

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT**



FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

“The Academic, Affective and Linguistic Factors that influence the level of English Achieved by EFL Learners majoring in the B.A. in English Teaching Option and the B.A in Modern Languages Specialization in French and English at the Foreign Languages Department in the University of El Salvador”

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF: BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH WITH EMPHASIS IN TEACHING.

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ABSTRACT

The present research is focused on the study of the academic, affective, and linguistic factors that influence the level of English achieved by EFL learners at the FLD of the University of El Salvador. This work has been conducted as a bibliographical research. For instance, the data has been collected through investigating other studies carried out at the FLD. The findings of this research are shown by using graphs and tables taken from previous studies to have a clear understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, the team expects the results obtained from the sources consulted will be helpful to find the impact of academic, affective, and linguistic factors in the level of English achieved by students from the FLD.

Based Words: Grade point average (GPA), Academic background, socioeconomic status (SES), study habits, attitude, anxiety, shyness, motivation, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and phonetics.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking English is considered important in today's society since learners are judged when performing in real-life situations. English has become an indispensable requirement worldwide. The topic under study is The Academic, Affective and Linguistic Factors that Influence the Level of English Achieved by EFL Learners majoring in the B.A. in English Teaching Option and the B.A. in Modern Languages Specialization in French and English at the Foreign Languages Department in the University of El Salvador. This research aims to identify the factors that influence learners when developing English proficiency as a foreign language.

Additionally, this research includes objectives that consider the academic, affective, and linguistic factors to be investigated which play an important role in the learning process. It also includes a theoretical framework about the challenge students deal with while aiming to reach higher levels of proficiency. It finishes by identifying the level of English students achieved by considering the Common European Framework of References for Languages.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is believed that there is not a single factor that that affect students' language learning rather it is a combination of several variables that does affect this. In the present study, several studies indicated that generally students of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador in few exceptions reach a level C (using the Common European Framework of References) of linguistic competence.

This is why the purpose of the investigation is to analyze some key factors which could contribute to students' language learning. They are: a) academic factors that are related to socio economic status, GPA (Grade Point Average), study habits, and academic background, these aspects play an important role in students' academic performance since students need to be concentrated on their studies. Besides, b) affective factors are equally important since they have to do with motivation, attitude, anxiety, and shyness. These categories are related to how students feel about learning. Finally, c) linguistic factors, which involve vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and phonetics are essential for students to succeed or fail due to the fact that these factors help students to develop a high proficiency language level.

Unfortunately, there are not several studies carried out in the department that have focused on the academic, affective, and linguistic factors. There are sometimes studies that focus only on one factor but not on the three of them. These factors have not been correlated to find out their impact on the English language learning. The purpose of this study is to find out the impact these factors have on students' English language learning. This study will answer the following questions: To what extent do affective

factors influence students' language development while learning English as a foreign language? Do academic factors play an important role to develop English proficiency in students? Are students reaching a good level of English?

2. IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Learning English plays a very important role for the professional, academic, and personal development of emerging societies worldwide. People who speak English get better job opportunities since English is a “lingua franca”. Also, learning English could bring information sources and help to communicate with people around the world. According to Ethnologue (2018), “English is spoken in 118 countries and English is the most widely spoken language in the world with 1,121 million speakers”. For mastering English as a foreign language, a lot of time, effort and attention are needed in order to produce the language (Brown. D, 2000).

At the Foreign Languages Department, at the University of El Salvador, students are expected to reach an advanced level of English according to ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) guidelines. English as a foreign language can be easy for many EFL learners but difficult for others. There are factors influencing this process such as academic factors that include: learning strategies, language aptitude, (Gardner, 1990), age, academic background, and learners’ GPA; affective factors such as motivation, shyness, anxiety Gardner (Nitta, 2006); and linguistic factors: grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary (Hammer, 2002).

Therefore, the team considers important to study into depth these factors due to the lack of relevant data that shows how these factors influence EFL learners majoring in English Teaching and majoring in Modern Languages at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador.

TOPIC:

The Academic, Affective and Linguistic Factors that Influence the Level of English Achieved by EFL Learners majoring in the B.A. in English Teaching Option and the B.A. in Modern Languages Specialization in French and English at the Foreign Languages Department in the University of El Salvador.

2.1. RESEARCH QUESTION:

What are the academic, affective, and linguistic factors that influence the level of English achieved by EFL learners majoring in the B.A. in English Teaching Option and the B.A. in Modern Languages Specialization in French and English at the Foreign Languages Department in the University of El Salvador?

2.2. OBJECTIVES:

2.2.1 General objective

To analyze the academic, affective, and linguistic factors that influence the level of English achieved by EFL learners majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages of the Foreign Languages Department at The University of El Salvador.

2.2.2 Specific objectives

- To identify the academic, affective, and linguistic factors that influence EFL learners majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages of the Foreign Languages Department at The University of El Salvador to learn English as a foreign language.

- To determine how these factors influence EFL learners' English proficiency majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages of the Foreign Languages Department in The University of El Salvador.

-To describe the level of English proficiency achieved by EFL learners majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages of the Foreign Languages Department at The University of El Salvador.

