from such engagement; they learn more effectively in individual, independent situations that are more involved with

ideas and concepts and they store energy in solitude or with one or two trusted friends (Isemonger and Sheppard, 2003; Ehrman, 1995; Reid, 1995).” While superficially, this may not appear relevant to language learning, the very social nature of language makes it extremely relevant. Ehrman and Oxford (1990) and Oxford, Ehrman and Lavine (1991) have conducted work in this area” (Cited in Isemonger and Sheppard, 2003, p.199).

EFL - ESL Learning styles – Cultural Background, Gender and Major

Learning styles research has demonstrated that individual differences do exist. Nearly all the authors have included pervasiveness, individuality and stability as inherent characteristics of learning style definitions. Others have included features like habitual, natural, internal or biological set of personality traits in order to explain the nature and the origin of learning styles. It is really hard to know to what extent biology and genetics on the one hand and environment on the other hand have shaped individual differences. Yamauchi (2003,p.15) maybe might be offer a good explanation about the origin of learning styles, she cites Fazzaro and Martin (2004) who stated that “ in relation to Kolb’s (1981) experiential learning theory, most of us develop learning styles as a result of our hereditary past life experiences and the needs of our present environment. The result of our hereditary equipment, our particular past life experiences, and the demands of our present environment emphasize some learning abilities over others”.

Learning as a social construction occurs within a determined culture, which is partially responsible for individual differences. “But culture refers not to what is individual, it is something shared by a group of individuals. It concerns similarities, not differences” (Reid, 1995). Culture shares some tangible things, but the most

invisible but probably the most important components of our culture are also shared by a culture. Mariani (2007) states:

The meaning we attach to people, things and events, our deeply felt beliefs, attitudes and values – in a word, our way of knowing the world. This, of course, includes the way we think schools should be run, what should be taught and how, what teachers and students should do in class (p.2).

Culture is both learned and shared. According to Singleton (1991)

“Individuals are most likely not born with a genetic predisposition to learn analytically or relationally, visually or kinesthetically. They learn how to learn through the socialization processes that occur in families and friendship groups” (cited in Reid, 1995, p.6).

The fact that culture influences learning styles was first demonstrated by early research with American minorities (e.g. Cohen, 1969; Hale, 1982; Ramirez y Castaneda, 1974; Wogt, Jordan and Tharp, 1987; Philips, 1983) which suggested that ethnicity played a role in learning differences among the groups studied (Stebbins, 1993 as cited in Reid, 1995, p.108). But, it was Joy Reid who besides being the most cited author in this literature review, started to study learning styles of international ESL students. Her study was really significant since it was carried out with a large sample (N= 1234) of ESL students that included groups of native speakers of Arabic, Spanish, Japanese, Malay, Chinese, Korean, Thai and Indonesian. She employed a validated self-report inventory that probed the preferred learning style modalities of students in four perceptual areas, namely, the visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile areas. In addition, the inventory also probed student preference for individual and group learning. Variables examined included such factors as the age and gender of the students, the TOEFL score of students, the length of time spent in the United States,

the major field of students and whether they were graduates or undergraduates (Isemonger & Sheppard, 2003; Reid, 1987; Sheorey & Choi, 2003).

The Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) has also been used in a number of studies as a measure of learning style preferences of adult ESL students (e.g. Cheng & Banya, 1998; Chew, Kitchen & Chu, 1999; Reid, 1987; Rossi-Le, 1989 and 1995, Reid, 1998 as cited in Sheorey & Choi, 2003). To prove the relevance of this inventory, seven research papers (Mulalic & Mohd Ahmad, 2009; Isemonger & Sheppard, 2003; Torres & Cárdenas, 2008; Nathan, 1998; Garcia & Figueroa, 2007; Peacock, 2001; Sheorey & Choi, 2003) from a group of thirteen which have been reviewed for the present study, reported the application of this questionnaire to assess learning styles.

The most important findings in Reid's work are summarized in these statements:

- There are differences in learning styles regarding students' cultural background.
- Differences in strategies used by second language learners can be attributed to their differences in their learning style preferences.
- ESL students typically prefer kinesthetic and tactile learning styles
- Most groups showed a negative preference for group learning.
- Students who have been in the U.S. for more than three years showed a preference for an auditory learning style.
- Males preferred visual and tactile learning significantly more than females
- Graduate students indicated a significantly greater preference for visual and tactile learning than undergraduates

- Students in four major fields preferred auditory learning as a major learning style: computer science, hard sciences, business, and medicine.
- Engineering and computer science majors were significantly more tactile than humanities majors.
- Students in all fields except hard sciences indicated that individual learning was a minor learning style.
- Spanish speakers have strong preferences for kinesthetic mode.
- “Reid observed no significant difference in learning style preference for her sample in terms of age, although she reports a trend for higher preference means on all four perceptual modalities as age increases” (Isemonger & Sheppard, 2003, p.210)

There were several implications from Reid’s work. First of all she aroused “teacher awareness of the style differences that delineated ESL students from each other and from native English speakers” (Stebbins, 1993 as cited in Reid, 1995, p. 108). Her research also permitted researchers to identify different cultural learning styles which far from stereotyping individuals created the basis for designing new learning environments, material and resources that match better with learners’ styles; these claims may have encouraged some teachers and researchers around the world to find more evidence that supports or rejects Reid’s findings and it has produced a lot of investigation in the field of ESL – EFL learning styles.

Some research papers from the current review have purely assessed learning styles within different cultural backgrounds: Mulalic & Mohd Ahmad, 2009; Isemonger and Sheppard (2003), Torres & Cárdenas, Tinajero & Páramo (1998),

Wang (2007), and Chiya (2003). Some have included variables which are always associated with learning styles like gender, major, or age.

Mulalic, Mohd, & Ahmad (2009) investigated learning styles of 160 ESL university students from Malaysia, China and India by using PLSPQ he found that the students preferred learning style was kinesthetic. They also reported a significant difference in learning style between male and female students. Male students favored Kinesthetic and Auditory LS when compared with their female counterparts. He cites the agreement found with Dunn and Griggs (1990) study in which they found significant differences in learning styles of Mexican and Anglo-American students. Mexican American males had strongest preferences for tactile learning. Female participants in both groups were more motivated to learn than male students". According to Oxford (cited in Reid, 1995, p. 36) "this preference by tactile and kinesthetic channels might be related to the spatial ability prominent in the masculine gender role, a finding reported in some studies (e.g. Hansen, 1982; Hyde & Linn, 1986; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Weiner & Robinson, 1986)"

Isemonger and Sheppard (2003) worked on a replication of Reid's and Hyland's studies. They assessed perceptual learning styles of 710 Korean university students by using PLSPQ. Their study included variables such as age, gender, year of study, major field, time spent overseas and attendance at private language institutes. Probably, one of the results emerging most clearly from this study, and in all other studies in this line of research, is an increase in preference for the auditory modality with time spent overseas in an English-speaking environment, which was also found by both Reid's and Hyland's studies. The study obtained different results from both Reid and Hyland in the area of learning style preferences and gender, and

clearly contradicted predictions made by Oxford (1995) concerning the tendencies one would expect from men and women in this area.

Wang (2007) found variation in learning styles in a group of 152 Chinese university learners enrolled in EFL courses at a technological university. She applied The Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire devised by Felder and Soloman (1991). She did not find any significant difference between genders.

Three studies from this group that deserve some attention because they were carried out with EFL Hispanic learners are from Torres & Cardenas in Perú, a study realized by Tinajero & Páramo (1998) in Spain, and Hernández (2004) in Mexico.

Torres & Cardenas (2008) evaluated perceptual learning styles of 24 students from a Language Center, finding that 27% of students preferred kinesthetic and individual styles, especially the younger students from 21 to 31. Their study also found that females preferred visual learning while males preferred group work.

Hernández (2004) realized an exploratory study of the different cognitive, sensory and affective emotional learning styles with 105 Mexican students arriving to a similar finding about kinesthetic preference: “Students can show higher preference by kinesthetic style if they are around 17 and 32 years old in both genders (para. 53).

Tinajero & Páramo (1998) assessed Field Dependence- Independence in 383 students from 9th grade. They related this analysis to academic achievement, finding that field independent children of both sexes obtained higher grades in English than field dependent children and field independent girls show higher achievement levels than field dependent.

Other studies reviewed have focused on the effectiveness of matching learning and teaching styles to improve language learning: Yamauchi, 2008; Nathan, 1998; Peacock, 2001; Garcia & Figueroa, 2007 and Naime, Siraj, Ahmed & Shagholi, 2010.

Yamauchi's quantitative research (2008) evaluated learning styles of 117 ESL learners and 11 teachers at an American university. Through descriptive statistics and correlation analysis she found that students' educational status affected motivation in learning and the more ESL students learn in a professional field, the more they are likely to be motivated as they develop various types of learning styles.

The action research developed by Nathan in 1998 with 166 Taiwanese students clearly showed evidence that it is worthwhile for writing teachers to identify learning styles and learning preferences of their students in order to develop activities that better suit the needs of local classroom.

Peacock (2001) investigated learning style and teaching style preferences in EFL at Hong Kong University with 206 students and 46 teachers. As he wanted to test two of Reid's major hypotheses about learning styles: "All students have their own learning styles and learning strengths and weaknesses...A mismatch between teaching and learning styles causes learning failure, frustration, and demotivation", he applied PLSPQ to both groups, with some adaptations made for teachers. Besides supporting the truth of Reid's hypotheses, he found that among Chinese students kinesthetic and auditory were major styles, while kinesthetic, group and auditory were major teaching styles.

García & Figueroa (2007) produced other research, which is particularly relevant for this present study, because they assessed 32 Colombian university students from first level of English. In addition to evaluating learning and teaching styles through qualitative and quantitative methods, their study demonstrated that

matching learning and teaching produced higher motivation. It was found that tactile learning style was the most representative, followed by auditory and kinesthetic styles.

Naime, Siraj, Ahmed & Shagholi (2010) worked on research that relates learning styles with learners' achievement and technology preferences. The sample consisted of 4 lecturers and 310 students in an English major program in Iran. By using the Index of Learning styles, observations and interviews they concluded that the students show a positive response and higher achievement when their learning preferences and needs are accommodated by their lecturers. Based on findings, it is hypothesized that the different learning style dimensions have their own preferences in terms of technology usage.

Regarding the application of learning styles in the EFL / ESL classrooms, Binti (2007) explored the benefits of kinesthetic activities with six upper secondary students. Qualitative methods, classroom observation, interviews, as well as the Style Analysis Survey (Oxford, 1993) were used in her research.

Research in field dependence-independence cognitive styles that deserve particular attention because of its relevance to this research study, is one carried out by Emma Violand-Sanchez (1987) in the eighties who assessed cognitive and learning styles of 20 Hispanic ESL students. Her work aimed to state the differences between English native speakers and language minority students (20 Hispanic learners), and subsequently, based on these results, to develop and implement a new curriculum model of instruction. Her findings besides of contributing to the knowledge of learning styles of Hispanic learners which is relevant to the present research, is also in the same line of cross-cultural learning styles, curriculum development and classroom activities. Among their important findings she stated:

African –American and Hispanic students *as groups* tend to be field-dependent. These results parallel those made by earlier researchers (e.g. Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974; Witkin & Berry, 1976; Hale-Benson, 1987). However some of these studies like the Hale-Benson’s included a very small size sample, they were a starting point for further research. “Also Hispanic and Asian English Proficient (EP) students were generally more field-independent than counterparts with lower language proficiency” (Viola-Sánchez, 1987 as cited in Reid, 1995, p.50-51).”

Language Learning Strategies

The claim that "the students’ language learning strategies have a powerful impact on the students’ learning outcome” (Lengkanawati, 2004, as cited in Deutsch, 2005 p.19; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989 as cited in Gu, 2002) provides a rationale to include a literature review about language learning strategies (LLS) within the analysis of language learning difficulties.

As if it were a paradox, the study of language learning strategies started with the early identification of the characteristics of skillful language learners by Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) who are “two of the earliest researchers who shifted their focus from teaching methods and materials to a more learner-centered aspect, maintaining that successful language learners employ a variety of learning strategies in their study to facilitate language acquisition” (Varasarin, 2007, p.12). They conducted extensive research into LLS to investigate successful and less successful learner behaviors in the West (Naiman et al. 1978; see Oxford 1993, 1996, for reviews). This body of research intended to find out how good and poor language learners differ in strategy choice (Cited in Zhang, 2003, p.286)

From these initial research efforts, numerous researchers have attempted to emphasize the importance of language learning strategy use by successful language learners (e.g., Abraham & Vann, 1987, 1990; Chamot & Kupper, 1989; Naiman, Frolich, Stern, and Todesco, 1978; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford et al., 1989, 1993, 1995; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985; as cited in Chang, Liu & Lee, 2007). McMullen (2009) claims,

...the publication of Oxford's *What Every Teacher Should Know* (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot's *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition* (1990) ignited a series of empirical studies on LLSs in the international research community which has lasted for nearly two decades. (p. 419).

Indeed, cross-cultural research study on language learning strategies use has been mainly descriptive, as researchers like Chamot (2004) have sought to discover what learning strategies are reported by learners of different languages. These studies have been conducted mainly to find out what strategies learners use, as well as what factors affect these choices. She writes: "The issues that arise from this body of research are: identification procedures of learning strategies, terminology and classification of strategies, the effects of learner characteristics on strategy use, and the effects of culture and context on strategy use". (, p.14)

Twenty two research papers about LLS have been analyzed in this current study, most of them have been done in Asian contexts. Fourteen studies belong to the descriptive type named above, and eight research studies have to deal with LLS instruction. Goh & Poh, 1997; Chang, Liu, & Lee, 2007; Su, 2005; Ghadessy, 1998; Phakity, 2003; and Vidal, 2002 have investigated language learning strategies related to factors like age, gender, language proficiency and major. Other studies have

focused on finding LLS use for specific language skills like vocabulary (Gu, 2002), reading and writing (İstifçi, 2009; Baker & Boonkit, 2004), and listening (Chen, 2005). Some of these authors have focused on the study of specific strategies or group of strategies to develop these skills, as in the case of the Liao's (2006) who explored the role of translation in Taiwanese college students' English learning.

Research studies associating language learning strategies with other factors like with self-efficacy have also been carried out (Lian -Wong, 2005), with intuitive-analysis style (Kelly, 2005), or with strategy awareness and English-learning self-image (Lee & Oxford, 2008). All of these studies have been carried out within EFL or ESL contexts with populations from similar cultural backgrounds, because as Goh & Poh (1997) explain:

...although there have been many reports on findings concerning learner strategy use among ESL/EFL learners, it has been difficult to compare these findings; one reason is that many of these studies have been conducted among mixed groups of learners with different backgrounds and experiences, (p. 39).

One such research which is reported here is a comparative study made by Deneme (2010) to explore the cross-cultural differences in LLS preferences among 55 students from Jordanian, Turkey and Spain attending EFL classes in their native countries. She found some differences in strategy use; these differences were not only in general strategy categories but also in the individual strategies they used.

The second group of studies analyzed for this research concerns with Instruction in language learning strategies. Three authors explored the effects of LLS instruction in reading comprehension in different contexts: Deutsch, 2005; Hayashi, 1999; and Cataldo, 2008. Mizumoto & Takeuchi, 2009 and Ali (2007) investigated

the impact of instruction on vocabulary learning strategies, the former ones in Japan and the latter in Saudi Arabia. Action research in LLS was carried out by Varasarin (2007) who investigated the effectiveness of pronunciation learning strategies in Thai students and teachers. There is one case study carried out with a Chilean learner, which was one of the few studies about LLS in Latin American context available and published on Internet. His author Mauricio Cataldo (2008) found evidence about the development of strong metacognitive strategies to deal with reading comprehension, arriving at replicate previous results found in other studies about EFL Hispanic learners (Green, 1991 as cited in Oxford, 1996; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

Definitions of Language Learning Strategies

Some definitions of LLS emerge from the different research papers analyzed. They are presented here.

“Strategy”, from the ancient Greek term *strategia*, refers to generalship or the art of war. In a more specific sense, strategy entails the optimal management of troops, ships or aircraft in a planned campaign. However, in language learning, the term has been used differently. Strategy is ‘planning movements’, mental or behavioral, that have nothing to do with wars. It has basic concepts like planning, competition, conscious manipulation and movement toward a goal. (Oxford, 1990 as cited in Chang, Liu & Lee, 2007, p. 237). Thus a general definition for the term *strategy* can be ‘mental or behavioral activity related to some specific stage in the overall process of language acquisition or language use’ (Ellis, 1994 as cited in Ghadessy, 1998, p.102 and in Vidal, 2002). Some authors refers to the strategies as “tactics” or “techniques” leaving the door opened for a discussion that makes a

distinction between the two terms in the field of education. Schmeck (1988 as cited in Zhang, 2003, p.287) thought that this distinction would draw attention to the dimension of ‘specificity-generality’. Also the study of individual differences often requires that researchers look at behavior from the more general perspective. So he argued that “the term tactics refers to the specific activities of learners and the word strategies refers to their more general plan or approach” (Cited in Zhang, 2003, p.287-288). For Stern (1983) “strategy is best reserved for general tendencies or overall characteristics of the approach employed by the language learner, leaving techniques as the term to refer to particular forms of observable learning behaviors” (Cited in Ghadessy, 1998 p. 102)

In defining the language learning strategy, “different researchers use different terms and different concepts” (Oxford & Crookall, 1989 as cited in Chang, Liu & Lee, 2007) therefore, a great number of researchers have formulated their own definitions:

Rubin (1975) defined strategies as “the techniques or devices, which a learner may use to acquire knowledge” She also suggested that language learning strategies include “any set of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information” (Cited in Chang,Liu & Lee,2007; Su,2005; Ghadessy, 1998)

Bialystok (1978) defined language learning strategies as “optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language” (Cited in Chang, Liu & Lee, 2007; Su, 2005)

O'Malley (1985): "language learning strategies have been broadly defined as any set of operations or steps used by a learner that will facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval, or use of information" (Cited in Chang, Liu & Lee, 2007)

Chamot (1987) defined language learning strategies as "techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information" (Cited in Su, 2005; Ghadessy, 1998; Chang, Liu & Lee, 2007).

In cognitive perspective, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) viewed language learning strategies as "the special thoughts or behaviors of processing information that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (Cited in Chang, Liu & Lee, 2007; Varasarin, 2007).

Oxford and Crookall (1989) defined language learning strategies as "steps taken by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information (cited in Chang, Liu & Lee, 2007 p.)

Oxford (1990) provided an even more specific definition of learning strategies, and it is the definition adopted for the present study. She states "learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations" (p.8)

"The actions chosen by language students that are intended to facilitate language acquisition and communication" is the definition used by MacIntyre (1994 as cited in Su, 2005, p.46). This definition highlights the awareness and intention of learners' use of language learning strategies. He argued that the term strategy implied active planning in pursuit of some goal, which was not something that would

automatically occur. The definition focuses more on learners' intention and choice of using language learning strategies. (Cited in Chang, Liu & Lee, 2007; Su, 2005)

Cohen (1998 as cited in Su, 2005) states: those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language (p.46).

Language learning strategies are important for learning a language as well as for using it. This seems to frame within communicative language learning, which ultimate goal has to deal with enable language learners to use the target language for communication effectively and appropriately. Canale and Swain (1980, as cited in Oxford, 1990, p.7) claimed that in order to achieve communicative competence it is necessary to develop grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences. Oxford (1990) states that LLS contribute to the goal of communicative competence in general and specific ways because these strategies are tools for active and self-directed involvement of learner, besides appropriate use of LLS results in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence.

Most research in LLS has been addressed to its identification. "The methods of data collection used included observations, interviews, student self-reports and diaries, and questionnaires" (Lian-Wong, 2005, p.246). "Each of these methods has limitations, but each provides important insights into unobservable mental learning strategies" (Chamot, 2004, p.15). The most frequent and efficient method for identifying students' learning strategies is through questionnaires; some studies have developed questionnaires based on tasks that students have just completed, reasoning that students will be more likely to remember and to report accurately if little time has elapsed (for example questionnaires from Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; O'Malley &

Chamot, 1990; Oxford , 2004; Ozeki, 2000; Rubin & Thompson, 1994; Weaver & Cohen, 1997 as cited in Chamot, 2004, p.15).

Classifications of Language Learning Strategies

Once long lists of strategies had been identified, researchers undertook the task of classifying the language learning strategies with research purposes too. Oxford (1993) reported that

“there were at least two dozen different classifications. In general, these strategies fall under four broad categories, i.e. strategies that enable learner to: 1. Comprehend, store, retrieve and use information. 2. Manage and direct their learning through reflection and planning. 3. Control their emotions, and 4. Create opportunities to practice the target language with other people.” (Cited in Goh & Poh, 1997, p. 41)

“The most widely used classifications for language learning and language use strategies are those of O’Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990)...In fact, they both provide similar classifications, but Oxford’s is an all-embracing scheme for learning strategy use” (Cited in Vidal, 2002, p. 47) . The present study was mainly based on Oxford’s but with some additional strategies taken from Chamot’s classification. So both classifications are presented below on figures 2 and 3.

“O’Malley and Chamot (1990) established that three types of strategies, namely metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective, were being used. Within the metacognitive category were those strategies which involve knowing about learning and controlling learning through planning, monitoring and evaluating learning activity, cognitive strategies included those strategies involving manipulation or transformation of the material to be learned, while social/affective strategies mainly

involved the learner in communicative interaction with another person, for example, collaboration with peers and teachers in the learning process” (Cited in Lian-Wong, 2005, p.246).

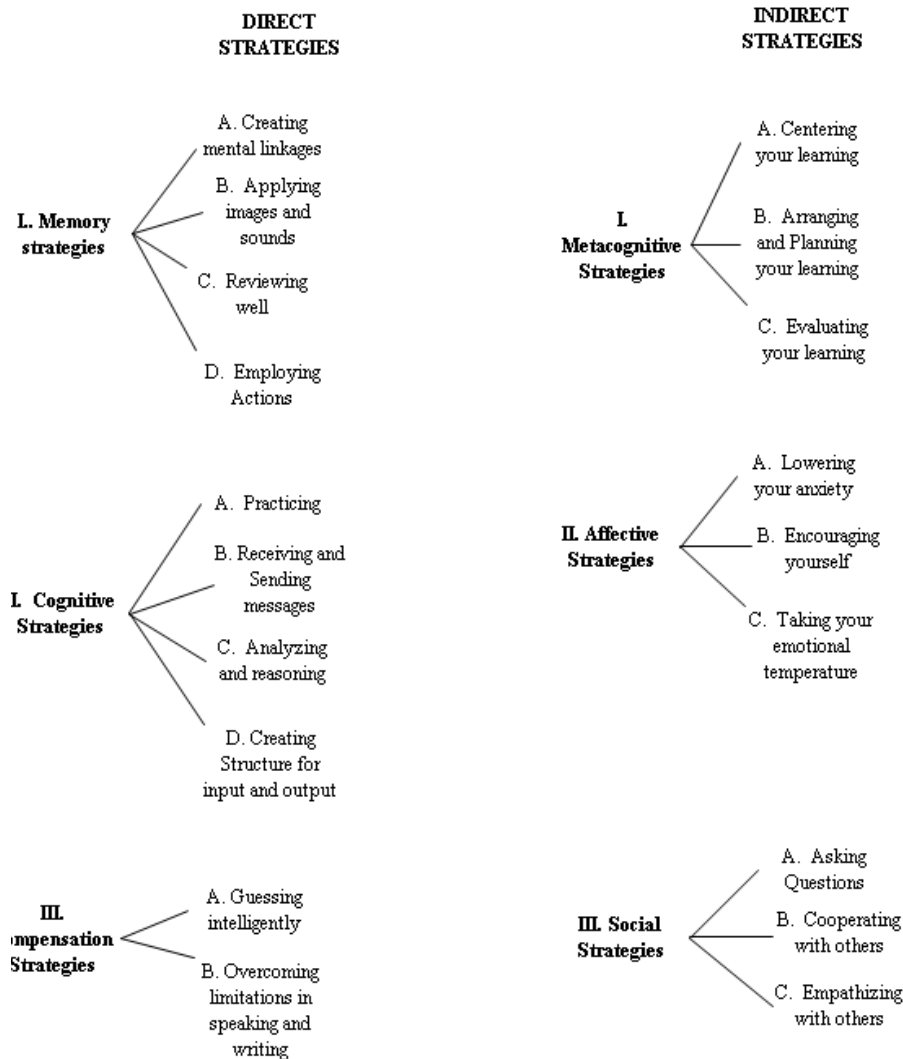
Figure 2. Preliminary classification of learning strategies. Source: O’Malley and Chamot (2002, p.46)

Generic Strategy Classification	Representative Strategies	Definitions
Metacognitive Strategies	Selective attention	Focusing on special aspects of learning tasks
	Planning	Planning for the organization of either written or spoken discourse
	Monitoring	Reviewing attention to a task, comprehension of information that should be remembered, or production while it is occurring
Cognitive Strategies		Checking comprehension after completion of a receptive task, or evaluating language production after it has taken place
	Rehearsal	Repeating the names of items or objects to be remembered
	Organization	Grouping and classifying words, terminology or concepts according to their semantic or syntactic attributes
	Inferencing	Using information in texts to guess meanings of new linguistic items, predict outcomes, or complete missing parts.
	Summarizing	Intermittently synthesizing what one has heard to ensure the information should be retained
	Deducing	Applying rules to the understanding of language
	Imagery	Using visual images to understand and remember new verbal information
	Transfer	Using new linguistic information to facilitate a new learning task
Social-Affective Strategies	Elaboration	Linking ideas contained in new information, or integrating new ideas with new information
	Cooperation	Working with peers to solve a problem, pool information, check notes or get feedback on a learning activity
	Questioning for a clarification	Eliciting from a teacher or a peer additional explanation, rephrasing or examples
	Self- talk	Using mental redirection of thinking to assure oneself that a learning activity will be successful or to reduce anxiety about a task

Oxford (1990), drawing on earlier research conducted over the years, outlined a classification system. She classified strategies into two major groups: direct and indirect. In her definition, direct strategies “directly involve the target language” and “require mental processing of the language”. Indirect strategies “support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language”. The two major strategies are mutually supporting and can be subdivided into six broad categories. Direct strategies include three groups of strategies: memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. Memory strategies are for remembering and retrieving new information, cognitive strategies for understanding and producing the language, and compensation strategies for using the language despite gaps.

Indirect strategies include three groups of strategies: metacognitive, affective and social. Metacognitive strategies for coordinating the learning process, affective strategies for regulating emotions, and social strategies for learning with others.

Figure 3. Diagram of the Strategy System by Rebecca Oxford. Source: Oxford (1990, p. 17)



Based on this classification, Oxford developed the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) to evaluate the use of language learning strategies (Cited in Su, 2005). “The greatest numbers of descriptive studies have utilized *SILL*, which is a standardized measure with versions for students of a variety of languages and it has also been used extensively to collect data on large numbers of mostly foreign language” (Chamot, 2004, p.17) . In fact, nine of the research papers analyzed for this current literature review (Baker, 2004; Chang, Ching, Liu & Lee, 2007; Deneme,

2010; Ghadessy, 1998; Goh & Poh, 1997; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Li & Liu, 2008; Su, 2005; Vidal, 2002) had used SILL as one of data collection method.

Chamot, (2004) points out that Hsiao and Oxford (2002) conducted a comparative study of three classification systems used in the field: O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1981, and found that the Oxford's (1990) system of six basic types of language learning strategies (Metacognitive, Cognitive, Memory, Compensation, Social, and Affective) was superior in accounting for the variety of strategies reported by language learners (p.17). Furthermore, "the efficiency of this categorization in a range of cultures including Asian cultures has also been demonstrated" (Oxford, 1996 as cited in Baker & Boonkit, p. 301). It has also been applied successfully in academic contexts (Dadour and Robbins 1996; Peacock, 2001 as cited in Baker & Boonkit, 2004, p. 301).

It is important to notice that independent of the different classifications of LLS, there are no good or bad strategies, as Oxford (2003) claimed:

A given strategy is neither good nor bad; it is essentially neutral until the context of its use is thoroughly considered... A strategy is useful if the following conditions are present: (a) the strategy relates well to the L2 task at hand, (b) the strategy fits the particular student's learning style preferences to one degree or another, and (c) the student employs the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies. (p. 8)

Language learning strategies are often labeled as successful or unsuccessful according to how effective the strategy is used by learner, which clearly may depend on "the characteristics of the given learner, the given language structure(s), the given context, or the interaction of these. (Cohen, 1996, p. 7).

Learner Factors and Language Learning Strategies

Other important concern for researchers in this field was to investigate what were the factors related to strategy choice. “Learning strategies depend on a large number of factors. Some of these are related to each individual”. (Cited in Ghadessy, 1998, p.102)

“In her review of a number of learner strategies studies, Oxford (1989) lists the following factors: language being learned; duration; degree of awareness; age; gender; affective variables such as attitudes, motivation level/ intensity, language learning goals, motivational orientation; personality characteristics and general personality type; learning style; aptitude; career orientation; national origin; language teaching methods; task requirements” (Cited in Goh & Poh, 1997, p. 41). In the present study language learning strategies were analyzed in relation to learning styles, gender, major, cultural (educational) background, and proficiency.

Learning Styles and Language Learning Strategies

The relationship between learning styles and language learning strategies has been profusely studied for many researchers. Both terms were initially confused and some authors used them as synonyms, but later some distinctions were made: in such a sense Oxford (2003) claims that learning styles are the general approaches to learning a language; and strategies, the specific behaviors or thoughts learners use to enhance their language learning. Reid (1995) also distinguished both terms by claiming that “learning strategies are defined as external skills that students use, often consciously, to improve their learning; we might describe them as study skills that students can be taught that can enhance or expand their existing learning styles. Learning styles, in contrast are internally based characteristics, often not perceived or

used consciously, that are the basis for the intake and understanding of new information” (Reid, 1995, p.viii). It seems to be that “the differentiation of the two concepts should be made in terms of the level of intentionality, awareness and stability” (Bailey *et al.* 2000; Brown 1994; Ehrman and Oxford 1990; Reid 1998 as cited in Jie & Xiaoqing, 2006, p.68).

The relationship between these two aspects is based on the assertion that “language learning strategies do not operate by themselves, but rather are directly tied to the learner's underlying learning styles” (Brown, 1991 as cited in Cohen, 1996, p. 10). When left to their own devices and if not encouraged by the teacher or forced by the lesson to use a certain set of strategies, students typically use learning strategies that reflect their basic learning styles (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford, 1996a, 1996b as cited in Oxford, 2003, p.9)

Reid’s research (1987-1995) on learning styles also found this close relationship; she stated that differences in strategies used by second language learners can be attributed to their differences in their learning style preferences. Based on her studies, researchers carried out investigations about the same topic, some of them were analyzed in the present literature review: Jie & Xiaoqing, 2006; Sheorey & Choi, 2003; Oxford, 1995; Rossi-Le 1989.

Jie & Xiaoqing (2006) investigated learning styles and LLS of 187 EFL second year undergraduate students in China. She used the MBTI-G; a questionnaire adapted from O’Malley and Chamot, and structured interviews to six high and low achievers. Besides of finding that learning styles have significant influence on learners learning strategy choices, and that high achievers are more capable of exercising strategies that are not associated with their non-preferred styles, she cited three empirical studies which suggested that learning styles may significantly

influence learners' learning strategy choices in spite of the different research instruments and contexts concerned (e.g. Carson and Longhini 2002; Ehrman and Oxford 1990; Littlemore 2001).

Sheorey & Choi (2003), worked with 266 university students from three different countries. They evaluated learning styles with PLSPQ from Reid and LLS with SILL questionnaire; additionally, a background questionnaire with demographic information. Their research reported that "at least in the case of one model of learning styles (Perceptual Learning Styles) it may not be a major determinant of the language learning strategies at least in this sample of ESL students at the college level in the U.S."

Rossi-Le (1989) studied the perceptual learning styles of 147 adult immigrants in ESL programs in two community colleges. "The focus of the study was to investigate the role that preferences in perceptual learning style have in determining language learning behaviors and to examine the relationship between these styles and the strategic approaches to language learning that students choose" (Reid,1995,p.118). She used the PLSP (Reid, 1987) and SILL (Oxford, 1986) questionnaires with learners that represented different linguistic backgrounds: Chinese, Laotian, Vietnamese, Spanish and others. Her findings demonstrated that an individual's learning style preference influences the types of learning strategies that he or she will employ in acquiring a second language. She also found that the learning strategy groups most frequently selected as being used were social strategies. Students who favored group study utilized affective, social and interactive strategies. Students who prefer tactile and kinesthetic perceptual learning styles sought out native English speakers and engaged others in conversation, as well as they prefer authentic language use, "but showed a negative preference for memory strategies,

which usually involved auditory or visual associations of various kinds” (Reid, 1995, p. 35-36). Learners who prefer the visual mode chose visualization as a strategy, and in a limited number, individual learners chose model building, reflecting the self-directed and individualized nature of that strategy. (Reid, 1995, p.121-122)

“Rossi-Le found that being an auditory learner was a significant predictor of using memory strategies, using strategies for authentic language use and using self-management strategies like planning and evaluating”(Reid, 1995,p.36)

Language learning styles and strategies are among the main factors that help determine how –and how well –our students learn a second or foreign language (Cited in Oxford, 2003, p. 1-2). There is a growing appreciation for the contribution of such variables to language learning success in recent ESL/EFL classroom research (eg. Carrell and Monroe 1993; Carrell *et al.* 1996; Ehrman and Oxford 1990; Ehrman *et al.* 1995; Littlemore 2001; Wen and Johnson 1997, as cited in Jie & Xiaoqing, 2006, p.68). Concerning to the same issue, Oxford (2003, p.1-2) states that “when the learner consciously chooses strategies that fit his or her learning style and the L2 task at hand, these strategies become a useful toolkit for active, conscious, and purposeful self regulation of learning. Furthermore, in other studies carried out by her and Ehrman (1995) they found that cognitive style and personality variables are also significant predictors of second language attainment.

Gender and Language Learning Strategies

Gender differences have been found in many areas of human social and cognitive development. A comprehensive review of social development studies showed several gender differences such as: females show more interest in social

activities than males; females tend to prefer less aggressive interaction than males; females are less competitive and more cooperative than males (Cited in Oxford, 1996, p. 79). It has almost become commonsensical that female students are in general more successful in language learning than their male counterparts (Sunderland, 2000 as cited in Pavlenko & Piller 2008). Apart from brain hemisphericity, cognitive style, and socialization differences between the two sexes (Oxford, 1995), part of the gender differences in language learning has been attributed to the differences in learning strategies. Since Oxford's publication of "*Vive la Difference? Reflections on Sex Differences in Use of Language Learning Strategies*" (1988), a number of studies have been conducted worldwide – most reporting higher strategy use among females. Studies reporting greater strategy use by female participants include observations from the US (e.g. Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Zoubir-Shaw & Oxford, 1995 cited in McMullen, 2009), from Japan (Watanabe, 1990), from Taiwan (Wang, 2002), from China (Sy, 1994), and from Puerto Rico (Green and Oxford, 1995). Oxford, Nyikos, and Ehrman (1988) summarized four studies concerning gender differences in language learning, confirming that females use a greater range of language learning strategies.

Regarding to the type of strategies more frequently used by females and males, Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1990) discovered that girls use metacognitive strategies, such as goal-setting, planning, keeping records, and monitoring, more than boys.

Females use socially-based learning strategies more often than do males. (e.g. Politzer, 1983; Ehrman and Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). In a study conducted with high school learners, by Oxford, Pak-Oh, Ito & Sumrall (1993) it was found that females tended to use many social and affective strategies more often than

males. Similar results were found in Puerto Rican students in a research carried out by Oxford and Green (1982) (Cited in Reid, 1995, p. 39)

However, in a study carried out by Kaylani (1996) in Jordan with 255 EFL learners and reported by Oxford (1996, p. 84) it was found that “the differences in strategy use accounted for by gender were significant; there was no significant difference in the use of metacognitive and social strategies between male and female students”. In the same study it was revealed that female students used significantly more memory, cognitive and compensatory strategies than male students

Vocabulary learning seems to be another area where gender might exert some influence (Boyle, 1987 as cited in Gu, 2002, p. 36). Oxford, Lavine, Hollaway, Felkins, & Saleh (1996 as cited in Gu, 2002, p. 36), for example, found that female students were significantly more willing to try out new vocabulary learning strategies than male students, a finding corroborated by Young and Oxford (1997 as cited in Gu, 2002, p. 36) and by Gu (2002) who reported that significantly females more use of almost all vocabulary learning strategies that were found to be correlated with success in EFL learning.

From the body of research papers analyzed for the present literature review, Goh & Poh (1997) found that female students used compensation and affective strategies significantly more often than male students, in a quantitative study carried out with 175 students from China by using SILL.

Chang, Ching, Liu, & Lee in a study carried out with 1758 Taiwanese college EFL learners found statistically differences in the use of cognitive, metacognitive, social strategies and overall strategies with regard to gender. Male learners presented less frequently in using overall strategies than did female learners. Female learners

reported using cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies more often than did male.

In a Lee and Oxford's research with 1110 Korean students from middle school, high school and university, they found that women used strategies more often than men. Metacognitive strategies showed significantly more awareness by males than by females; however they use them less often than women.

McMullen (2009) in a research conducted with 165 Saudi EFL students also found that female students used slightly more LLSs than male students, but also cited some other studies where it does not seem to find differences in use of LLSs between both genders. He stated that "in recent years, a number of SILL-based studies have also surprisingly revealed no significant gender differences in strategy use. For example, a study conducted in Malaysia (Hashim and Sahil, 1994) showed no significant differences between male and female students in overall strategy use, although it did indicate a slightly higher use of affective strategies by females. Similarly, no significant gender differences were found in overall strategy use in a study coming out of Lebanon. However, the females there did score higher in certain individual strategy categories (Salem, 2006). Likewise, no significant gender differences were found in a strategy study in Palestine (Shmais, 2003) or in what was probably the first strategy study conducted in Saudi Arabia (Al-Otaibi, 2004). Similar studies from Taiwan, (Luo, 1998; Peng, 2001) have also reported no significant gender differences, but were later disputed by Wang's (2002) study. In another Thai study (Phakiti, 2003), no differences were found between male and female respondents in the use of cognitive studies. (Cited in McMullen, 2009, p.420)

Language Learning Strategies and Cultural Background

It has been analyzed before in the present literature review how culture influence learning styles in a subconscious manner. In fact “many aspects of culture, such as certain beliefs, perceptions and values, including learning styles and learning strategies affect language learning” (Oxford, 1996,p. x). Language learning is fully situated within a given cultural context and it can be expected that the “values of the learner’s society will have a strong influence on choice and acceptability of language learning strategies. The culture of a student is in part, made up of formal and informal educational experiences (Oxford, 1996, p.79). For example, in a culture that prizes individual competition and has organized its educational system around competitive tasks, successful language learners may prefer strategies that allow them to work alone rather than social strategies that call for collaboration with others” (Cited in Chamot, 2004, p.18-19).

Important pieces of research have been collected by Rebecca Oxford (1996) in her book “*Language Learning Strategies around the World*” which focuses on understanding cross-cultural use of language learning strategies and how cultural background affect strategy choice. Her book reports a lot of studies made around the world, but for the present literature review just the research findings concerning to Hispanic students have been taken into in account. Most of the Hispanic students who participated in these studies were part of mixed ESL or EFL groups and in some of these pieces of research SILL was used as a data collection method.

Green, in 1991 used the SILL with 213 students of English at the University of Puerto Rico and they showed high use of metacognitive strategies and medium use of social, cognitive, compensation affective and memory strategies (Oxford, 1996, p.49). Regarding to the use of metacognitive strategies by Hispanic learners, Vidal (2002)

also found that they were chiefly used by 8 Brazilian students in his case study that explored the correlation between reported language learning strategy use, actual strategy use and achievement.

Two studies were carried out with EFL Cuban students: Nicolás (2002) and Casar & Hernández (2000). Nicolás explored language learning strategies of 110 first level university students by using SILL. Results showed that in general the use of strategies is moderated. Only metacognitive, affective and social strategies were reported with values that exceed 3, but they did not reach 3.5 to be considered as at high level of frequency.

In Casar & Hernandez's research a strategy inventory (based on the six Oxford's categories) was conducted on 24 first year students of mechanical engineering, finding that the type of strategies used at high level of frequency were the affective (79.6%) metacognitive (70.3%) and social strategies (37.5%), whereas memory strategies were the least employed (8.33%).

Cataldo (2008) in a case study found that metacognitive strategies were primarily used by an intermediate EFL learner. The percentage of metacognitive strategies used by this EFL learner was 55.81%, became the most appropriate "tactics" that the EFL learner relied on when reading.

Reid (1995) claims that because of Hispanics' global and field dependant style preference many Hispanic ESL/ EFL students choose particular learning strategies, such as predicting, inferring (guessing from context), avoiding details, and working with others rather than alone, and basing judgments on personal relationship than logic. (Oxford, 1996, p. xi)

Politzer and McGroarty (1985) wanted to investigate the relationship between students' L1 background/ethnicity and their strategy use. They administered a

questionnaire to 37 learners, 19 of them were Hispanics (Latin American speakers of Spanish) and 18 were Asians. The study revealed that Asian students scored lower than the Hispanic learners on the scale of good language behaviors. The researchers concluded that such behaviors represent social interactions in which Asian learners are less likely to engage in than Hispanics. Politzer (1983) in a previous research that involved ESL students, reported that Hispanic students used more social interactive strategies (Cited in Su, 2005, p. 53)

Harshbarger (1986) and Willing (1988) also stated that extroverted learning styles, such as those of many Hispanics and Arabic speakers, are related to the use of social strategies for learning (Oxford, 1996, p. xi).

Language Learning Strategies and Major

“Academic majors generally affect students’ use of learning strategies. Generally speaking, students majoring in humanities used more and a wider range of strategies than those majoring in science/engineering in several studies (e.g., Lee, 1994; Park, 1999; Dreyer and Oxford, 1996, and Oxford & Nyikos, 1989) also showed significant influences of university majors on students’ strategy use” (cited in Lee & Oxford, 2008)

These findings have been tested by many other studies. In a research carried out by Chang, Liu & Lee (2007) with 1758 students, designed to investigate the influence of gender and major on college EFL learning strategy use in Taiwan, it was found statistically significant differences in the use of six subcategories of language learning strategies and overall strategies with regard to major. In overall strategy use, the mean of frequency of humanities and social science learners was 3.11, the mean of frequency of business and management learners was 2.82, and the mean of

frequency of science and engineering learners was 2.79. According to the results of descriptive statistics analysis, the humanities and social science learners seemed to be more commonly in using overall strategy and six subcategories of language learning strategies than did other two majors.

Same results were found by Lee and Oxford (2008) with Korean learners where students majoring in humanities used strategies more often than those majoring in sciences or engineering. In the Ghadessy's study (1998) engineering students were not included in the sample of 602 first year students at a university in Hong Kong and she did not find significant differences in strategy use among students from Science, Humanities and Business Communication.

Language Learning Strategies and English Proficiency

Since Rubin's research (1981) identified language learning strategies of good language learners it appeared to be pretty clear the close relationship between proficiency and language learning strategies, and "MacIntyre (1994) further emphasized that strategy use results from and leads to increased proficiency. Strategies are the causes and the outcomes of improved language proficiency" (Cited in Su, 2005, p.48) Osanai's (2000 cited in Su, 2005, p. 49) concluded "... a linear relationship between proficiency level and the reported frequency of use of many strategies" (p. 231), and "the relationship is two way, however, with proficiency affecting strategy use and vice versa" (p. 232).

A big number of studies focused on the effects of language proficiency on strategy use (e.g. Watanabe, 1990; Chang, 1991; Green, 1991; Phillips, 1991; Wen and Johnson, 1991; Mullins, 1992; Bedell and Oxford, 1996; Dreyer and Oxford,

1996; Cohen, 1998; Chamot et al., 1999; Riding, 2005, as cited in McMullen, 2009, p 419)

In fact, it has been found in study after study that more proficient language learners use a “wider range of LLSs than do less proficient learners” (Ehrman and Oxford, 1990, p. 312), and more efficiently (Green & Oxford, 1995; Kaylani, 1996; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Oxford, 1996; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Philips, 1991 as cited in Lee & Oxford, 2008, p.9). However, Ehrman and Oxford (1995) found that only cognitive strategies had a significant relationship with language proficiency in the SILL category. Other strategies, (memory, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies) had no significant relationship with proficiency. On the other hand, only cognitive strategies significantly influenced ESL/EFL learners’ proficiency outcomes. It might be associated with the deep-surface processing information theory where deep processing strategies or cognitive strategies like elaboration, mind- mapping, summarizing should be promoted to “reach long –term retention and to make associations”(Ehrman, 1996,p.173) and to get higher order thinking skills.

Other studies have demonstrated that the main differences between higher and lower proficiency language learners is not just concerning about the frequency and the number of strategies they use, but those related to the learners' conscious choices and their flexibility when selecting and applying strategies to a certain learning task.

“In two separate studies, Abraham and Vann (1987) and Vann and Abraham (1990) reported that learners who were less proficient were using strategies considered as useful, and are often the same strategies used by learners who were more proficient. They claimed that the difference between successful and less

successful learners was the degree of flexibility the learners showed when choosing strategies, and the learners' ability to appropriately apply strategies in their own learning situation" (Cited in Su, 2005, p. 48). This assertion has been confirmed by other studies (e.g. Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1975; Rubin, 1975) where it was found that less able learners used strategies in a random, unconnected, and uncontrolled manner while more effective learners showed careful orchestration of strategies, targeted in a relevant, systematic way at specific L2 tasks. (Cited in Oxford, 2003, p. 10).

Chamot (2004, p.14) states that this efficiency in strategy use that good language learners show it is because they have metacognitive knowledge about their own thinking and learning approaches, a good understanding of what a task entails, and the ability to orchestrate the strategies that best meet both the task demands and their own learning strengths. "A good language learner is someone who is metacognitively aware of the processes in language learning and uses metacognitive, cognitive and socioaffective strategies flexibly and effectively" (Cohen 1998; Oxford and Cohen 1992; Wenden 1998 as cited in Zhang, 2003, p.286)

From the research papers reviewed for the present literature, four of them searched for the relationship between these two variables. Goh & Poh (1997) in a study carried out with 175 Chinese ESL students found that the proficiency level of students had a significant influence on the use of cognitive and compensation strategies. The high proficiency group used more cognitive and compensatory strategies compared with the medium and the low level proficiency groups.

In Lee & Oxford study (2008) with 1110 Korean students from middle school, high school, and university found that strategy use was higher for university students and for students who rated his proficiency as excellent.

Phakity in 2003 worked with 384 Thai students to find out the relationship of cognitive and metacognitive strategy use to EFL reading achievement test performance. He stated that highly successful test-takers reported significantly higher metacognitive strategy use than moderately successful ones, who in turn reported higher use of these strategies than unsuccessful test-takers.

Maggie Su (2005) investigated 419 Taiwanese vocational college students, their language learning strategies and their self-perceived English proficiency. By applying the SILL and a background questionnaire she found that students who reported a higher self-perceived English proficiency level use language learning strategies more frequently than those who had a lower self-perceived English proficiency level.

Mochizuki (1999) examined the kinds of factors that affect the learner's choice of strategies in 157 Japanese students and she found that more proficient students use cognitive and metacognitive strategies more frequently than less proficient students.

Instruction in Language Learning Strategies

As it was mentioned before, language proficiency and LLS have a linear and a reciprocal relationship between them. So, it might make suppose that less proficient students might be trained in certain kind of strategies that were found successful in high proficient learners in order to improve their achievement. Indeed, when Rubin (1975) investigated the characteristics of good language learners and identified what were the strategies they used, he did it in the hope of closing the gap between different proficiency levels (Cited in Mizumoto & Takeuchi, 2009), so she assumed that language learning strategies might be taught and in such a way less effective

learners would be directly benefited. However, identifying these “good language learning strategies”, codified and teach them to poor language learners do not guarantee a better language performance because less successful learners will not automatically become more successful simply by copying the full range of strategies that most successful learners are using so, there is no single set of effective learning strategies that fits every language learner.

Strategy instruction involves active learning and growth on the part of each individual students, it also involves helping learners know about themselves, so they can try out, test and become expert in using the strategies that help them the most (Oxford, 1996). “ Language learning strategy instruction is a teaching approach that aims to raise learner awareness of learning strategies and provide learners with systematic practice, reinforcement and self-monitoring of their strategy use while attending to language learning activities” (Kinoshita & Dokkyo,2003) .

Researchers have attempted to prove the teachability of language learning strategies by training students in using them to learn a specific language skill and then investigating the effect of this training on acquiring strategy use and/or improving such skill. “Given the possibility of teaching students to be better language learners, researchers made a case for strategy instruction (Crookall, 1983; Nyikos, 1991; Oxford, 1990, 1993; Rodgers, 1978; Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Wenden, 1991, as cited in Oxford, 1996, p. 229). They cited benefits of strategy instruction such as increased motivation, improved language performance, greater autonomy and self-reliance, and ability to continue learning after the language class is over” (Oxford, 1996, p.229) “A recent review by Rubin *et al.* (2007) with regard to intervention studies relating to language learning strategies suggests that teaching students learning strategies, if effectively done, increases not only their knowledge of strategies but also their

motivation and performance”. (Cited in Mizumoto & Takeuchi, 2009, p.425-426).

Instruction in language learning strategies also helps students become aware of strategies, and according to Chamot (1998) this awareness of one’s own strategies is closely related to metacognition, a typical characteristic which has been found in more successful learners.(Cited in Lee and Oxford,2008). This assertion about that “metacognitive knowledge can be increased through classroom instruction has also been supported by other researchers like Liu and Goh (2006), Mareschal (2007) and Vandergift (2004)” (Cited in Goh, 2008, p.196)

Researchers have experimented with instructing language learners to use selected learning strategies as a way to improve language skills. According to O’Malley and Chamot (1995) “in second language contexts, learning strategy training studies include memory training, listening and reading comprehension, but just few studies have examined how strategies for productive language can be trained”(p.152). On the other hand according to Oxford’s (2003) overview, “in ESL/EFL studies positive effects of strategy instruction emerged for proficiency in speaking: Dadour & Robbins, 1996; O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Küpper, & Russo, 1985. “Wenden (1987) reports that providing students with a checklist of criteria to self-evaluate their oral production resulted in successful use of self-evaluation as a learning strategy” (Cited in Kinoshita & Dokkyo, 2003)

Varasarin’s (2007) action research study of pronunciation training, LLS and speaking confidence with 5 teachers and 20 students from 12 to 13 years old resulted in an effective instruction. It was evident that the pronunciation training with direct and indirect LLS helped Thai students to achieve intelligible English competence.

Some of the studies that probe effectiveness in strategy training for different language skills that have been reported by Oxford (2003), O’Malley & Chamot

(1995) and Latif (2006) in their respective literature reviews will be displayed in the following paragraphs.

Findings of these studies show that vocabulary learning is a fertile area for strategy instruction (e.g. Coady, 1997; Crow & Quigley, 1985; O'Malley, 1987; Brown and Perry, 1991; Alseweed, 2000; Rasekh & Ranjbari, 2003).

Among the research papers analyzed for the present literature review, there were two studies which explored vocabulary strategy training. Mizumoto & Takeuchi (2009) examined the effectiveness of explicit instruction of vocabulary learning strategies with Japanese EFL university students, demonstrating that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the vocabulary test.

Abd Elsamir Ali (2007) carried out a study with 42 EFL adult beginners from university proving the effectiveness of incorporating mnemonics into lexical instruction. It helped students in vocabulary achievement, retention and metacognitive awareness.

Hayashi (1979) cited in her study many researchers who have demonstrated the “efficiency of teaching reading strategy for improving student performance on comprehension (e.g. Block, 1986; Carrell, 1983, 1988; Grabe, 1997; Cohen, 1997; Kimura et al., 1997; Aebersold and Field, 1997). But she also asserted that extensive reading of EFL students in both L1 and L2 becomes basically the most important factor for improving reading skills rather than just teaching reading strategies”. Other researchers who also reported ineffectiveness of reading strategy training are Barnett (1988) and White (2006) (Cited in Latif, 2006, p.25)

Latif (2006) reported in his review some studies about effectiveness of reading strategy training (e. g. Park-Oh, 1994; Dreyer and Nel, 2003; Pani, 2004). Deutsch (2005) worked with 1500 junior and high school students and their teachers in an

action research where reading strategies and techniques to lead with anxiety during the tests were taught. Results of the training showed an increase in students' performance.

Training studies on comprehension strategies in second language learning have investigated reading comprehension more frequently than listening comprehension and according to Oxford (2003) results for listening were not significant (O'Malley et al., 1985). Chamot et al. (1996), Cohen et al. (1995). "O'Malley (1985) for instance, used cognitive (note taking), metacognitive (selective attention) and socioaffective (cooperation) strategy training to improve students' performance on listening tasks, but it did not have a significant effect on their listening performance". Results of Schwartz's (1992) study also cited by Latif (2006) are aligned with the previous one regarding to ineffectiveness of listening strategy instruction.

However, Li & Liu (2008) delivered strategies-based instruction on listening comprehension to 44 senior students in English major, demonstrating effectiveness with the instruction and improvement in listening skills. Ozeki's (2001) study also demonstrated improvement in listening abilities after training female EFL Japanese college students (Cited in Latif, 2006). "Two studies (Vandergrift 2007; Zeng 2007) have also demonstrated a causal relationship between metacognitive instruction and statistically significant improvement in listening performance" (Cited in Goh, 2008, p.196). In the same line, "Thompson and Rubin (1996) found that a two-year metacognitive and cognitive strategy instruction program with university students of Russia improved their listening performance and their way of managing listening strategies". (Cited in Latif, 2006, p. 26)

Latif (2006) agrees with O'Malley & Chamot (1995) about the relative little research that has been conducted on the effectiveness of writing strategy instruction within EFL or ESL contexts. Aziz (1995 as cited in Latif, 2006, p.29), Sano (1999 as cited in Latif, 2006, p.29) reached positive results for writing strategy instruction, as well as McMullen (2009) who presented a study with empirical evidence that demonstrated how strategy-based instruction can help improve the writing abilities of Saudi students in an EFL setting. Shih (2005) instructed 35 eighth- grade EFL students in three writing strategies including guided journal writing, story grammar mapping and webbing. Her findings demonstrated great improvement in writing skills.

Most of authors of these researches have delivered LLS instruction for specific language skills and they have demonstrated that language learning strategies are teachable and training language learners to use selected learning strategies can have positive effects on task performance and the language learning process. "Strategy intervention research has also suggested important issues related to instruction such as: explicit and integrated strategy instruction, language of instruction, transfer of strategies to new tasks, and models for language learning strategy instruction" (Cited in Chamot, 2004, p.15); in the same manner, there are numerous means available for this such as general study skills courses, peer tutoring, research-oriented training, videotaped mini-courses, awareness training, strategy workshops, insertion of strategies into language textbooks, and integration of strategies into foreign language instruction (Weaver & Cohen, 1994 as cited in Cohen,1996, p. 12) Based on their studies some researchers have designed different models or frameworks for language learning strategies instruction in order to improve learning for varied types of second language tasks. Some of the most important models for providing strategy-based

instruction SBI including Oxford's framework (1990), Chamot and O'Malley's framework (1994), Grenfell and Harris' framework (1999) and Cohen & Weaver's framework (2006) (Cited in Chamot, 2004; McMullen, 2006). "All of them share important characteristics: They develop students' metacognitive understanding of the value of LLS. All of them emphasize the importance for providing multiple practice opportunities with strategies. All suggest that students should monitor and evaluate how well a strategy has worked, choose strategies for a task and actively transfer strategies to new tasks" (Cited in Chamot, 2004, p.21)

Regarding to explicitness of purpose, instruction in LLS can be delivered in a direct or explicit manner or it can be embedded instruction. In direct instruction students are informed of the value and purpose of strategy training, "they are provided with feedback about their performance so that they can estimate the effectiveness of the training (Wenden, 1987 as cited in Chen, 2005). "Through this direct and integrated approach to strategy instruction learners become reactive learners as they increase their awareness, practice, and use and monitoring of the language learning strategies they are using while learning a second or foreign language. The learner outcome is an efficient learner who has developed the skills to successfully organize and conduct their own learning events" (Wenden, 1987, p.11 as cited in Kinoshita & Dokkyo, 2003)

This type of direct and informed training has been favored by a number of researchers (e.g Oxford & Leaver, 1996; Shen, 2003; Anderson, in press; Chamot et al., 1999; Cohen, 1998; Nunan, 1997; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990 as cited in Chamot, 2004, p.19)

In embedded instruction, students are presented with activities and materials structured to elicit the use of the strategies being taught, but are not informed of the

reasons this approach is being practiced or when a certain strategy is appropriate to use (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wenden, 1987, as cited in Chen, 2005, p.5). Wenden (1987 as cited in Chen, 2005, p. 5) indicates, the focus of blind instruction is on learning something rather than on learning to learn. It results in improved performance of the task to which it is tied. However, early research on training learning strategies following the embedded approach found little transfer of training to new tasks (Brown, Armbruster, & Baker, 1986) because according to Wenden (1987)(as cited in Kinoshita & Dokkyo, 2003) “without a metacognitive awareness about language learning strategy use and purpose, learners will lose opportunities to increase their strategy repertoire, to successfully transfer strategies to new tasks, and to maintain efficient and long term strategy use in their language learning career”

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter explains some issues related to the methodology employed in this study. The first part describes the research design, data collection tools, and a description of the sample and of the setting where the study was carried out. A second part contains a chronological account of the different steps or stages in the research, followed by some features related to the design of language learning strategy instruction.

Research Design

The present study was designed as classroom action research. “Action research is a common-sense approach to personal and professional development that enables practitioners everywhere to investigate and evaluate their work and to create their own theories of practice” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, p.1)

Within the action research tradition I decided to use the Duchan Multi-step Reiterative Process (2004, as cited in Hu, 2005) where the teacher- researchers identify the issue or problem that they want to study, gather information about the topic, develop an initial plan; then implement the plan. Next relevant data is collected; the teacher-researcher evaluates the results of the pedagogical activity on the basis of data collected; so the initial plan is revised based on emergent understandings and new information found in the literature.

A combination of different data collection techniques was used in order to reduce the chance of bias and to give a more comprehensive understanding of the topic under study. Some of the data required the employment of quantitative methods

as well as qualitative. Furthermore, the concept of triangulation was seriously considered in the research design because many experts in educational research as Cohen et al (2000, 2007), Clough and Nutbrown (2007), Weir (2005), and Gillham (2000) regard triangulation as an important step towards validating the results of a study (Cited in Ali Grami p. 56) By triangulation it is meant “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior” (Cohen 1994 as cited in Ali Grami, 2010).

Setting

This study was carried out in a Foreign Language Department at a major Ecuadorian Technical University (ETU), name of the institution was omitted and fake names for participants in the study were employed in order to protect their identities. This institution offers academic services in three different branches: Engineering, Technology Programs and Economics. This is a Public University to which attend students from middle and lower socioeconomic status.

The Foreign Language Department offers general language courses for all the students, from basic to upper-intermediate levels. Its curriculum is textbook – driven, though; it has with a well-qualified teaching staff. The entire faculty uses the Face2face series, a six-level general English course for adults and young adults. Regular courses are taught in a 14-week block that meets three times a week for two hours.

Students have to take two standardized exams, which are not made by the teacher in charge of the course. The regular exam evaluates the four skills and constitutes the 80% of the students’ grades. English courses are considered as any

other credit-bearing course within the academic record, so the courses must abide by the same ETU general rules

Participants of the Study

Cultural Context

Participants of this research were from different cultural backgrounds.

Ecuador is characterized by cultural and geographic diversity. It can be split up into three parts, geographically; the Costa (coast), the Sierra (Highlands) and El Oriente, The Galapagos Islands also belong to Ecuador. Its population is ethnically diverse so the largest group is comprised of mestizos, who constitute 65%, a mixture of both European and Amerindian ancestry, and much like their ancestry, the national culture is also a blend of these two sources. 25% of the population is comprised of Indigenous people, and 7% Caucasian or White and 3% of Ecuadorians of African descent. This current study was carried out in the most crowded coastal city which has 84% of the population living in the urban area (INEC, 2001) In this urban area, most of students (70%) attend public schools.

Characteristics of the Sample

This action research was thought out with the idea of helping unsuccessful students in language learning. Because of the online registration that the university employs, it was too difficult to put together a homogeneous group of students who had failed their English courses. So this study involved three groups with mixed abilities and English knowledge backgrounds who were novice learners, the lowest level course. A total of 89 novice students (28 females and 61 males) participated in the research. The treatment groups were formed of 62 students who received explicit

instruction in language learning strategies, 28 students were from Engineering and, 34 students from Technology; the group from Technology Program was selected because according to the Foreign Language Department's statistics there is a big number of Technology students who fail this course.

Control group was formed of 27 students (18 males and 9 females) from Engineering. Tables 1 and 2 describe different groups with demographic features about the participants. Their ages ranged from 17 to 23 years old.

Table 1

Demographics for the Treatment Groups

Professional Career	Gender	Private School	Public School	Total
Engineering	Male	9	9	18
	Female	9	1	10
	Total	18	10	28
Technology	Male	4	21	25
	Female	3	6	9
	Total	7	27	34

Table 2

Demographics for the Control Group

Gender	Private school	Public School	Total
Male	11	7	18
Female	4	5	9
Total	15	12	27

Students who had self-identified as having problems in language learning were invited to form a tutorial group in order to receive individual personalized instruction; this group of 24 students (9 females and 15 males) come from the two treatment classes, which met once a week for an hour in 7 different groups according to the students' time availability. Table 3 shows the demographics for the tutorial group.

Table 3

Demographics for the Tutorial Group

Professional Career	Gender	Private School	Public School	Total
Engineering	Male	2	5	7
	Female	2	3	5
	Total	4	8	12
Technology	Male	0	8	8
	Female	1	3	4
	Total	0	12	12

Instrumentation

Quantitative methods selected for this study should assess learning styles and language learning strategies from the participants in the study. Learning styles were assessed through the Style Analysis Survey by Oxford (1993). The SAS is designed to assess the general approach to learning and working, though it contains five sections to evaluate different style dimensions, only the first and second sections were administered because I considered that they were relevant and sufficient for the purpose of this study. (See appendix A). They have to do with “how I use my physical sense to study and work”, and “how I deal with other people”, so they provided information about what were the preferred senses for learning (visual, auditory or hands-on) and about the preferred way of dealing with other people (introverted or extroverted). This questionnaire translated to Spanish was administered to the students from the treatment groups at the beginning of the course. It was included some demographics like age, gender and type of school where students graduated.

Language learning strategies were assessed through the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (version 7.0, by Oxford, 1989), and it was selected because of its

high reliability, since this is the only strategy questionnaire that has showed acceptable fit indices in various exploratory factor analysis conducted with EFL and ESL students (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Oxford, 1996; Lee K, Oxford R, 2008) This version includes 50 quantitative, close-ended items, with each item measuring the frequency with which respondents use the particular strategy. Students responded to each strategy item using a Likert scale of 1 through 5 to reveal the frequency with which they used the strategy, with 1 representing “Never or almost never true of me” (ie, rarely or never used) and 5 representing “Always or almost always true of me” (ie, always or almost always used). This inventory has six sections and they assess the strategies for remembering more effectively; for using all their mental processes; compensating for missing knowledge; organizing and evaluating learning; managing your emotions and it also assess strategies for learning with others, or social strategies.

This questionnaire was taken from an adaptation in Spanish of SILL made by Roncel, (2007) <http://www.educacion.gob.es/redele/revista9/redEleaprende-leFIN.pdf> (See appendix B) and whose reliability and confidence have also been validated; it was administered to the entire sample, treatment and control groups at the beginning of the course and when the instruction had finished.

Qualitative methods to collect data included semi- structured interviews, learners’ diaries, strategy checklists and teacher’s observation records. All of these resources were only employed with the students from the tutorial group.

Semi- structured interviews were conducted at the beginning of the course and at the end, and they were recorded. Initial interviews attempted to investigate the students’ school background, if they liked English, their motivation, the hours of instruction at high school, how were their classes, the teaching approach, the

materials, what techniques they used to learn English and what were the main problems in language learning. After these interviews students were asked to do a reading task from the textbook in order to observe and analyze how they approach the task.

Final interviews were conducted at the end of the program. They aimed to collect data about how the students felt with the program; how useful has it been for them, whether have they improved in those skills that were difficult in language learning; what were the strategies learned during the program and the aspects that should improve in the LLS instruction. Both interviews (See appendix C) were conducted in Spanish with students from the tutorial group, though students' answers were transcribed in English to report findings and results in chapter 4.

The students from the tutorial group also employed learners' diaries and strategy checklists. Both resources were designed to help students arise their metacognitive knowledge, so their feelings about language learning as well as questions addressed to assist them in developing metacognitive strategies were going to be reported on the diaries. Students could choose the language Spanish or English, to write on the diaries and they were used some minutes before class periods finished and whenever they needed to report some thoughts or feelings about their learning processes. Some samples of the entries posted for the diaries can be found in the appendix D.

The intent of the strategy checklist (see appendix E) was that it served as an instrument that would help students to identify strategies by their own names, to remind them and to know what strategies were available according to the different tasks they faced, and it would also help them to realize what strategies they have used during a task. This last aspect will be particularly important to collect the data needed

for the research. Students were asked to mark the checklist every time they are working with English, after class, during homework, and before and after a quiz or an exam.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated for all questionnaire data. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 16.00) was used to obtain percentages, means and associations from a descriptive point of view. For the Likert-scaled strategy-use items on the *SILL*, the following key helped to interpret the means: 3.5 to 5.0, high use; 2.5 to 3.4, medium use; and 1.0 to 2.4, low use (Oxford, 1990).

The McNemar test was used to determine the significance level of the strategies. McNemar test is a non-parametric test that is used to compare two population proportions that are related or correlated to each other. It is also used when we analyze a study where subjects are accessed before and after the study. The predetermined significance level is less than 0.05. The test was applied to every strategy, not just to those which were taught, and within treatment group and control group.

Qualitative data were processed and triangulated in order to find any identifiable emergent patterns.

Timeline

The first step consisted in collecting data about learning styles and language learning strategies used by students, so the questionnaires SAS and SILL were administered during the first week of the course. Because of the online registration that the university employs, it was too difficult to put together a homogeneous group

of students who had failed their English courses, as it was the initial plan for this research; therefore, instruction in language learning strategies was delivered to both treatment groups. These students from the treatment groups were invited to participate in the tutorials by resulting in a group of 24 volunteer students who met once a week for an hour in 7 different groups according to the students' time availability.

On the second week, initial interviews were conducted to the students from the tutorial group. Information obtained from these interviews was helpful especially what had to deal with the students' main language learning problems that were reported, it was considered in designing the strategy instruction.

Instruction in language learning strategies was delivered to both treatment groups during 12 weeks, meanwhile students from the tutorial groups had the opportunity of receiving individualized feedback and extra resources and support from the teacher as well as from their partners. They were asked to mark their checklists and to answer questions on their diaries in order to monitor their processes.

During the last week of the course the SILL was administered again to treatment and control groups in order to find the differences in language learning strategies usage after the instruction. Final interviews were conducted to students from the tutorial groups.

Class observations were also carried out and recorded in the teacher's journal. However, observation is not a good data collection method to assess strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990), some students' behaviors that demonstrated certain changes and applicability of specific strategies were evident during the class periods and during the tutorials too, so the researcher thought it was important to record these events as well as some feelings and thoughts that arose while the research was made.

Strategy Instruction - Course Design

Backgrounds

Providing explicit instruction to the students about language learning strategies required designing a small training program, so it meant I had to think about time, contents, resources, methodology and assessment for instruction. For the researcher, who has had experience with these groups, the time always seemed to be too short to teach the regular curriculum to novice learners, but now it was necessary to take 10 or 15 minutes every lesson to instruct both the groups of students in the LLS program.

Some literature about learning strategies recommends giving explicit instruction and integrating the strategies with classroom instruction in the language or content subject. "Learning in context is more effective than learning separate skills whose immediate applicability may not be evident to the learner" (Wenden, 1987 as cited in O'Malley and Chamot, 2002, p.152). So integrated instruction delivered in Spanish was the model to use in this research. The instruction about strategies was explained in Spanish not only to increase learner confidence but also to assure more student comprehension.

However strategy instruction was initially planned and addressed only for less successful learners according to their special needs, the new scenario required to select strategies that might be useful to improve language learning of every student from the treatment groups; in subsequent stages students from the tutorial might go into language learning strategies (LLS) in depth. So besides of time limited, other important aspects should be taken into account to select the strategies, they had to

deal with the FLD program, type of evaluation, learners' needs, and teaching approach.

There are a huge number of language learning strategies identified by literature but the strategy system employed in this study was based on Oxford's (1990) classification, with some adaptations from strategy information from O'Malley and Chamot (2002). (See chapter two), so any of the selected strategies would correspond to these strategy systems.

Brief Curriculum Analysis

One of the aspects considered in selecting the strategies was the analysis of the curriculum. If there is a documented operational curriculum other than the textbook series that has been elaborated for the Foreign Language Department, it has not been distributed among the faculty. The four main language skills seem to be well known by all the teachers, but the level of competence according to each course is something that has to be managed through intuition, or based on the teacher experience. To overcome the lack of a declared consensus about the level of skills and sub skills for this course level the textbook was analyzed. This analysis was done based on the *ESL Textbook Evaluation Checklist* by Joshua Miekley (2005). Furthermore, as it was integrated strategy instruction textbook resources were used in the program.

The Analysis of the Textbook

Face2Face series which constituted the FLD's real curriculum generally speaking, presents activities that are contextualized and students would find it very practical and meaningful to use the curricular contents and skills presented to improve their language learning through strategies. But it was required to be so careful in

distinguishing the differences between teaching and learning strategies. Textbook instructions and the teacher's guide involve some teaching strategies which refer to actions, techniques or tips that help teachers to teach content or skills in language. On the other hand learning strategies are actions taken by learners, so the main goal of this LLS program was that students identify, use and practice learning strategies, these actions should be learner-driven. The students needed to take hold of the strategies, and practice them.

Type of evaluation

The assessment program is something that concerns all instruction in every academic setting. Applying standardized tests prepared by a different teacher, who is not in charge of the course has some advantages and disadvantages. On one hand it means less work for the teacher, and it drives what is supposed to be taught in the class so that similar content will be taught no matter who teaches the course. On the other hand, it does not allow teacher autonomy in choosing criteria or selection of items to be covered. Teachers do not have a hand in choosing the kinds of assessment and even worse the level of skills that are going to be evaluated. They are forced to teach everything regardless of the available time and they cannot omit any content that might be considered irrelevant or inadequate so teachers have to teach a bit blindly, or to trust absolutely in the exam makers criteria.

By analyzing the regular exams applied at this level within the FLD and, according to the score assigned to each aspect, I concluded that the textbook driven curriculum has a clear grammar-focused bias though the exam evaluates the four skills Reading (15 points), listening (10 points), writing (10 points), speaking skill is evaluated over 15 points. Use of English (mainly grammar and vocabulary) is

evaluated 30 points) (37% of the exam). 20 scores are given to class activities, assignments, quizzes and homework done during class periods. The exam contents could not be ignored because 80% of the student's grade is given by the exams. For the students it meant putting everything they have on the line, so by considering this, priorities were taken into account to match students' needs and the selection of strategies for explicit instruction.

Teaching approach

The teaching approach, as far as this research is concerned, also guided the selection of strategies. Some conflicts that have to do with teaching methodology arose immediately because gaining language learning strategies involves a process orientation but, with such a kind of teaching-learning context conditioned by a grammar-focused approach it was going to be so hard to spend enough time on LLS instruction, and therefore it would diminish the opportunities of developing a language learning approach with a process orientation. Standardized tests, tight EFL curriculum as well as the textbooks sometimes feel like a pedagogical straitjacket, but they were part of this EFL Program. The teachers had to learn how to deal with the requirements and constraints, and try to fit their own expectations about any changes, new methodologies or techniques to them, so it was clear that managing strategy instruction under these conditions was going to be a real challenge for me.

Regular classes are taught in English, and the typical lesson from the textbook follows the Presentation, Practice and Production Model (PPP). This model views language as a series of "products" that can be acquired sequentially as "accumulated entities" (Rutherford, 1987 cited in Ellis, 2003 p 29) . This was the first conflict that would arise concerning the methodology of the implementation of the strategy

instruction, and it has been a permanent conflict in my daily teaching. The nature of LLS is process oriented and my philosophy of education and my personal beliefs about language learning are aligned with communicative language learning, which in the strong version is a process oriented approach and has to do with task-based language teaching (Ellis,2003) so that it was going to be so difficult to present coherent and integrative instruction. To overcome such an apparent problem I decided to work with some activities and techniques that belong to the communicative learning approach in its weak version, with communicative exercises on one hand, I hoped to balance the grammar- focused orientation required by the curriculum, and on the other hand, the related strategy instruction would be in harmony with my beliefs about how a language is learned. It would partly satisfy the communication gap that learners would experience too. No matter the language curriculum, communicative competence, which is the ability to use the language effectively for communication, was going to be presented as the main goal for the course.

In addition to all these parameters for selecting the strategies it was critical to take into account the special needs of the students from the tutorial group. During the first individual interview, they were asked about the main problems they faced in language learning. Most of them said that listening was the most difficult skill. So, it was necessary that their language learning strategy instruction targets improvement of their listening over the whole semester.

Based on all these aspects, it was designed a strategy system where the strategies were selected and classified within the four main language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. Vocabulary and grammar intersect and often overlap with the main four language skills in particular ways. It is my assumption that

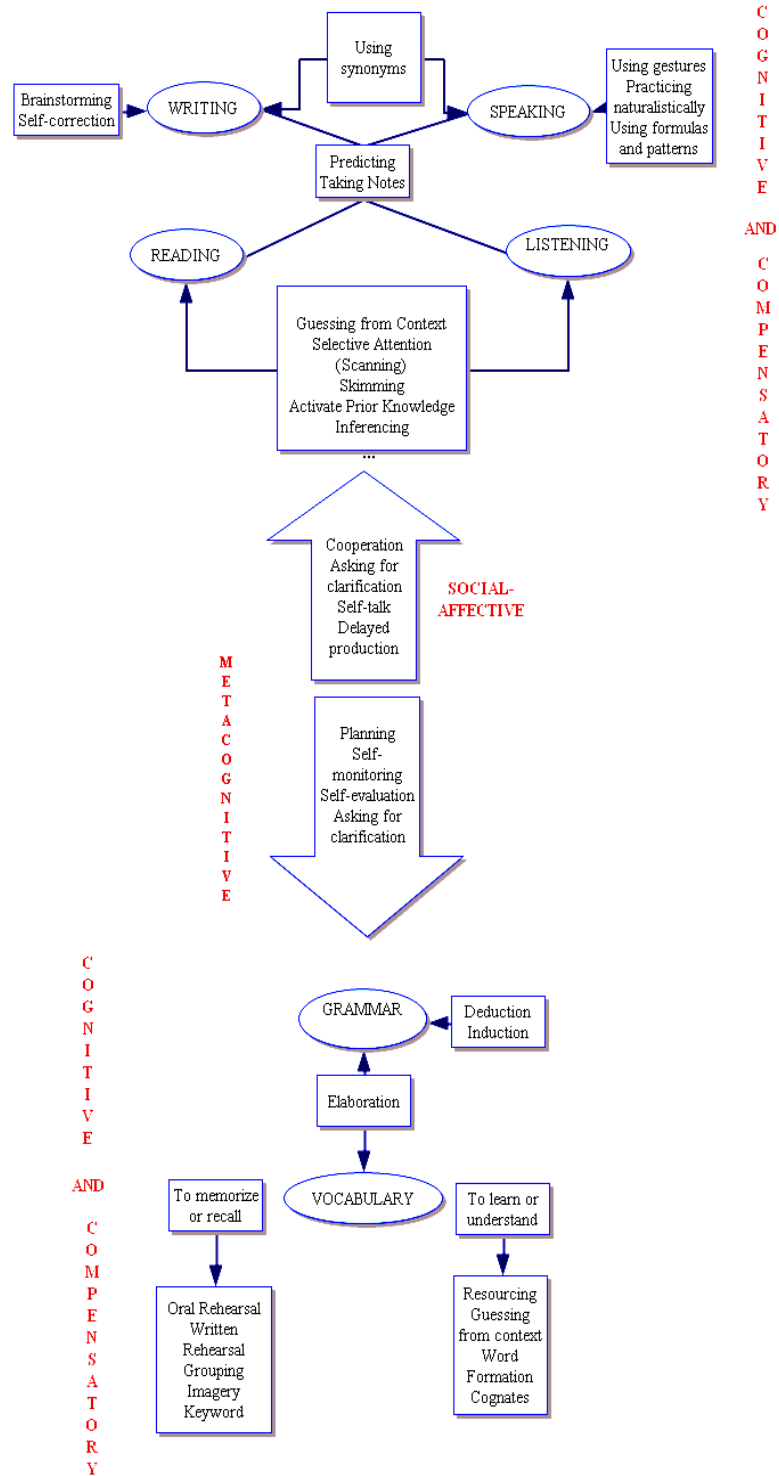
increasing vocabulary is really essential in EFL programs and the nature of the evaluation employed at FLD has a clear grammar-focus approach, so it was important to select strategies to develop aspects of grammar and vocabulary too. Figure 4 shows the strategy system used for the instruction and how the different strategies were framed within every skill.

There are some strategies that are useful for developing all the skills, but there are others, which are specific for listening, speaking, reading, or writing. However this classification is useful for organizing instruction and for teaching strategies, it is important to remember that these strategies are always interacting while the learning process occurs. Indeed an orchestration of all of strategies that were taught is the goal. Therefore the Selected Strategies Chart intends to show an interactional model of integrated strategies. Metacognitive and social-affective strategies are applied in and intersect all the skills, all of them help learners manage learning process, cognitive strategies assist learners in understanding and producing language, while compensatory strategies are useful to overcome limitations in language. They are also intersecting and integrating learning process. Memory strategies are more specific to learn and retain new vocabulary and structures, but some cognitive strategies which are deep processing strategies like *elaboration*, or *grouping* are designed to promote long-term retention.