2.3. SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS

1. To what extent do affective factors influence students' majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages at the Foreign Languages Department at The University of El Salvador, English language development while learning English as a foreign language?
2. Do academic factors play an important role to develop English proficiency in students majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador?
3. Are students reaching a good level of English when majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages at the Foreign Languages Department at The University of El Salvador?

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

HISTORY OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT AT UES

The Foreign Languages Department that we know today was created in 1948 as a language school for the teaching of English and French as a service to the university in general. In 1956, it was recognized as a Department, and it started with the administration of the major Technician in English-Spanish Translation, offered for 12 years, (Salazar, 2012). In 1973, the Consejo Superior Universitario (CSU) approved the curricula of the English Teaching program in Education for High School for the Teaching of the English Language, and the Bachelor in the English Language, which were ratified in 1977 and modified in 1993 and 1999 (a new plan was offered: a B.A. in English with an emphasis in Teaching) In 1998, the Master's in Translation English / Spanish, Spanish / English, is offered for the first time, and the English Teaching for Middle School Basic Education and High School program, Plan MINED is opened as well. In 2002, the Foreign Languages Department began to serve the Bachelor in Modern Languages.

3.1 LEARNING AND ACQUISITION THEORIES.

Learning English as a foreign language entails a number of difficulties for most of the students. Hence, several theories have been written about the challenge students deal with while aiming to reach higher levels of proficiency. The purpose of the second language learning and acquisition theories has been to study the process of language acquisition and language learning. According to Krashen (1988), there are two independent systems of foreign language performance: “the acquired system and the learned system. Acquisition is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. The “learned system” is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge about the language, for example, knowledge of grammar rules” (as cited in Schütz, 1998).

Second Languages Acquisition and Learning.

There is a distinction between learning and acquisition. The acquisition means how language ability is developed in a natural way in order to use it; while learning is how knowledge is compiled by a learner such as a vocabulary, grammar features, etc. of a language in a conscious way (Yule, 2010). This is a complex distinction that needs to be elaborated. Krashen (1983) stated the difference between acquisition and learning as two “different and independent ways of developing ability in a second language”. And according to Krashen, the acquisition is more important than learning.

The monitor model

The monitor hypothesis

This theory says that a learner learned system acts as a monitor to what they are producing. So, in this way, the learner internally scans for errors and uses that system to make corrections. It is about how acquisition and learning are related in order to dominate the learner's performance. The principal function of the monitor is to plan, edit, and correct; this means that the learner has enough time to focus and think about the correct use of already known rules (Krashen, 1988). But, the role of the monitor should be minor since there is no clear evidence to show "monitor" use.

The natural order hypothesis.

This theory explains how grammatical rules are learned in a natural way at early stages depending on the context the learners are exposed to, Krashen (Dulay and Burt, 1974.) It is based on the idea that rules and language are acquired in a predictable order. For instance, "in English, some features, such as third-person "-s" ("he runs") are easy to teach in a classroom setting, but are not typically fully acquired until the later stages of language acquisition" (Smith, 2016). Moreover, Krashen (1988) points out that the most important thing about learning is the acquisition of the language not the order of grammatical rules that a program requires, therefore, a syllabus should not be based on the Natural Order Hypothesis.

The Input Hypothesis.

According to this hypothesis, learners acquire language only in one way, that is by receiving “comprehensible input” (input a bit beyond our current level of understanding), by listening or reading for meaning. This hypothesis is intended to expose a learner in a way in which he/she acquires a foreign language by receiving an input one step beyond his/her level, this theory is well-known as the “I+1” hypothesis. In addition, The Input Hypothesis also mentions that meaning goes first and then structures are acquired. The Input Hypothesis is only concerned with 'acquisition', not 'learning' (Krashen, 1988).

The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

As mentioned previously, Krashen's hypothesis (1988) deals with the named affective factors which are motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. When students feel anxious, low self-esteem, and lack motivation they cannot succeed in the acquisition of a second language because the affective filter is high and when this happens, a mental block prevents comprehensible input for the learner. Thus, he states that in order to have a successful second language acquisition is essential for the learner to feel high motivation as well as self-confidence, and a low level of anxiety; in order to be able to learn effectively, the learner should feel comfortable in the learning environment.

3.2.1 INFLUENCING FACTORS IN THE LEVEL OF ENGLISH ACHIEVED

Language is essential for communication and when learning English as a foreign language there is a huge barrier that hinders accurate communication. Besides, students' aptitudes, cognitive style, motivation, age, personality and the level of English reached are outstanding factors to be considered in the process of learning a foreign language successfully. In fact, some factors can be identified influencing this learning process such as academic, affective, and linguistic factors which play an important role as well as that of identifying the level of English students achieved by using the Common European Framework of References for Languages.

3.2 ACADEMIC FACTORS

The human brain is an unlimited capacity processor because it is able to focus on many activities at the same time. If a human's mind concentrates too much on correctness it may cause a lack of learning (as cited in Derakhshan, 2016). However, some language learners may accomplish their goals because of their persistence and hard work to reach them. There are many factors influencing learners in a foreign language context, and GPA (Grade Point Average) is a very important factor in the process of second language learning. Moreover, Crow & Crow, 1969 noted that academic achievement plays a very important role not only in education but also in the learning process.