The chart of selected learning strategies is attempting to show not just the content of instruction in LLS but the methodology and probably the outcomes of the research. Language learning is considered an interactive process where all the input factors are part of a dynamic system, therefore teacher, learners and learning environment will act in such a way that their actions or behaviors might change one

or more aspects of the LLS instruction in order to meet the language learning requirements

Figure 4. Language Learning Strategies selected for the Instruction



Methodological Aspects of the Instruction

New learning approaches require some changes in teaching methodology as it was needed with the instruction in LLS. Integrating LLS in regular classes somehow entails to make learners aware of strategy use, to identify, practice and evaluate them but all of these skills need to be attached while ongoing learning process occurs, therefore all the procedures needed to be practiced within the regular lessons so they could eventually be internalized by the students.

During the first stage of instruction, it was important to ask students to reflect on some issues like: What does learning a language mean? What were the differences between studying abroad and studying English in our country? What kinds of things had they done to learn English? What were the differences between studying a language and studying other subjects? This introductory and exploratory phase would help students to situate themselves in the real learning context, so they could identify learning goals. It would also be useful to recognize what the strategies were, so their own methods, tools or resources for studying, show up them the path to go ahead.

Once the students identified the kinds of techniques or tips that might be useful in the English class, and they recognized that communicative competence is really essential for learning English, it was important to encourage the students to see their classmates and the teacher as collaborators who could cooperate in their learning, especially to develop their communicative competence.

One of the main goals of strategy instruction is getting metacognitive awareness.

Self-awareness, task awareness and strategy awareness are the three elements of this metacognitive knowledge. In order to help students develop this ability teaching in

metacognitive strategies like *planning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation* was stressed during the instruction.

An issue that has to deal with *planning* is setting goals and it was especially focused within the instruction.

Intentional learning is particularly important in EFL and ESL contexts where acquisition and learning are always on the tapestry of discussion. Despite the efforts made in order to approximate natural language learning environments and accept that part of language learning occurs by acquisition, it is absurd to deny that our students “learn” more than “acquire” English, therefore *planning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation* have a stronger rationale within this learning context because learning means to undertake some language activities called “tasks”, which implies identifying learning tasks, setting goals, to monitor and evaluate the task process and the achievement of goals

So that we started every class by setting a goal referring to a language function with a learning strategy embedded in it. Students were asked to have in mind this goal over the class. For example, the goal for the first part of a listening lesson was “Listening for the gist”, so the strategies that were taught were: *making predictions, inferencing, note taking*, and of course, students also used other kinds of strategies such as *translation*.

Regarding learning tasks, one of the Flavell’s (1979, as cited in Thamraksa, 2005, p.1) three dimensions of metacognitive knowledge, is task knowledge. I have seen that no matter how much students work with the textbook, they do not understand some instructions, and even less the task involved in them. So that, before starting the activity, I asked the group to read the instructions aloud and then to explain the task involved in the instruction in Spanish or English. For instance when

the instructions in a listening activity asked the students “to fill in the gaps in the conversation” they needed to use denotative and connotative reading. So, they needed to understand both the instruction in itself and what the task demands are or what the task really wants from them. The goal in mind and the task demands were emphasized in every class so they became very familiar for the group.

At the same time cognitive strategies for vocabulary were chosen to start the training, not just because of my own assumptions about the importance of increasing vocabulary, but especially because students also agreed to this. Consequently, many ways to learn vocabulary were explained such as concept maps, translation, definition, using words in examples, and drawings. I always asked them to notice the importance of associations in order to recall words faster and more effectively. I also encouraged them to use vocabulary-learning strategies of their own choice so they would feel more comfortable

Instruction about different strategies was delivered following the prescribed content of the textbook tasks and activities. After the students were taught vocabulary strategies, listening strategies were considered as a priority, followed by reading and grammar strategies. I delayed the speaking and writing strategies for the second phase. I based this decision on research on the silent period, (Krashen 1985) who proposed what most students experience at basic levels, so it would be helpful to delay language production. Furthermore, as I realized how low the English language skills of these students were, I preferred not to force them to produce language immediately because such instruction might have caused high levels of anxiety.

Strategy Instruction for Tutorial Groups

LLS instruction with the tutorial group would have two main objectives: a) to identify individual differences and learning difficulties and to suggest language learning strategies according to their needs, and b) to monitor and provide feedback about the strategies, their use and their effectiveness. The teaching approach used for strategies instruction included awareness raising, explicit naming of strategies, practice and self-evaluation and monitoring.

Furthermore, over these meetings students should have the opportunity to clarify some content matter issues that were not understood during the class period. Their participation required some extra time and some level of engagement with the project. During the first session the program and the research project were explained and they were informed that if they felt uncomfortable or for any reason they could not continue, they had permission to leave the program without any prejudicial effect on their grades. Consent forms (See appendix F) were administered to assure them some issues related to their participation in the program.

A reflective approach was proposed from the beginning. It was my intention, that after the Style Survey Analysis (Oxford, 1993) was given to all the students from the treatment groups, these students would have some keys about how they learn better, what were their learning channels and also about what were their strengths and weaknesses for language learning. They needed to feel that those strengths were their starting point, rather than their weaknesses. Personalized tips were given to them according to their results.

The students were informed of the scope and limitations of the instruction and that it was not going to be something magical that would make them learn English, and that foreign language learning involves a process. The strategies that they were

going to learn will be useful as they practice them. Every strategy learnt in class was analyzed and practiced in depth during the tutorial and feedback was provided about their use and effectiveness. However the students learnt all the strategies they were encouraged to use the strategies they preferred or what made them feel more comfortable, they could not be forced to employ all of them, because learning strategy research also claimed to find out what kinds of strategies more often appear at this level of instruction. Ideally, students should practice the learning strategies until they became automatic, but they would end up using those which were harmonious with their learning styles and needs.

Materials

As much as it was possible, the textbook resources were used in the program but some extra material and worksheets were designed in order to support the LLS learning process. Information handouts (See Appendix G) in Spanish were elaborated and delivered after every strategy lesson via e-mail. They described the kind of strategies, their use and how to practice them. They were explained step-by-step and with examples. They were posted on the university Computer Mediated Instruction Platform, which is a network used by the students from this university. Students could access or download them any time they needed to.

Learner Diaries played an important role in the language learning strategy instruction since they would help the students develop their metacognitive strategies. Different questions were displayed to achieve this objective. Learners' diaries as well as worksheets and activities for practicing strategies were a bit limited because most of the students did not have Internet at home, and there was not ample time within the curricular constraints for writing in class.

As the students had many strategies to learn and identify they were asked to mark the Learning Strategy Checklist. They marked them every time they are working with English, after class, during homework, before and after a quiz or an exam. The intent of this checklist was that it served as an instrument that would help students to identify strategies by their own names, to remind them and to know what strategies were available according to the different tasks they faced, and it would also help them to realize what strategies they have used during a task. This last aspect will be particularly important to collect the data needed for the research.

All the strategies from the chart showed in figure 4 p... were taken into account to prepare the checklist. *Translation* was added to this because most of students tend to translate to Spanish .

Chapter 4

Results and Findings

Results will be presented by going from the widest view to the more detailed description of language learning strategies found through the groups. Research questions will guide the corresponding exposition of the different results. They are divided in three sections. In the first part the researcher thought that some data collection tools would provide a kind of framework to understand the educational background of students that come to elementary level. This section also includes analysis of some learners' factors related with the occurrence of LLS their use and frequency, such as kind of school, major, and gender.

The second part has to deal with quantitative results about the effectiveness of instruction in LLS by taking into consideration the treatment group and by comparing the significant strategies found within it with those found within the control group. Analysis of the Learning Style Survey was also included in order to find the close relationship that LLS have with students' learning style.

Knowledge about language learning strategies supports in the comprehension of strengths and weaknesses of the students, therefore once they had been identified the current study would address its attention to which it was primarily conceived that is, the design of an appropriate remedial course for unsuccessful learners. So, the third part of the results describes qualitative findings as well as some quantitative data about tutorial group. In order to support the triangulation of data, checklists' analysis, individual interviews, students journals, learners' diaries and teacher's observation record were analyzed very carefully.

Language Learning Strategies of Novice Learners

One of the gaps in research about language learning strategies refers to studies of population of learners from Latin America, so this study hoped to provide a general view about the strategies that university students from Ecuadorian context bring to their elementary EFL classes. As one of the instruments used in this research was the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (*SILL*, version 700) whose validity and reliability has been proved at length, (Lee & Oxford, 2008) I thought in employing the results from the first questionnaire applied to the whole sample (N= 89) in order to analyze what language learning strategies students use and how frequently they use them in general. To obtain averages of the use of strategies quantitative analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 1600). For the Likert-scaled strategy-use items on the *SILL*, the following key helped to interpret the means: 3.5 to 5.0, high use; 2.5 to 3.4, medium use; and 1.0 to 2.4, low use (Oxford, 1990). The *SILL* strategies are Memory, Cognitive, Compensatory, Metacognitive, Affective and Social strategies. Table 4 shows average use of strategies from the whole sample.

Table 4
Averages Use of Strategies

Averages use of strategies- Control and Treatment Groups (N= 89)						
Strategy	A	B	C	D	E	F
Mean	3.02	2.94	3.15	3.37	3.14	3.29
SD	0.603	0.477	0.548	0.484	0.837	0.466
Full Score	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

A: Memory Strategies,
D: Metacognitive Strategies

B: Cognitive Strategies,
E: Affective Strategies

C: Compensatory Strategies
F: Social Strategies

Although, all the strategies are used at medium level of frequency, that metacognitive strategies as well as compensatory and social ones are the most used by this group of Ecuadorian university students, and cognitive strategies are the least used. Averages are useful because they provide a general view about the strengths and weaknesses that learners from a particular context have. It was also helpful to analyze what specific strategies within each group are the most frequently used by the students. Table 5 shows their averages.

Table 5

Language Learning Strategies used at high level of frequency

Language Learning Strategies used at high level of frequency			
Type	Description	Mean	SD
A1	I think of the relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	3.92	0.829
A4	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	3.56	0.929
C24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses	3.71	1.068
D31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better	3.81	0.94
D32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	4.15	0.886
D33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	3.64	1.047
D38	I think about my progress in learning English.	3.81	0.999
E39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English	3.66	1.196
E40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake	3.92	1.003
E41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English	3.61	1.328
E42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying English	3.58	1.313
F45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again	3.99	1.143
F46	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	3.61	1.212
F48	I ask for help from English speakers	3.61	1.302

Memory strategies help learners store and retrieve new information, they reflect very simple principles such as arranging things in order, making associations and reviewing (Oxford, 1990 pg.37). As it can be observed on the table below two memory strategies are at high level of frequency; one is related to activation of prior knowledge (A1) and the other has to deal with visual association (A4).

The medium level of frequency of cognitive strategies whose function is the manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner (Oxford, 1990 pg 43) seems to have determined that any of these isolated strategies had been used at high level of frequency.

On the other hand, there are four metacognitive strategies used at a high level of frequency. They provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process. Two of them (D31, D38) help students evaluate their learning. Strategy D32, "I pay attention when someone is speaking English" assists students to center learning and, the strategy D33 supports them in arranging and planning their learning.

From the six strategies grouped with the name of affective strategies, four of them (E39, E40, E41, E42), "I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English", "I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake", "I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English" and "I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying English" are used at high level of frequency. These strategies help learners to gain control over affective factors influencing language learning (Oxford, 1990 pg 142). Strategies E39 and E42 are useful to low anxiety, and the strategies E40 and E41 support to encourage students themselves.

Social strategies in language learning are very important because communication involves people, and this type of strategies is really strong in this

group of students. Three strategies (F45, F46, and F48) from a total of six, which have to deal with asking for clarification and asking for correction, are used at a high level of frequency

Among the factors that influence strategy choice, Oxford (1990) has identified the following: degree of awareness, stage of learning, task requirements, teacher expectations, age, gender, nationality, general learning style, personality traits, motivation level and purpose for learning the language. Results presented above about averages of use of strategies have offered information about LLS choice and nationality or ethnicity. The subsequent comparative charts and their descriptions give an idea about how language learning strategies are related with educational background, major and gender.

Language Learning Strategies and Educational Background

Students from treatment and control groups filled in the information about the kind of high school, public or private where they graduated. This information was required on the SILL questionnaire. The following tables show the results about the averages in use of strategies and the specific strategies that were found at a high level of frequency depending on the kind of school.

Table 6

Language Learning Strategies vs. kind of school

Strategies in Public and Private Schools		
Strategy	Averages of use of strategies	
	Public	Private
Memory	3.02	3.04
Cognitive	3.02	2.88
Compensatory	3.08	3.25
Metacognitive	3.38	3.35
Affective	3.10	3.21
Social	3.24	3.36

Averages of different groups of strategies are at medium level of frequency in students from both private and public schools. Students from private schools use more compensatory, metacognitive and social strategies. Cognitive strategies are slightly higher in public schools. Memory and metacognitive strategies are at nearly the same level of frequency in both according to the type of school.

Tables 7 and 8 show individual strategies found at high level of frequency in both types of schools. Strategies which are at the middle of the table are at high level of frequency in both kinds of schools. Students from private schools use a total of 18 strategies at high level of frequency while students from Public schools use a total of 14 strategies at high level of frequency. Direct Strategies (see Table 7) are pretty similar in both groups, but students from private schools exceed in the use of compensatory strategies, which are related to communicative language approach. Differences in the use of indirect strategies are bigger; students from private schools used more metacognitive and social strategies. Strategy D37 has to deal with stating goals, while strategies D37 and F48 have to deal with centering learning.

Regarding stating goals it has been my perception that most novice students are not so aware of their own language learning goals, this strategy appears to be used mainly by students from private schools. In fact, through informal conversations in class, I have been able to realize that many students know they are studying to get a degree but they are not conscious of the competencies that they need to acquire, nor are they learning how to improve their skills. Teachers seem to expect that students will be able to discover learning goals by themselves. Education systems in Ecuador seems to ignore that learning is an intentional act, not just from teaching practice which normally includes planning, monitoring and evaluation, but mainly from learner's involvement.

Table 7

Direct Strategies used at high level of frequency and Educational Backgrounds

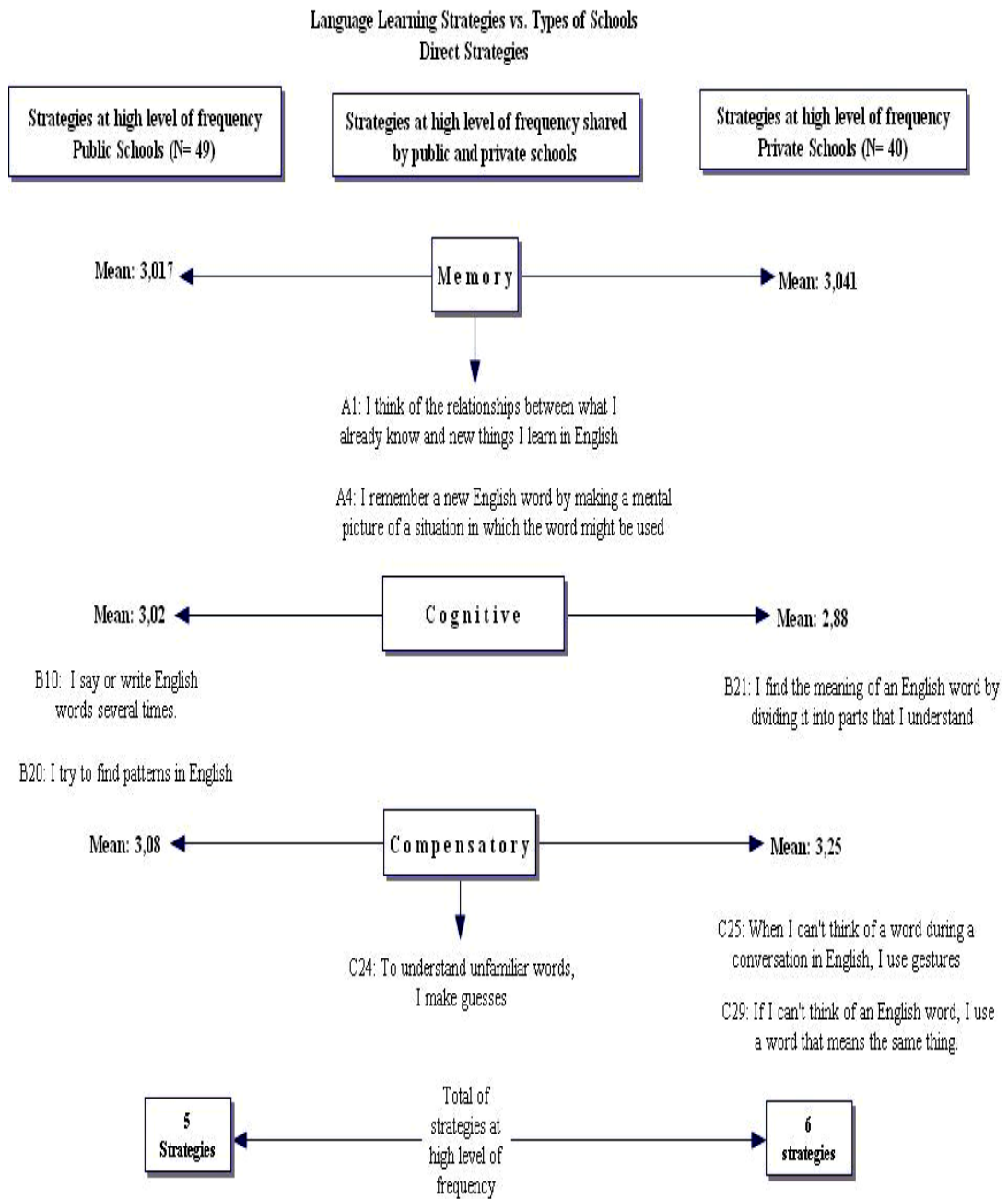
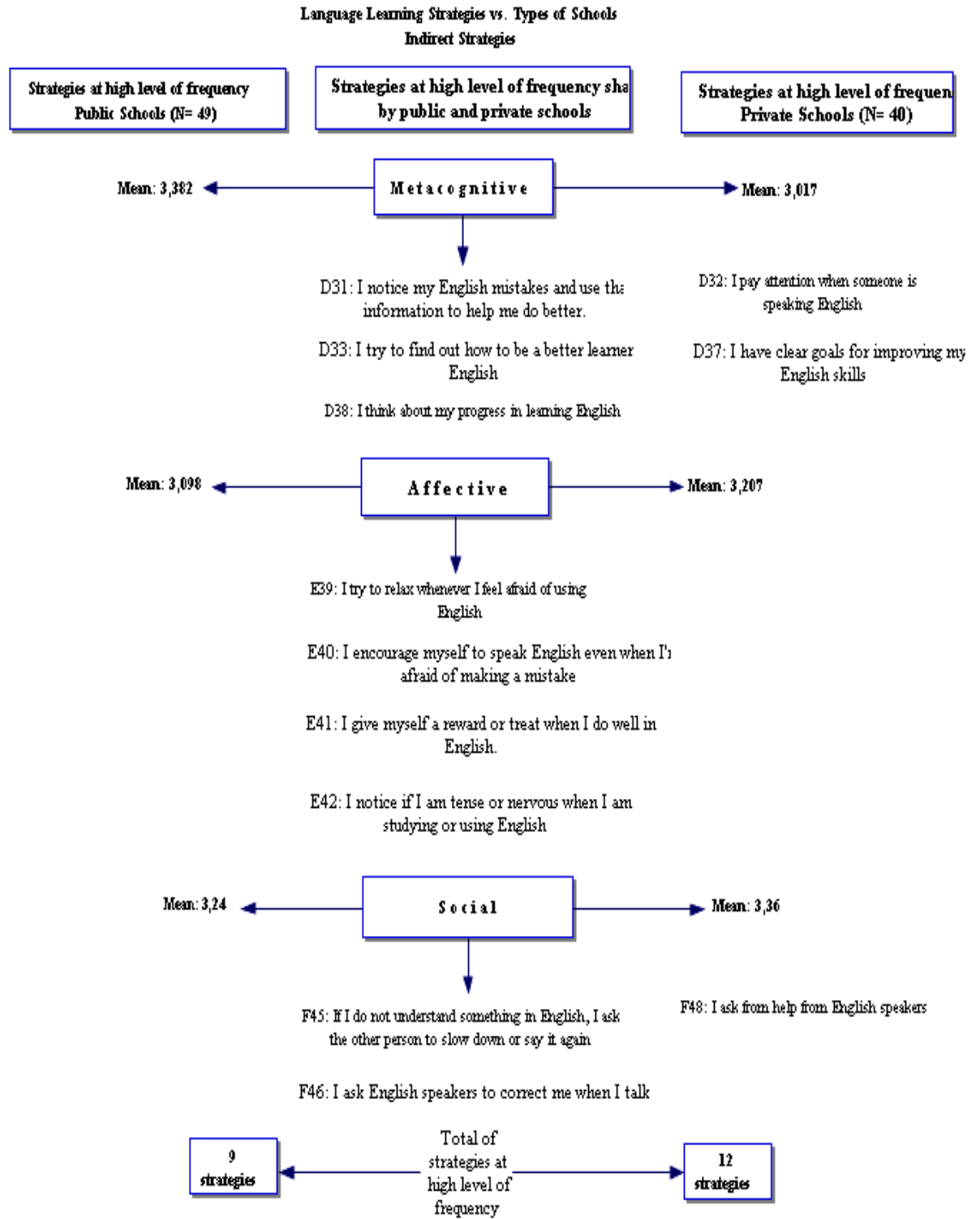


Table 8

Indirect Language Learning Strategies and Educational Background



Language Learning Strategies and Gender

Results about gender and LLS were also important since previous literature about this issue has shown that females use to use more strategies and more frequently than males. Tables 9 and 10 show how findings from the current study are aligned with what research has also found.

Averages of use of strategies in both groups are pretty similar; all of them are at medium level of frequency. Means in the different groups of strategies are slightly higher in females though. By observing isolated strategies almost all of them are slightly higher in females too. Furthermore, there is a total of 20 strategies that are at high level of frequency in females contrasting with 15 strategies in males.

Females use more memory strategies than males at higher level of frequency. Strategies A1 and A4 that have to deal with engaging in prior knowledge and visual association were found high in both groups. Besides of these strategies females use at high level of frequency strategy A3 and strategy A9, the first applies sounds in addition of images to help remember words, the latter also has to deal with visual association.

Cognitive strategies are at a medium level of frequency in both groups, and there is just one strategy in each that is at a high level. While males use more frequently strategy B20 which is related with recognizing patterns in English, females use strategy B10 that involves a formal practice with sounds and writing systems. Both strategies are classified within Practicing, which is one of the four sets of cognitive strategies according to Oxford's classification.

Table 9

Direct Language Learning Strategies and Gender

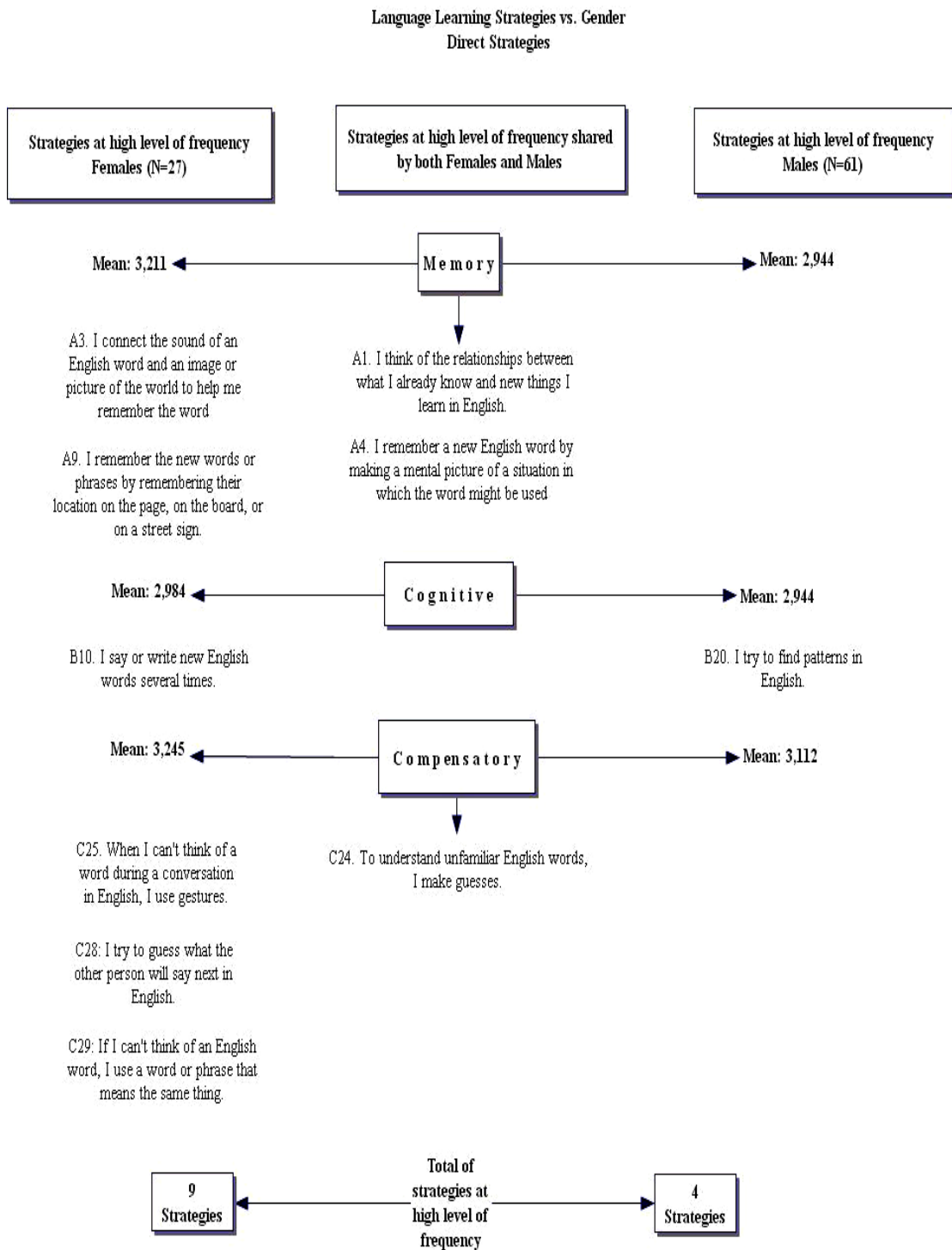
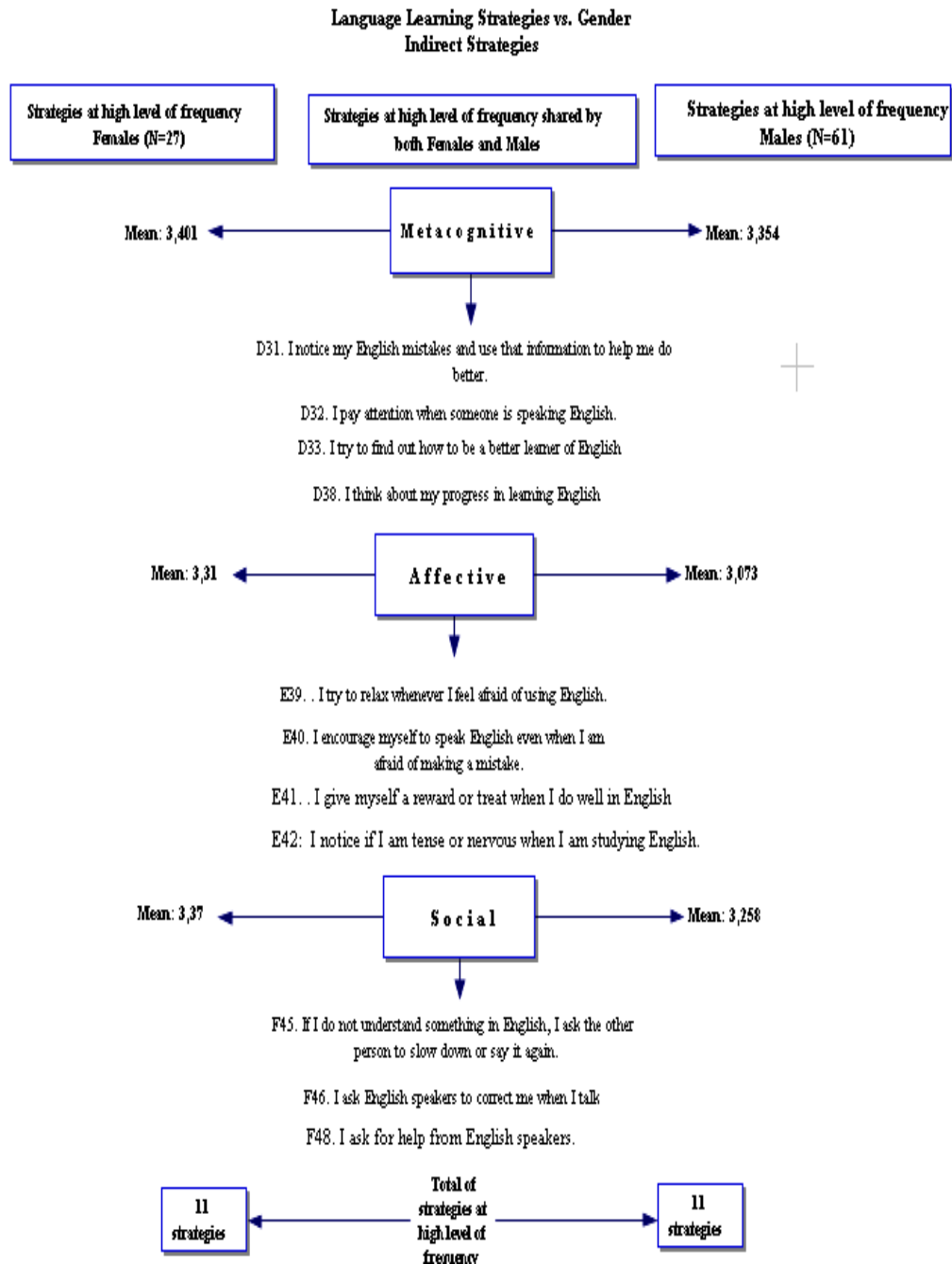


Table 10

Indirect Language Learning Strategies and Gender



Compensation strategies are clustered into two sets: Guessing intelligently in listening and reading, and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (Oxford, 1990, pg.47). The difference in the averages of use of these strategies between males and females is really notable. Strategy C24 which belongs to the first set is at high level of frequency in both genders. Strategies C25, C28 and C29 are at a high level of frequency in the females, they are “When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures”, “I try to guess what the other person will say next in English” and “If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing”

It was found the same metacognitive strategies at a high level of frequency in males and females. Strategy D31 deals with centering learning by paying selective or directive attention to language. Strategies D32, D33 and D38 are involved with evaluating learning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation.

Four affective strategies from a total of a set of six have been found at high level of frequency in males and females. Strategies E39, E40, E41 and E42 are known as self-encouragement and anxiety-reducing strategies. They help students to identify their emotions and attitudes toward a situation where language is used. Furthermore of being able to identify this, they also encourage themselves to feel more confident in learning the new language.

Some authors like O'Malley & Chamot (1995) uses to name social- affective strategies as one set. The social strategies according to Oxford are divided in three sets. One group has to deal with asking questions, like strategies F45 and F46 that were found at a high level of frequency in both males and females, as well as strategy F48 which involves cooperating with proficient users of the new language, and it belongs to the second set.

So, generally speaking in this study it was found that females use more language learning strategies (40%) than males (30%) at high level of frequency; females use more memory and compensatory strategies. There were not differences either in number or type of metacognitive, social and affective strategies found between males and females. Only one cognitive strategy in each group was found as frequently used.

Language Learning Strategies and Major

Other important factor that I thought in analyzing was the major related with LLS, since my personal perception of a kind of disadvantage that students from technology faculty always faced, and which eventually determined their more recurrent fails at the elementary level contrasting with their pairs of engineering. Tables 11 and 12 show comparison of averages of strategy use in both types of career. Again averages are at medium level of frequency. The number of strategies used at high level of frequency is almost the same in both groups. The kind of strategies within this set that are shared by both types of careers are A1, A4, C24, D31, D32, D33, D38, E39, E40, E42, F45, F46. Metacognitive, affective and social strategies are used more by both groups of students in this order of frequency. These are indirect language learning strategies. There are only three direct strategies belonging to the sets of memory, cognitive and compensatory which are at high level of frequency.

Table 11

Direct Language Learning Strategies and Major

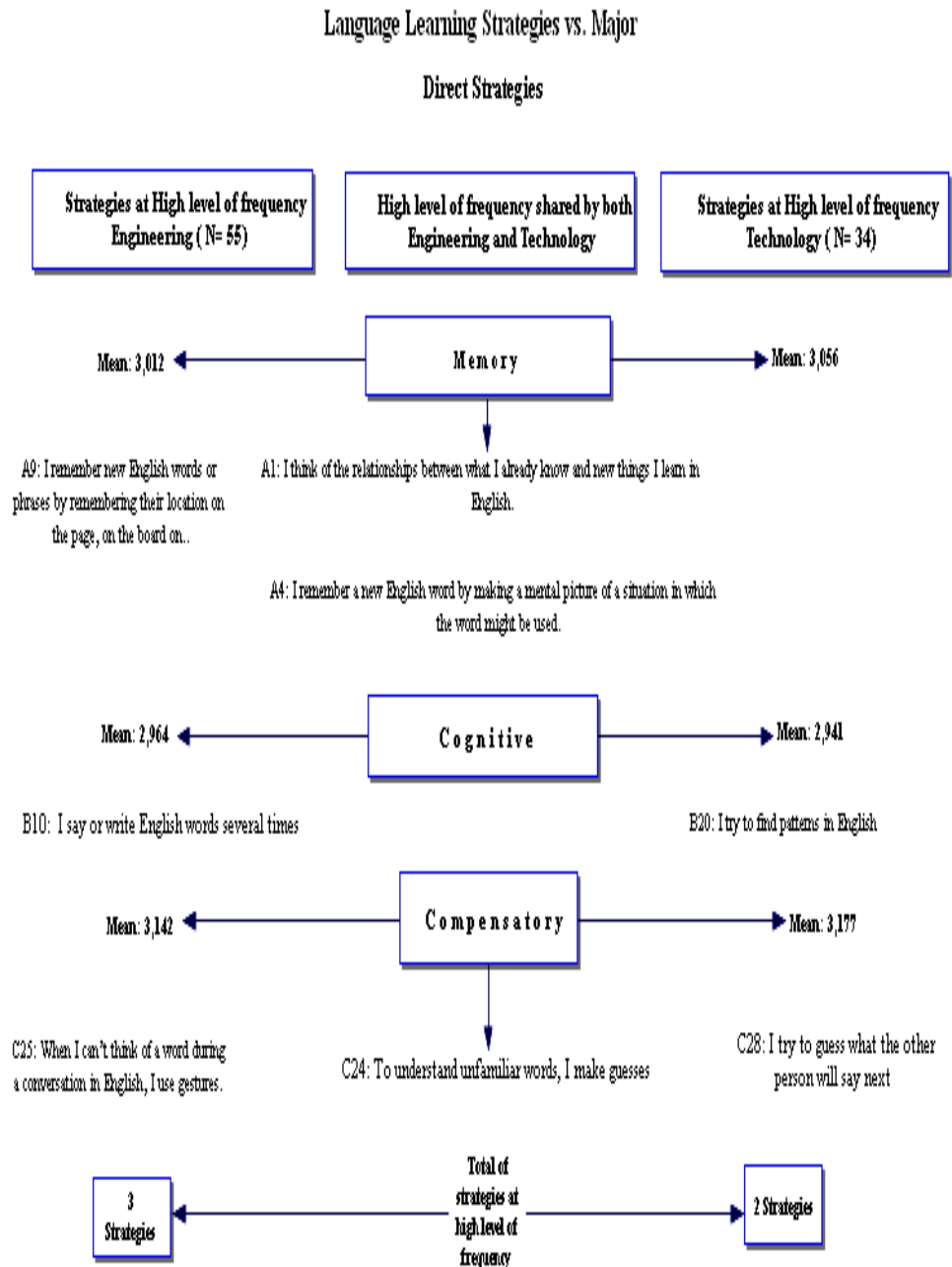
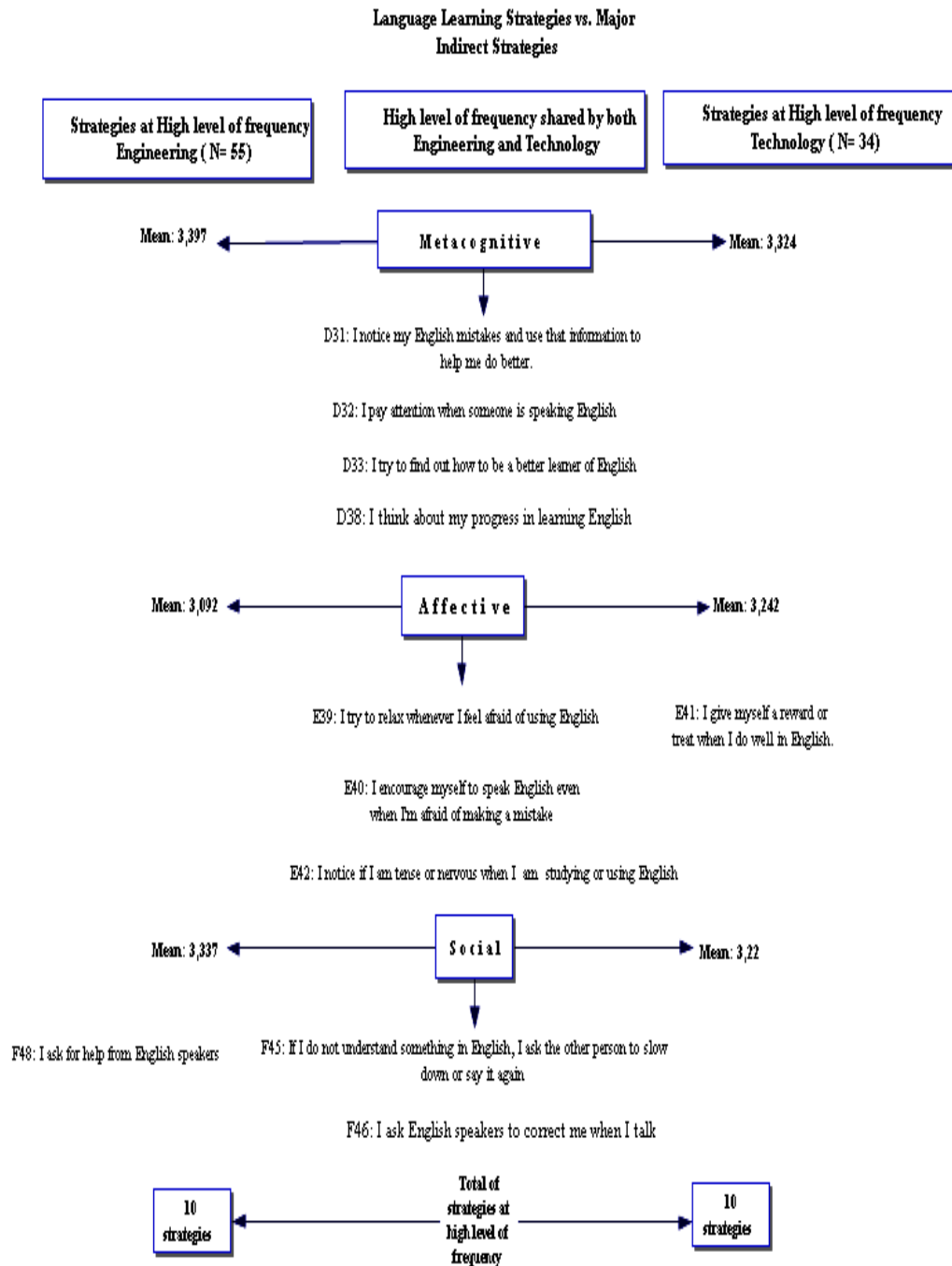


Table 12

Indirect Language Learning Strategies and Major



By looking for the differences in kind, use and frequency of strategies according to the students' major we can notice that there are specific strategies used at a high level of frequency particularly within one or other group. Students from Engineering use Strategy A9 that has to do with visual association. Among the cognitive strategies they use at a high level of frequency is strategy B10 that supports students in practicing new vocabulary. Strategy C25 enables learners to overcome a limitation in speaking and, strategy F48 is used when students cooperate with more proficient English users in order to improve language skills. Students from Technology use the cognitive strategy B20 that has to do with practicing and it helps learners be aware of language forms. Strategy C28 helps them in guessing intelligently in listening skill. The affective strategy E41 represents an available encouragement that comes from inside the learner.

Effectiveness of Instruction in Language Learning Strategies

Results about Treatment Group

Instruction in LLS was delivered to 62 students from treatment groups, 28 students from engineering and 34 students from technology. However they received explicit instruction, any follow up task or personal assistance were provided to them. Averages of use of strategies belonged to the whole group (89 students) have been shown in the first section of results; however it is useful to demonstrate those averages within the treatment group too. (See Table 13)

Table 13

Averages Use of Strategies- Treatment Group

Averages Use of Strategies - Treatment Group (N = 62)						
Strategy	A	B	C	D	E	F
Mean	3.04	2.95	3.17	3.35	3.23	3.29
SD	0.585	0.473	0.507	0.484	0.815	0.459
Full Score	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

A: Memory Strategies, B: Cognitive Strategies, C: Compensatory Strategies
D: Metacognitive Strategies E: Affective Strategies F: Social Strategies

This general view of averages gives an idea about their similarity with those from the whole group. All the strategies from different sets are at medium level of frequency, but metacognitive, social and affective strategies are slightly above the range. Cognitive and memory strategies are the least used by students. Strategies found at high level of frequency are described on Table 14.

Table 14

*Language Learning Strategies used at high level of frequency**Treatment Group (N= 62)*

Language Learning Strategies used at high level of frequency			
Type	Description	Mean	SD
A1	I think of the relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	3.92	0.829
A4	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	3.56	0.929
B20	I try to find patterns in English	3.6	1.234
C24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses	3.71	1.068
C28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English	3.61	0.998
D31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better	3.81	0.94
D32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	4.15	0.886
D33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	3.64	1.047
D38	I think about my progress in learning English.	3.81	0.999
E39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English	3.66	1.196
E40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake	3.92	1.003
E41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English	3.61	1.328
E42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying English	3.58	1.313
F45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again	3.99	1.143
F46	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	3.61	1.212
F48	I ask for help from English speakers	3.61	1.302

There are a total of 16 strategies used at high level of frequency. 11 of them are indirect strategies, they are called in such a way because they support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language. Direct strategies on the other hand, require mental processing of the language; (Oxford, 1990) there are only 5 strategies of this type used at high level of frequency.

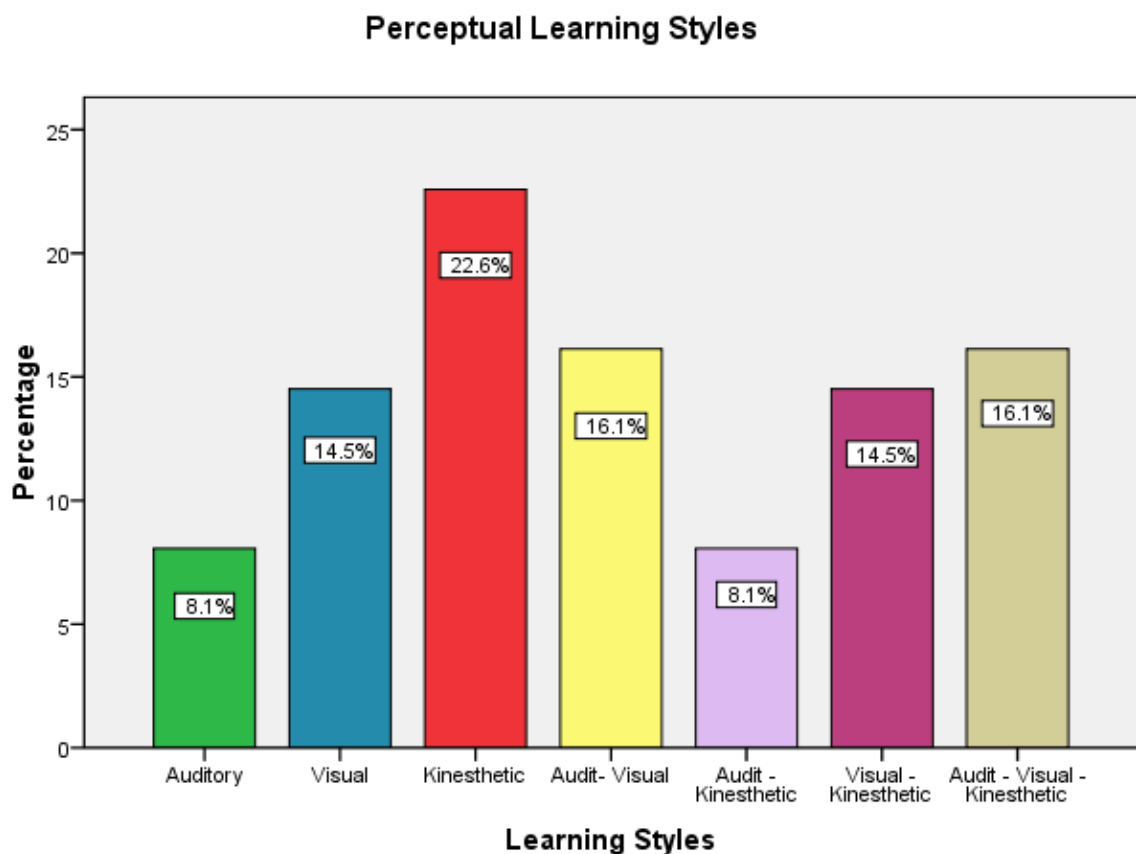
For this second part of the results I decided to take into account learning style because there is a growing appreciation for the contribution of such variables as learning style and learning strategy to language learning success in recent ESL/EFL classroom research (eg. Carrell and Monroe 1993; Carrell *et al.* 1996; Ehrman and Oxford 1990; Ehrman and Oxford 1995; Littlemore 2001; Wen and Johnson, 1997 as cited on Jie & Xiaoqing, 2006). Brown (1994) further pointed out that learning strategies do not operate by themselves, but rather are directly linked to the learner's innate learning styles and other personality-related factors. It is proposed that learning style encompasses learners' general inclination to use certain learning strategies while avoiding others (Oxford, 1990).

To assess this variable Style Analysis Survey (SAS) 1993 by Rebecca Oxford was conducted within the treatment group. SAS is designed to assess the general approach to learning and working. It does not predict behavior in every instance, but it is a clear indication of the overall style preference (Cited on Reid, 1995). This survey has five major activities with 110 items using a Likert scale, but only Activities 1 and 2 were applied to these students, a total of 50 items. SAS is a complex survey but I preferred to use this based on the criteria that using both instruments from R. Oxford would be better. Of course other sections from the survey are also valuable in order to assess learning style but for the purpose of this research I only used the first two activities from the questionnaire. Activity one has to deal with "How I use my

physical senses to study or work" and it targets sensory preferences: visual, auditory and tactile-kinesthetic. Activity two assesses "How I deal with other people" and it focuses on a personality characteristic: introversion or extroversion.

Besides of the fact that students' learning strategies are linked to their learning styles, there is other fundamental of learning styles and it claims that they exist on wide continuums, although they are often described as opposites (Reid, 1995); figure 5 shows the different learning styles found within the treatment group.

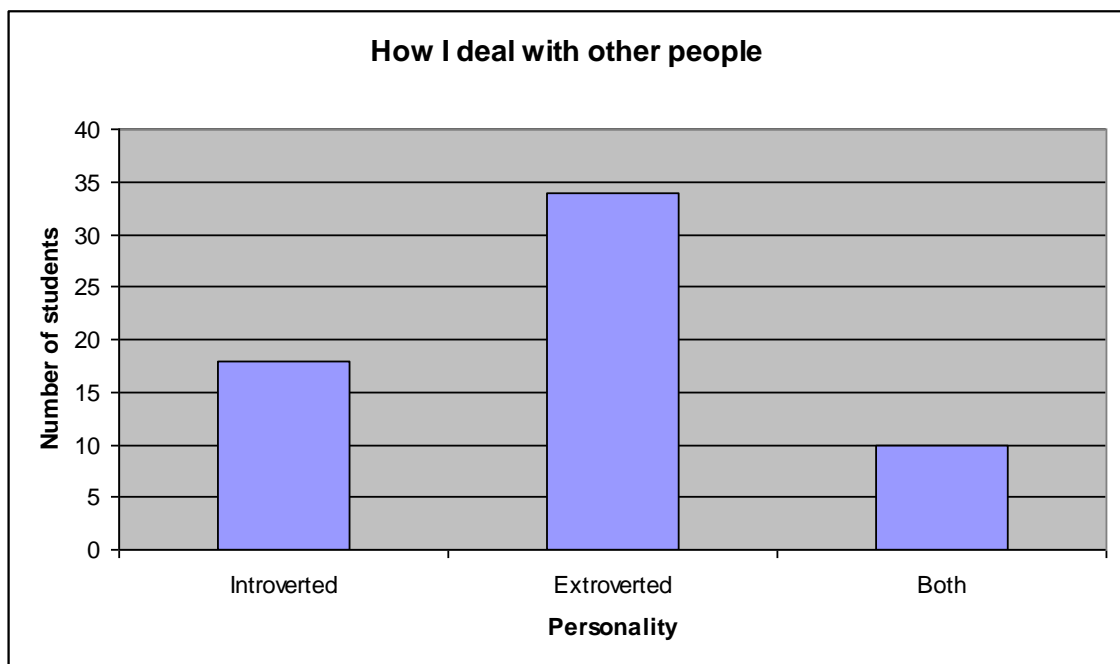
Figure 5. Sensory Learning Styles



As it was stated above, this classification of learning styles according sensory channels is continuum, so some students might identify a clear preference for one of the senses for learning, while others have identified more than one. Kinesthetic or

hands-on- represents the highest percentage, 22, 6% of students who prefer this sense in learning, followed by students who prefer all three of these senses 16,1%. The same percentage 16, 1 is the students who prefer auditory –visual senses. Students who identified visual sense as their preferred one and those who are visual-kinesthetic constitute 14, 5% each one. Finally students who belong to both groups Auditory and Auditory-kinesthetic represent 8, 1% each one.

Figure 6. Learning Styles- How I deal with other people



The distinction between introversion and extraversion, which was introduced by Jung refers, on the one hand, to the tendency to withdraw from social interaction and be preoccupied with inner thought and feelings (introversion) and, on the other hand to the tendency to be outgoing and interested in people and things in the environment (extraversion) (Stern, 2003, pg 381). Figure 6 shows that 54, 8% (34) of students from the treatment group are extroverted, while 29% (18) are introverted. 16,2% (10) students do not show a defined and clear preference, and it could be interpreted like those kinds of students who are balanced in the sense that they can

study or work easily with others and by themselves.(Oxford,1993 as cited by Reid, 1995)

Learning styles are different manners to approach learning and at least 21 components of learning style have been identified by different instruments; (Reid, 1995) The present research is mainly based on Oxford's learning – style inventory (SAS version 1993) on the sections related with sensory preferences and personality types. These aspects will be analyzed in turn with three variables that some authors (Felder & Silverman, 1988; Litzinger, Lee, Wise & Felder, 2005;) have identified as closely involved with learning styles; they are gender, culture and major.

Gender is still a contentious issue in SLA education. With numerous presumptions, the gender differences have been researched on academic attitude, mental representations, and both cognitive and physical skills in relation to hormonal variables (Saville-Toroike, 2006 as cited on Yamauchi, 2008). Results about the differences in language learning styles are shown in figure 7 and on the Table 15 Males prefer kinesthetic sense and their second inclination is the visual-kinesthetic, while females prefer visual sense followed by auditory-visual senses preference. Regarding to personality types females seem to be more extroverted (68%) than males, their ability to manage both personality types according to the situations is less compared with their males pairs though.

Figure 7. Gender Differences in Learning Styles

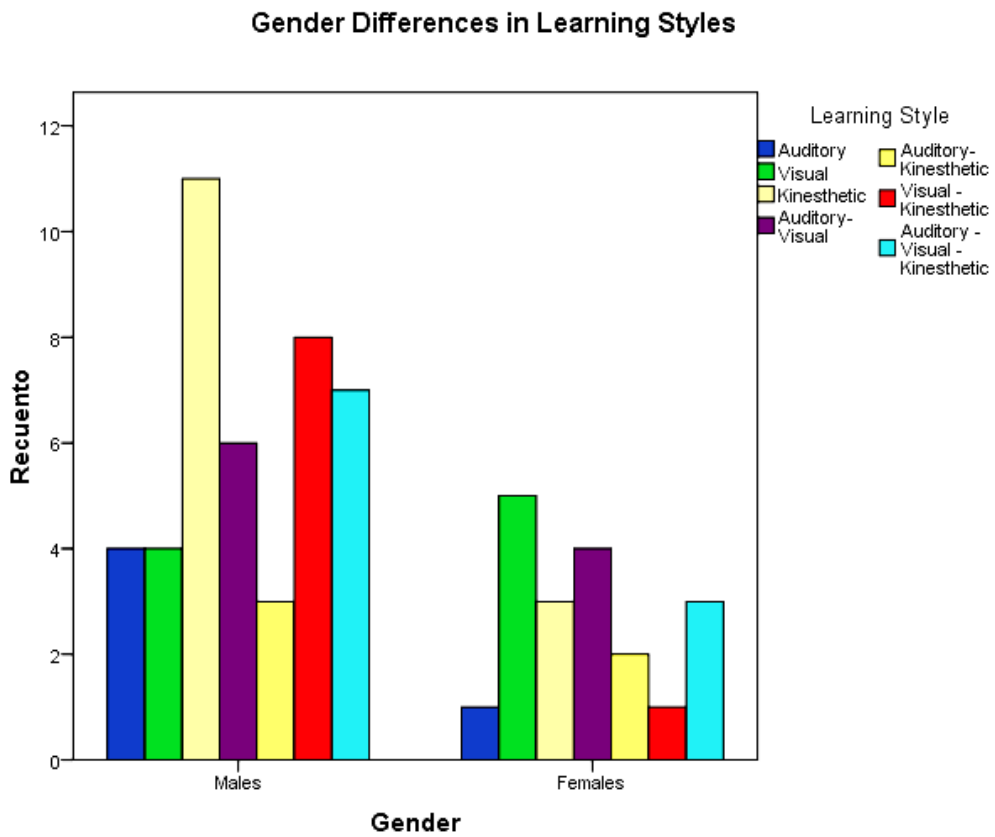


Table 15
Gender Differences in Learning Styles

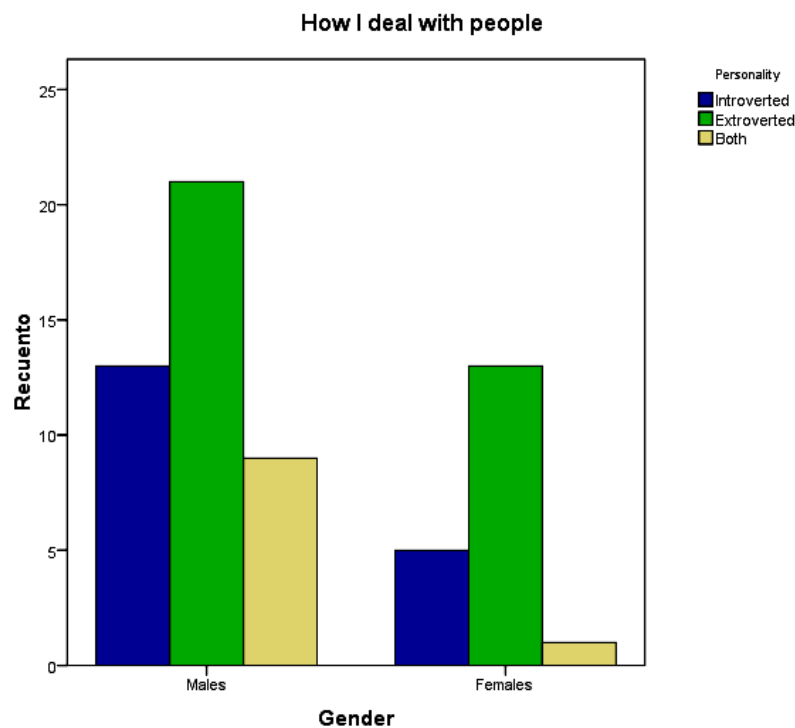
Gender	Learning Styles							Total
	Auditory	Visual	Kinest.	Aud-Visual	Aud-Kin.	Vis - Kin.	Au.-Vi.-Ki.	
Males	4	4	11	6	3	8	7	43
%	9.3%	9.3%	25.6%	14.0%	7.0%	18.6%	16.3%	100%
Females	1	5	3	4	2	1	3	19
%	5.3%	26.3%	15.8%	21.1%	10.5%	5.3%	15.8%	100%
Total	5	9	14	10	5	9	10	62
	8.1%	14.5%	22.6%	16.1%	8.1%	14.5%	16.1%	100%

Table 16

Personality and Gender differences

Personality					
Gender		Introverted	Extroverted	Both	Total
Males		13	21	9	43
	Percentage	30.2%	48.8%	20.9%	100%
Females		5	13	1	19
	Percentage	26.3%	68.4%	5.3%	100%
Total		18	34	10	62
		29%	54.8%	16.1%	100%

Figure 8. Personality and Gender Differences



Reid (1998) indicated that our life experience influenced the way we learn so that there was a relationship between learning style and different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. With that in mind, the information of country of origin would reflect a specific learning style from a specific country. (Cited in Yamauchi, 2008)

There is evidence pointing to differences in the extent to which certain learning styles are employed by different cultural groups. (Reid, 1987 as cited in Isemonger and Sheppard, 2003). Culture refers not what is individual but to what is shared by a group of individuals, and it is also learned. One of the aspects from cultural background of learners is the educational one. Regarding to this study differences in learning styles according to the attendance to public or private schools were analyzed. As culture is a very complex and interesting interaction of diverse aspects where individuals are immersed, additionally to these quantitative data, qualitative data about English class environment within both schools were included. The following table with the attached figure 9 shows that 24, 3% of students from public schools preferred kinesthetic style as their favorite way to learn. Visual-kinesthetic (18,9%) preference is at second place. At private schools visual preference is at the highest percentage 24%, followed by 20% of students that chose kinesthetic sense too.

Table 17

Educational Backgrounds and Learning Styles

School	Learning Styles							Total
	Auditory	Visual	Kinest.	Aud- Visual	Aud- Kin.	Vis - Kin.	Au.- Vi.- Ki.	
Public	4	3	9	6	2	7	6	37
%	10.8%	8.1%	24.3%	16.2%	5.4%	18.9%	16.2%	100%
Private	1	6	5	4	3	2	4	25
%	4.0%	24.0%	20.0%	16.0%	12.0%	8.0%	16.0%	100%
Total	5	9	14	10	5	9	10	62
	8.1%	14.5%	22.6%	16.1%	8.1%	14.5%	16.1%	100%

Figure 9. Educational Backgrounds and Learning Styles

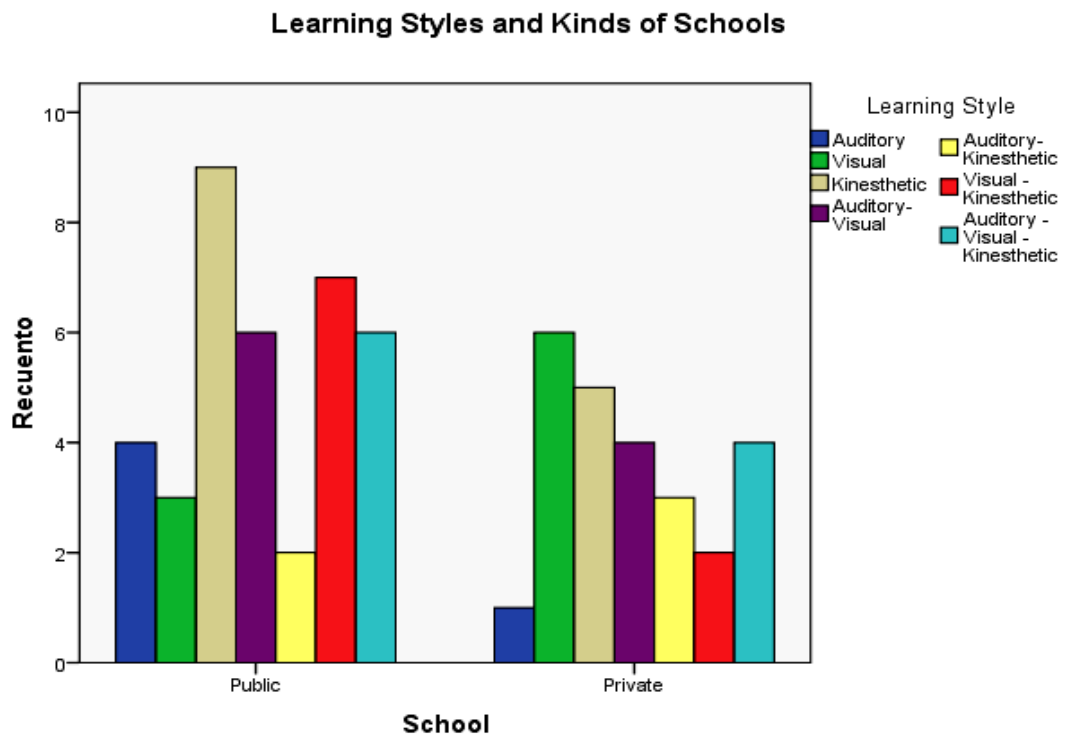


Table 18

Educational Backgrounds and Personality

Personality				
School	Introverted	Extroverted	Both	Total
Public	12	20	5	43
%	32.4%	54.1%	13.5%	100%
Private	6	14	5	19
%	24.0%	56.0%	20.0%	100%
Total	18	34	10	62
	29%	54.8%	16.1%	100%

In analyzing Table 18 it can be observed that percentages of extroverted students in both school environments, public and private are very close. There are

more introverted students at public schools compared with the same kind of students at private schools. There are more students from private schools that seem to manage both types of personality indistinctly when whether they need to study in groups or individually.

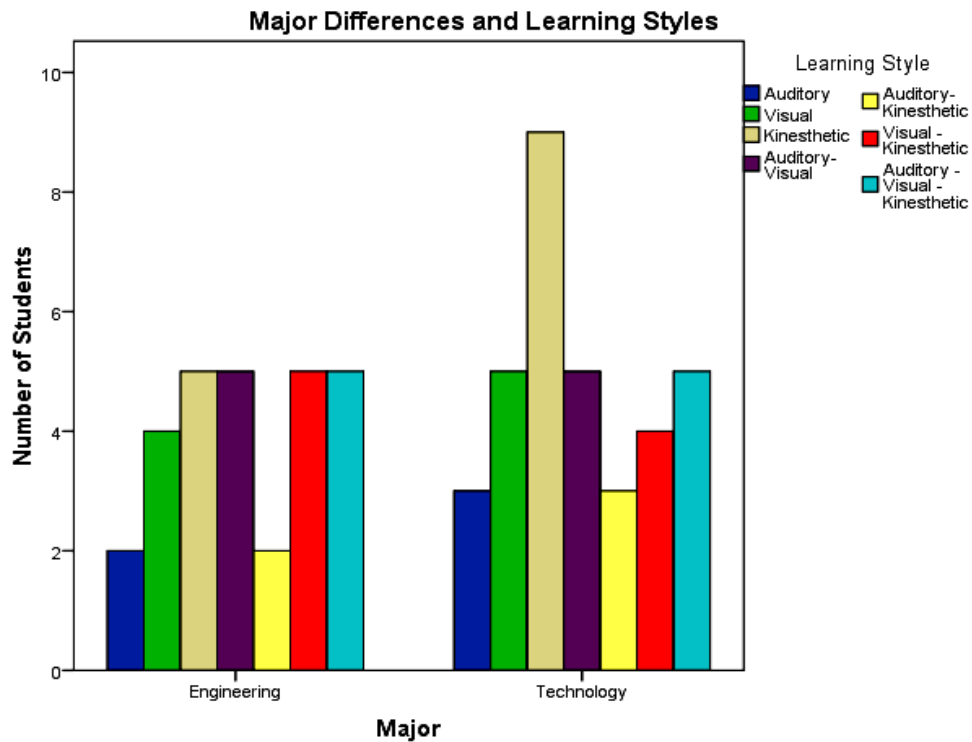
Research conducted recently found that learners' learning style preference differs across majors, and significant relationship has been demonstrated. Results in the present research seem to be aligned with previous studies (e.g. Felder & Silverman, 1988; Litzinger, Lee, Wise & Felder, 2005, as cited in Wang, 2007; Fazarro and Martin, 2004)

Table 19

Major Differences and Learning Styles

Learning Styles								
Major	Auditory	Visual	Kinest.	Aud- Visual	Aud- Kin.	Vis – Kin.	Au.- Vi.-Ki.	Total
Engineer.	2	4	5	5	2	5	5	28
%	7.1%	14.3%	17.9%	17.9%	7.1%	17.9%	17.9%	100%
Technol.	3	5	9	5	3	4	5	25
%	8.8%	14.7%	26.5%	14.7%	8.8%	11.8%	14.7%	100%
Total	5	9	14	10	5	9	10	62
	8.1%	14.5%	22.6%	16.1%	8.1%	14.5%	16.1%	100%

Figure 10. Major and Learning Styles



Most of preferences in sense for learning of engineering students are distributed at the same proportion between the types of kinesthetic, auditory-visual, visual- kinesthetic and auditory- visual –kinesthetic. This is 72% of the whole group. On the other hand, technology students show a slight marked preference by kinesthetic style, (26, 5%) followed by visual, auditory-visual and auditory-visual – kinesthetic styles. Within both groups, auditory and auditory-kinesthetic types show similar distributions that represent the least preferred senses of learning.

Significant Language Learning Strategies

Once results about one of the most important learner's factor related to LLS has been presented, effectiveness of explicit instruction in LLS was tested in order to know whether any shift on using them was due to the instruction in itself, or they were learned incidentally. McNemar test was used to determine the significance level of the strategies. McNemar test is a non-parametric test that is used to compare two population proportions that are related or correlated to each other. It is also used when we analyze a study where subjects are accessed before and after the study. The predetermined significance level is less than 0.05. The test was applied at every strategy, not just to those which were taught, and within the treatment group and control group. Significance test was also applied within tutorial group in order to know if individual support to these students produced better results in quantitative terms. Results about significance will be displayed and strategies which were significant are highlighted in bolds.

Within the treatment group, a total of 11 strategies proved to be significant after the instruction in LLS. Results about significance will be displayed and strategies which were significant are highlighted in bolds

Table 20
Significant Memory Strategies- Treatment Group

Memory Strategies- Treatment Group N= 62						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Signif.
		Before	After	Before	After	
A1	I think of the relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	48	51	77.4	82.2	0.42
A2	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	19	25	30.7	40.4	0.22
A3	I connect the sound of an English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word	28	38	45.2	61.3	0.134
A4	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	35	42	66.5	67.8	0.247
A5	I use rhymes to remember new English words	10	18	16.1	29.1	0.093
A6	I use flashcards to remember new English words	7	14	11.3	22.6	95
A7	I physically act out new English words	12	24	19.3	38.7	0.03
A8	I review English lessons often.	24	34	38.7	54.8	0.119
A9	I remember the new words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign	29	40	46.8	44.5	0.114

Table 21
Significant Cognitive Strategies- Treatment Group

Cognitive Strategies – Treatment Group N= 62						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Signif.
		Before	After	Before	After	
B10	I say or write new English words several times.	25	33	40,3	53,2	0.179
B11	I try to talk like native English speakers	26	27	42	43,6	0.5
B12	I practice the sounds of English.	20	31	32.3	50	0.081
B13	I use the English word I know in different ways.	25	26	40.4	41.9	0.5
B14	I start conversations in English.	7	19	11.3	30.6	0.015
B15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	23	35	37.1	56.4	0.074
B16	I read for pleasure in English	7	17	11.3	27.5	0.03
B17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	10	21	16.1	33.9	0.03
B18	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	32	41	51.7	66.1	0.175
B19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	30	35	48.3	56.5	0.31
B20	I try to find patterns in English.	38	41	61.3	66.2	0.411
B21	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand	30	38	48.4	61.3	0.198
B22	I try not to translate word-for-word.	16	26	25.9	41.9	0.08
B23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English	9	14	14.5	22.5	0.202

Table 22

Significant Compensatory Strategies- Treatment Group

Compensatory Strategies – Treatment Group N= 62						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Signif.
		Before	After	Before	After	
C24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses	38	43	61.3	69.4	0.328
C25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures	27	39	43.6	62.9	0.08
C26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	13	26	20.9	41.9	0.027
C27	I read English without looking up every new word	13	25	20.9	40.3	0,037
C28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English	37	43	59.7	69.3	0.288
C29	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	29	39	46.8	62.9	0.138

Table 23

Significant Metacognitive Strategies- Treatment Group

Metacognitive Strategies - Treatment Group N= 62						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Significance
		Before	After	Before	After	
D30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English	21	35	33.9	56.5	0.04
D31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better	40	44	64.5	70.9	0.30
D32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English	46	48	74.2	77.4	0.45
D33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English	36	35	58.1	56.5	0.5
D34	I plan my schedule so I have enough time to study English	15	22	24.2	35.5	0.16
D35	I look for people I can talk to in English	17	21	27.4	33.9	0.31
D36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English	17	22	27.4	35.5	0.26
D37	I have clear goals for improving my English skills	35	41	40.3	66.1	0.03
D38	I think about my progress in learning English	43	51	69.3	82.3	0.23

Table 24

Significant Affective Strategies- Treatment Group

Affective Strategies - Treatment Group N= 62						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Significance
		Before	After	Before	After	
E39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English	39	43	62.9	69.3	0.37
E40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I'm making a mistake	44	44	70.9	70.9	0.54
E41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English	43	43	69.4	69.4	0.54
E42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English	36	39	58.1	62.9	0.409
E43	I write my feelings in a language learner diary	6	15	9.7	14.2	0.04
E44	I talk to someone else about what I feel when I am learning English	18	24	29	38.7	0.266

Table 25

Significant Social Strategies- Treatment Group

Social Strategies - Treatment Group N= 62						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Significance
		Before	After	Before	After	
F45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again	46	51	74.2	82.3	0.347
F46	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk	36	46	58	74.1	0.16
F47	I practice English with other students	18	28	39	44.8	0.09
F48	I ask from help from English speakers	38	41	61.3	66.2	0.411
F49	I ask questions in English	21	36	33.8	58.1	0.032
F50	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers	18	34	29	54.8	0.01

Explicit instruction in language learning strategies was mainly addressed to memory and cognitive strategies. From the set of memory strategies students were instructed on A1, A2, A3, A4, and A6, but strategy A7 that has to deal with "I physically act out new English words" was acquired by them, as it is demonstrated by its significance level.

From the set of cognitive ones, strategies B10, B13, B14, B18, B19, B20, B21, B22, and B23 were taught to students. Other strategies like B16, B17 were practiced within class as reading and writing activities. As it can be seen on the tables of significance, three cognitive strategies became significant for the group. They refer to B14: "I start conversations in English", B16: "I read for pleasure in English" and B17: "I write notes, letters, messages or reports in English".

Two compensatory strategies from a set of six proved to be significant after the instruction; they were strategy C26: "I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English" and strategy C27: "I read English without looking up every new word". The use of compensatory strategies was also frequently encouraged during communicative activities as well as during reading activities.

However half of metacognitive strategies were found at high level of frequency within the treatment group, after LLS instruction two more strategies from this set were acquired by students. Strategy D30: "I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English" and strategy D37: "I have clear goals for improving my English skills" proved to be significant. Metacognitive strategies were developed through the use of learners' diaries, but only students from the tutorial group were asked to write them and answer different questions. This affective strategy "I write my feelings in a language learner diary turned out significant. Specific affective strategies like E39,

E40, E41, and E42 were taught to some students who faced problems like anxiety or lack of self- confidence as a mean to overcome such difficulties.

Among the social strategies, those which proved to be significant were strategies F49: "I ask questions in English" and F50: "I try to learn about the culture of English speakers".

Control group did not receive any explicit instruction in LLS, but incidental learning might be predictable within the group, since many strategies can be developed according learners' needs, teacher's expectations, students learning styles, and so on. Results about tables of significant strategies found within the control group are displayed below.

Tables of Significant Strategies – Control Group

Table 26

Significant Memory Strategies- Control Group

Memory Strategies- Control Group N= 27						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Significance
		Before	After	Before	After	
A1	I think of the relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	18	25	66.7	92.6	0.18
A2	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	6	12	22.2	44.4	0.11
A3	I connect the sound of an English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word	15	16	55.5	59.2	0.5
A4	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	15	23	55.5	93.2	0.128
A5	I use rhymes to remember new English words	1	7	3.7	25.9	0.03
A6	I use flashcards to remember new English words	2	5	7.4	18.5	0.057
A7	I physically act out new English words	5	14	18.7	51.8	0.03
A8	I review English lessons often.	17	17	63	63	0.53
A9	I remember the new words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign	13	25	48.1	92.6	0.03

Table 27
Significant Cognitive Strategies- Control Group

Key	Cognitive Strategies- Control Group	N= 27				Signif.
		Number		Percentage		
		Before	After	Before	After	
B10	I say or write new English words several times	19	16	7.4	59.2	0.36
B11	I try to talk like native English speakers	11	12	40.7	44.4	0.5
B12	I practice the sounds of English	14	16	51.8	59.2	0.42
B13	I use the English word I know in different ways	12	19	44.4	70	0.14
B14	I start conversations in English	2	6	7.4	22.2	0.14
B15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	17	18	62.9	66.6	0.5
B16	I read for pleasure in English	4	9	14.8	33.3	0.13
B17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English	3	8	11.1	29.6	0.11
B18	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	10	19	37	70	0.06
B19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	10	17	37	62.9	0.12
B20	I try to find patterns in English	11	19	40	70	0.101
B21	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand	14	18	51.8	66.6	0.298
B22	I try not to translate word-for-word.	7	17	25.9	62.9	0.03
B23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	5	9	18.5	33.3	0.211

Table 28

Significant Compensatory Strategies- Control Group

Compensatory Strategies- Control Group N= 27						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Signif.
		Before	After	Before	After	
C24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses	15	17	55.5	62.9	0.43
C25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures	20	21	74.1	77.7	0.5
C26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	2	10	7.4	37	0.02
C27	I read English without looking up every new word	5	8	18.5	29.6	0.29
C28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English	12	18	44.4	66.6	0.18
C29	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing	16	17	59.2	62.9	0.5

Table 29

Significant Metacognitive Strategies- Control Group

Metacognitive Strategies -Control Group N= 27						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Signif.
		Before	After	Before	After	
D30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English	12	14	44.4	51.8	0.4
D31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better	18	20	66.6	74	0.43
D32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English	23	21	85	77.7	0.44
D33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English	19	17	70.4	63	0.43
D34	I plan my schedule so I have enough time to study English.	11	9	40.7	33.3	0.412
D35	I look for people I can talk to in English.	6	7	22.2	25.9	0.5
D36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English	4	10	14.8	37	0.09
D37	I have clear goals for improving my English skills	12	17	44.4	83	0.229
D38	I think about my progress in learning English	19	21	70.4	77.8	0.437

Table 30

Significant Affective Strategies- Control Group

Affective Strategies- Control Group N= 27						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Signif.
		Before	After	Before	After	
E39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	18	18	66.6	66.6	0.566
E40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake	18	17	66.6	62.9	0.5
E41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English	13	18	48.1	66.6	0.236
E42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying English	16	16	59.2	59.2	0.57
E43	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	0	3	0	11.1	0.309
E44	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English	5	9	18.5	33.3	0.211

Table 31

Significant Social Strategies- Control Group

Social Strategies - Control Group N= 27						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Signif.
		Before	After	Before	After	
F45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	20	22	74	81.4	0.439
F46	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk	15	16	55.5	59.2	0.5
F47	I practice my English with other students	5	15	18.5	55.6	0.02
F48	I ask for help from English speakers	16	21	59.2	77.7	0.249
F49	I ask questions in English.	8	12	29.6	44.4	0.251
F50	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers	11	14	40.7	51.8	0.345

A total of six strategies were found significant within the control group. Three of them are memory strategies: A5 which has to deal with the use of rhymes to remember new English words, A7: "I physically act out new English words" and strategy A9: "I remember new English words of phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign".

One cognitive strategy B22, which refers to: "I try not to translate word for word"; one compensatory strategy C26: "I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English" and one social strategy F47: "I practice English with other students" turned out significant at the end of the course.

Results about Tutorial Group

Working with the tutorial group fostered a much more confident environment for the students who seemed to share the same kind of language learning problems. It is common knowledge in the region that this university has the reputation of being a place, where only smart students attend, so lower proficiency in English makes these students feel underestimated and embarrassed when they need to ask something in class. Some students reported this fact during the individual interviews. There was even a student who joined the tutorials only from the second term because she reported feeling a fear of being criticized.

Although not all the students from this group really had language learning difficulties, a sense of empathy was created among the participants, as they were encouraged to support each other and during regular class periods they began to sit together.