The academic background of EFL learners has a relationship with the social context in which they are immersed when learning English as a foreign language because of their socio-economic status (SES), (Pishghadam, 2011). Willingham, 2019, said that when learners have previous knowledge and they use it in classes it's expected for them to learn in a simple way. The social context depends on some aspects such as the socio-economic status and the academic education of the learners' parents. Learners of lower socioeconomic status have limited opportunities to achieve academic success because of their parents' involvement in their education and their few resources to access different information such as the internet, books, dictionaries that are not enough as is expected (Goto, 2013).

Moreover, there are few studies about SES in the development of EFL learners in the country. However, in the few studies, it has been found out that parents' educational achievement is highly correlated to the academic background of the students, and this is in accordance with what Butler, 2013, noted. Learners' access to different goods (such as Internet, computer, previous English, money, and financial support) and their relationships with people can influence how they learn a new language (as cited in Montero, Chavez, and Alvarado, 2014). Pishghadam (2011) claims that teachers have to reinforce instructions to be understood over social class (as cited in Montero, Chavez, and Alvarado, 2014). Also, Pishghadam said that those learners who have access to different resource and relationships can be more successful in the development of their education (as cited in Montero, Chavez, and Alvarado, 2014). Arika (2011) points out that students with higher economic status have higher academic achievement because their parents can afford all educational expenses (as cited in Montero, Chavez, and Alvarado, 2014).

Equally important, are the study habits which have a strong impact on learners' success, As Palm suggested (2008), it is a very good idea that students dedicate a minimum of three hours out of class for every hour spent in class. She also claimed that a student must have a special place to study with plenty of room to work. Pogue (2020) said that a student should possess, firstly, an acceptable study environment, a good desk, a comfortable chair, an appropriate illumination, a comfortable room, and a peaceful atmosphere. That implies for learners to take out all types of distractions. After that, the learner should have an overview of the task before starting to work.

Beginning with the most difficult task or exercises meanwhile, the senses get into the topic under study. Finally, “study habits are said to be improving because of the advent and wide use of the Internet, hypertext, and multimedia resources which greatly affects the Study Habits” (Liu, 2005).

To conclude, there are always factors influencing EFL learners in their process of learning such as GPA, academic background, socio-economic status, and study habits all of these factors are related to the language learning process but success may be determined by students ‘persistence and hard work.

3.3 AFFECTIVE FACTORS

Performing in public is one of the most difficult parts for EFL learners because the affective side may lead them to success or fail in their process. Krashen in 1982, as cited in Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego (2018), said that the affective side is an important part to be successful in learning a second language taking into account three factors: attitude, motivation, and personality. Moreover, there are other affective factors to take into account such as anxiety, shyness, lack of interest, self-esteem, and many others (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Ellis, as cited in Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego (2018), pointed out that students' attitudes were identified as an important factor in the student learning process which is formed by social factors (1994). Furthermore, he expressed that learners could face negative or positive attitudes when boosting learning. Positive attitudes let students be able to perform in the foreign language with native speakers since they show interest in the countries where English is spoken. On the contrary, students that show negative attitudes may not improve in the language since they do not look to be interested in their learning (1994). Also, as cited in Hernandez, Salazar, and Villanueva (2018), James Lantolf pointed out that students' attitudes when learning a foreign language can be influenced by their motives, beliefs, and how much they spend in their learning process (2000).

Additionally, the most common affective factor according to Arnold & Brown (as cited in Bhattacharya, 2017) that interferes with the development of learning is anxiety. Scovel (1978), in educational psychology, anxiety is associated with uneasiness,

frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, and worry (as cited in Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego, 2018). This occurs when the learner at the moment of performing in public gets lost and starts thinking about making mistakes or failing when speaking in the target language. This situation is more common in adults rather than children because they are more willing about being judged by others (Selvia, 2018).

A study made by Aceituno, Melara, and Serpas (2008), showed that anxiety is the most influencing factor when performing orally because it becomes an obstacle when speaking, making learners have difficulties expressing their ideas correctly. Some symptoms that appear when performing in the second language and can make students fail are fear, worry, nervousness, sweat, lose eye contact, and tongue-tied (Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego, 2018).

Furthermore, Bhattacharya (2017), said that some learners are shy to perform which block the process of learning; this entails that extroverted learners look to dominate the shyness one in this type of classes. On the other hand, for students to perform better there is the other factor “motivation” that on the whole with the role of the teacher may help learners. According to Aceituno (2008), motivation is definitely an important factor when learning for students to get more opportunities to become successful in the process (as cited in Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego, 2018).

Finally, Walker, as cited in Hernandez, Salazar, and Villanueva (2018), said that motivation is the factor that made people take decisions to continue doing something

(2011). The teachers can make students aware that making mistakes is part of the process of learning, giving them time and equal attention for them to be motivated to speak the language with confidence. A research made in 2010 by Palacios, Bonilla, and Najera pointed out that motivation is important in the learning of a foreign language, so in their study, the sample showed to have a high level of motivation to learn (Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego, 2018).