Tutorial group received a very special treatment, since within this group there were some students who were self-identified as students with language learning difficulties. Instruction in LLS was supported with individual and personalized teacher's monitoring. Extra worksheets about how to use LLS were supplied during the tutorial sessions in addition to LLS instruction delivered at regular classes. SILL surveys initial and final were also applied to this group. These questionnaires together with Learning Style Surveys constituted quantitative data of the current research and they have provided worthwhile information through the tabulation and statistic analysis, but they are able to show just some pieces of the whole. Language learning is a complex issue, as well as human beings are. So that qualitative data that come from individual interviews, teacher's observation records, learners' diaries, and checklists constitute a very important source of information that support tremendously in the comprehension of a lot of subtle issues involved in educational research, even more such this current research which deals with individual differences that without a very deep qualitative analysis would be impossible to understand.

A semi-structured interview was conducted at the second week of class in order to know about students educational background, details of their English classes at school, materials, pedagogical issues and different methodologies applied in their FL classes. It was also important to know about their attitudes toward English as well as the main difficulties they faced with language learning. An attempt to obtain thinking aloud protocols was made by asking the students to do a reading activity while researcher observed and recorded her impressions. The idea was to get information about how they lead with tasks. Unfortunately this attempt did not work, especially because these protocols really need some previous training in order to be effective. Anyway this interview besides of helping in gaining more comprehension

about students' educational background and their different English class environments, it also allowed to observe the general approach that they used in a simple reading task.

Tutorial group was formed by 24 students, half of them were studying Engineering and the other half was in Technology faculty. They were 9 females and 15 males. 8 students studied at private schools and 16 at public high schools.

First interviews were carried out during the second week of class. It permitted to discover some facts that researcher had supposed before thanks to her teaching experience with elementary level, and because of some informal conversations held with students about their educational backgrounds in English learning. Regarding to this important issue, there were some common characteristics concerning to English classes found at public schools as well as at private schools.

Educational Background

Public Schools

At public schools English classes were delivered two or three times a week for periods of 40 minutes each. There were around 35 or 40 students per class. Classes were conducted in Spanish depriving the students of opportunities to listen to English. Most students tended to translate every single word to Spanish; this fact was found when they were interviewed individually because besides of the semi-structured interview students were asked to do a reading task from the textbook in order to observe the kind of approach they used for doing the task. Some students' expressions that describe this situation are cited below:

Cristóbal: "English was not English, it was whatever but not English, nobody cared it! We had six hours a week".

Marcelo: "My classes were 60% in Spanish; I just received instruction in technical vocabulary.

Santiago: "My classes were totally in Spanish. My teachers did not attend to class very often"

Estéfano: "My teacher did not speak English in class. We did not read or write"

Ana: "All my English classes were in Spanish, just in sixth course we received them in English because we had to take an exam to graduate"

Luis: "At my English classes everyone spoke Spanish, even the teacher, so when I came to my first class here, you spoke only English, I understood nothing and for that reason I wanted to participate in this project"

Students thought that most of English teachers from their high schools were not sufficiently trained, they did not attend to class very often and they perceived the teachers' lack of interest which was transferred to students who thought that English was not an important subject. Students told about this through the following phrases:

Eugenia: "Teachers were a bit lazy, they did not like teaching"

Rodrigo: "My teachers did not attend to class, and when they did, they talked with us, but never in English. It was not important, they did not care it".

Bruno: "Teachers did not know how to teach. They made English difficult and they never explained"

Cristóbal: "I had six hours a week of English, but teachers did not attend to class and we missed a lot of classes"

Tomás: "The last teacher I had, knows a lot but he could not manage the class, nobody respected him, he was easy going, so we did not care English too much and we did not pay attention"

Language learning approach is mainly teacher centered at public schools. The only material they used was the official textbook published by the Ecuadorian government and whose usage is mandatory within public schools. All the activities just asked the students to fill in exercises from the textbook and students used to cheat them. They hardly ever did an activity addressed to develop language skills. Reading

aloud some pieces of texts in class was the only thing that some students considered as a speaking activity. Students also seemed to demand more explanation about everything and this requirement was not satisfied by teachers, especially about class and textbook instructions and grammar. Terms that describe general language approach students experienced are transcribed below:

Eugenia: "We used the government book... people did not understand it and they asked the book to students from higher courses to cheat"

Fernando: "Every teacher taught us the verb To Be... we used to fill in the book, but just filling in without any explanation.. Everyone cheat, like sheep to a classmate who knew more. The teacher signed the book with the activities"

Gemma: "My teacher just used that book, she explained a bit and nobody were interested.... classes were boring. It was a lecture class and everyone talk!"

Lucas: "During fifth course we just learned the numbers. During sixth course we used the book from the government and it does not have grammar. Just the teacher read and we pretended to do something"

Bruno: "Teachers just worked with the book, they said the pages to work but never explained...and the instructions were in English too. We read aloud but there is not any interaction between students"

Students at public schools as well as private ones seemed to value a stricter teacher who speaks English in class and who presents different activities. They told phrases like some which are exposed below that make us suppose this. Of course they also had a couple of teachers at high school that made things differently, and they could perceive a different learning environment too. Furthermore, communicative approach used in my classes was new for most of them, and maybe it allowed observing the distinction.

Santiago: "Just in sixth course we used audio-visual aids, and I learnt a bit!" But English at my school was never enough"

Clara: "My whole class was in English with that teacher who was very strict...so I do not have problems with listening"

Fernando: "If we would have had the sixth course teacher during the past years...He taught us, He allowed us speaking English, we made dialogues, he had a good methodology. He's got a master's degree. Maybe He took any English teaching course"

Gemma: "Other teacher in second course taught well because the whole class was in English, She did not allow us using the dictionary. She made us memorize the verbs, and she took quizzes every class, as well as oral exams."

Cristóbal: "One teacher in second course spoke English in class, it was like your class, but he died... he was an excellent teacher"

Students from public schools seemed not to be interested in learning, but only in passing exams. Exams were easy and they have the same exercises from the textbook, so only memorization was required to pass them. Their expressions show how clear they appear to be about this:

Fernando: "The exams were very similar to the textbook activities, I memorized the dialogues and I always had a "polla" to help myself."

Gemma: "I was encouraged to pass, but not to learn. I got extra points for the textbook activities, homework... but just for passing not for learning"

Víctor: "Teacher told us what the topics for the exam were, so we knew what it was going to treat about. I memorized it... but it was short term memory!"

Santiago: "Exams were made in Spanish"

Cristóbal: "During the exams the strategy was guessing, or cheating"

Martín: "One teacher I had used to dictate the answers during the exams. We had to write what she said... How we were going to learn English in such a way!! It was impossible.... instead of doing by ourselves!"

Private Schools

At private schools English language was the vehicle to teach it, no matter in some cases students complained about lack of understanding and little interest

showed by the teacher in charge to help them. Teachers' attendance was pretty regular though.

Gina: "I had ten hours a week of English. The teacher spoke too fast and nobody understood her. I asked my classmates to explain me every time".

Tamara: "My classes were totally in English but I did not understand anything, so I did not like English. From 4th course to 6th I always got bad scores. The teacher did not care us, she did not explain grammar.

Germán: "My whole class was in English, so I do not have problems in listening".

Karla: "My classes were 50% in Spanish, 50% in English, because when we did not understand, teacher explained in Spanish"

Students from private schools appear having had access to more varied English class activities, to more explanation about grammar, as well as to more opportunities to develop language skills, despite of big size classes they attended. They used foreign textbooks.

Charlotte: "My classes were in English but if we had a question teacher answered and explained it in Spanish. We used a foreign textbook"

Karla: "I did not have problems in grammar. But when we did listening activities I did... When we did not understand, the teacher explained us in Spanish. We spoke English in class. We did oral presentations about some topics like the family and so on..." Books were foreign and we also used a listening series"

Samuel: "My English classes were a bit funnier in fourth course. I had 7 hours a week. Teacher asked us to make oral presentations at the end of the course, but he did not give us too many opportunities to speak English in class"

Víctor: "As we were a lot of students we did not have any opportunity to speak English!"

Some students from both kinds of schools told that they did not like English because they did not understand it. Others liked it and they had even taken private courses to learn English, because they thought it was important.

Marcelo: "I did not like English because I have always had the problem of looking at English like the Spanish"

María: "I did not pay attention to English, I did not like it, but I have to learn it"

Lucas: "It is nice to learn languages. It is important for the job, in my profession all the programs are in English"

Victor: "I did not care English. I did not like it because I did not understand. I do not like what I do not understand!"

Ana: "At high school I liked English a bit, because I sometimes do not understand it, it is difficult for me and I get annoyed!"

Eugenia: "I know English is important and I like it! I took an English course in an academy"

Data displayed above about students' educational backgrounds besides of making available some research clues within the complicated diagnosis of language learning difficulties they let to know the real learning environment the practitioner will face and it will eventually allow modifying some aspects of the learning process.

One of the best sources of knowledge about the students' language learning difficulties was to address this question to them, as it was done during the first interview. Results about language learning difficulties are presented below.

Language Learning Difficulties

Main problems that students faced in English learning were self-identified during the individual interviews. Listening was the most serious problem found by students from public schools; all of them (15 students) reported such a situation.

Karla: "My most serious problem is listening. I understand at first, but next I desperately block myself, I lose the concentration and I feel anxious"

Ana: "I really have problems in understanding what the people say in English"

Gemma: "My main problem is listening because I try to understand word for word and because they really speak too fast"

Lucas: "I have many troubles in listening because words sound similar and I get confused, and I don't know how to pronounce well..."

Five students from private schools and three from public ones told that they found difficult speaking English, especially pronunciation, but listening was not a big trouble for them.

Germán: "I have difficulties in pronunciation. When I'm speaking fluently... I sometimes have to think in the Spanish word first."

Clara: "I don't know why I get nervous when I speak English, because I still think in Spanish, I translate it and I say it in English"

Charlotte: "Speaking English is what makes me difficult because I am afraid of making mistakes, if it is not perfect it is better not to talk"

Eugenia: "Pronunciation is hard for me, but listening too"

Difficulties in writing and grammar were also reported by some students especially about what have to deal with sentence building. Regarding grammar some students also reported that even Spanish grammar was difficult for them, what it made more complex to contrast or compare with English grammar when I tried to use metalanguage in explaining language issues.

Reading, on the other hand was reported by nearly all the students as the easiest skill in English learning.

Eugenia: "People in my class were better in reading and fill in exercises because it was what we have been doing the past years"

Clara: "Reading is not difficult for me, but writing is difficult for me because I make spelling mistake."

Estéfano: "I don't have problems in reading but listening and writing is hard for me"

María: "Building sentences is hard for me and I get confused with verb tenses and grammar"

Identifying the aspects of language learning which are problematic appears to be a fairly easy task for the students especially if they had been exposed to new challenges or requirements that subject matter in itself demanded of them which

seemed to be the case at the moment that interviews were carried out. Anyway it was useful to make them aware of these specific weaknesses they faced in such a situation. On the other hand they were also asked about the techniques, tips or any aids that they had been employing in order to overcome such difficulties, that is to say LLS.

In order to achieve a systematic analysis of the results the group of 24 students who belonged to the tutorial group was divided in three sub-groups. To avoid some subjective perceptions at this initial stage classification was made by taking into account students scores from their first quiz and they were averaged it out with the scores from their mid-term exams. So the first group of 7 students which will be called as high level and they can be considered as successful students were in the range that comes from 80 to 100. Medium level students were those who are in the range from 70 to 79, there were 10 students in this group; and there were 7 low level students who were in the range from 48, which was the lowest score, to 69.

Table 32

Scores and Overall Average Obtained at SILL

Level	Tutorial Sub- groups		
	Students	Scores	Overall Average SILL 1
H	German	96	2.5
I	Charlotte	95.5	3.9
G	Clara	94	3.24
H	Karla	91.5	2.94
	Santiago	82.5	3.06
	Eugenia	84	3.64
	Fernando	83.5	3.16
M	Ana	79	2.84
E	Estéfano	78	2.1
D	María	77	3.7
I	Tomás	76.5	3.26
U	Tamara	75	2.8
M	Gema	74	3.7
	Martín	71	4
	Cristóbal	70	3.04
	Samuel	72	3.04
	Lucas	70.5	2.78
L	Gina	68	3.6
O	Bruno	59	3.72
W	Luis	54	3.88
	Rodrigo	62	3.7
	Víctor	53	2.94
	Felipe	55	2.14
	Marcelo	48.5	3.74

Table 31 shows the classification of students from the tutorial group in three levels according their grades. This table also includes their overall averages obtained at first SILL questionnaire. This average tells how often they use strategies for learning English. For the Likert-scaled strategy-use items on the *SILL*, the following key helped to interpret the means: 3.5 to 5.0, high use; 2.5 to 3.4, medium use; and 1.0 to 2.4, low use (Oxford, 1990). This table demonstrates that in some cases there is not a direct relationship between grades and overall averages at SILL.

One of the purposes of this research was to investigate all the possible factors that are involved in language learning difficulties, so once students from the tutorial group was classified according their proficiency, it was also important to relate this factor to students educational background, learning styles, and major. Table 32 shows the relationship between educational background and learners language proficiency; it was found that 82% of students self-identified as less successful learners (low and medium proficient students) studied at public schools while 62.5% of high proficient students studied at private high schools.

Table 33

Educational Background vs. Students Proficiency

Educational Background vs. Students Proficiency- Tutorial Group								
Type of School	Proficiency							
	Low	%	Medium	%	High	%	Total	%
Public	7	43.8%	7	43.8%	2	12.5%	16	100%
Private	0	0%	3	37.5%	5	62.5%	8	100%
Total	7	29.2%	10	41.7%	7	29.2%	24	100%

As triangulation requires more data collection from different sources, results of Style Analysis Survey applied to tutorial group will be provided on the figure 11. It shows the same variable according to the students' proficiency. Next figure (12) shows kinds of personality of students from the tutorial group

Figure 11. Learning Styles found within Tutorial Group

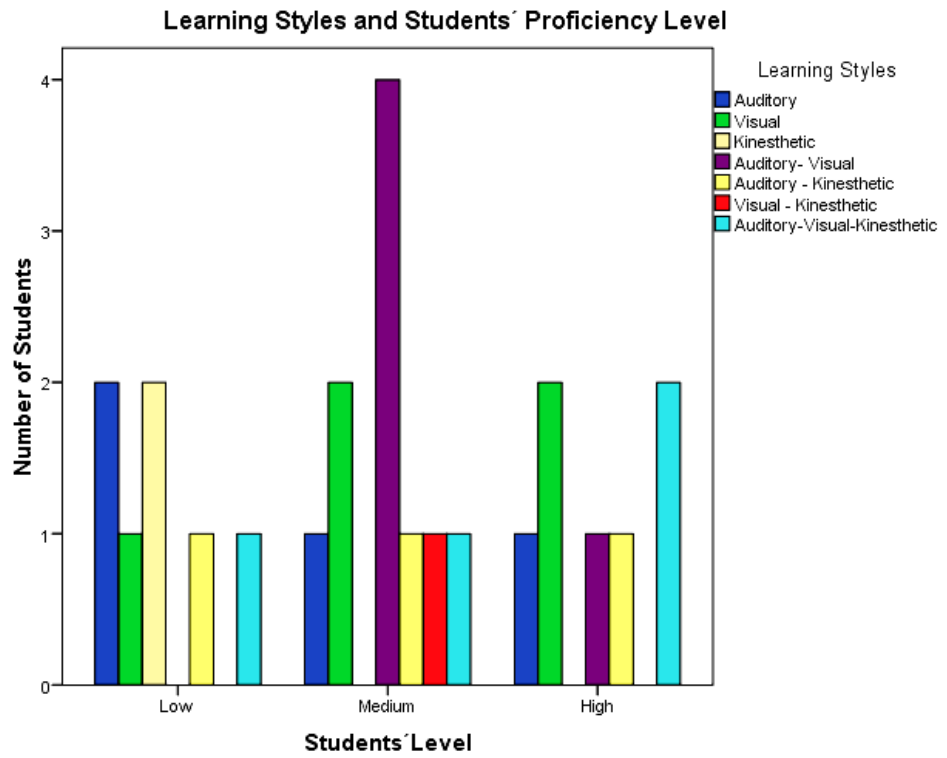
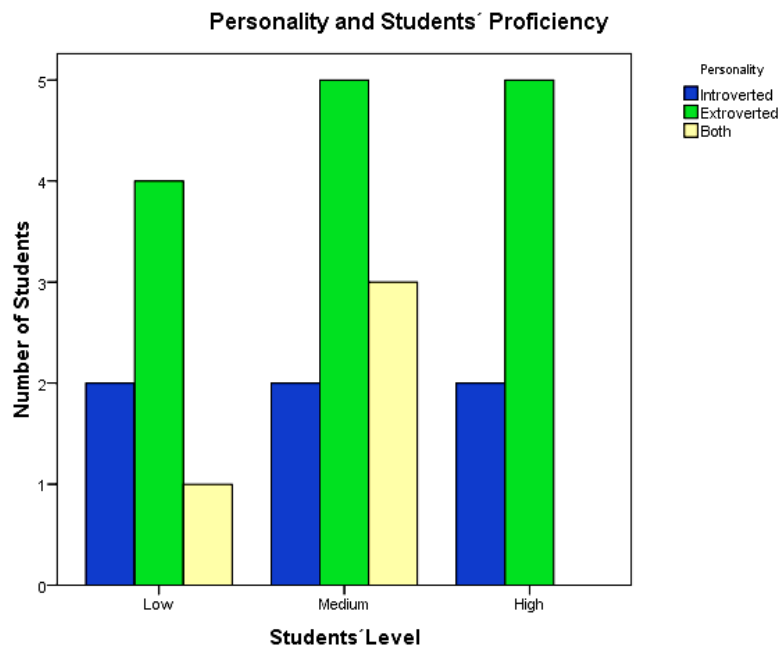


Figure 12. Types of Personality – Tutorial Group



As it can be seen on figure 11 from the seven students who have low proficiency 71% of them strongly favor one learning channel. From medium level students 30% strongly favor one learning channel; one is auditory and one is visual. There were 42.8% of high level students who have preference for just one learning channel. Two students are visual and one student is auditory. Among the students of medium and high level there was not any student who has preferred kinesthetic sense as the only one learning channel, as it did occurred among the students from low level.

On the other hand, results about personality types found within tutorial group demonstrated to be similar to the experimental group, however low proficient students seem to be less extroverted than the other both groups.

Language learning strategies are not always identified by students with such a name and most of them were not even aware about their use and frequency. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning is one of the tools designed for this purpose and results obtained from it together with data from students interviews constituted in the first evidence of students' strengths in language learning at the beginning of the research process. Comparative charts showing the strategies found at high level of frequency throughout the three subgroups and answers obtained during the interviews about the strategies that students use in language learning will be transcribed below every table from 34 to 39. Results of strategies found at high level of frequency have been arranged according the six sets of strategies from Oxford's classification.

Table 34

Memory strategies vs. Proficiency- Tutorial group

Table 34. LLS used at high level of frequency - Comparative Chart

Memory Strategies - Tutorial Group

High Level Students	Low Level Students	Medium Level Students
A1: I think of the relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English		
	A2: I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	
A3: I connect the sound of an English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word		
A4: I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used		
	A5: I use rhymes to remember new English words	
	A7: I physically act out new English words	
A8: I review English lessons often		

From the nine memory strategies classified by Oxford, low level students seem to use six of them at a high level of frequency. Besides of strategy A1 that is frequently used by all the students from the three groups, they seem to use all their senses preferences in order to remember words in English, strategies A3, A4, A5 and A7 have to deal with this assertion. On the other hand during the interview just three of them reported such memory strategies, as they expressed:

Gina: "Gestures and mimics help me a lot to understand. I listen to songs and rhymes to learn vocabulary".

Victor: "I visualize and associate with what I remember. During the class I associate the topic with what we are learning in order to understand"

Rodrigo: "There are things that I do not understand at the beginning, but later I assimilate some words and then I understand"

High level students use very frequently the strategies A1, A3, A4 as the low level ones do, and additionally they also use strategy A8 that has to deal with

reviewing new target language in order to be remembered. Their phrases during the interview confirm such answers at SILL.

Charlotte: "I try to visualize the word or the image in my mind.. I record them in such a way"

Fernando: "For the exams I memorized the vocabulary and the dialogues"

Santiago: "To learn English I read a lot and try to listen to the CD"

Eugenia: "I had read before about this topic, so I tried to remember what the text was, so I understood the lecture!"

Medium level students were able to identify just two memory strategies A1 and A2 which are used at high level of frequency. An answer of one student during the interview just seems to support the absence of the strategy A8 in this group.

Gemma: "I do not study for the exams, I pay attention in class"

Martin: "I have some programs on my computer, I learn a lot. Once I have seen the words, I record them"

Table 35

Cognitive strategies vs. Proficiency level- Tutorial group

**Table 35. Cognitive Strategies used at high level of frequency
Comparative Chart- Tutorial Group**

High Level Students	Low Level Students	Medium Level Students
B10. I say or write new English words several times		
	B11. I try to talk like native English speakers	
B12. . I practice the sounds of English		
	B13. I use the English word I know in different ways	
	B19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English	
B20. I try to find patterns in English.		
	B21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand	

Cognitive strategies reported at high level of frequency were 7 from a big group of 14 belonged to this set. Strategy B20 was found relevant within the three groups and it was the only one which was at high level of frequency in the medium level students group. No matter there was a couple of students who reported the use of cognitive strategies. Their expressions are transcribed below:

Lucas: "I write down the words, look at the pictures, and I revise by saying them aloud"

María: "I translate the words with the computer, then I write and repeat them"

Tamara: "I learned better by pronouncing words and concepts rather than by writing them".

Samuel: "I have looked how words are pronounced, I repeat them aloud, I sometimes record them and I review them mentally"

However low level students reported the highest number of cognitive strategies used very frequently on the SILL questionnaire, they did not inform about them on the interview.

Felipe: "I repeat the words many times and I relate them with the sounds in the alphabet"

Víctor: "I use to reason how questions and answers are built"

Bruno: "I used my CD that came with the textbook and I practiced with it"

High level students, on the other hand reported the same cognitive strategies at high level of frequency during the interview too, especially the strategies B10 and B12:

Charlotte: "I repeat the words several times and memorize them, I say the words aloud and I also write them. I listen to the dialogues first, and then I repeat"

Eugenia: "I need to write the words in order to remember them later" ... I do not translate everything but what I am interested in"

Fernando: "I use to spell the words by saying them aloud"

There were also other strategies which were reported a couple of times during the interview but they were not registered at high level of frequency on the SILL, such is the case of the strategy B15, which refers to watching films and programs in English

Ana: "I have used videos in English"

Gemma: "I have watched films in English" .

Table 36

Compensatory strategies vs. Proficiency level- Tutorial group

Table 36. Compensatory Strategies at high level of frequency Comparative Chart- Tutorial Group		
High Level Students	Low Level Students	Medium Level Students
C24: To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.		
C25: . When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures		
C28: I try to guess what the other person will say next in English		
C29: . If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing		

Regarding to compensatory strategies, results are shown on table 36. All the students from the three groups use the strategies C24 and C28 very frequently.

During the interviews these strategies were also expressed by them and it was also evident when they worked on the reading task.

Cristóbal: "I pay attention to the context and I try to imagine what is going to come"

Eugenia: "When I read I look carefully what the instruction asks for. I help with the context and I try to understand by association. I try to imagine what the other person will say in English".

Samuel: "I relate the words I know in order to understand what I listen"

Fernando: "I prepare my mind for the task"

Low level students use strategy C25 and high level students use strategy C29 both at high level of frequency respectively.

Table 37 shows four metacognitive strategies D31, D32, D33 and D38 which were found at high level of frequency throughout the three groups. Strategy D37 was found at high level in both low and medium level students and, strategy D30 is used very frequently by high level students. Students' comments about the use of these strategies were also expressed during the interviews and they are transcribed below the table.

Table 37

Metacognitive strategies vs. Proficiency- Tutorial group

Table 37. Metacognitive Strategies at High Level of Frequency Comparative Chart- Tutorial Group		
High Level Students	Low Level Students	Medium Level Students
D30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English		
	D31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	
		D32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English
	D33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English	
		D37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
		D38. I think about my progress in learning English

Charlotte: "I have been a good student, but now I'm not so good at English...I pay attention to pronunciation"

Samuel: "Our teacher did not go to class, so we had to look for and learn by ourselves. We used to work in groups in order to catch up"

Luis: "I decided not to take the exam to pass this level; I preferred to take the course in order to learn"

Víctor: "My other classmates did not do the course, they just took the exam to pass it, but I wanted to learn... not just taking the exam and pass with the minimal score. At high school I memorized the topics in advance... but it was just short term memory"

María: "The last time I took Basic A I cheat myself at laboratory activities... but I realized that it was not so helpful for me"

Marcelo: "I have always seen English like Spanish... I have not devoted too much time to study English but there must be a way I can learn English... but I do not find the right method to do so."

Boris: "I use to speak English with my cousin"

Tomás: "I try to pay attention in class as much as I can; I changed my seat in order to avoid distractions. I have really improved, because at the beginning I did not understand anything"

Affective strategies found at high level of frequency within the three groups were strategies E39, E40 and E42, as it is shown on table 38. Strategy E41 was used very frequently by students from low and medium levels.

Table 38

Affective strategies vs. Proficiency- Tutorial group

Table 38. Affective Strategies at high level of frequency Tutorial Group- Comparative Chart		
High Level Students	Low Level Students	Medium Level Students
E39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.		
E40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake		
	E41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English	
E42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying English		

A couple of comments about strategies E39 and E42 were expressed by students during the interview:

Clara: "I don't know why I get nervous the moment I speak English it is because I still think in Spanish, I translate it and then I say it in English."

Marcelo: "I use to get nervous during the exams and I do not answer well. I need to manage my anxiety better"

Karla: "To avoid anxiety during an exam or any listening activity, I get serious, and I say myself: breathe deeply, then I listen and next I pretend to be alone and not like if I were taking an exam"

Social strategies found at high level of frequency within the tutorial group are shown on table 38. Strategies F46 and F48 were frequently used by students from the three groups. Students from high and low level use strategy F45 at high level of frequency and strategy F47 is used very frequently by low level students. Social strategies reported during the interviews were attached under the table.

Table 39

Social strategies vs. Proficiency- Tutorial group

Table 39. Social Strategies at high level of frequency Comparative Chart- Tutorial Group		
High Level Students	Low Level Students	Medium Level Students
F45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.		
F46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk		
F47. I practice my English with other students.		
F48. I ask for help from English speakers		

Eugenia: "My father and my best friend helped me with the compositions and my best friend listens and corrects me"

Tamara: "A friend who studied at an academy helped me"

Estéfano: "My friend Luis helped me a lot and Juan also helped me with the order of words in a sentence"

María: "I use to go to the laboratory with Clara, she really encouraged me and she helped me, she explained me and I learnt a lot"

Rodrigo: "I use to revise for the exams with my cousin and my father who is an English teacher... he taught me the basis and he helped me"

There were other strategies that are not described at SILL questionnaire and which appeared to be used by students. Some other LLS were taken from Chamot's classification, to be included on students' checklists, such is the case of "translation", "using the dictionary" or "taking notes". These strategies were reported during the interviews as well as on the students' checklists and when students worked on the reading activity which was asked to them in order to see how they faced the task. Some phrases from the students which illustrate the use of these strategies are the following ones:

Víctor: "I take notes, I make my own handbook, I translate everything. I look for every question that might be asked and I translate everything"

Estéfano: " I look for the words in the dictionary"

Cristóbal: "I revise with my notebook, I use the dictionary a lot, I take notes"

Lucas: "I read and I look for the words in the dictionary, but it takes much time"

Germán: "I write my vocabulary on the textbook with the translation"

The findings in this study showed that the low proficient students used 58% of LLS at high level of frequency, followed by high proficient learners who reported to use 42% of strategies. Medium proficient students used 32% of strategies at high level of frequency.

Effectiveness of Instruction within tutorial group

Results very carefully described previously have offered a starting point for the analysis of strengths and weaknesses that novice learners use to bring. Once this

diagnosis was carried out, it was time to collect information about the progress and effectiveness of the instruction in language learning strategies within the tutorial group. A comparative table about the averages obtained before and after the instruction is showed below.

Table 40

Averages Use of Strategies before and after LLS Instruction

Averages Use of Strategies - Tutorial Group N= 24						
Strategy	A	B	C	D	E	F
Mean- SILL 1	3.23	3.00	3.14	3.54	3.35	3.52
Mean- SILL 2	3.60	3.49	3.81	3.94	3.77	4.20
Full Score	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

A: Memory Strategies, B: Cognitive Strategies, C: Compensatory Strategies
D: Metacognitive Strategies E: Affective Strategies F: Social Strategies

Averages of different sets of strategies were at medium level of frequency before the LLS instruction. Means of memory, compensatory, metacognitive, social and affective strategies shifted to high level of frequency after the instruction. Average of cognitive strategies slightly shifted, but it remained in the range of medium level. Social strategies seemed to reach the highest level of frequency within the tutorial group followed by metacognitive ones.

Instruction in language learning strategies has demonstrated to improve language learning. In order to verify such enhancement, in addition of averages use of strategies corresponding to the entire tutorial group, it is important to verify individual results related to language performance, so students grades together with their overall averages are presented on Table 41.

Table 41

Students' grades and Overall averages in strategy use

Students grades and SILL overall averages- Tutorial Group				
Students	Initial Grades	Average SILL 1	Final grades	Average SILL 2
German	96	2.5	100	3.26
Charlotte	95.5	3.9	97	4.18
Clara	94	3.24	96	3.74
Karla	91.5	2.94	94	3.52
Santiago	82.5	3.06	84	3.44
Eugenia	84	3.64	80	3.74
Fernando	83.5	3.16	86	4.08
Ana	79	2.84	69	2.78
Estéfano	78	2.1	93	3.8
María	77	3.7	64	3.98
Tomás	76.5	3.26	85	3.38
Tamara	75	2.8	74	4.26
Gema	74	3.7	60	3.94
Martín	71	4.0	54	4.4
Cristóbal	70	3.04	61	2.82
Samuel	72	3.04	77	4.34
Lucas	70.5	2.78	75	3.38
Gina	68	3.6	46	4.22
Bruno	59	3.72	67	4.24
Luis	54	3.88	66	3.82
Rodrigo	62	3.7	53	4.04
Víctor	53	2.94	48	3.6
Felipe	55	2.14	53	2.78
Marcelo	48.5	3.74	61	4.12

From the group of high proficient students, six students improved their grades, and one kept in the range; three students had a high overall average in strategy use at the beginning of the instruction and six of them improved their overall averages after the instruction, two of them shifted from medium to high range.

From the group of medium proficient students, three students had a high overall average in strategy use before the instruction and after this, three students shifted from medium to high range. Four students improved their grades after the instruction in LLS, one of them kept in the same range, but there were five students

who got worse, two students from this group of five also decreased in their overall averages, while the others three students despite of their lower grades, increased in their overall averages in strategy use.

From low proficient students three students improved their grades after the instruction; all of them had high overall average in strategy use. One student kept on the range and three did not improve their grades. Interestingly five students had high overall averages of strategy use when they started the instruction. After the instruction, one student shifted from medium to high range, while the other student shifted from low to medium range in strategy use, but none of them actually improved their grades.

From the tutorial group, a total of thirteen students (54%) improved their language learning after the instruction in LLS. Two students kept their same grades. Nine students shifted from medium range to high range in strategy use. 10 students improved in their grades as well as in their overall averages in strategy use.

From the group of students self-identified as unsuccessful, a total of seventeen (medium and low proficient), seven students (41%) improved their language learning, while one kept her same grades. All the students who improved their grades also enhanced their overall averages in strategy use; four students shifted from medium to high range.

However ten students from this group of less successful learners did not improve their grades, seven of them enhanced their strategy use.

In order to associate different data, relationship between learning styles and language proficiency is showed on table 42. Learners highlighted in boldface are those students who improved their language learning after instruction in strategies. It

can be seen that the students with more flexible learning styles were those who enhanced language learning the more compared with their initial grades.

Table 42

Learning Styles and Proficiency Levels- Tutorial Group

Learning Styles vs. Proficiency Levels - Tutorial Group					
Proficiency	Students	Initial Grades	Final Grades	Learning Style	Personality
High	German	96	100	A	I
	Charlotte	95,5	97	A-K	E
	Clara	94	96	V-A-K	I
	Karla	91,5	94	V-A-K	E
	Santiago	82,5	84	A-K	E
	Eugenia	84	80	V	E
	Fernando	83,5	86	A-V	E
Medium	Ana	79	69	V	E
	Estéfano	78	93	V-A-K	E-I
	María	77	64	A-V	E
	Tomás	76,5	85	V-A-K	E-I
	Tamara	75	74	V	E-I
	Gema	74	60	V-A-K	E
	Martín	71	54	K	E
	Cristóbal	70	61	A	E
	Samuel	72	77	V-A-K	E-I
	Lucas	70,5	75	V-A	I
Low	Gina	68	46	A	E
	Bruno	59	67	A-K	E
	Luis	54	66	A	E
	Rodrigo	62	53	K	E-I
	Víctor	53	48	V	I
	Felipe	55	53	V	I
	Marcelo	48,5	61	V-K	E

Learning Styles: V= Visual A= Auditory K= Kinesthetic
 Personality: E= Extroverted I= Introverted

From the group of students who improved in language learning it is important to observe which sets of strategies increased their frequency, that is to say what type

of strategies shifted from medium to high range. These results were obtained by doing a comparison between SILL 1 and SILL 2 and overall averages from sets of strategies. Table 43 shows these results.

Table 43

Effectiveness of instruction in LLS vs. Proficiency

LLS acquired after Instruction by learners who improved in language learning						
Students Proficiency	Type of LLS					
	Memory	Cognitive	Compensat.	Metacognit.	Affective	Social
Low		X	X		X	
Medium	XX	XX	XXX	XXXX	XXX	XXXX
High	XX	XXX	XXX	XX	XX	XXX
Total of Students	4	6	7	6	6	7

Among the students who improved their language learning after the instruction, compensatory and social strategies became the most highly frequent, followed by cognitive, compensatory, affective and memory strategies. Medium proficient students were who mostly used and tried new strategies followed by high proficient and low proficient students, and they were also who employed more metacognitive and social strategies compared with the other two groups.

Significance test was also applied within tutorial group in order to know if individual support to these students produced better results in quantitative terms. Results about significance will be displayed and strategies which were significant are highlighted in bolds.

Tables of Significant Language Learning Strategies- Tutorial Group

Table 44

Significant Memory Strategies- Tutorial Group

Memory Strategies- Tutorial Group N= 24						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Significance
		Before	After	Before	After	
A1	I think of the relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English	22	21	91.6	87.5	0.5
A2	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them	8	11	33.4	45.8	0.323
A3	I connect the sound of an English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word	12	18	50	75	0.18
A4	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	14	17	58.4	70.9	0.3
A5	I use rhymes to remember new English words	4	11	16.6	45.9	0.06
A6	I use flashcards to remember new English words.	2	9	8.4	37.5	0.03
A7	I physically act out new English words	8	11	33.3	45.8	0.32
A8	I review English lessons often	12	18	50	75	0.18
A9	I remember the new words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign	10	15	41.7	62.5	0.21

Table 45

Significant Cognitive Strategies – Tutorial Group

Cognitive Strategies – Tutorial Group N= 24						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Significance
		Before	After	Before	After	
B10	I say or write new English words several times.	14	16	58.3	76.6	0.42
B11	I try to talk like native English speakers	11	12	45.9	50	0.5
B12	I practice the sounds of English.	11	16	45.9	50	0.28
B13	I use the English word I know in different ways.	9	13	37.5	54.1	0.26
B14	I start conversations in English.	3	4	12.5	16.7	0.5
B15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	9	12	37.5	50	0.33
B16	I read for pleasure in English	1	7	4.2	29.2	0.03
B17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	5	11	20.8	45.8	0.1
B18	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	11	17	45.8	70.9	0.17
B19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	12	18	50	75	0.18
B20	I try to find patterns in English.	17	17	70.9	70.9	0.5
B21	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand	10	17	41.6	70.9	0.12
B22	I try not to translate word-for-word.	4	6	16.7	25	0.37
B23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English	5	7	20.9	29.1	0.38

Table 46

Significant Compensatory Strategies- Tutorial Group

Compensatory Strategies – Tutorial Group N= 24						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Significance
		Before	After	Before	After	
C24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses	15	16	62.5	66.7	0.5
C25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures	10	20	41.7	83.3	0.05
C26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	5	12	20.8	50	0.07
C27	I read English without looking up every new word	3	9	12.5	37.5	0.07
C28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English	15	19	62.5	79.2	0.3
C29	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	11	15	45.9	62.5	0.27

Table 47

Significant Metacognitive Strategies- Tutorial Group

Metacognitive Strategies - Tutorial Group N= 24						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Significance
		Before	After	Before	After	
D30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English	9	17	37.5	70.8	0.08
D31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better	18	20	75	82.3	0.43
D32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English	17	22	70.9	91.7	0.26
D33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English	16	18	66.7	75	0.43
D34	I plan my schedule so I have enough time to study English	8	12	33.3	50	0.25
D35	I look for people I can talk to in English	5	11	20.9	45.8	0.1
D36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English	12	10	50	41.7	0.41
D37	I have clear goals for improving my English skills	13	20	54.2	83.4	0.14
D38	I think about my progress in learning English	20	24	82.3	100	0.32

Table 48

Significant Affective Strategies- Tutorial Group

Affective Strategies - Tutorial Group N= 24

Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Signif.
		Before	After	Before	After	
E39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English	17	18	70.9	75	0.5
E40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I'm making a mistake	20	20	83.3	83.3	0.56
E41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English	16	18	66.6	75	0.43
E42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English	15	18	62.5	75	0.36
E43	I write my feelings in a language learner diary	4	13	16.7	54.1	0.02
E44	I talk to someone else about what I feel when I am learning English	5	12	20.9	50	0.07

Table 49

Significant Social Strategies- Tutorial Group

Social Strategies - Tutorial Group N= 24						
Key	Strategies	Number		Percentage		Signif.
		Before	After	Before	After	
F45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again	21	24	87.5	100	0.38
F46	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk	16	22	66.6	91.7	0.2
F47	I practice English with other students	9	16	37.5	66.6	0.11
F48	I ask from help from English speakers	18	20	75	83.3	0.43
F49	I ask questions in English	7	17	29.1	70.8	0.03
F50	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers	9	16	37.5	66.6	0.11

The number of strategies that tutorial group seemed to acquire according their significance level obtained with the application of McNemar test is five. The memory strategy A6: “ I use flashcards to remember new English words”, a cognitive one, B16: “I read for pleasure in English” One compensatory strategy C25:” When I can’t think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures”, an affective strategy E43: “I write my feelings in a language learner diary” and strategy F49, which is social: “I ask questions in English”.

Regarding to the type of strategies, four of them correspond to the same ones found also significant within the larger group, or at least are closely related, like C25 and A7 that refers to the use of gestures to learn or to compensate the lack of knowledge in language.