3.4 LINGUISTIC FACTORS

Learners' English proficiency has to do with the correct use of words and structures (Selvia, 2018). Some important linguistics factors are pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary which are needed to produce language in a determined context (Hammer, 2002). Automaticity and interlanguage are the other two linguistic factors important to mention in this study. Pronunciation: According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary pronunciation is "the act or manner of pronouncing something." Grammar: According to Yule (2010) "grammar is the process of describing the structure of phrases and sentences in such a way we account for all the grammatical sequences in a language and rule out all the ungrammatical sequences." Vocabulary: According to the Cambridge dictionary vocabulary is "all the words that exist in a particular language." Language learners need to recognize the areas of knowledge that acquiring English involves such as the mechanics, which involves vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, which means using the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation. According to Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (2010), "automaticity is the ability to use a language using automatic processing." Likewise, vocabulary, and pronunciation are factors that affect learners; as cited in Hernandez, Regalado, and Vasquez, (2017).

To begin with, as cited in Guardado, Romero, and León (2018), Schmitt in 2000, said that the knowledge of vocabulary in learning is essential for communication. Moreover, Barra (1995) recommended students get sufficient vocabulary knowledge in order to understand what they read and listen to. Additionally, Nation (2001)

published that language use and the knowledge of vocabulary have a relationship, they complement each other.

As cited in Flamenco, Avalos, and Cabezas (2010), Corder said “Errors are believed to be an indicator of learners' stages in their target language development from the errors that learners commit, one can determine their level of mastery of the language system” (1967). In addition, Brown said that children learn a language automatically because they do not think about it (2000). For instance, when learning a foreign language is not recommended to think too much about it because this interferes with the process of automaticity when learning a language.

In the same way, children progress in their native language in stages, adults too in the target language in a systematic or semi-systematic progress to fulfill their competence. This is called interlanguage in which learners need feedback from others to have a successful development of the language (Brown, 2000). When it comes to EFL students the hard part begins at the moment of the practice. When students want to show their communicative competence in the target language, it is difficult to do it outside the classroom. Even in a classroom full of EFL learners, students tend to feel insecure at the moment of speaking because of the fear of making some pronunciation or grammatical mistakes in front of other students and of course, teachers.

As reported by Oliva, Hernandez, and Salazar (2008), pronunciation is one of the most essential parts of learning a language since it is taught from the very beginning

of the process. Even though students face a hard time trying to improve this skill, it is still laborious for them to successfully dominate it. as explained by Adult Migrant English Program Research Centre (AMEP, 2002), Students with a good pronunciation even if they make grammatical mistakes, can be better understood than those with a bad pronunciation.

In addition, the research also shows that specialized subjects related to linguistics are required in order to enhance students' pronunciation proficiency. There are no advanced courses in English pronunciation into the study plan of the FLD and that is a big problem for students because there aren't any other spaces where they can improve this. And is essential especially because English is studied in a non-English environment. (Oliva, Hernandez, and Salazar, 2008).

3.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ACADEMIC, AFFECTIVE, AND LINGUISTIC FACTORS AND CEFR.

Since affective, academic, and linguistic factors are strongly related with the learning of a foreign language, there is a necessity to establish the language learning proficiency that students achieve during their learning process which will be presented later in the report. Hence, to measure the level of English of EFL learners the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is the most recognized standardized scale used worldwide. The CEFR not only measures the level of English but also describes in an understandable manner what learners need to do in order to use the language in a communicative way and what skill they have to master to have a good performance to communicate in a foreign language. Besides, it is well known that EFL students learn in different ways and might develop some skills better than others. For instance, one student can be good at writing, but not good at speaking.

Understanding the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is a general guide that lists the levels of English that students reach during the process of learning a foreign language (Principles of Good Practice, 2011). The CEFR is used to elaborate workbooks, textbooks, tests, and curriculum designs since it describes the stages of learning in which the students' progress (Council of Europe, 2001). Being that the CEFR illustrates language learners' ability in terms of speaking, reading, listening, and writing at six reference levels.

These six levels are named as follows:

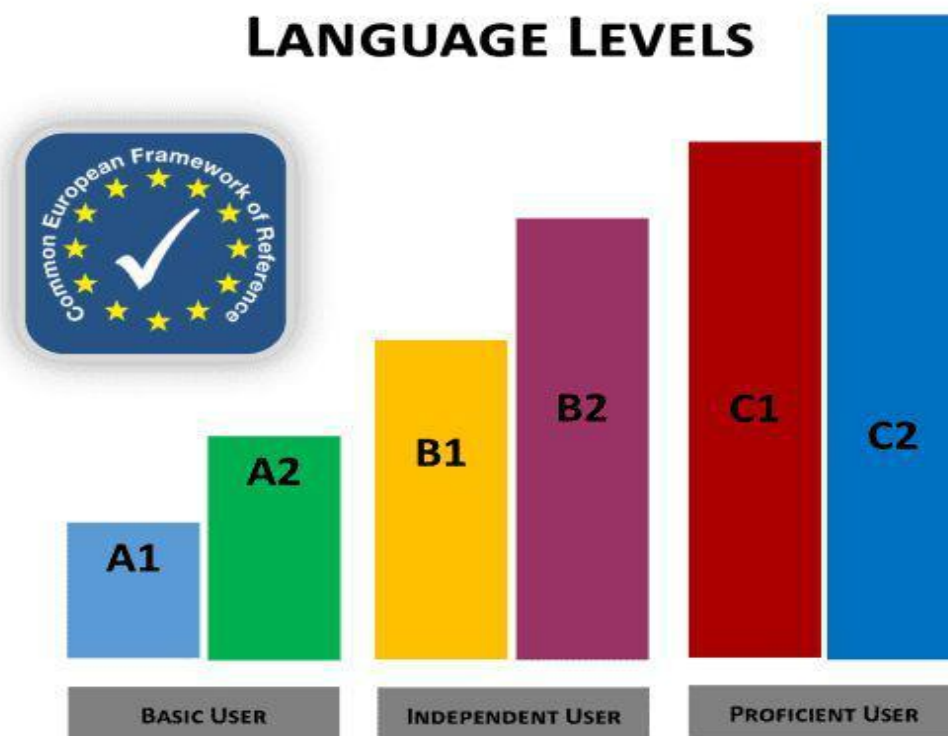


Table taken from: Common Reference Levels: global scale from Chapter 3 of the CEFR (2001a:24)

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

4. METHODOLOGY

This bibliographical research is conducted based on the qualitative method using content analysis as the main technique by consulting the different graduation Works and available literature related to our main topic. The main objective is to analyze the academic, affective, and linguistic factors that influence the level of English achieved by EFL learners majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages of the Foreign Languages Department at The University of El Salvador.

The purpose of bibliographical research is to get detailed and relevant information of the already existing literature about a research problem since a responsible investigation consists of understanding other studies (authors). The methodology of bibliographical research derives from three purposes: first to provide an analytical record of a real book with the goal of having authentic sources. Second, to implement a logical and systematic investigation of tangible material that helps with the judgment of the consulted sources. Finally, another purpose of the bibliographical research is to focus on both literature and published information from reliable authors to collect accurate data (Eaton, 2018).

The process to collect the information is through gathering general resources related to the topic under investigation, then separate them into the specific and useful information such as books, thesis, journals, articles and websites. In addition, to select the topic, the team looks for a real problem that affects EFL learners from FLD at the University of El Salvador. Finally, to analyze the information the team has considered

previous studies from the FLD at the University of El Salvador to support the literature obtained from this investigation.

This chapter presents the analysis of the literature consulted through the whole process which was classified in qualitative data in order to discover and explain the academic, affective and linguistics factors that influence the level of English achieved by EFL learners majoring in the B.A. in English Teaching Option and the B.A. in Modern Languages Specialization in French and English at the Foreign Languages Department in the University of El Salvador. The current study follows these steps:

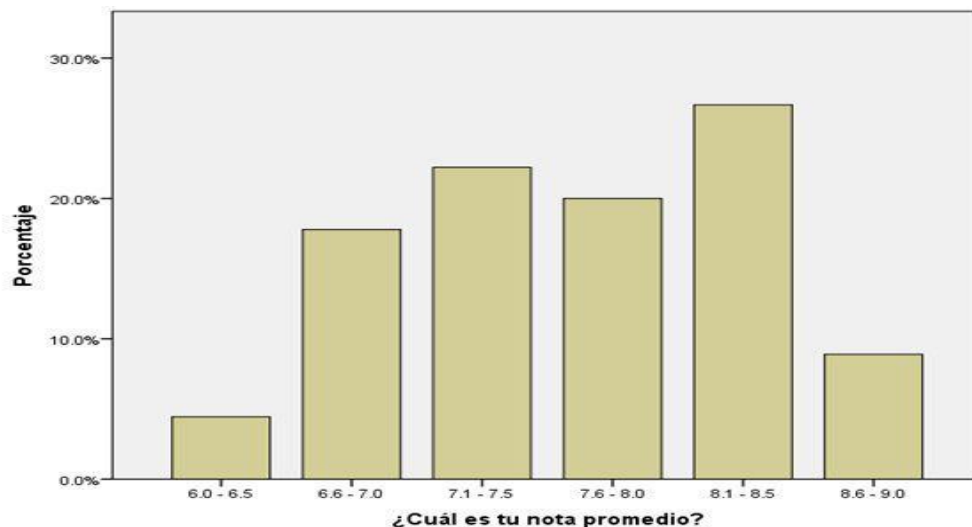
- Collecting information from books, journals, thesis, articles, and websites.
- Classifying the primary and secondary sources.
- Analyzing the information related to the topic.
- Processing the information.
- Obtaining the data through graphs and tables taken from previous studies.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from other studies, the researchers sought into the academic, affective, and linguistic factors that influence the level of English achieved by EFL learners at The University of El Salvador. Graphs and tables are taken from previous studies to have a visual helper so that the understanding of the phenomenon studied is given as clear as possible.

ACADEMIC FACTORS

GPA

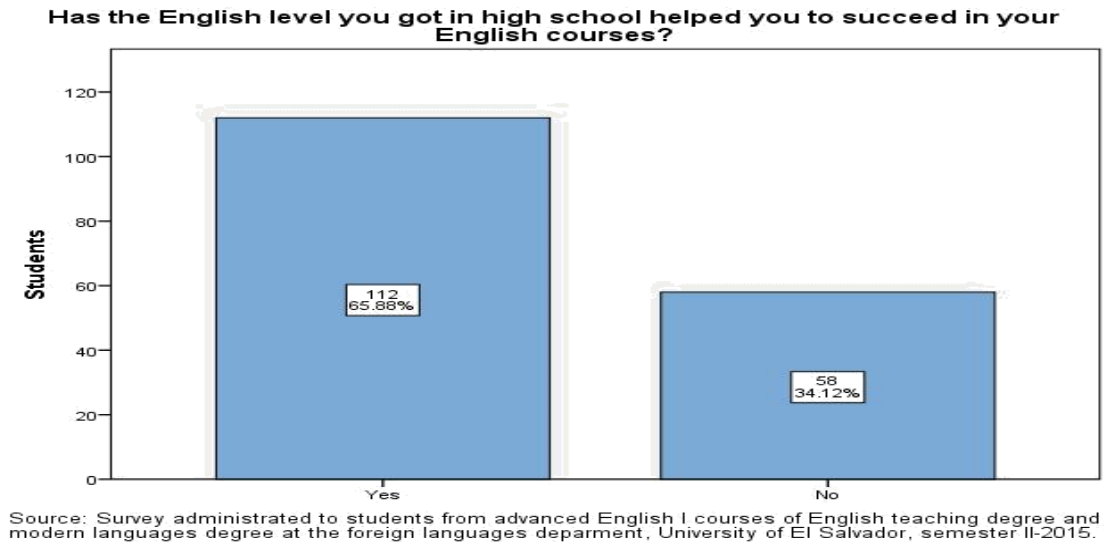


Taken from: Cabrera, Gonzalez, and Palacios, 2013.

Crow & Crow (1969), stated that academic achievement plays a very important role not only in education but also in the learning process. A study made by Cabrera, Gonzalez, and Palacios (2013), showed that the majority of students in their third year have a grade point average (GPA) between 6.1 and 7.5, and a significant minority of

36 % of students got between 8.1 and 8.5. It is essential to point out that these ideas were taken as general statistics that do not represent one specific major. On the contrary, according to the study carried out by De Leon, Ortiz, and Salguero (2016), and the information they collected, demonstrated that most of the students 75.88% have a satisfactory GPA above 7.0, this means that most of the students according to both studies reach an average GPA around; 7 for instance, it can be said that students have a decent English language level.

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND



Taken from: De León, Ortiz, and Salguero, 2016.

According to the theory related to students' academic background, when learners have previous knowledge and they use it in classes it is expected for them to learn in a simple way (Willingham, 2019). Hence, De León, Ortiz, and Salguero, (2016) demonstrated with the graph that 65.88% of the students seem to be helped by previous knowledge acquired in high school. An additional study made by Escobar, Lopez, and Ramirez (2019), showed that a substantial percentage of 54.32% students who had already studied English had a better performance in the learning process.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Table No. 5.1: Study population by CGPA obtained and origin of the financial tuition

GPA (Ranges)	My parents		Myself		Scholarship		Shared Tuition		Others		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
6.00 – 6.99	2	3.51%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.75%	0	0.0%	3	5.26%
7.00 – 7.99	13	22.81%	11	19.30%	0	0.0%	1	1.75%	1	1.75%	26	45.63%
Equal or higher than 8.00	14	24.56%	8	14.03%	1	1.75%	3	5.26%	2	3.51%	28	49.14%
Total	29	50.88%	19	33.33%	1	1.75%	5	8.77%	3	5.26%	57	100.0%

Source: Academic Record provided by 57 respondents at the end of the semester I- 2018.

Taken from: Escobar, Lopez, and Ramirez, 2019.

Arika (2011), points out that students with higher economic status have higher academic achievement because their parents can afford all educational expenses as cited in Montero, Chavez, and Alvarado (2014). Based on a study made by Escobar, Lopez, and Ramirez (2019) showed that 47.37% of students whose studies are afforded just by their parents reach a GPA higher than seven. It can be inferred that those students whose parents have the possibilities to support their children's expenses obtained a better academic achievement. Likewise, a study made by De León, Ortiz, and Salguero (2016) showed that one group of 28 students with high socioeconomic status, 25 of them had higher proficiency language level than the rest of their partners.

STUDY HABITS

Table No. 9: Study population by CGPA and daily hours dedicated to study.

CGPA (Ranges)	Less than 1 hour		Between 1 - 2 hours		More than 2 hours		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
6.00 - 6.99	0	0.0%	1	1.75%	2	3.51%	3	5.62%
7.00 - 7.99	6	10.53%	5	8.77%	15	26.32%	26	45.63%
Equal or higher than 8.00	1	1.75%	8	14.04%	19	33.33%	28	49.14%
Total	7	12.28%	14	24.56%	36	63.16%	57	100%

Taken from: Escobar, Lopez, and Ramirez, 2019.