Students were asked to mark a checklist of strategies every time they studied English, outside of class, during the time they were doing homework and before and after they took a quiz or an exam. Checklists were designed by taking into account all the strategies that were taught and practiced during class time and in the tutorials. Some of these strategies were taken from Chamot's classification and they cannot be found in Oxford's classifications. Such is the case of using a dictionary, translation, and deduction- induction. However, even though I continuously insisted on collecting and marking the checklist, not all the students were disciplined enough to monitor and control the use of strategies during the time they were working on English. Table 49 includes a summary of the frequencies of use of LLS obtained from students' checklists. Highest frequencies are highlighted in bold and it can also be observed how these frequencies decline from high level students to low level ones. There are some strategies found at high level of frequency either within medium level students or high level students indistinctly.

Table 50

Summary of Monitoring of Language Learning Strategies

Language Learning Strategies Checklist				
Students Proficiency Level	Frequency			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
Cognates	44	41	21	106
Word Formation	25	32	6	63
Guessing from context	50	43	19	112
Using Dictionary	27	20	15	62
Imagery	38	38	15	91
Grouping	11	17	5	33
Keyword	19	23	9	51
Elaboration	28	18	7	53
Oral Rehearsal	21	36	11	68
Written Rehearsal	28	35	14	77
Prediction	55	39	10	104
Skimming	37	34	14	85
Planning	31	34	2	67
Self-evaluation	29	25	9	63
Selective attention	50	31	6	87
Deduction-induction	51	25	6	82
Asking for clarification	37	33	7	77
Self correction	18	15	9	42
Translation	27	29	9	65
Induction- deduction	8	7	0	15
Using models or patterns	12	13	5	30
Using gestures or mimics	5	19	3	27
Transferring	28	14	6	48
Using CDs, videos or TV programs in English	4	7	5	16

As indicated in table 50, guessing from context, use of cognates and making predictions were the strategies with the highest occurrence. Oral and written rehearsals were used more frequently by medium proficiency learners while selective attention, deduction-induction, making predictions and elaboration were more used by high proficiency students.

Final Findings about Language Learning Strategy Instruction

A careful analysis and triangulation of different quantitative data also required qualitative information collected through individual interviews. This valuable information together with the previous results displayed above was synthesized in the following findings that demonstrated the effectiveness of LLS instruction with students from the treatment groups.

There were a total of thirteen strategies found significant after the instruction in the treatment groups, compared with the five strategies found significant and maybe acquired incidentally by students from the control group.

Two memory strategies were acquired and used frequently by the students: A6: “I use flashcards to remember new English words” and A7: “I physically act out new English words”; however this last strategy was not used by a significant number of students within the tutorial group, it was reported on SILL 2 as one that increased in frequency and it was reported in the final interviews.

Karla: “I use gestures to speak and to rehearse new words”

Fernando: “If I don’t remember a word in English I use other words or gestures to make other people understand me”

Another strategy that shifted to a high level of frequency of use among the tutorial group participants and it is associated with the strategy of acting out new words was the compensatory strategy C25: “When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.” The difference is the purpose of using gestures, in the first case students use this strategy to help store and retrieve information, in the second case gestures help overcome limitations in oral communication.

However there were some memory strategies that were not found significant by applying the McNemar test they were reported as highly frequent by students on their checklists, and in their final interviews This is the case of the strategy A4: "I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used". Besides having a relationship with the strategy A6 about the use of flashcards, it was frequently reported by students in final interviews.

German: "I have tried imagery, to associate words with objects"

Cristóbal: "I imagine new words and associate them with a situation then I make up a sentence with that word"

Marcelo: "I create an image about something that I would do with the word... so I remember it"

Karla: "I associate pictures and words. One word with other and so on"

Three cognitive strategies were used with significant frequency: B14, B16, and B17 were found significant too. Strategy B14: "I start conversations in English", and strategy B17: "I write notes, messages, letters or reports in English" were used significantly only in the treatment groups, but not within the tutorial. Strategy B16: "I read for pleasure in English" was found significant within tutorial as well as within treatment groups. All these strategies are classified by Oxford as "practicing naturalistically", that is to say practicing the new language in natural, realistic settings, as in participating in a conversation, reading a book or article, listening to a lecture, or writing a letter in the new language" (Oxford,1990, p.45)

These strategies are closely related to a metacognitive strategy also used with significant frequency, and which had to deal with seeking practice opportunities in naturalistic situations, the strategy D30: "I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English" These activities that involved the use of these strategies were reported by students in the final interviews:

Eugenia: "I used English to speak with my boyfriend, so my mother can not understand what we are talking" Eugenia

Tamara: "When I talk to a friend, I use the words I've learned"

Martín: "I speak English with Gemma and other friends. I sometimes write messages in English to a friend, and she sometimes writes me"

Fernando: "On Saturday I went to a conference, it was in English but I tried to understand the context, and I was so happy because I could understand a lot"

The acquisition of the strategy: "I read for pleasure in English" appears to be associated with several other techniques that helped the students understand texts and make them feel more comfortable with reading. The compensatory strategy C27: "I read English without looking up every new word" was used with significant frequency, so guessing from context as it was stated on the students' checklists reported high occurrence too. Skimming was also reported as highly used. These strategies were frequently reported in the final interviews:

Samuel: "Now when I read what I don't understand, I skip it, I try to guess... I relate with other previous words and I figure it out what it is about"

Tamara: "When I read, I don't translate word by word anymore, but I try to guess, so I don't stop on words I do not understand, I skip it... then I make the sense of the text"

Clara: "I liked so much to guess words from the context"

Cristóbal: "When I read I try to make sense of the text by guessing what it is about"

Tomás: "When I read, I first read over the passage quickly and later I deeply understand the article"

Eugenia: "I understand texts better because I skim through the text first"

Bruno: "For reading I use skimming"

There were other cognitive strategies that though they were not found significant, they were reported on the checklists and in the individual interviews. Such is the case of the employment of cognates, and oral and written rehearsal. These last strategies were mainly used by medium proficiency students.

Lucas: "I pronounce and write new words"

Samuel: "I use to repeat words aloud"

Gemma: "I used to repeat the verbs and I made up a couple of sentences"

Estéfano: "I have repeated words I don't know"

Marcelo: "I repeat new words several times"

Gina: "I have repeated words orally and by writing them"

Elaboration was another strategy reported on the checklists and in the individual interviews, as frequently used. The following learners' expressions support this finding:

Santiago: "I use to make sentences with new words; the sentences are about my life"

Cristóbal: "I sometimes use new words in sentences"

Samuel: "I have made up sentences with the new words and with the verbs in past... they were very useful to recall them on the exams"

Marcelo: "I sometimes make up a couple of sentences I relate them with something about my life"

One more compensatory strategy was acquired and used frequently by these students after the instruction. Strategy C26: "I make up new words if I don't know the right ones in English" However it was used with significant frequency within the control group.

Another important metacognitive strategy used with significant frequency within the treatment groups was the strategy D37: "I have clear goals for improving

my English skills". Some learners' comments might support the students' goal setting which is related to self- efficacy.

Estéfano: "Now I feel that English is learnable and it is not an impossible goal"

Marcelo: "Now I have found the way of studying English"

Luis: "Now I know how to study English and I have some friends who help me study"

Santiago: "I used to say that I was not able to learn, but now I feel I can"

The next strategy used with significance deals with raising strategy awareness by writing a diary. Indeed, the strategy E43: "I write down my feelings in a language learning diary" was frequently used, especially by the students from the tutorial.

Some of their comments reported on their final interviews are the following:

Clara: "The diary was so useful because it helped me a lot to be aware about the mistakes and also about what I have learned"

Karla: "The diary was useful to learn grammar and to reflect on some things that I had learned before"

Santiago: "I used the diary to write about my frustrations and feelings I used to have. Later I checked the diary and I asked to my classmates, and then I solved the problem"

Samuel: "The diary was helpful for me to self- analyze...what I have learned and what I still need to"

Marcelo: "With the diary I have reflected on my English difficulties"

María: "The diary was helpful to reflect in what we had seen in class... so for instance wrote something like this: "Though I did not understand that... I'm going to ask about it"

There were two social strategies used with significant frequency too. The strategy F49: "I ask questions in English" was reported on the checklists and also was observed during class sessions when these students tried to formulate questions to me

or to their partners in a natural way. Some questions were for clarifying and others just for fun. The strategy F50: “I try to learn about the culture of English speakers” was used with significant frequency within the treatment group and it involved keen interest in learning English and the culture of places where English is spoken. The students who used this strategy seemed to have more intrinsic motivation.

An imperative objective of the instruction in language learning strategies was helping the students enhance language skills, especially listening, that was reported on the initial interviews as one of the most difficult for less successful language learners.

All students from different proficiency reported improvements in language skills.

Table 51 shows the frequencies obtained from the final interviews regards to the type of skills that enhanced the more during the instruction. As it can be observed speaking was the skill more developed by students followed by listening and reading. The students also reported improvements in vocabulary, grammar and writing. These results seem to be coherent with the type of significant strategies as well as with the teaching approach employed. Some students’ comments were attached below the table.

Table 51

Enhancement in Language Skills and Proficiency Levels

Proficiency	Speaking	Reading	Listening	Writing	Grammar	Vocabulary
High	6	4	4	3	2	3
Medium-Low	7	5	8	3	5	5
Total	13	9	12	6	7	8

Clara: "I have improved in reading, listening and writing, my speaking is better now. At high school I was afraid of speaking; now I'm more confident"

Karla: "I have improved in listening and in speaking too, because of the activities you allowed us doing in groups"

Fernando: "At the beginning I was so afraid of speaking because I thought that I had to speak correctly otherwise it was better not to speak. Now I'm more confident and I speak freely"

Cristóbal: "I have improved in listening and my memory strategies. I have improved vocabulary"

Tamara: "I have improved a lot in listening. I have used a lot of listening strategies"

Samuel: "I have improved in reading comprehension, and also in listening. Now I speak English better"

Estéfano: "I have improved reading, writing and grammar...I'm still confused in listening. I sometimes listen carefully but there are some pieces I miss. My words flow more easily now and I have more vocabulary"

Víctor: "The most important thing I have learned is that now I understand everything what you say... however I can not answer you yet...I don't know how to do that"

Luis: "Now I understand your jokes! I'm faster in reading and I comprehend more. I feel better when I speak because I was afraid of speaking before. I have improved in writing but I'm still confused in grammar"

María: "I have learned vocabulary and verb tenses are clearer for me"

Bruno: "I have improved my vocabulary, now I identify the words" When I listen I'm much better!" "I have improved my pronunciation too"

Tomás: "I feel much better with English" I have made progress in 75%. "Now I also understand when somebody is speaking English"

Apart from these significant strategies reported by the students during the final interviews, there were other important findings related to learners' affective factors like motivation, self-confidence, and autonomy that also increased with language learning strategy instruction.

Regards to increase of self- confidence, it was an aspect that was reported by the students of different proficiency. Some comments that support such a finding were the following:

Clara: "I feel more confident now, but I think it is because the environment you have created, this is what makes me more confident"

Santiago: "I feel more confident now... with more trust. Now I know how to study and how to learn English with the strategies you have taught"

Lucas: "I feel more confident to speak and participate in class; I have made a lot of progress in English"

Bruno: "I feel more confident in speaking, because before I thought I was saying stupid things, so I had better not to talk"

María: "I feel a bit more confident with English... I understand you better in class"

Increase in motivation for English as well as for the strategy instruction was reported by the students, especially from high and medium language proficiency.

Some of their comments are:

Eugenia: "Now I love English... now I'm really using English it makes sense because at high school I only memorized grammar rules and it was "dead letter"

...I frequently use all the strategies and they are so useful. I have reached autonomy in my language learning"

Fernando: "I can see English much more interesting and I liked the way as you have planned it"

Santiago: "When I was at high school I didn't know anything about English. I have learned a lot. I liked to learn English with you"

Estéfano: "At the beginning I knew nothing... now I have improved a lot... Now I think English is easy"

Charlotte: "When I watch a film I used a lot of strategies and I understood what it was about".

Karla: "You have taught us some cool strategies"

Lucas: "I have learned thanks to the strategies you have taught"

The final interviews also contained questions addressed to know how the students perceived the instruction in language learning strategies, as well as the possible problems or suggestions to improve the program. All the students agreed that it was a good program but it was required more time to practice and learn more strategies. These are the students' comments that were useful as a feedback for the instruction.

Lucas: "Strategies are really useful, but we need to practice more. To improve the program we would need more time"

Tamara: "I think it was a fault of my classmates for not coming to the tutorials, because the program was very good"

Germán: "Strategies were ok, but I think we need more time for practicing. I understood them well but I think we needed more time to practice"

Fernando: "I think time is too short. Topics go so fast, if we were fewer students I think we would learn more"

Cristóbal: "The program is good, but if we don't take time to do it, it does not work"

Luis: "We need more time because the program is extensive and it is complicated to manage everything"

Samuel: "To enhance this program we need more time"

As it can be observed most students viewed the instruction useful, however there were some medium and low proficiency learners who did not show major improvements; some of the barriers or difficulties they reported have to deal with lack of organization and time and especially with particular beliefs that some of them held about language learning. Such was the case of Cristóbal and Victor who believed that English learning was a matter of translation to Spanish. Their comments seem to suggest such statements:

Cristóbal: "I like to understand word by word and I still make mistakes because I try to translate word by word"

"I use to get home tired and I don't have time to practice the strategies"

Víctor: "I did not know anything about English. I have had too many subjects this semester. I was working and I did not have time to do homework. When I wanted to study English, I had to study Math too, so that I did not study... then I wanted to catch up and I couldn't. I sent my book to a friend to be translated; he had to complete the activities. I haven't written the diary either"

The same belief was encountered in other student, but it was eradicated on the process. This is the Marcelo's comment reported on the final interview:

Marcelo: At the beginning I told you that I tried to translate every single word... and I tried to learn English as it was Spanish, but many people told me that there were many things in English that are made in such a way...like formulas... so I decided not to complicate myself anymore with that. I changed my mind about that!"

Other students reported problems related to lack of time or effort to practice the strategies or to attend to the tutorials:

Rodrigo: "I have been so busy, I worked and I couldn't study. I haven't devoted time to English"

Gemma: "I have had a lot of absences... I have not attended to class regularly, neither to the tutorials... I have missed a lot because I usually learn a lot when I pay attention in class... I don't use to study at home"

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter the discussion is presented by following two directions. The first section refers to the findings concerned with learning styles and language learning strategies from the entire group of participants in the study, and those related to other factors like gender, major and educational background. It was my decision to include these data about Ecuadorian language learners because language learning strategy research has had a gap concerning language learners from this country. This information collected in the early stages of this research process may add to the knowledge about less successful learners and may provide a starting point for further investigation within Ecuadorian EFL learning contexts.

Findings in the second section will attempt to answer the research questions set out in this study that have to deal with unsuccessful language learning and the analysis of some factors related to this issue. The last part will describe the discussion of results from the study about instruction in LLS their application and the range of effectiveness as a resource to overcome language learning difficulties.

Findings in Learning Styles and Language Learning Strategies

Analysis of learning styles linked with language learning strategies is based on the assumption that theoretically learning strategies can serve as an analytical tool to comprehend the fundamental elements of a particular learning style which may appear to be arbitrary and random on the surface (Willing, 1988 as cited in Li & Qin, 2006, p.70). So, as learning style characteristics reflect on learning strategies that students choose, this awareness may guide learners in their self-knowledge and in the comprehension of the reasons why they prefer to use certain strategies and not others. At the same time “this awareness would help learners develop the flexibilities to cope

with different learning contexts and ultimately achieve learner autonomy (Li & Qin, 2006, p.70).

Reid's (1995) definition of learning styles was adopted for the present study, it is "an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills (p.viii)". From the different LS categories perceptual learning styles were assessed in this group of learners, this is a term that describes the variations among learners in using one or more senses to understand, organize, and retain experience (Dunn, 1983; Dunn & Dunn, 1979 as cited in Reid, 1987).

The Extraversion / Introversion dimension was also analyzed because "the very social nature of language makes it extremely relevant (Isemonger and Sheppard, 2003, p.199)." It was also assumed that these perceptual learning styles should be viewed on a wide continuum, which means that these learning styles are preferences, so "something we find more comfortable but can do another way if circumstances require it (Ehrman, 1996, p.54)". Thus, it was possible to find students who operate most of the time from a certain style, but others who seem to be more flexible and for whom it was possible to use more than one sensory channel for learning.

However, the sensory learning style dimension was chosen because it is easier for students to assess them; Ehrman (1996) claims that more students, especially adults are aware of this learning style dimension than any other except possibly the "right and left brain" metaphor. (p.59). Some groups of researchers seem to overlap terminology and taxonomies from the different categories; this is the view that was used to analyze these results and to present the discussion related to learning styles within this group of EFL novice learners (ACTFL: *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages*)

The findings in this study were consistent with those in past studies with Hispanic learners related to kinesthetic preference for example in the work of Hernandez (2004); Torres & Cárdenas (2006); García & Figueroa (2007), and with Spanish speakers (Reid, 1987; Stebbins, 1995) where how cultural background related to learning styles preferences was explored. However Reid (1987) found that Hispanic learners were frequently auditory (Oxford, 2003, p.4).

The multidimensional nature of learning styles has allowed some researchers to discover close relationships among these three characteristics of learning –being field sensitive (field dependant), relational, and kinesthetic- (Reid, 1995, p.5). A field-sensitive individual is a global learner who is socially oriented and extrinsically motivated, (Ramirez and Price-Williams 1974, as cited in Kang, 1999). They are unable to perceive elements (or themselves) as separate from their background or environment" (Violand-Sánchez as cited in Reid, 1995, p.49). Previous research has also reported similar findings regarding field-dependence tendency of Hispanic learners (as groups)" (for example Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974; Witkin & Berry, 1976; Hale-Benson, 1987;Violand- Sánchez, 1995 as cited in Reid, 1995, p 50, 51).

Regarding personality types, the finding about the majority of extroverted students in the sample seems to be aligned with their preferred ways of learning. So, it is possible to say that kinesthetic preferences as well as an extroverted personality are somehow related because they are outgoing people who seek engagement with others, as they learn more effectively through concrete experiences, and store energy through contact with the outside world (Isemonger and Sheppard, 2003; Ehrman, 1995; Reid, 1995). It is also possible to relate these categories of learning styles with the intuition or right-brain orientation which refers to "immediate judgements based

on feelings and the adoption of a global perspective. The intuitivist prefers open-ended approaches to solving problems, and such people rely on random methods of exploration, remembering spatial images most easily" (Allinson and Hayes 1996 as cited in Chang, 2005)

On the other hand, Oxford's (1990) definition of language learning strategies (LLS) framed the context of this study. It says: "Learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations" (p.8). Her inventory SILL (version 7.0, by Rebecca Oxford, 1989) was employed to explore what language learning strategies students use and how frequently they use them in general. For the Likert-scaled strategy-use items on the *SILL*, the following key helped to interpret the means: 3.5 to 5.0, high use; 2.5 to 3.4, medium use; and 1.0 to 2.4, low use (Oxford, 1990).

In order to make a comparison between learning styles and language learning strategies, the sample corresponding to treatment groups was taken into account in this part of the analysis. However the mean of frequency of overall strategy use within the treatment group (N= 62) was 3.17, which was approximately at a medium degree, metacognitive strategies are the most frequently used by the students (M=3.35), followed by social (M=3.29), affective (M=3.23), compensatory (M=3.17), memory (M=3.04) and cognitive (M= 2.95) strategies.

Regarding to the overall analysis of results of type and frequency of language learning strategies, findings reported in this study are consistent with previous research carried out with Hispanic learners regarding with the occurrence of metacognitive, affective, social and compensatory strategies (Politzer 1983; Politzer

and McGroarty 1985; Green, 1991; Casar & Hernandez, 2000; Nicolás, 2002; Vidal, 2002).

Tactile learners in Rossi-Le's (1989) study demonstrated significant use of strategies for authentic language use but showed a negative preference for memory strategies (which usually involved auditory or visual associations of various kinds) (Reid, 1995, p.35-36). As it was seen in this study, memory and cognitive strategies were the least frequently used by learners. "Ko's Taiwanese study (2001) found that kinesthetic/tactile-style learners used significantly more memory-related, compensation, and social strategies than did other style groups" (Cited in Lan, 2005)

So, the higher occurrence of social and affective strategies found in this group of learners seems to be associated with the learning styles characteristics described above. Oxford (1996) states that extroverted learning styles such as those of many Hispanics and Arabic speakers are related to the use of social strategies for learning, and because of Hispanics global and field dependent style preference (Reid, 1995), many Hispanic ESL/EFL students choose particular learning strategies such as predicting, inferring (guessing from context), avoiding details, working with others rather than working alone, and basing judgments on personal relationships rather than logic" (p.xi). Li & Qin (2006) also found that extroverted learners are inclined to use such strategies as practicing, overcoming limitations in speaking, lowering anxiety and cooperation.

Indeed, by doing an individual analysis of strategies used at high level of frequency among these students, it appears that 50% of social strategies were highly used by these learners in the current study, they were: "If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again", or "I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk" and "I ask for help from English

speakers". Use of these strategies was also reported in the individual interviews. Furthermore during class, it was observed that students worked cooperatively to support each other in language learning. Especially, students who participated in the tutorials employed pair work and group work very often, not just because task required them to do so, but out of class periods too.

Affective strategies like "I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English", "I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake"; "I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English", and "I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying English" were also found at high level of frequency; they constitute 67% from the total of this set of strategies at SILL.

Strategies like "To understand unfamiliar words, I make guesses", or "I try to guess what the other person will say next in English" are compensatory strategies that help students to overcome limitations in knowledge. These strategies, as well as "prediction" and "skimming" were also reported on students' checklists as ones with the highest occurrence.

Oxford (1990) states that learners use metacognitive strategies sporadically and without much sense of their importance. She reported some research findings fairly opposite to these ones found in this research when she claims that " In several studies of second and foreign language learning (O'Malley, 1985; Chamot,1987) students used metacognitive strategies less often than cognitive strategies, with planning strategies more frequently employed and with little self-evaluation and self-monitoring."(P.136- 137). In the present study 40% of metacognitive strategies established by Oxford's classification were reported as being used at high level of frequency by all the students (treatment and control groups). Two of them were monitoring and self-evaluation strategies: "I notice my English mistakes and use this

information to help me do better”, and “I think about my progress in learning English”. One strategy: “I pay attention when someone is speaking English” is classified as useful for centering learning, and the strategy: “I try to find how to be a better learner of English” is framed within planning strategies.

Learning Styles, Language Learning Strategies and Gender

Though some researchers have found no difference in cognitive preferences between male and females, findings in the present research indicated learning styles differences among genders. Other literature about gender in learning style preferences locate visual, tactile and kinesthetic styles as males preferences whereas females tend to be auditory (Dunn, 2000, cited in Dybing & Church, 2010). Findings in this study seem to be similar regarding male preferences, since authors like Reid (1985, 1987); Dunn & Griggs (1993), Mulalic, Mohd & Ahmad (2009) reported that males favored tactile learning. This style was found alone and combined with visual learning style in males.

On the other hand females’ sensory learning styles tend towards a visual learning style preference, and also combined with auditory sensory channel. Unfortunately, available data was not found from previous research associated with similar results about female learning style preferences with the exception of Torres & Cárdenas’ study who explored LS of 24 Peruvian EFL learners, finding that females preferred visual style too. The lack of research particularly regarding the situation of female students, in the ESL/EFL world has been a recurrent complaint in language learning research for example has been denounced in the column of the TESOL Research Interest Section in an article written by Vandrick in 1999. Even some of the research papers named and analyzed for the present study regarding gender

differences in learning styles have discussed male preferences, but only vague information is provided regarding specific female learning style preferences.

Some authors, for example Oxford, 1994; Ehrman, 1996) claim that there is a high percentage of visual learners or it is normally found in combination with other senses, as it was the case in this study (auditory- visual in females and visual-kinesthetic in males) within language classes. Perhaps due to a traditional approach where most teachers emphasize learning through reading and tend to pour a great deal of information onto the board, and because textbooks are employed as part of the language learning input. Furthermore all of us and especially students are more than ever, normally exposed to visual means (Television, computer, Internet, iPods) for long periods of time.

Oxford (1994) as cited in Reid (1995) claims “that linkage between gender and auditory preferences are not clear, but listening studies (Eisenstein, 1982) suggest that auditory ability in a foreign language might be greater in females than in males”. Hutt (1972), as cited in Tai, 2000, p.270) observed some differences between males and females. Hutt states that girls listen better than boys; they are superior on verbal tests and those which require short-term memory, speed and deftness. Emanuel & Potter (1992) supported that there are differences in learning styles where females are more likely to be participative and less likely to be independent compared to males.

Gender differences in language learning styles, as well as cognitive development have been explained as elements of socialization,(Oxford,1996,p.80) which is defined as “the way we bring up our young and integrate them into society through a vast network of social roles” (Reid, 1995,p.41). “Social forces such as parental attitude and gender-related cultural beliefs influence students expectations for success and consequently their motivation, in various subject matter courses”

(Eccles,1989 as cited in Oxford,1996,p. 80). Therefore, the tendency of females to be more auditory than males has been explained because their manner of “socializing” or communicating that was found on Maccoby and Jaclyn’s work (1996 as cited in Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, p.1) which states that females are very different from males in many social skills. Gilligan (1988, as cited in Ehrman & Oxford, 1989,p.1) found the predominant female social image to be the "web" and the predominant male social image to be the "hierarchy", so within ESL contexts men dominate second language conversations, but women initiate more “negotiations of meaning”, trying to understand and communicate clearly (Gass & Varonis, 1986 as cited in Reid, 1995, p. 38).

A high percentage of extroverted female students found in this study also suggested “a great deal of social interaction, a high degree of empathy and cooperative learning” (Reid, 1995, p.39). It was also evident in classroom observations during learning activities that entailed communicative strategies. Females were more willing to participate in oral interactions.

Concerning to gender differences in language learning strategy use, the results in this study are consistent with those in past studies (for example Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos,1989; Zoubir-Shaw & Oxford, 1995; Watanabe,1990;Wang, 2002; Sy,1994; Green & Oxford,1995; Oxford, Nyikos & Ehrman,1988; Lan & Oxford, 2003; McMullen,2009) where it was found a greater strategy use by female participants. Females used the same type of metacognitive, social and affective strategies at the same frequency than males, something similar to Kaylani’s (1996) research where there was no significant difference in the use of metacognitive and social strategies between male and female students. Her study also revealed similar

findings to the present research regarding with difference in the use of memory and compensatory strategies by females.

“Rossi-Le found that being an auditory learner was a significant predictor of using memory strategies, using strategies for authentic language use and using self-management strategies like planning and evaluating”(Reid, 1995,p.36). The use of memory strategies usually involves auditory or visual associations of various kinds” (Reid, 1995,p. 35-36). In fact, from the 44.4% (4 strategies from a set of 9 at SILL) of memory strategies used by females at high level of frequency , three of them seem to deal with auditory or visual associations : “I connect the sound of an English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word”, “ I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used”, and “I remember the new words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign”.

Males, on the other hand reported using 22.2% of memory strategies at high levels of frequency, and just one of them seems to be associated with visual sense: “I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used”. So these findings, at least regarding female learners, seem to corroborate the close relationship between learning styles and language learning strategies, since past research has claimed that students typically use learning strategies that reflect their basic learning styles (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford, 1996a, 1996b; Li & Qin, 2006; Oxford, 1995; Rossi-Le 1989)

Regarding to the use of compensatory strategies, difference appears to be greater between males and females, since females employ 66.6% against 16.6% of males counterpart of compensatory strategies which according to Oxford, (1990) enable learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production

despite limitations in knowledge. Only one strategy was shared by both groups: “to understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses”. Additionally to this one, females reported to use this strategy: “I try to guess what the other person will say next in English”. Both strategies are known like “guessing strategies”, which have been found related to extroverted learners (Li & Qin, 2006) and also to Hispanics global and field dependent style preference (Reid, 1995, p.xi).

Maybe the most interesting finding in this research study about compensatory strategies used by females has to deal with the other two strategies that help learners overcoming limitations in speaking and writing: “when I can not think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures” and “If I can not think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing”. High occurrence of these strategies in female students appears to be aligned with a concrete involvement in social interaction and communicative and real language use as also found Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, 1990; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; and Reid, 1995, Therefore it seems to be that, at least in this group of novice learners the females were more willing than males to use language for actual communication because of their high strategic competence, one of the elements of communicative competence.

Cognitive strategies were the least used by the learners in this study. Only one strategy of this type was reported as highly frequent in each group. The females in this group indicated: “I say or write new English words several times” whereas males reported: “I try to find patterns in English”. Female cognitive strategies seemed to be related to their visual- auditory learning style, as well as to a kind of study skill to memorize vocabulary; this is the type of general study strategies that Oxford (1993) stated as “tended to be used by females (p)”. Memorizing vocabulary

was also recorded in most of the journals of the female participants in the tutorial group as one technique often practiced previously to take a quiz or an exam.

Learning Styles, Language Learning Strategies and Major

Findings in the present research seem to be consistent with research conducted recently which found that learners' learning style preferences differ across majors (Felder & Silverman, 1988; Fazarro & Martin, 2004; Litzinger, Lee, Wise & Felder, 2005). Reid's (1987) study revealed that engineering and computer science majors were significantly more tactile than humanities majors. It appears to be especially true for technology students in this study who favored the kinesthetic learning style; however the same type of style was also found combined with other sensory learning channels in learners who are majored in engineering. Technology students seem to be oriented toward practical and immediate use of knowledge, since most of the students from this research came from technical high schools, so their abilities and interests are more operative, they really need to be involved in concrete activities with machines or any technical device. Even English instruction in these kinds of technical schools was restricted to handbook translation, as it was reported by some students on the interviews, it might allow supposing the instrumental orientation given to language teaching.

In this Ecuadorian group of learners that were studied in this research the Engineering students employed 32% of language learning strategies at a high level of frequency while technology learners employed 30%. Both groups employed the same number and kind of metacognitive strategies. Engineering students used more memory and social strategies whereas technology students reported using more affective strategies. The number of compensatory and cognitive strategies is the same

for both groups; the type of strategies that belong to these sets is different though (for further explanation see page 96)

Differences in strategy use of both majors relate more to type more than with number of strategies employed. Engineering students exceed in one memory strategy to their technology counterparts; this strategy is “I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign”, as well as the cognitive one: “I say or write English words several times” also found highly frequent in the same group, seem to be aligned with auditory- visual, or visual-kinesthetic learning styles. The oral or written rehearsal is also associated with the “study skills”.

Three social strategies were found highly frequent in engineering group; - this strategy: “I ask for help for English speakers”, and one compensatory strategy: “When I can not think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures”- were reported as highly frequent only by engineering students. This fact might allow us thinking about more predispositions of these learners to use English communicatively.

On the other hand, by comparing with engineering, technology students exceed them in one affective strategy: “I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English”. “I try to find patterns in English” which is a cognitive strategy and “I try to guess what the other person will say next” that is a compensatory strategy, were found highly frequent only in this group. Occurrence of more affective strategies together with these strategies described above might be aligned with field –sensitive and kinesthetic learning styles.

Unsuccessful Language Learning

Studying all the complexities of language learning difficulties is a very hard challenge because of the multiple variables interrelated in the teaching- learning process, and because such difficulties also represent individual differences which eventually deserve special attention, and personalized treatment and monitoring. The main problem stated for the present research was to investigate what were the main factors related to unsuccessful language learning, within a group of Ecuadorian university language learners. This study focused on some of the variables to which previous investigations have assigned significance in exploring language learning difficulties. In order to investigate the problem some of these variables were part of the research questions stated in this study:

RQ 1: What are the main language learning problems that unsuccessful learners face at a rigorous technical university?

Examination of learning styles and language learning strategies in relationship with gender and major offered information related to the entire sample of learners, as well to the less successful students who were included in the group. However, educational background was analyzed very carefully and it was taken into account as one of the crucial factors related to learning outcomes, especially with these novice learners.

Educational Background

Analysis of educational background is highly relevant to the study of unsuccessful language learning because it is one of the factors involved in teaching- learning process, especially in this study with novice learners who came from different educational backgrounds. This diversity of educational background made it necessary to explore characteristics of the EFL class within public and private high

school contexts. It is important to remember that the nature of the strategies to be used for problem-solving, so they arise because of learners' needs and requirements of different learning environments as well as common practices displayed inside them. So, types of language learning strategies and learning styles are somehow reflecting the learning contexts where students were exposed.. Information provided from these sources, as well as data from individual interviews supported the discussion about considering educational background as a crucial factor involved in learning outcomes of novice learners. At the same time it will be part of the answers to the research questions of the present study.

A finding that was shared by both types of contexts students from public schools and students from private schools was the employment of more indirect strategies, which seems to indicate that these students are more interested in regulating and managing learning than in "working with the language itself in a variety of specific tasks and situations" (Oxford, 1990, p.14). Contrary to the findings in this study, where memory and cognitive strategies were the least used, Oxford (1990) and other researchers (for example O'Malley, 1985; Chamot, O'Malley, Küpper & Impink-Hernández, 1987 as cited in Oxford,1990, p. 242) stated that they are "typically found to be the most popular strategies with language learners." (p.43).

Low occurrence of cognitive and memory strategies might be due to a couple of factors. The first concerns proficiency level, since participants in this study are novices and it has been found that "more proficient language learners use a greater variety and often a greater number of learning strategies"(Bruen, 2001; Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; Green & Oxford, 1995; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wharton, 2000 as cited in Chamot, 2004). Furthermore, these students with the highest proficiency

level made greater use of cognitive strategies than did those of the lowest proficiency level (Green & Oxford, 1995; Goh & Poh, 1997; Bremmer, 1999; Lee & Oxford, 2008). In addition, the frequent use of affective, compensatory and metacognitive strategies found in these learners has also been found in other investigations, which found that less proficient learners tended to use more affective and compensation strategies and the metacognitive strategy of “thinking about their progress in learning” (Green & Oxford, 1995, as cited in Nambiar, 2009, p. 138) which was reported as highly frequent by these students too. Other authors reported similar findings in the same vein (for example Nambiar, 1996; Davis & Abas, 1991; Nuril Huda, 1998; Sarjit Kaur & Salaisah, 1998 as cited in Nambiar, 2009, p. 232) where it was demonstrated that :

“less proficient students tended to use compensation and affective strategies because they were not proficient in the English language and preferred to guess their answers. In addition, they tended to seek comfort in affective strategies, and this was an indication of their anxiety in language learning”(p.232)

Kayad (1999 as cited in Nambiar, 2009, p.138) reports that the less proficient learners used less challenging strategies or strategies that did not require much linguistic knowledge to help them in their learning.”

The other reason that is related to low frequency of cognitive strategies refers to what Ehrman (1996) called “weak learning environments” where deep processing strategies, that is to say cognitive strategies are not promoted. It is known that within most of educational systems “students often have limited opportunities to understand or make sense of topics because many curricula have emphasized memory rather than understanding” (Donovan, Bransford & Pellegrino, 2003, p. 8).

It seems that surface learning strategies make up part of the learning experience within EFL contexts because learners are expected to memorize, repeat, and rehearse vocabulary or structures valuable and efficient, Ehrman (1996) has suggested that deep strategies are more likely to result in long-term retention and more efficient retrieval information; it will also eventually produce an active engagement with the material. It is important to notice that these strategies are taught by teachers who usually teach in the manner they learned, so it is a subtle issue that we do not realize

After data were collected, the analysis and triangulation permitted me to come to some conclusions regarding to learning contexts and how they were affecting learning outcomes. Comparison between public and private high school contexts was unavoidable and necessary for two reasons, the first one because students who had more language learning difficulties seemed to come from public schools and secondly because it had been my perception for a long time that English teaching in Ecuador still remains as something exclusive for medium and high socio-economical stratum, so doing research with actual information only confirmed my assumptions.

The tutorial group was made up of 24 students, 16 students came from public schools, and 8 from private schools. It was not a representative sample of real unsuccessful language learners, 17 of them were self-identified as students with major language learning problems though. From this group of 17 students, 14 (82%) of them were classified into medium and low language proficiency according their initial grades from public schools. Therefore a deep analysis of this language learning context deserves some attention.

Evidence of a weak EFL learning environment was illustrated especially by students from public schools who reported common characteristics of their classes

during the interviews: recurrent absences of their teachers, poor class management, low interest and motivation in language learning, English classes totally managed in Spanish, class activities of the type of filling in the textbooks, and big size classes with a traditional lecture approach. Learners were also aware of the lack of emphasis that public schools gave to English teaching; it a kind of culture where everyone considered English only as a subject to pass with just few hours devoted to it and with a lack of motivation for real language learning has been the perceived norm.

One can extrapolate that this kind of context does not allow a high development of language learning strategies like those found in this research where the overall means of strategy use was at a medium range. However, being unaware of the use of language learning strategies is a common fact for most of learners and it requires previous training especially in metacognition. The few strategies reported by students during the initial interviews referred only to those, which allowed them to pass an exam or a test at high school, and the most frequent was “cheating”, or borrowing textbooks from other classmates and copying the activities. Even many of these students told that passing exams, but not learning was the only thing they were interested in. In such a case the use of surface processing strategies is also justified as part of an effort to meet requirements and no more, because it is related to extrinsic motivation (Ehrman, 1996). Another reason that led students to mostly choose surface processing strategies over deep processing strategies is that these last ones require more time and much greater intellectual effort. Regarding time constraints, some students from the tutorial reported that one of the causes that they did not use the deeper strategies was because they had not practiced the cognitive strategies taught during the instruction in LLS. Strategies like elaboration, oral or written rehearsal, mind maps and some other memory strategies had been particularly selected within

strategy instruction and special attention was given to their teaching, however the practice and use of these strategies was only verified in high proficiency students since they reported using them in their diaries and through activities that proved their practice such as in their portfolios and notebooks.

Indeed, this selection and emphasis on teaching cognitive and memory strategies was based on my perception of a deficiency in long-term retention and retrieval of information of many students which eventually seemed to contribute to learners failing in other language skills. In the teaching materials there was a strong focus on grammar and vocabulary (37.5% of the total score) on the exams. It was a recurrent fact that most of the learners failed this section of the exam which corresponded to grammar and vocabulary.

Unfortunately, in my six years of experience in the university language classroom the effort made with the intent teaching to the exam requirements seems prevalent among English teachers, and not just in high schools, but also at the university level. At the FLD, with institutional final exams prepared by a different teacher, who is not in charge of the course and whose score counts 80% of students' term grades. The evaluation system in the program with its low flexibility also determined, in some unconscious way to the seemingly prevalent teaching approach. Teachers had to focus on helping students to pass exams by using surface processing strategies. Furthermore, it has been substantiated by research that our teaching models somehow reveal how we, as teachers learned, (Kinsella, 1995; Jordan, 1997 as cited in Peacock, p.92) so teachers are reflecting their past learning experiences too.

However, some evidence of weak language learning environments was found in the results of students who came to the university from both private and public high

schools. The finding in this study about a higher use of metacognitive, compensatory and social strategies by learners from private high schools appears to suggest a less discouraging learning context, where the students really were not taught explicitly to use deep processing learning strategies, (i.e. elaboration or mind-mapping) because on the one hand it has been found that metacognitive strategies use are related to more proficient language learners (Phakity, 2003; Mochizuki, 1999; Chamot, 1998; Carrel, 1989). On the other hand the use of more compensatory and social strategies by students from private schools seems to reveal slight differences in language teaching approach aligned with communicative language learning.