As Palm suggested (2008), it is a very good idea that students dedicate a minimum of three hours out of class for every hour spent in class. A study made by Escobar, Lopez, and Ramirez (2019) showed that a considerable number of students 59.65% who spend more than 2 hours studying out of the classroom are the ones who reach better grades. In another research made by Cabrera, Gonzalez, and Palacios (2013), it was found out that students practice different study habits some of them study for their exams and the other academic tasks weeks in advance, and some others check their notes every day so that they keep their new knowledge activated. For these students, it is a matter of keeping reading and practicing every day.

AFFECTIVE FACTORS

Attitude

Q8: I do not mind making mistakes when I am in Classes						
				Table 2.8		
Choice	English Language Teaching Students	Percentage	Modern Languages Students	Percentage	ML and ELT Global Students	Global Percentage
Strongly Disagree	4	10%	3	12%	7	8%
Disagree	11	28%	21	37%	32	37%
Neutral	11	28%	15	31%	26	29%
Agree	9	23%	9	18%	18	20%
Strongly Agree	4	10%	1	2%	5	6%
Total	39	100%	49	100%	88	100%

Taken from: Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego, 2018.

As stated by James Lantolf, students' attitudes when learning a foreign language can be influenced by their motives, beliefs, and how much they spend on their learning process (2000). Based on a study made by Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego (2018), it can be identified that the majority of students 74% of both majors have a positive attitude towards making mistakes when speaking English since they are aware that making mistakes is part of the process of learning. Moreover, in a study carried out by Palacios, Bonilla, and Najera (2011) it was shown that in a sample of 37 students from the FLD 32 of them had a positive attitude towards being corrected when making mistakes since they know that being corrected is part of their improvement. On the contrary, the remaining percentage of the sample felt uncomfortable about being corrected.

ANXIETY

Q4: I get nervous when speaking in English in front of my classmates Table2.4						
Choice	English Language Teaching students	Percentage	Modern Languages students	percentage	ML and ELT Global Students	Global Percentage
Never	6	15%	8	16%	14	16%
Rarely	15	38%	9	18%	24	27%
Sometimes	9	23%	22	45%	31	35%
Often	4	10%	6	12%	10	12%
Always	5	13%	4	8%	9	10%
Tot	39	100%	49	100%	88	100%

Taken from: Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego, 2018.

A study made by Aceituno, Melara, and Serpas (2008), showed that anxiety is the most influencing factor when performing orally because it becomes an obstacle when speaking, learners have difficulties to express their ideas correctly. Consequently, with the data collected by Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego (2018), it can be assumed that 78% of the students have not felt nervous when speaking English in front of their classmates and that is strongly related to anxiety. Additionally, in another research made by Palacios, Bonilla, and Najera in 2011 it was found out that the majority of the students (a significant 43%) from the sample under study experienced anxiety in some situations when performing in the foreign language, this made them to be incapable of producing in the target language.

SHYNESS

Q9: I feel embarrassed to participate in classes.			Table 2.9			
Choice	English Language Teaching Students	Percentage	Modern Languages Students	Percentage	ML and ELT Global Students	Global Percentage
Strongly Disagree	8	21%	13	27%	21	24%
Disagree	15	38%	18	37%	33	37%
Neutral	8	21%	12	24%	20	23%
Agree	7	18%	5	10%	12	14%
Strongly Agree	1	3%	1	2%	2	2%
Total	39	100%	49	100%	88	100%

Table taken from: Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego, 2018.

Bhattacharya (2017) said that learners who are shy to perform, whose learning process is blocked, entails that extroverted learners look to dominate the shyness one in this type of classes. According to Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego (2018), only 16% of students from both majors felt embarrassed when participating in classes. Hence, the majority of the students felt confident by the time to participate. On the other hand, in a study conducted by Palacios, Bonilla, and Najera (2011) it was demonstrated that 26 of the students from a sample of 37, feel embarrassed when performing orally that means the majority, found themselves embarrassed or shy in certain situations when performing in English.

MOTIVATION

Q17: I do not feel motivated to attend classes				Table 2.17		
Choice	English Language Teaching Students	Percentage	Modern Languages Students	Percentage	ML and ELT Global Students	Global Percentage
Strongly Disagree	4	10%	6	12%	10	11%
Disagree	9	23%	14	29%	23	26%
Neutral	12	31%	16	33%	28	32%
Agree	9	23%	10	20%	19	22%
Strongly Agree	5	13%	3	6%	8	9%
Total	39	100%	49	100%	88	100%

Table taken from: Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego, 2018.