Exploration of ELT learning styles among the students in this study also indicated that there are more extroverted learners in private schools, which is aligned with the occurrence of more social strategies. The higher occurrence of compensatory strategies might allow us to suppose that at least this group of learners have had more opportunities for using English in oral or written production. Indeed, activities to develop listening and oral skills within private school contexts were reported in the individual interviews. In addition, strategies like: “When I can not think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures”, “If I can not think of an English word , I use a word that means the same thing” and “I ask for help from English speakers” only appeared highly frequent in learners from private schools. It seems possibly due to broader exposure to the English language during their classes, these learners from private schools were more willing to use language in oral communication. In fact, the skill of speaking was reported as their major concern during the interviews, but they did not minimize the importance of practicing listening either.

By contrast with learners from private high school group, the most difficult skill for learners from public school group was listening; it seems pretty logical because most of them were not exposed to much English language during primary and high school years, since they reported that English classes were managed in Spanish. They were deprived of the more varied learning experiences that included materials other than textbook- based language teaching.

This deficiency in listening became more evident for most learners because of the type of methodology employed into their regular classes at the Foreign Language Department (FLD) where English is the vehicle for language teaching. In fact, the awareness about lack of strategies to cope with oral comprehension was reported in the individual interviews too.

Furthermore, by studying the learning styles of the entire group of learners it was found that auditory and auditory-kinesthetic learning styles are the least favorite sensory learning channels. It seems to suggest that at least in the Ecuadorian language learning contexts that were studied among this group of learners, the listening skill was not developed, that is to say, students were not exposed sufficiently to oral input, so auditory preference in learning styles was not developed either. It was also observed that these learners normally wanted visual support in order to get instructions and to understand language; their comments indicated that most of them felt insecure if they were asked to close their books and attend to oral input only. It seems fairly reasonable because in both private and public schools kinesthetic and visual learning styles combined or alone corresponded to their major sensory learning preferences.

RQ 2: What are the learning styles of unsuccessful learners?

Unsuccessful language learning merited a double analysis in this study. One is related to a general context where it is more frequent to find language learning difficulties, and the other refers to individual differences that make language learning complicated.

Exploring the educational background of novice learners through the study of language learning strategies and learning styles of the group has been helpful in disclosing possible reasons that are associated with the higher number of technology students who have been found less successful in language learning. Without the intention of labeling or considering all technology students as ULL, but because a real concern that led this study, I decided to focus on the analysis of factors that might be involved in the recurrent failures of these students on English courses at FLD.

Learning styles are among those factors considered in the study of less successful learners. Findings of this study related to major differences in learning styles seem to suggest that the more flexible learning styles are the more advantages students will take from learning situations. This finding is aligned with Ehrman's (1996) claim about "style flexing". This style flexing appears to be lower in technology students compared with engineering students. The students in this study who showed more flexibility in their learning styles seemed to be those who came from learning environments that featured explicit training in more varied methodologies or techniques; this is the case of engineering students because most of them come from private schools. That their school contexts affected the learning of the participants of the study seem to support Kolb's (1981) experiential learning theory.

Starting from the premise that any learning style is better than any others the haptic- global- extroverted style, the major preference of the technology students, seems to affect their learning process and eventually their learning outcomes. There were mismatches that seemed to emerge between this preference and some elements of the language learning teaching process. For instance, by exploring students' academic backgrounds it was found that some learners from this major studied at technical high schools, their learning had always been associated with concrete experiences, and even some students reported that their parents taught them technical issues by using authentic materials, since some of them come from families who have technical workshops. They also related how they interacted in their classes at secondary schools by speaking with their teachers about the everyday activities or teachers experiences, but it was done in Spanish during English classes too.. Many of the students reported that their English teachers didn't teach English but rather shared many of their own experiences, which the students really valued as something through which they had also learnt about life issues. Similarly to other Latino students (Torres & Cárdenas, 2008; Hernández, 2004; García & Figueroa, 2007) they learn better through social interaction. Many of the students also reported that they were often asked to translate handbooks during their classes in order to learn "technical vocabulary". Many students from this academic background were only expected to learn English up to the point of understanding technical handbooks.

There are two other issues related to the haptic-global- field dependent learning style, one has to dealing with the available teaching methodology, and the second issue regards the type of assessment required of these learners. Ehrman (1996) states:

...sensory channel style preferences are fairly straightforward to address because most communicative language classrooms have a considerable amount of visual and auditory content (in the case of public schools auditory content is minimal) , but the most difficult adaptation for most teachers is kinesthetic-haptic, for several reasons (p.61)

Because of social conditioning, this group of “technical students” has been regarded by faculty at the FLD as hyperactive. I came to this conclusion from the many comments made by my colleagues in the university where I teach. This group of students were given scholarships, and had to adjust to the big city milieu in addition to carrying out the requirements of their degree programs. Teachers tried to teach them while trying to suppress their need to move and to sit still. Their classroom behavior was considered immature and inappropriate for university study. The teachers found it difficult to use bodily- involved activities such as games or others that required realia or props with crowded classrooms or big sized classes. These activities normally entail more time and with the typical extensive English programs. I experienced this many times, because time constraints prevented me from doing a lot of activities aimed to matching their learning style.

Another difficulty that I became aware of in this research was the struggle kinesthetic-haptic learners have to face in the kind of evaluation which is part of the required curriculum within the FLD, since some studies (for example Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982, Salmani-Nodoushan, 2001; and Roberts, 1983;) have demonstrated that global learners perform better on communicative tests. However, the type of evaluation employed at FLD seems to be more oriented to field-independent or analytical learners. In fact the items that assess grammar and vocabulary are of analytic nature, and those scores were weighted more heavily than higher other exam

sections. These kinds of traditional tests also require to the conscious learning of metalinguistic skills, for which most of these novice learners are not ready. It was shown several times during classes when learners were unable to identify or to distinguish a verb from a noun or from an adjective. A similar situation occurred with the different grammar patterns that were included in the exam's instructions that asked for: "Fill in the spaces with simple past or present perfect form of the verb". For most of these students who told me that even Spanish grammar was tedious and difficult to understand, this instruction was completely abstract however these grammar patterns had been taught in class. Just a few students, especially those from private schools, were able to recognize and name them, perhaps because as they reported in the interviews, language teaching at their secondary schools had strongly focused on grammar.

There is an additional variable to take into account with the technology students: most of them at least in this sample (79.4% rate of agreement with the related research questions) studied at public high schools, as expected because most technical schools in Ecuador are public whereas, in engineering most of learners (64.3%) studied at private high schools. The data from this small sample size seems to suggest that language learning environments at public high schools do not promote the development of language skills necessary for success in the university where this study took place.. Skills like listening or speaking had been neglected, as it was reported by some students in the initial interviews, and the textbook –based methodology employed within these contexts have hardly helped learners have an idea about English language. I had to assign simple tasks, which did not demand strong cognitive effort like fill- in activities, reading short texts, or memorizing lists of verbs. However, most of the students in the study, even though they

recognized the language teaching deficiencies in their academic backgrounds, as it was reported in the initial interviews, they did not seem to know how to demand better learning conditions. Some learners reported that they had to take extracurricular English courses at private academies, but others simply accepted the situation without figuring out the troubles that those deficiencies would cause in the future. It was only when they had their first class at FLD that they became conscious of the deficiencies in their academic English because they faced instruction where English was used as a vehicle for teaching. That the learners were concerned about their lack of understanding of oral input was reported by many students of this study in their initial interviews. Their serious lack of skill in listening became even more evident, so it was one of the reasons because some students self-identified as unsuccessful decided to participate in the tutorials and to look for strategies to support their learning.

One of the objectives of working with the tutorial group where it was possible to identify individual reasons for the struggle of the unsuccessful learners was to do a deep analysis of their difficulties in language learning. Data collected from Style Analysis Survey (SAS) especially in this group was employed to assist in increasing the students' awareness of their own language learning difficulties, and then, based on that information to support their learning in their own preferred style but with the invitation to stretch them in aspects of learning styles that did not come easily to them in subsequent stages. However, this information about their learning styles and learning difficulties was applied to their lessons in such a way as to address individual differences. Findings in this study corresponding to low proficient learners seem to suggest again that having a less flexible learning style is one factor among others that contribute to unsuccessful language learning, since from the 7 low proficient students

within the tutorial group, 6 of them favored just only one learning sensory channel. Even more, effectiveness of instruction in language learning strategies was also affected by this fact, since findings in this study show that medium proficient students as well as one low proficient student who exhibit more flexible learning styles (combined sensory channels) improved their language learning, performed better on their tests and they really took in advantage of the program.

RQ 3: How does the use of language learning strategies differ among students with different proficiency levels?

Exploring differences in language learning strategy use regarding language proficiency allowed discovering some underlying problems that less successful learners have, because the complexity of studying language learning difficulties is as far more than analyzing a couple of factors involved in such issue.

Initial findings of this study related to the comparison between three different proficiency levels and strategy use seem to contradict findings of past research (MacIntyre, 1994; Osanai, 2000; Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Bruen, 2001; Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; Green & Oxford, 1995; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wharton, 2000 as cited in Chamot, 2004) regarding the findings that more proficient learners employ a wider range of strategies with more frequency than less proficient learners. Instead, these initial findings seem to be aligned with Abraham and Vann (1987) and Vann and Abraham (1990) who in two different case studies reported that not only learners who were less proficient using strategies considered as useful, but they were often the same strategies used by learners who were more proficient. Such is the case of low and high proficiency students in this study, but the medium proficient students seem to manage fewer strategies than both of the other groups. However, though

these findings at the initial stages might be interpreted in such a way, the subsequent results obtained in the individual interviews, and with the students' checklists, demonstrated that low proficient students were less able to report the strategies to which they made reference on the initial survey. It seems to be that the less successful learners of this study lacked strategy awareness; perhaps because of this lower strategy awareness, it is possible that they are hiding the reality of their real condition. In other words it is easier to mark strategies on a survey than to really understand what the strategies are and how to use them for these low proficient students. It might be that this lower awareness of some unsuccessful learners became in a kind of barrier to attempt new strategies or new ways of leading with language learning because they might be thinking they have already tried every strategy. In fact during the instruction in LLS these students did not attend to the tutorials regularly, they hardly ever wrote their diaries and they marked their checklist sporadically. Furthermore their less flexible learning styles might be also associated with their short receptiveness.

It is also possible that some of the low proficiency students had actually been using all of these strategies, but in a randomized and disconnected manner in such a way that they were not able to match strategies to the task they were working on. It seems to suggest that however they claimed to have certain level of metacognitive awareness (reported as metacognitive strategies), they seemed to lack the metacognitive knowledge about task requirements needed to select appropriate strategies. As it has been found in numerous studies which state differences between more and less effective learners (Chamot, 2001; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; White, 1999, as cited in Hauck, 2005; Abraham and Vann, 1987; Vann and Abraham, 1990)

Regarding the task requirements, during the incipient attempts of think-aloud procedures, I tried to analyze how learners approached the task. These observations permitted me to discover that some of medium and low achievers are not careful enough in reading instructions, so they did not understand them, and therefore they did not know what the tasks were, what the learning goals implicit in them are and therefore they were not able to plan the appropriate strategies to reach these goals. So, three elements that constitute metacognitive knowledge: person variables (or self-knowledge), task variables, and strategy variables (Wenden, 1995 as cited in Jing, 2006, p.45) appear to be found at a low level of awareness in low proficient students.

The medium and high proficient students on the other hand appeared to report a more realistic scenario regarding the use of strategies. At least they did not cheat themselves with strategies they thought they have used or have tried before. Their level of metacognitive awareness seems to be higher and it allowed them being more open-minded to try new techniques; here the style –flexing of some of these students might have played an important role too. This accessibility was demonstrated later during the instruction in LLS, because their regular attendance to tutorials, they also wrote their diaries more frequently and monitored their progresses through the checklists.

The difference is then marked by the level of awareness they have of their own strategies, which is an issue that was stated in some studies about differences between more and less proficient students (Yang, 2010). Furthermore, by making reference to metacognitive awareness it is important to remember the difference in metacognitive strategy use found in this study between students from private and public schools. It was 55.5% for private schools against 33.3% for public high schools.

Besides of the general differences in strategy use among the three groups classified by their proficiency, it is important to notice that there are some individual strategies which only appeared as highly frequent within a particular group. This fact might suggest interesting relationships between proficiency and use of strategies. Such is the case of high proficiency students who were the only ones that reported to use these strategies at high level of frequency: "I review English lessons often, "If I can not think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing", and " I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English". The latter strategies have to deal with willingness for communication and the strategy "I review English lessons often" implies a type of study skill that entails effort from students.

As a conclusion concerning with the use of LLS among students from different proficiency, the findings of this study suggest that even the same kind of strategies were reported by high and low proficient students, the mere high occurrence of use of them do not assure student succeed in language learning. However some metacognitive strategies were found highly frequent in the whole group, the level of metacognitive awareness is what will eventually produce an "active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of cognitive processes to achieve cognitive goals." (Cited in Phakiti, 2003, p.29). Evidences of this process were found in some of the students who improved in language learning after the instruction, but they will be displayed with the next research question stated below.

RQ 4: How effective was the instruction in language learning strategies for novice learners and for unsuccessful learners?

Within the analysis of effectiveness of language learning strategies instruction, the results about significant strategies acquired after the instruction by students from

the treatment groups were taken into account because instruction was delivered into regular classes; the students who attended to the tutorial were additionally provided of individual monitoring and feedback. .

The findings in this study seem to be consistent with previous research (for example Mizumoto & Takeuchi, 2009; Adb Elsami´Ali, 2007; Hayashi, 1979; Varasarin, 2007; Oxford, 2003; O'Malley & Chamot, 1995; Rubin,2007; Liu & Goh ,2006; Mareschal ,2007) that claims that language learning strategies are teachable and therefore instruction in LLS is really effective because it improves language learning, increase motivation, increase metacognitive awareness, and students reach greater autonomy and more self-confidence.

There were a total of eleven strategies found significant after the instruction in the treatment groups, compared with the five strategies found significant and maybe acquired incidentally by students from the control group. However instruction in LLS was addressed to teach varied strategies for helping students cope with their language learning difficulties, the findings in this study related to significant strategies acquired with the LLS instruction seem to demonstrate that no matter time and resources invested in teaching all of them, students tend to adopt or learn the strategies that are more aligned with their learning styles, personality and other factors that involved in strategy choice.

Because the curriculum of FLD has a clear grammar-focused bias I stressed the explicit instruction of cognitive and memory strategies in the hope that some of deep processing strategies which promote meaningful associations would be useful for students to recall and retain information and they eventually aid them to overcome difficulties in grammar structure and vocabulary retention, both aspects constituted 38% of the exam grade. However, strategies like elaboration, minding maps,

summarizing, were not found significant but only with some high proficiency students.

Instead these strategies aligned with naturalistic practice and communicative language learning were found significant: “I start conversations in English”, “I write notes, messages, letters or reports in English”, “I read for pleasure in English”, “I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English”, “I make up new words if I don’t know the right ones in English”, “I ask questions in English” and “I try to learn about the culture of English speakers”.

The acquisition of this kind of strategies with the instruction might be due to a couple of factors. First of all it is important to remember the global- extroverted- haptic learning style of these students. It was externalized through the kind of memory strategies found significant: “I use flashcards to remember new English words” and “I physically act out new English words” which are closely associated with these students’ two favorite learning styles: kinesthetic and visual. It might be interesting because they are going to link their preferences in learning styles with adequate strategies in order to facilitate associations and retain vocabulary.

This preference with global learning style is associated with social learning, because these students are outgoing people and they learn more effectively through concrete experiences, that is because their preference for learning language naturalistically. Furthermore these global learners tend to develop communication skills sometimes through subconscious acquisition, as it seems to suggest the finding of a couple of strategies found significant among the students from the control group: “I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English” and “I practice my English with other students”. It might be due to my insistent encouragement for overcoming limitations in speaking practice within class sessions.

This apparent difficulty that some students have to learn grammar structures and which has been reflected on their exams and also reported in the final interviews might be due to their extroverted- field dependent or global learning styles that at the same time are related to the use of communicative strategies. For these students emphasis on accuracy is sometimes neglected, making grammar structures more difficult to learn for them; and also asking any conscious learning of metalinguistic skills is much more cognitively demanding for a global or field- dependant learner.

Besides of learning styles, teacher's beliefs and expectations seemed to have influenced in these learners strategy choice from this study as it was stated by Oxford (1990,p.13) . Indeed I had claimed in chapter two corresponding to methodology my beliefs about the advantages of communicative language learning and I had decided to work with some activities and techniques that belonged to the CLA (Communicative Learning Approach) in its weak version in order to balance the grammar- focused orientation required by the curriculum. I had claimed "No matter the language curriculum, communicative competence that is the ability to use the language effectively for communication was going to be presented as the main goal for the course". So, though this goal was not explicitly expressed to the students during the course, hidden curriculum was subtly conveyed to these novice learners, showing again that it is not what teachers say or teach what is learned by students, but what teachers do.

Effectiveness of LLS instruction within the tutorial group was more carefully assessed because it allowed not just monitoring their individual progresses, but also finding some issues that obscure the vision of quantitative data. To reach this purpose data from the students' checklists, diaries entries, teacher's observation records and

final interviews were very valuable, especially because the tutorial group was not a statistically representative sample.

If it would be considered for instance the number and type of strategies found significant after LLS instruction they were only five, but three of them: “I read for pleasure in English”, “I write down my feelings in an English diary” and “I ask questions in English” are the same ones also found significant within the treatment groups and the other two strategies: “When I can’t think of a word during a conversation, I use gestures” and “I use flashcards to remember new English words” are closely related with other significant strategies within treatment groups.

The strategy “I read for pleasure in English” is a very interesting finding in this study because it is possible that other reading strategies like guessing from context, skimming, or making predictions that were taught during the instruction and that were reported as highly frequent on the checklists and on the final interviews had played an essential role in this result, because these strategies supported the learners in text comprehension, making reading easier and more enjoyable. Therefore, this finding seems to suggest that if learning strategies are available to students, and they are consistently practiced, language skills are enhanced and students increase their level of motivation too.

The case seems to be the same with speaking. As many students of this study developed a lot of communicative strategies during the course, they reported in the final interviews to feel more self-confidence in speaking and with language learning too. The most important progress they had made in speaking referred to overcoming fears of speaking. Indeed, I could observe them much more confident during class activities, they asked and answered questions more freely, and I could perceive their high motivation especially in oral interactions with their partners.

One of the main language difficulties reported especially by medium and low proficiency learners during initial interviews was listening, whereas for high proficiency students it was speaking, so during the instruction, special attention was paid to teach strategies addressed to these students needs, but it also seems to be that these learners, especially high and medium proficiency learners were also able to match their insufficiencies with the adequate strategies that helped them enhance in language learning. According with the data obtained from their final interviews students reported to have improved in speaking the most, followed by listening, reading and vocabulary. High proficiency learners reported speaking as the skill they have improved the most, while medium and low proficiency students reported that they have made a lot of progress in listening and speaking. These results are consistent with the strategies found significant after instruction in LLS.

The findings in this study seem to demonstrate that language learning strategies improved language learning. Thirteen students from the tutorial group improved their proficiency, according with their mid –term and final grades which were taken into account to compare students' progress. Regards to increases in the scores, this improvement was more striking in medium and low proficiency students than in high proficiency ones, because the first two groups really needed to overcome learning difficulties, while high proficiency students were interested in improving language learning even more or in maintaining their averages.

Some factors could have been involved in the language learning enhancement of these students, some of these variables were not assessed in this study tough, like level of motivation, attitude towards English and learners beliefs, but as far as this study is concerned it has been found a couple of variables that seem to be closely related. The first one has to deal with the level of metacognitive awareness and the

second one with learners' effort and their study skills. It is important to notice though that these affective variables motivation, attitudes and beliefs besides of deserving further investigation within the study of unsuccessful language learning, they strongly determine at what extent a learner is involved with learning, because for instance motivation as Ehrman (1996) claims is "the perceived "payoff" for the student's investment of time, energy and effort" (p.137) so its relationship with employment and practice of language learning strategies is undeniable.

Differences in the level of metacognitive awareness found among these students seem to be partly responsible of improvements in language learning, and it eventually determined the effectiveness of the LLS program. This assertion arose by analyzing students checklist, diaries entrances and the regularity in attendance to tutorials, finding that high proficient students were who monitored their work in strategy use the most, followed by medium proficient learners. Unfortunately, the employment of checklists by low proficient learners was sporadic.

These resources were designed to raise metacognitive awareness, and it was evident that those students who regularly attended to the tutorials, wrote their diaries very often and marked their checklists frequently really improved their language learning and their metacognitive awareness; many medium proficiency students increased the number of metacognitive strategies or their frequency with the instruction; while others who did not make progress during the instruction still maintained the same averages in metacognitive awareness. It was especially evident with those medium proficiency learners who exhibited a more dramatic increase in their grades. Moreover, for most of these students who enhanced their learning it was so easy to report their strategy use on the individual final interviews.

Therefore, one of the elements of metacognitive awareness that is strategy awareness was reached through the instruction in LLS, a finding consistent with previous research (for example Chamot, 1998; Oxford, 1994; Nyikos, 1996; Oxford & Leaver, 1996; Cohen, 1998). At the same time this level of awareness allowed them to know how they learned and what strategies had been useful to get their learning goals. Both strategies: “I write down my feelings in an English diary” and: “I have clear goals for improving my English skills” were found significant after instruction in LLS. In addition to the level of metacognitive awareness, it is important to notice that as it has been found in this study it is not the range of strategies and the frequency of use what determine successful language learning, but the management of the students’ own strategies and the degree to which their strategies are efficiently applied to language learning tasks, however it is very difficult to investigate all these mental processes but with techniques like think-aloud protocols it can be done and it is suggested for further investigation.

The importance conferred by students to the use of the checklists and their journal diaries give an idea about the level of motivation, effort and persistence of these learners in the LLS instruction. However level of motivation was not assessed in these students, it has been demonstrated that mastery goals is positively related to both persistence (Bouffard, Boisvert, Vezeau, & Larouche,1995;Miller, et al., 1993, 1996;Pintrich,1989; Pintrich & Scharauben,1992; Pintrich, et al., 1993) and effort (Mac Iver, Stipek, & Daniels,1991; Meece & Holt,1993, Miller et al.,1996; Wetzal, 1996) (Cited in Elliot, McGregor and Shelly Gable, 1999, p.550).

Effort is also related to study skills, that was reported highly frequent only by high proficiency students as the strategy “I review English lessons often” on the initial surveys (SILL 1), this is one of the factors that greatly support better learning

outcomes. In addition as Ehrman (1996) states “a teacher can help a student learn in all of the ways, but the ultimate responsibility to learn, and learn actively, is the student’s” (p.177). This lack of responsibility was assumed and reported by those students who did not achieve much improvement by saying that the program was very good but they did not have time to attend to, and to practice strategies either.

Other significant finding of this research has to deal with the importance that learners’ beliefs have in the study of unsuccessful language learning, However assessment of this variable was not part of this study, it was incidentally discovered for instance that beliefs about the nature of language learning that students hold might have inhibited learners’ perceptiveness to the instruction in LLS and even more when if there were mismatches between learner and teacher styles. It was perhaps the case of three less successful students who tended to translate everything from English to Spanish as they reported on their final interviews, and as it was observed during some classes. If they were convinced that learning a language was a translation issue and maybe this belief had led these students to any positive experience in the past, so learners reinforce this behavior, making more difficult to eradicate the belief; additionally communicative approach did not seem to match with the visual learning style of these students, because they appeared to be too devoted of translating every single word. They were very analytical too.

Beliefs, as well as the other affective factors are interwoven in a complex manner and they can also affect attitudes, self-esteem, self-efficacy and motivation. I could observe these effects with a student who only attended to the first two tutorials and who despite of my continuous insistence on his participation within the program, he seemed to refuse any kind of help. Unfortunately the reasons for such refusal were discovered when feedback of the course and the final interviews were made. His

strong belief about language learning was based on his father's belief too, since he reported that he did not attend to the tutorials because as his father was unable to learn English so he thought he was unable too, and it was going to be a waste of time. It was the second time he took the course, and he failed again. Besides of my feelings of disappointing and frustration, it was in that moment that I knew how important beliefs in our lives are, and how easy is for most of teachers to neglect our learners' beliefs, at least those which have to deal with language learning which should be one of our main concerns.

RQ 5: How will learning strategies influence unsuccessful learners' perceptions towards English?

This research question is closely related with affective factors too, since motivation, or any shift in their attitudes toward English were influenced by the level of involvement and willingness learners had with the instruction in language learning strategies.

It is possible that high proficiency students had have a high level of motivation; some of them were interested in attending to the tutorials because their concerns about passing the course, other few of them, really wanted to be better and better. Anyway this factor that belongs to extrinsic or instrumental motivation which according to Dörnyei (1990, as cited in Kimura, Nakata, & Okumura, 2001) is a more common issue in EFL contexts and it should receive special attention, was also shared with low and medium proficiency students, who contrary to the formers reported on their initial interviews that they did not like English, especially because it had become in a difficult subject to cope with and understand. Most of them have had many problems since they were at school, even more some of them had not received

English as a subject at primary school or their first approach was not so positive. According to some informal conversations held with many students, I could realize that students with early negative language learning experiences used consciously or unconsciously to reject English. It can be an issue that might be investigated.

The metacognitive strategies reported by the students on their initial surveys provide a rationale for their decision of participating in the program since they seem to have led learners to look for techniques for improving their language learning. But this metacognitive awareness which was increased during the instruction in LLS appear to be one of the responsible of the results obtained in regards to how these learners perceived English after the instruction. The other factor that was also acknowledged by students was the positive and affective class environment provided by the teacher that helped them gain confidence.

In fact, gaining confidence is just one of the elements involved in this positive shift that the students made with the instruction, and that were reported on the final interviews. The others aspects they gained have to deal with increase of motivation, self-efficacy, autonomy, and change of beliefs related to language learning ,all of them are interwoven and are closely related to each other, and especially all these positive changes allowed these students modify their perceptions toward English.

The findings in this study about this positive variation of these learners' affective factors influenced by instruction in language learning strategies have been found in some past studies (e.g. Crookall, 1983; Nyikos, 1991; Oxford, 1990, 1993; Rodgers, 1978; Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Wenden, 1991, as cited in Oxford, 1996, p. 229). And most of these changes concerns to the level of metacognitive awareness acquired during the instruction and its close relationship with enhancement of self-direction and autonomy (Cohen ,1998; Hedge ,2000; Wenden ,1991; Williams and

Burden ,1997, as cited in Jing,2006,p.45; Stewner-Manzanares, Chamot, O'Malley, Küpper & Russo, 1985; Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Oxford, Talbott & Halleck, 1990 as cited in Takallou, 2011,p.277). Indeed as many students reported in their final interviews, after the instruction they could see English as something possible to learn. They felt confident to cope with language learning, they feel they can do it by themselves and they had found a way how to learn English. Some of these changes in some students directly involved a declining in their beliefs about language learning, because it allowed their openness to try new things, which is also related with their style-flexing. So they experienced the use of strategies to lead with language, they monitored their progress and they could evaluate which of them worked better. Their improvements in language learning through the use of strategies encouraged them and it produced a feeling of self-efficacy that lead learners to autonomy.

While these features were found and reported by students who actively participate in the program and who enhanced their proficiency, those students who did not take the program seriously reported some improvements in their language skills and some progress in use of strategies.

RQ 6: What should be considered in designing a remedial course for unsuccessful university language learners?

One of the purposes of this study was to find the factors that should be considered in designing a remedial course for less successful learners. Once some of learners' factors have been analyzed and it has seen that instruction in language learning strategies is fairly effective, implications for teaching as well as for designing a remedial course can be suggested after this study.

Studying how instruction in language learning strategies would help less successful learners allowed me to discover many than how effective might be the instruction for these students. One of the most important issues that I could understand is that these students with language learning difficulties really deserve individual attention; as it was the sample of tutorial with mixed proficiency language learners assessment, monitoring and support that less successful learners required was not totally individualized. However LLS instruction needs active participation from learners, teacher's role within a remedial course should include a very deep involvement with learners that support them in discovering affective and personality factors like learning styles, beliefs, attitudes and motivation. Unfortunately, I could discover that these students who have failed English courses once or twice held some strong beliefs and attitudes that seriously blocked their language learning, so these aspects deserve further research.

First of all it is important to understand that language learning difficulties for novice learners may have different causes. One of them is the educational background that as it was showed in this study does not always promote the appropriate development of language learning skills and strategies; teachers at the same time should be aware of their own teaching approaches in order to understand the possible mismatches that might be produced for instance with the use of English as an exclusive vehicle for language teaching, as it was reported by many low-proficiency students in this research who reported that at the beginning they were so shocked because they understood nothing..

However learning style differences is an issue that within EFL contexts seems not to be as serious as it is within ESL, assessment of individual differences through the learning style dimensions is mandatory previously to start a remedial course. It

would be recommendable to use a different dimension in addition to the perceptual or sensory learning styles.

In addition, assessment of language learning strategies that students use will be a starting point to the instruction because it will make possible a first identification of strategies in order to familiarize students with them. If time permitting it would be advisable to model and apply think-aloud protocols in order to close strategy use to the time they are happening.

Acknowledgement of individual learning styles will permit learners to identify their strengths and weaknesses in language learning, by reminding that there is not any style better than others, attention should be paid to lack of style- flexing though, as well as it would be recommendable to assess teaching style too. Both processes will be important till the point of identifying possible mismatches, but in no sense to label or to stereotype learners or teachers, because one of the purposes of the instruction in language learning strategies is supporting students and teachers in stretching their learning styles through the practice of new strategies, and eventually learners and teachers will be able to recognize which are useful to improve language learning.

As it was found in this study, raising metacognitive awareness is a key factor to get effectiveness in LLS instruction, and to enhance language learning. Resources like learners' diaries, strategy checklists, and individual interviews have proved to be useful to help students be aware about their strengths and weaknesses. They are also essential to get strategy awareness. It would be recommendable to provide immediate feedback during learning tasks by accompanying learners and supporting them in discovering what strategies they are using and how effective they were; this feedback

should be used as scaffolding that will be removed in subsequent stages to help learners gain independence.

Designing questions addressed to get more metacognitive awareness and include them in reflective journals or diaries might be helpful too. Diaries can be used for different purposes and aid students to reflect on their learning processes, on their feelings and reactions instilled by different class activities and learning tasks. It is also helpful to state questions for allowing learners gripping new contents to their prior knowledge.

Instruction in language learning strategies has to be delivered in the first language and it would be better to include materials that are currently employed within regular classes where students are attended to, or instead similar topics or contents aligned with their regular language program. Explicit and integrated strategy instruction proved to be efficient but unfortunately big size classes and time constraints do not allow an appropriate individual monitoring of less successful learners. Enough time to learn and practice strategies was a common suggestion made by all the participants in the tutorial.

Designing material, activities and resources addressed to different learning styles with the subsequent reflection about their employment will assist students in becoming conscious of the importance of stretching their learning styles by taking risks and banishing limiting beliefs about the nature of language learning, and about themselves as language learners. Providing opportunities to practice language learning strategies will aid them on this issue because learners may experience some new strategies that might match better with their styles, widen their repertoires and it allow them shifting their attention to a new learning scenario.

Regarding type of strategies selected for the instruction, this study showed that there are some factors to take into account, but they seem to be geared one to each other. First aspect to consider with individual learning difficulties has to deal with students learning styles, and their specific needs; some of them will probably arise depending on the language program requirements, and the teaching approach as it happened with the students of this research. It seems pretty logical because of the nature of language learning strategies which is problem-solving, so however students have their own perception about their language proficiency it is the learning environment what it makes obvious for them some language deficiencies.

However language curriculum, type of assessment, resources and teaching approach should be aligned, it seems not to be the case of many language learning contexts and this is an issue that besides of meriting further investigation, should be considered in designing a remedial course. In fact this is a matter that goes normally beyond of teacher's means, but it is always possible to get a balance in order to benefit learners instead of damage them, as it usually occurs with the lack of coherence among the different elements of the curriculum. Concerning to learners, there would not be any hard in trying to offer any justification for these differences encountered because it will make them conscious of a problem that do not depend on them but they have to manage to see how to overcome. Here, teachers should be flexible enough to deliver instruction that fit with the program, with the evaluation and with students learning styles. A very hard challenge for them!

The last thing that must be clearly established for these less successful learners is their responsibility and engagement with the program, because no matter what teachers can do to help them, the active involvement in their own learning processes will be what lead them to improve in language learning.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

A harmonious interaction of factors involved in teaching –learning process is what eventually produces successful language learning. From the teachers viewpoint one of the aspects of understanding such interactions should entail taking responsibility for their part. This responsibility can be understood as the capacity to respond to language learning difficulties. The way teachers respond can be seen as an opportunity to reflect on their own teaching practices. In working with those less successful learners their individual differences should also be taken into consideration.

Analysis of some learner factors were emphasized in this action research, so the findings about learning styles (LS) and language learning strategies (LLS) employed by novice students may involve some implications for teaching, especially for Ecuadorian language learning contexts; related to that, findings about learners educational backgrounds will include additional data to gain an insight into these learning contexts.

Teachers of novice learners should especially take into account the students' educational background, since findings in this study seem to suggest that language proficiency of this group of novice learners depends on a great deal on the type of learning environment to which they were exposed. Differences encountered between private and public schools regarding their language learning could assist teachers in understanding some learning difficulties in particular those related to deficiencies in listening skills and management of communicative learning techniques with learners from public high schools. Furthermore, these differences should call the attention to

an educational problem in our country that goes beyond methodological issues. The problem has to do with lack of opportunities and inequality for low socio-economic strata that often do not have language instruction of good quality. These deficiencies may also restrict access to higher education because English courses are considered as any other credit-bearing course within the academic record.

Regarding the findings on learning styles and having no intention of stereotyping learners, I observed from the results of the study that the pattern of kinesthetic-global- extroverted learning style preference of these students as a group requires a more communicative teaching approach, with opportunities for naturalistic practice and social interaction along with selected activities that require physical involvement. As other learning style preferences were also found, teachers the results suggest that teachers should design activities to match this diversity of style preferences, but special attention should be paid to kinesthetic learning style because activities of this type usually require more time investment, bigger classrooms and “realia”. Teachers often seem to neglect this style, because preparing lessons that are hands-on and active require extra time and energy. Furthermore, as learning styles are related to the major area of study, and as a pattern of preference for the kinesthetic learning style by technology students was a finding of the study, teachers should pay special attention to offering at least some activities that target these kinesthetic learner’s needs.

It is pretty clear that no style is better than others, but it was found that less style -flexing is a factor that might block language learning, so teachers should support learners in stretching their learning styles; a good alternative is strategy instruction.

This study also suggested that more style-flexing that these learners had, the more learning improvements were gained through strategy use, so it is important to be explicit with the students regarding the opportunities that strategy instruction might provide them, not just for language learning but for their lives. Leaving from our “comfort zones” involves willingness to grow up, to learn and to enhance. Moreover, developing style-flexing through the employment of different learning strategies will be helpful for the students in the future, because it will make them more willing to attempt different learning circumstances. It also implies overcoming barriers and banishing limiting beliefs.

It is imperative to consider the individual differences of less successful learners, so it requires that teachers, in order to be sensitive to those learners with difficulties, and to pay careful attention to those students who maybe not be so receptive to the teachers’ way of working. It also demands that teachers also stretch their styles in order to be flexible with individual needs of their learners. Such flexibility would mean that for example, teachers accept the invitation that those students have made to move to other teaching spaces.

Students’ individual differences challenge practitioners to try new ways of teaching and through them to possibly discover some strength that could be hidden because they were not practiced. Being flexible also would require teachers to question some teaching theories and try to test them themselves, or another experiment in flexibility might be the case of setting aside that taboo of not using Spanish at all. I noticed with the struggling novice learners in the study that they were not able to understand instructions in their texts, so I recommend investigating to what extent the use of the mother tongue could be helpful in some situations or circumstances that learners require. Because if many less successful learners do not

understand even the instructions in the textbooks, how can teachers expect them to understand the learning goals implicit in their learning tasks. So I decided to use Spanish for LLS instruction.

Regarding the effectiveness of language learning strategy instruction, the findings of this study may have important implications for teaching because they provide methodological alternatives to enhance language learning of students at different language proficiency level as well as enabling students to overcome their language learning difficulties.

Among the most important benefits of strategy instruction achieved with the participants of this study was the increase of metacognitive awareness, which helped students stretch their own learning styles, and to enhance their language skills. Metacognitive awareness increased their level of motivation, self-confidence and autonomy. Because of these benefits, it is really worthwhile for teachers in spite of restricted time and the extra effort required, to train learners in LLS. Otherwise, as shown in this study, though some strategies can be acquired incidentally, learners might miss the advantages of explicit instruction in language learning strategies. Explicit instruction increases metacognitive awareness, in the areas of self-knowledge, strategy awareness and task awareness, and it makes learning transfer easier for students; all of these are long-term learning goals expected within every academic setting and even more for lifelong learning.

Training learners in LLS also means empowering students to gain autonomy. For example, the text features a grammatical approach, though the curricular agenda is supposed to be communicate to teach, so if we consider some problems related to these curricular elements, learners will not as negatively affected because they will have a strategy repertoire to help them move forward. However just a few learners

are able to perceive these problems, all of them at different levels are affected, but especially those less successful ones. So, learning autonomy is helpful and enables learners to go beyond these underlying problems and to overcome learning environment limitations.

Metacognitive awareness is also advantageous for teachers, because can relieve conflicts that may arise because of these contradictions and the solution for which most of the times is beyond their means.

Findings in this study also have implications for strategy instruction planning since the study's findings show that teaching learning strategies that do not match with learning style preference, is a fruitless effort. It would be even better if learning styles as well as learning strategies were in tune with teacher's expectations about language learning which are subtly expressed through their methodologies.

Finally, every human being is the result of their own personal experiences so we can not expect uniformity; instead, teachers should celebrate the diversity found in individual differences and understand that all of them mean opportunities to learn. We need to respect these differences and when they are seen as difficulties is when teachers' authentic mission comes into play, that is accompanying learners and providing a scaffold for supporting them until they reach language learning independence.

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Appendix A

LEARNING STYLE SURVEY (By Rebecca Oxford, 1993)

Nombre: _____

Edad _____

Tipo de colegio en el que se graduó: (marque con una X)

Particular o

Fiscal o

Pensionado o

Para cada ítem marque una respuesta de acuerdo al siguiente código

*0 = Nunca**1 = A veces**2 = casi siempre**3 = Siempre*¿Cómo uso mis sentidos para estudiar o aprender?

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Me acuerdo mejor de algo si lo escribo | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. Yo tomo muchas notas | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. Yo puedo visualizar cuadros, números o palabras en mi cabeza | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. Yo prefiero aprender con videos o con la TV que con otros medios. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. Yo subrayo o resalto las partes importantes cuando leo | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. Yo uso un código de colores que me ayuda a aprender mejor | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. Yo necesito instrucciones escritas para realizar las tareas | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. Me distraigo fácilmente con los ruidos del ambiente | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. Yo tengo que mirar a la gente para entender lo que están diciendo | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. Me siento más cómodo cuando las paredes del sitio donde yo estudio tienen pósters o cuadros. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 11. Yo recuerdo mejor las cosas si las digo en voz alta | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. Yo prefiero aprender escuchando una exposición, conferencia o grabación más que leyendo | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. Yo necesito instrucciones orales para las tareas | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14. Los sonidos del ambiente me ayudan a aprender | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. Me gusta escuchar música cuando estudio | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16. Yo puedo entender fácilmente lo que la gente dice sin necesidad de mirarla. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17. Yo recuerdo más lo que la gente dice que su apariencia | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18. Me acuerdo fácilmente de chistes que oí. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19. Yo puede identificar a las personas por su voz. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 20. Cuando prendo la TV yo atiendo más a los sonidos que a las imágenes | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21. Yo prefiero empezar a hacer las cosas en ese momento antes que poner atención a las instrucciones | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 22. Yo necesito descansar frecuentemente cuando estudio | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

23. Yo muevo mis labios cuando leo en silencio	0	1	2	3
24. Yo evito sentarme en el escritorio si no tengo que hacerlo.	0	1	2	3
25. Yo me pongo inquieto o nervioso cuando estoy sentado por mucho tiempo.	0	1	2	3
26. Yo pienso mejor cuando me estoy moviendo.	0	1	2	3
27. Tocar o manipular objetos me ayuda a recordar	0	1	2	3
28. Disfruto de construir o elaborar cosas.	0	1	2	3
29. Me gustan mucho las actividades físicas.	0	1	2	3
30. Disfruto coleccionando tarjetas, estampillas, monedas u otras cosas	0	1	2	3

¿Como trato con las personas?

1. Yo prefiero estudiar con otros	0	1	2	3
2. Hago nuevos amigos fácilmente	0	1	2	3
3. Me gusta estar en grupos de gente	0	1	2	3
4. Es fácil para mí hablar con gente que no conozco	0	1	2	3
5. Yo me mantengo al tanto de las noticias sobre otras personas	0	1	2	3
6. Me gusta quedarme hasta tarde en las fiestas.	0	1	2	3
7. La interacción con las personas me da energía	0	1	2	3
8. Recuerdo los nombres de las personas fácilmente	0	1	2	3
9. Yo tengo muchos amigos y conocidos	0	1	2	3
10. Donde quiera que yo vaya desarrollo contactos personales	0	1	2	3

11. Yo prefiero estudiar solo	0	1	2	3
12. Yo soy bastante tímido.	0	1	2	3
13. Yo prefiero los pasatiempos o deportes o individuales	0	1	2	3
14. Es difícil para la mayoría de la gente llegar a conocerme.	0	1	2	3
15. Las personas me ven a mi más reservado, que sociable	0	1	2	3
16. En grupos grandes tiendo a permanecer en silencio	0	1	2	3
17. Agruparme con mucha gente me estresa	0	1	2	3
18. Me pongo nervioso cuando tengo que tratar con gente nueva	0	1	2	3
19. Evito las fiestas, si es que puedo.	0	1	2	3
20. Recordar nombres es difícil para mí.	0	1	2	3

Appendix B

STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING
(Version 7.0 – ESL / EFL) By Oxford, R. 1989

NAME _____

Valora con 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 cada uno de los enunciados siguientes:

1 = nunca 2 = ocasionalmente 3 = de vez en cuando
4 = a menudo o casi siempre 5 = siempre

*Haz un círculo donde corresponda***PARTE A**

1. Yo relaciono entre lo que ya sé y las cosas nuevas que aprendo en inglés
1 2 3 4 5
2. Uso las nuevas palabras que aprendo dentro de una oración para poder recordarlas
1 2 3 4 5
3. Conecto el sonido de una palabra en inglés con una imagen o figura para ayudarme a recordar la palabra
1 2 3 4 5
4. Yo recuerdo una nueva palabra asociándola a una situación o imagen mental en la cual esta palabra podría usarse.
1 2 3 4 5
5. Utilizo rimas para acordarme las palabras nuevas en inglés.
1 2 3 4 5
6. Uso tarjetas con dibujos o diagramas para recordar las palabras nuevas en inglés
1 2 3 4 5
7. Utilizo gestos, o hago mímicas para aprender nuevas palabras en inglés
1 2 3 4 5
8. Repaso mis lecciones o clases de inglés
1 2 3 4 5
9. Recuerdo las nuevas palabras o frases en inglés relacionándolas con el lugar en el que aparecen. Su ubicación en la página, en la pizarra, o en una valla o señal de la calle.
1 2 3 4 5

PARTE B

10. Pronuncio o escribo las palabras nuevas en inglés varias veces.
1 2 3 4 5
11. Trato de hablar como un hablante nativo del inglés.(británicos, norteamericanos,etc), o como el profesor
1 2 3 4 5
12. Practico los sonidos del inglés
1 2 3 4 5
13. Uso la palabra que ya sé de diferentes maneras, y en diferentes contextos
1 2 3 4 5
14. Yo empiezo las conversaciones en inglés
1 2 3 4 5

15. Miro los programas de televisión en inglés o películas en inglés.
1 2 3 4 5
16. Leo por placer en inglés
1 2 3 4 5
17. Escribo notas, mensajes, cartas en inglés
1 2 3 4 5
18. Cuando leo un artículo en inglés lo leo rápidamente una primera vez y luego lo vuelvo a leer cuidadosamente.
1 2 3 4 5
19. Yo busco palabras en español que sean similares a las palabras nuevas en inglés.
1 2 3 4 5
20. Intento encontrar normas, reglas o modelos en el inglés que me faciliten el estudio
1 2 3 4 5
21. Busco el significado de una palabra descomponiéndola en partes que yo entiendo.
1 2 3 4 5
22. Procuro no traducir palabra por palabra
1 2 3 4 5
23. Hago resúmenes de la información que oí o leí en inglés
1 2 3 4 5

PARTE C

24. Trato de adivinar las palabras nuevas o extrañas en inglés para comprenderlas
1 2 3 4 5
25. Cuando yo no me acuerdo de una palabra en inglés durante una conversación, yo uso gestos.
1 2 3 4 5
26. Me invento palabras nuevas si no sé las palabras correctas para expresarme en inglés.
1 2 3 4 5
27. Yo leo en inglés sin buscar o averiguar el significado de todas las palabras
1 2 3 4 5
28. Intento adivinar lo que la otra persona dice en inglés
1 2 3 4 5
29. Si yo no se una palabra en inglés, uso una palabra, un sinónimo o frase que signifique lo mismo.
1 2 3 4 5

PARTE D

1. Yo trato de encontrar la mayor cantidad de maneras para usar mi inglés
1 2 3 4 5
2. Yo me doy cuenta de mis errores en el inglés y uso esa información para ayudarme a mejorar.
1 2 3 4 5
3. Yo pongo atención cuando alguien está hablando en inglés.
1 2 3 4 5
4. Yo trato de averiguar como ser un mejor aprendiz del inglés
1 2 3 4 5

5. Yo planeo mi horario para tener tiempo suficiente de estudiar inglés

1 2 3 4 5

6. Yo busco gente con la que pueda hablar en inglés

1 2 3 4 5

7. Yo busco oportunidades para leer en inglés lo más que pueda.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Yo tengo las metas claras para mejorar mis habilidades en el inglés

1 2 3 4 5

9. Yo pienso sobre mis progresos en el aprendizaje del inglés

1 2 3 4 5

PART E

1. Yo trato de relajarme y tranquilizarme cada vez que siento miedo de usar el inglés

1 2 3 4 5

2. Yo me doy ánimo a mí mismo para hablar en inglés, aún cuando tengo miedo de cometer errores

1 2 3 4 5

3. Yo me felicito o me recompenso a mí mismo cuando hago algo bien en inglés

1 2 3 4 5

4. Yo me doy cuenta o noto si estoy tenso-a o nervioso-a cuando estoy estudiando inglés

1 2 3 4 5

5. Yo escribo mis sentimientos en un diario del aprendizaje del idioma.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Yo hablo con alguien más acerca de como me siento cuando estoy aprendiendo inglés.

1 2 3 4 5

PARTE F

1. Si yo no entiendo algo en inglés, le pido a la otra persona que lo diga más despacio, o que lo repita.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Yo les pido a los hablantes del inglés que me corrijan cuando yo hablo

1 2 3 4 5

3. Yo practico inglés con otros estudiantes

1 2 3 4 5

4. Pido ayuda a las personas que hablan inglés

1 2 3 4 5

5. Yo hago preguntas en inglés

1 2 3 4 5

6. Intento comprender la cultura inglesa 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix C

Initial Interview

1. ¿Cuántos años ha estudiado inglés?
2. ¿Le gustaba el inglés cuando estaba en la escuela, en la secundaria?
3. ¿Cuántas horas de inglés recibía en la secundaria?
4. ¿Podría describir cómo eran sus clases de inglés?
5. ¿Sus clases de inglés eran conducidas totalmente en este idioma?
6. ¿El profesor les daba oportunidad de hablar inglés en clase?
7. ¿El profesor les instruía en vocabulario?
8. ¿Les daba la oportunidad de escuchar para aprender? ¿Usaba material audiovisual?
9. ¿Hacían actividades grupales en clase?
10. ¿Qué materiales o recursos usaban en sus clases de inglés, ¿cómo los utilizaban?
11. ¿Qué técnicas o estrategias usaba usted para aprender inglés, ¿cuáles de ellas le han resultado efectivas?
12. ¿Qué aspecto del idioma inglés le causa mayor dificultad?

Final Interview

1. ¿Cómo se siente en las clases de inglés ahora?
2. De los problemas que usted tenía al inicio del curso sobre las destrezas más difíciles para usted, ¿en cual aspecto cree que ha mejorado?
3. De las estrategias que hemos aprendido durante el curso cuáles le han sido útiles para mejorar las diferentes destrezas del idioma inglés?
4. ¿Cree usted que ha mejorado más en reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary o grammar?
5. Si alguien a usted le pregunta sobre cómo estudiar inglés o cómo aprenderlo, ¿qué le contestaría? ¿Que consejos le daría para que mejore o le guste el inglés?
6. ¿Si se incluyera este curso de estrategias de aprendizaje del inglés nuevamente, ¿qué sugerencias daría para optimizarlo?
7. ¿Podría decir que su actitud hacia el idioma inglés es ahora diferente? ¿Cómo?

Appendix D

Samples of Entries for the Learner's Diary

First Entry

Octubre 25-09

Samuel

HOLA SEÑORITA: Irene Yomar Castro Cobo

1-¿CUAL ES SU META MAS IMPORTANTE ?

MI META MAS IMPORTANTE ES GRADUARME Y TENER UN BUEN TRABAJO PARA ASI PODER AYUDAR A MI MAMÁ

2-¿QUE HA HECHO PARA ALCANZARLA ?

BUENO YO HE ESTUDIADO MUCHO,TRATO DE CUMPLIR CON TODAS LAS TAREAS Y PROYECTOS QUE ME ENVIAN

3-¿QUE MAS CRRE QUE PUEDE HACER ?

BUENO YO CREO QUE NUNCA DEBO PERDER LA ESPERANZA Y SEGUIR ADELANTA CON MUCHAS GANAS

Second Entry

2-nov-09

Samuel

¿Que destreza o habilidad en el ingles es la que más me causa trabajo o dificultad? Entender, hablar, escribir, leer o recordar vocabulario?

- bueno a mi el que mas trabajo me cuesta aprender es el hablar y por hay un poco escribir

¿ Que he hecho para mejorar o ayudarme en esa dificultad?

- bueno yo busco como se vocaliza esa palabra o como se pronuncia y de hay yo la repito en par de veces para acordarme y la copio o las repito para acordarme

¿ Han sido efectivas las estrategias o técnicas que he usado?

- bueno hay si yo no se lo único que se es que he pasado las materias estudiando y repasando mucho el idioma

¿Cómo estudio el vocabulario para un examen, una prueba o para estar listo en clase a responder algunas preguntas?

- bueno yo las repaso uno o dos días antes o el mismo día las repito hasta acordarme y también busco el significado de todas esas palabras

María

- ❖ Qué destreza o habilidad en el inglés es la que más me causa trabajo o dificultad? Entender, hablar, escribir, leer o recordar vocabulario?

❖

Entender cuando alguien me habla en Inglés, hablar al hacer las pronunciaciones en Inglés y leer el vocabulario

- ❖ ¿Qué he hecho para mejorar o ayudarme en esa dificultad?

Escuchar Cds. En Inglés, Ver Películas en Inglés y escribir le vocabulario y repetirlo varias veces

- ❖ ¿Han sido efectivas las estrategias o técnicas que he usado?

Me están dando resultado, solo que tengo ser constante

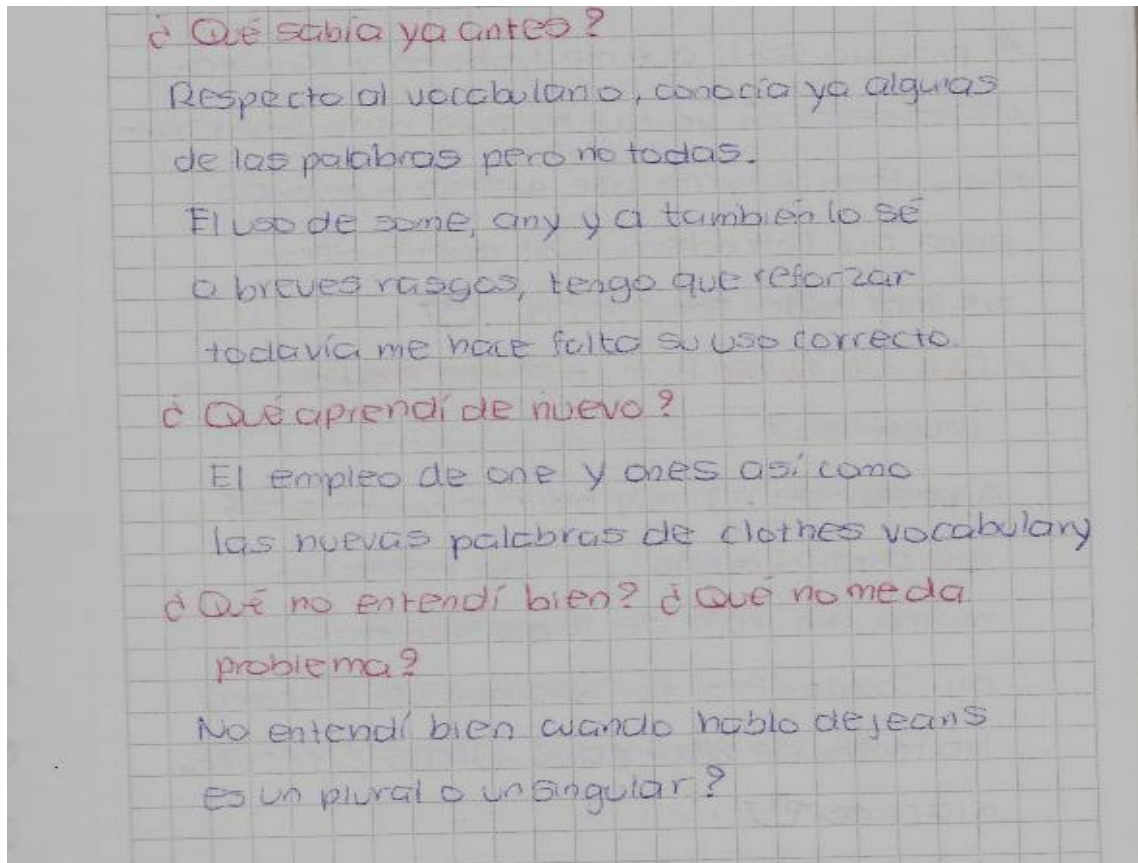
- ❖ ¿Cómo estudio el vocabulario para un examen, una prueba o para estar listo en clase a responder algunas preguntas?

Escribo en una hoja saco la información del libro, y luego lo repito sin ver la hoja en otra hoja aparte y luego analizo en que me equivoque y sigo con lo mismo

Third Entry (After class)

Nov. 26 -2009

Clara



¿Cómo se sintió en la actividad de speaking?

Al principio sentí que me trababa y también desesperación ya que no supe cómo expresarme. Poco después usé gestos o señales para que entendiera lo que quería decir, al final todo salió bien. 😊

¿Qué fue lo que lo hizo sentir malo o incómodo?

A pesar de mi muy mala pronunciación, me sentí a gusto, incluso hasta yo misma me reía de lo que hablaba y mi compañero intentó con ver su cara tratando de decir ¿qué dices? resultó gracioso 😊

Fourth Entry

Diciembre 1- 2009

Tomás

1. ¿Cómo se siente en la clase de inglés?

¿Tiene ahora más confianza en qué va a aprender o está con más dudas y problemas que al inicio?

¿Qué área o destreza del idioma le sigue preocupando y en cuál cree que ha avanzado un poquito más?

¿Qué estrategias cree que ha usado más? ¿Cuáles le han sido más útiles?

Mejor que cuando estaba en el colegio ya que siento que estoy aprendiendo. Me preocupa lo de la escritura aunque he mejorado desde la última vez que tuve una clase de inglés en el colegio. Deduction - induction, asking for clarification. Leyendo todo el contenido de una frase para así deducir lo que me está pidiendo y si no entiendo algo busco ayuda.

2. ¿Cuál es su meta para el examen del primer parcial? ¿Qué calificación quiere lograr? ¿Qué ha estado haciendo para lograrlo? ¿Qué es lo que más le preocupa sobre el examen?

Sacar una calificación alta dependiendo de todo lo que me ha enseñado. Quisiera sacar como mínimo 40.

La última semana estuve más al tanto de las clases y revisando las cosas que había olvidado de clases pasadas. Que me olvide de alguna regla de escritura y me pueda equivocar

Marcelo

¿Cómo se siente en la clase de inglés?

Muy bien miss al principio tenía mucho miedo pero conforme avanza el curso aprendo algo nuevo gracias a su forma de enseñar este idioma y la paciencia que nos tiene

¿Tiene ahora más confianza en qué va a aprender o está con más dudas y problemas que al inicio?

Tengo confianza ya que estoy aprendiendo mucho conforme avanzamos en la clase, es verdad que tengo algunas dudas pero en un menor grado que al inicio

¿Qué área o destreza del idioma le sigue preocupando y en cuál cree que ha avanzado un poquito más?

En si me preocupa más la parte auditiva existe cierta información que no alcanzo a entender pero claro esta que no en el mismo grado cuando no había tomado esta materia

¿Qué estrategias cree que ha usado más?

La estrategia de anotar las nuevas palabras y repetirlas muchas veces o relacionarlas con alguna cosa común de mi vida diaria, también e utilizado la de formular oraciones con estas nuevas palabras

¿Cuáles le han sido más útiles?

La de repetirla varias veces y la de formular oraciones

¿Cuál era su meta para el examen del primer parcial?

Realizar un buen examen

¿Qué calificación quería lograr?

Por lo menos más del 70%

¿Qué no más hizo para lograrlo?

Realice oraciones, formule preguntas y respuestas en su gran mayoría con el verbo to be y el have got, revise y leí textos del libro practique oraciones acerca de mi y mi familia

¿Cuáles de las estrategias o técnicas que practicó le resultaron efectivas al realizar su examen?

En realidad todas las técnicas que practique me sirvieron mucho para realizar el examen y si me topaba con algún tema que no pude entender lo dejaba para el ultimo, primero me dedique a realizar lo que conocía

¿En qué aspectos se equivocó?

En la parte de los verbos que necesitan del acompañamiento del auxiliar y el estudio de las cosas de la casa

¿Cómo cree que puede mejorar?

No dejando pasar por alto ese tipo de temas mencionados en la pregunta anterior

Gracias por sus enseñanzas Miss, por ser una buena persona con nosotros y por preocuparse por el aprendizaje del inglés ya que me siento con más confianza de salir adelante

Appendix F

Consent Form

Language Learning Strategies in EFL Elementary Class

Por favor, marque con una x la casilla que le corresponde. (Puede marcar más que una)

- Administrador del programa
- Estudiante
- Maestro(a)/Profesor(a)
- Padre o representante legal del participante menor de 18 años
- Otro (explique)

Yo, _____, he sido invitado a participar en esta investigación, la cual

Nombre del participante

me ha sido explicado por la Lcda. Irene Castro Cobo.

Esta investigación se está llevando a cabo con el propósito de cumplir con los requisitos del: grado de Magister en Enseñanza de Inglés como Idioma Extranjero.

El Propósito de este trabajo de investigación es:

Describir y explorar las estrategias de aprendizaje que utilizan los estudiantes universitarios de Elementary level en el área de inglés como idioma extranjero.

Desarrollar nuevas estrategias de aprendizaje en los estudiantes

La descripción de los métodos a usarse es:

This research will be a qualitative case study.

Los requisitos de los participantes son:

Los estudiantes que participarán en el estudio de investigación recibirán instrucción explícita sobre estrategias de aprendizaje, asistirán a tutorías, tendrán que contestar cuestionarios, llevar checklists y participar en entrevistas individuales. Se requerirá además que lleven un diario del aprendizaje.

Los beneficios de los participantes son:

Durante la investigación los estudiantes se beneficiarán de la instrucción sobre estrategias de aprendizaje, mejorarán sus destrezas en el área de inglés. Cuando la investigación haya finalizado toda la información estará disponible para ellos. Habrán tenido la oportunidad de conocerse a sí mismos, conocer sus fortalezas, sus debilidades, y desarrollar sus potencialidades en el área de inglés como idioma extranjero.

Los riesgos e incomodidades para los participantes son:

La única incomodidad para los estudiantes podría ser el hecho de que requerirán un tiempo extra fuera de clases para poder asistir a las tutorías y a las entrevistas.

Si tiene alguna pregunta, favor contactarse con : Lcda. Irene Castro Cobo

Confidencialidad

Entiendo que cualquier información personal que se obtenga como resultado de este trabajo de investigación se mantendrá confidencial, tanto como sea posible, según las normas de legalidad. En cualquier publicación que resultará de esta investigación ni mi nombre ni cualquier información que me pueda identificar será incluido.

Participación voluntaria

La participación en este trabajo de educación es voluntaria. Entiendo que tengo la libertad de suspender mi participación en el trabajo de la investigación o las actividades relacionadas. Entiendo que ni mi estatus de empleo, ni mi estatus académico serán afectados si decido no participar. Me han dado la oportunidad de preguntar sobre la investigación, y he recibido contestaciones a mis preguntas al respecto de las partes que no entendí. Los datos que proveo para este trabajo de investigación se mantendrán anónimos. Al firmar este formulario de permiso indico que entiendo los requisitos de participación relacionados con el trabajo de investigación. Al firmar este formulario de consentimiento, del cuál recibiré una copia, indico que entiendo. Doy mi permiso voluntariamente para participar en este trabajo de investigación.

Firma del participante o el representante del participante

Fecha

Firma del investigador (a)

Fecha

Appendix G

**Information Handouts – Activities
Language Learning Strategies**

VOCABULARY STRATEGIES

¿Por qué es importante aprender vocabulario?

Conocer muchas palabras en inglés nos va a dar la oportunidad de poder acceder al material y a la información necesaria para poder entender, hablar, escribir y leer en ese idioma. Uno puede aprender vocabulario de forma incidental, es decir mientras lee o escucha a alguien, o también cuando uno quiere aprender de manera intencional para ampliar su vocabulario

Hay varios aspectos importantes en relación al vocabulario. Es importante aprender palabras nuevas, archivarlas en la memoria, retenerlas y luego poder recuperar o recordar las palabras para poder usarlas y producir el lenguaje.

Aprenderemos entonces estrategias para poder cubrir todos estos aspectos relacionados con la adquisición del vocabulario.

Debemos recordar que todas las palabras que escuchamos o leemos están siempre en contexto, es decir forman parte de ideas completas. Los libros de texto que utilizamos en el aprendizaje del inglés suelen agrupar las palabras o aislarlas para enseñarlas previamente como palabras clave para los temas que se desarrollarán durante la unidad.

Cuando leemos o escuchamos un texto en inglés y no comprendemos el mensaje completo, se hace necesario también aislar las palabras nuevas para dedicarles mayor atención y conocer su significado, su escritura, su pronunciación, su uso y formas.

Para poder aprender o comprender el significado de una palabra, podemos usar varias estrategias:

Strategy # 1 **Resourcing:** es cuando usamos el diccionario, el libro de texto, o preguntamos a otra persona el significado de la palabra.

Si no tenemos un diccionario a la mano, u otro recurso de los anotados arriba, entonces se hacen necesarias otras estrategias para poder adivinar o pronosticar el significado de las palabras.

Strategy # 2 **Cognates:**

Cognates son palabras de un idioma que son iguales en forma y significado a las palabras en otro idioma. En este caso palabras del inglés que se parecen a las palabras del español en forma y significado. Los true cognates o cognates verdaderos

son las palabras que tienen igual significado. Los cognates falsos son las palabras que se parecen en dos idiomas pero tienen significados distintos.

El uso de los cognates verdaderos es una estrategia para poder adivinar o predecir los significados de palabras nuevas.

Ejemplos de cognates verdaderos son:

English	Spanish
Special	especial
Moment	momento
Situation	situación
Doctor	Doctor

Ejemplos de cognates falsos son:

English	Spanish
Actually	En realidad
Assist	Ayudar
Carpet	Alfombra

La mayoría son cognates verdaderos, sin embargo tendremos que comprobar por otros medios si es un cognate falso. Lo mejor es mirar si la palabra tiene sentido dentro del contexto o de la oración que estamos tratando de entender. Por ejemplo:

The house has a beautiful blue carpet.

Si pensamos que la palabra *carpet* es un cognate verdadero o true cognate, podríamos pensar que *carpet* significa carpeta o fólder... pero si miramos la palabra en el contexto de la oración, ese significado no tiene sentido. Tendremos entonces que utilizar otra estrategia para averiguar el significado.

Para practicar los cognates de una manera divertida, haz clic en este link

<http://www.eslbears.com/cognates.html>

Strategy # 3 Word Formation: En esta estrategia se trata de ver cómo está formada una palabra. En el inglés, como en el español hay palabras compuestas o compound words. Por ejemplo homework, classroom, housework, housewife, classmate. Si conocemos una de las dos palabras que las componen, o las dos, podremos inferir el significado de la palabra nueva.

Así mismo a las palabras se les puede añadir prefijos (prefixes) o sufijos (sufixes).

Los **prefijos** son dos o tres letras que se añaden antes de una palabra y ayudan a formar una nueva palabra.

Ejemplo: happy un = unhappy

Possible im = imposible

Way sub = subway

Los **sufijos** son dos o más letras que se añaden al final de una palabra y entonces forman una nueva palabra.

Ejemplo: play er = player

Build er = builder

Beauty ful = beautiful

Si usted conoce el significado de los prefijos y los sufijos, puede entonces predecir o conocer el significado de una palabra nueva.

Para practicar el uso de sufijos y prefijos haz click en estos links

<http://useit.vn/content/view/3590/378/lang.english/> (Easy)

http://www.englishlab.net/hp/wf_5_verbs_nouns1.htm (Difficult)

VOCABULARY STRATEGIES PART TWO

Ya hemos visto varias estrategias para aprender vocabulario:

- el uso del diccionario: que no es muy efectivo cuando queremos leer de corrido, o en un examen en el que no se permite el uso del mismo.
- el uso de cognates, es decir mirar si la palabra se parece al español y en su significado también.
- el mirar como está estructurada o formada una palabra, (Word formation) si tiene sufijos, prefijos (worker, player..) está compuesta de dos mas palabras (homework, housewife..)

Strategy # 4 Guessing from the context (adivinando desde el contexto)

La nueva estrategia que aprendimos es muy útil y se trata de adivinar o suponer cuál puede ser el significado de una palabra gracias al contexto en el que se encuentra esa palabra. Es decir mirando el resto de las palabras en la oración, frase o párrafo. De entre el resto de las palabras habrá algunas que nos den como una clave o te sugieran el significado de la palabra nueva. Por ejemplo :

Supongamos que no sabemos el significado de TINY. Esta palabra la encontramos dentro de las siguientes oraciones:

- Microscope helps us to see **tiny** objects.
- Japanese are creating a new television with a **tiny** screen. You can keep it in your pocket.

Podemos suponer el significado de esta palabra asociándola a “microscope”, entonces barajamos varias alternativas de significado

(Circle the best meaning for the word in **bold**)

Tiny means:

- a) light (liviano) b) strange (extraño) c) very small d) Biological

Sustituímos entonces la palabra tiny por una o varias de las alternativas que tenemos y escogemos la que más le da sentido a la frase.

La opción *c) very small* es la que más se acerca a un significado con sentido.

“Microscope helps us to see very small objects.”

“Japanese are creating a new television with a very small screen. You can keep it in your pocket.”

STRATEGIES TO REMEMBER or RECALL WORDS

Estrategias para recordar las palabras nuevas que hemos aprendido.

Es importante que una vez que conocemos el significado de una palabra practiquemos alguna técnica para poder recordarla de nuevo.

Hay varias técnicas para memorizar las palabras nuevas:

Strategy # 5 :Oral rehearsal : Repetición en voz alta: Repetir las palabras en voz alta te ayudará a memorizarlas. Sería bueno también que mientras repites la palabra la asocies con la imagen de la palabra en tu cerebro. Y si logras también imaginar o visualizar la escritura de la palabra sería mejor todavía.

Strategy # 6 Written rehearsal: En lugar de repetir la palabra en voz alta, la escribes varias veces para recordarla. Es también importante que mientras la escribes recuerdes o la asocies con la imagen de la palabra.

Strategy # 7 Elaboration: Esta estrategia se trata de utilizar la palabra nueva que has aprendido lo más posible. El primer ejercicio consiste en usar la palabra en una oración que tenga que ver con tu entorno más inmediato o con tu vida personal. En el ejemplo anterior ya sabes el significado de *tiny*. Para que no se te olvide, recuerda qué objeto que tú quieres o valoras mucho es realmente muy pequeño, casi diminuto, y entonces escribe una oración como esta:

I've got a **tiny** car....It's a micromachine!

Si tú quieres puedes escribir el resto de la oración en español. Pero lo mejor es si es que tratas de usar todo el inglés que puedas en la elaboración de tu ejemplo. Esta estrategia es muy efectiva porque tiene que ver con tu vida, es muy personal y esta asociación hace más fácil recordar la palabra nueva que aprendiste.

Strategy # 8 Keyword

Esta estrategia consiste en asociar el sonido de una palabra nueva con una palabra en español y entonces crear una imagen mental creativa en donde sea fácil recordar la palabra nueva. Por ejemplo la palabra "**carline**" significa bruja. Como la palabra "car" ya la conocemos y se parece al español entonces haremos una asociación mental como esta:



Es decir pondremos a una brujita "witch" en un carrito antiguo como este y así estaremos creando una asociación entre algo que ya conocemos y la palabra nueva que aprendimos.

LISTENING STRATEGIES Part one

Para muchos estudiantes el entender el inglés cuando están escuchando a alguien es complicado. Al leer un artículo en inglés se hace más fácil porque las palabras e ideas están escritas y podemos volver a leer, interrumpir nuestra lectura si no entendemos una palabra, volver a pasar la vista sobre el texto, etc. Pero cuando alguien nos está hablando en inglés la comprensión se hace más difícil. A veces podemos pedirle a esa persona que repita lo que dijo, a veces no es posible. No podemos interrumpirlo al hablar, y tampoco tenemos la oportunidad de detenernos en una o dos palabras que no entendimos.

Es necesario entonces desarrollar estrategias para aprender a escuchar, a entender el segundo idioma. Nuestro libro de texto utiliza algunas de esas técnicas y tu maestra también. Lo importante es que tú manejes estas estrategias.

Antes de escuchar a alguien hablando inglés, un párrafo en el CD, una conversación o cualquier material grabado es muy importante aplicar estas estrategias:

Strategy # 1: Planning

En una tarea de listening del libro, será muy importante tener claro cuál es la instrucción, es decir cual es el objetivo de la tarea, cuál es el propósito, así yo planifico qué exactamente tengo que hacer: si entender la idea general, o detalles específicos de lo que voy a escuchar

Si yo no entiendo la instrucción, es muy difícil saber cual es el objetivo al escuchar.

Será importante entonces que pidas ayuda si no entiendes la instrucción. Tu maestra, tus compañeros, tu diccionario pueden ser los recursos para eso. Esta estrategia se llama **Asking for clarification (Pedir que te aclaren algo)**

Strategy # 2: Making predictions (Hacer predicciones)

Las actividades de listening del libro de inglés, normalmente vienen con dibujos, gráficos adjuntos, diagramas etc. Es importante que los mires, ello te ayudará a predecir de qué se puede tratar lo que vas a escuchar. Haz suposiciones, predicciones, trata de adivinar.. no importa cuantas. Este proceso mental es muy útil porque te prepara para una mayor comprensión. Si el tema sobre el que vas a escuchar es bastante conocido para ti, o ya conoces vocabulario en inglés sobre este tema, también prepárate mentalmente sobre las palabras que podrían aparecer en lo que vas a oír. Si por ejemplo sabes que vas a escuchar una encuesta sobre aparatos electrónicos, y ese vocabulario lo conoces, trata de recordar tantas palabras como puedas sobre el tema.

Si por el contrario, ya estás en una situación de la vida real donde vas a tener una entrevista de trabajo en inglés, será importante por ejemplo tratar de imaginar o predecir qué tipo de cosas te van a preguntar, esta estrategia significa alistarse para comprender

Strategy # 3: Looking for a gist (Entender la idea principal)

Al escuchar la primera vez será importante comprender la idea principal de lo que escuchas. Es ahora cuando vas a verificar si tus predicciones o ideas previas sobre el tema son o no verdaderas. Vas a descartar algunas de ellas y vas a enfocarte en las que se acercan a lo que escuchaste. En esta parte es bueno **tomar notas, (taking notes)** si lo deseas sobre todas las ideas, palabras, o frases que entendiste.

Strategy # 4 : Selective attention (atención selectiva)

Ahora es tiempo de poner atención específica a ciertas ideas o palabras que necesitas entender para poder tener una comprensión total de lo que escuchaste. El libro de texto va a llevar una instrucción o tarea extra para que te enfoques en estos detalles específicos.

Strategy # 5: Self-evaluation (Auto-evaluación)

Ahora probablemente tendrás una comprensión más completa de lo que escuchaste. Es bueno ahora que te auto-evalúes sobre cuanto entendiste. Esta estrategia se llama **self-evaluation**. Verifica si cumpliste el objetivo inicial, las tareas. ¿Qué te faltó para comprender bien? ¿Qué partes de lo que escuchaste perdiste? ¿Por qué te perdiste?

¿Qué crees que puedas hacer la próxima vez para mejorar este aspecto?

Reading Worksheet

Reading Activities:

1) Before reading: No lea todavía el texto del artículo. Lea el título, mire los dibujos que acompañan al texto y haga **predicciones** acerca de qué se puede tratar el artículo, relacione esas ideas con sus experiencias sobre el tema. Escriba todas las ideas que vengan a su mente sobre la idea general del texto:

A Special Christmas Present



David wants to buy a Christmas present for a very special person, his mother. David's father gives him \$5.00 a week pocket money and David puts \$2.00 a week into his bank account. After three months David takes \$20.00 out of his bank account and goes to the shopping mall. He looks and looks for a perfect gift.

Suddenly he sees a beautiful brooch in the shape of his favourite pet. He says to himself, "My mother loves jewelry, and the brooch costs only \$17.00." He buys the brooch and takes it home. He wraps the present in Christmas paper and places it under the tree. He is very excited and he is *looking forward* to Christmas morning to see the joy on his mother's face.

But when his mother opens the present she screams with fright because she sees a spider.

Looking forward= esperar ansiosamente

2) Ahora lee una primera vez (**Skimming** the text) sin detenerte en ninguna palabra cuyo significado no entiendas y verifica si tus predicciones eran acertadas o no. Escribe en estas líneas todas las ideas o la idea general del artículo

.....
.....
.....

3) Ahora Lee la instrucción de la tarea a continuación y resuélvela

Choose what the main idea of the text is:

- a) A small boy buys a Christmas tree
- b) David's mother likes pets
- c) A different present for David's mother

d) A small boy has got \$ 20 in the bank

4) Lee nuevamente el texto y ahora para tener mayor comprensión de los **detalles** deberás conocer mucho vocabulario. Vas a encontrar algunas palabras que se repiten muchas veces en el texto. Esas son la palabras clave o “Cue Words”. Si tú no conoces el significado de esas palabras, no podrás comprender el texto a profundidad. Haz una lista de esas palabras aquí y busca en el diccionario o averigua a alguien su significado: (Algunas de esas palabras se van a parecer al español. Mira si son **true cognates o false cognates**)

.....

5) Ahora vas a encontrar el significado de algunas otras palabras, pero ya no en el diccionario, sino adivinándolas desde el contexto, (**guessing from context**) es decir sirviéndote de las palabras o ideas que están junto a la palabra nueva

- My mother loves **jewelry**, and the brooch costs only \$17,00

Jewelry means:

- a) decoration (adorno)
- b) an animal
- c) a flower
- d) real or artificial precious stone

(joya)

- He takes the brooch and **wraps** the present in Christmas paper

Wraps means:

- a) to write (escribir)
- b) to cover in material folded over (envolver)
- c) to keep (guardar)
- d) to give (dar)

- He’s looking forward for Christmas morning to see the **joy** in his mother’s face

Joy means:

- a) sadness (tristeza)
- b) an insect
- c) happiness (alegría)
- d) worry (preocupación)

When his mother opens the present she screams with **fright**...

Fright means:

- a) conflict, battle (conflicto, pelea)
- b) travel by plane
- c) excitement (emoción)
- d) Afraid, fear (miedo, temor)

VOCABULARY STRATEGIES. Worksheet – Tutorial Activities-

Strategy # 4 **Guessing from the context** (adivinando desde el contexto)

1) Circle the best meaning from the words in **bold**

1) Mary is an elegant person. Her uniform is always clean and her shoes are always **polished**.

Polished means:

- a) Fashionable b) Shiny (lustrado) c) Expensive d) Refined (refinado)

2) - Hip-hop singers wear too big clothes. Their shorts and t-shirts are really **loose**

- The large shoes were very **loose**

Loose means

- a) Not constrained, not constricted b) Fail to win (perder)
c) Not very clean d) Ugly

3) - Microscope helps us to see **tiny** objects.

- Japanese are creating a new television with a **tiny** screen. You can keep it in your pocket.

Tiny means:

- a) light (liviano) b) strange (extraño) c) very small d) Biological

4) I have got many **smooth** puppies on my bed.

Some shampoos makes you hair very **smooth** and beautiful.

Put your laptop on a smooth surface.

Smooth means:

- a) nice b) clear c) not rough, soft (liso, suave) d) wet, humid (humectado)