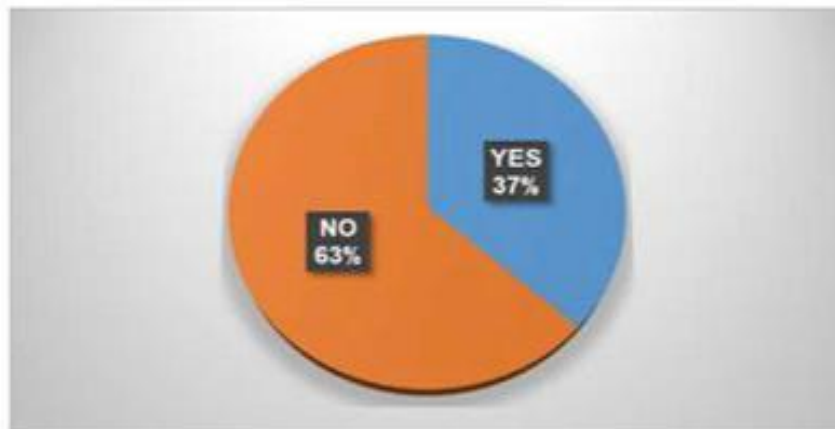
As cited in Hernandez, Salazar, and Villanueva (2018), Walker said that motivation is the factor that made people take decisions to continue doing something (2011). According to Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego (2018). Most of the students 69% from FLD felt motivated to attend classes which can be related to the fact that they are willing to improve their language level. Another study made by Palacios, Bonilla, and Najera in 2011, presented the motives students from its sample had to study in the FLD, and the majority of them according to the data collected were motivated to study there in order to speak other languages and know about other cultures where English is spoken.

LINGUISTIC FACTORS

Vocabulary

GRAPH N° 6, QUESTION 5

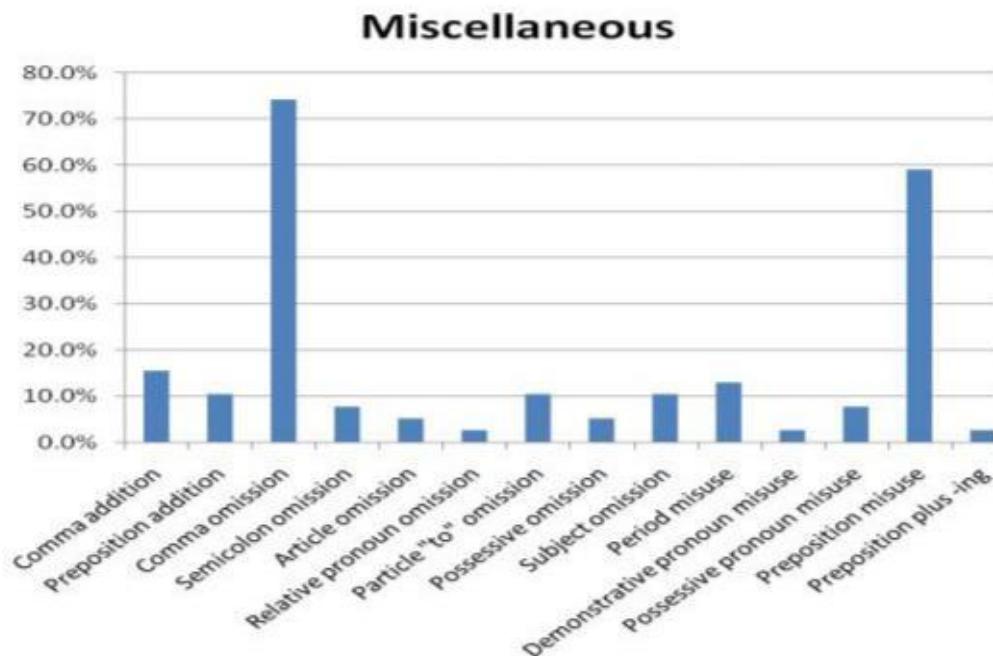
Do you consider that learning vocabulary is something difficult?



Taken from: Guardado, Romero, and León, 2018.

As cited in Guardado, Romero, and León (2018), Schmitt in 2000, said that the knowledge of vocabulary in learning is essential for communication. Additionally, Nation in 2001 published that language use and the knowledge of vocabulary have a relationship, they complement each other. Based on a study made by Guardado, Romero, and León, (2018) the majority of the students agreed that learning vocabulary plays an outstanding role when communicating.

Grammar



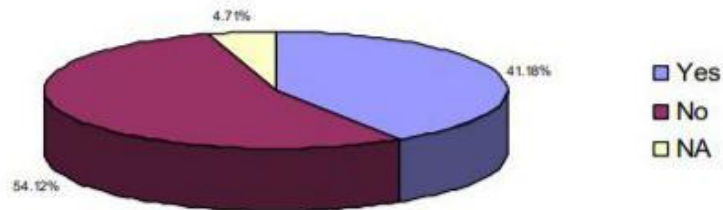
Taken from: Flamenco, Avalos, and Cabezas, 2010.

As cited in Flamenco, Avalos, and Cabezas (2010), in accordance with Corder's concepts "errors are believed to be an indicator of learners' stages in their target language development. From the errors that learners have, one can determine their level of mastery of the language system". During Flamenco, Avalos, and Cabeza's research different students' papers were identified with a set of errors. Some of them interfere with communication others do not, but they show the poor knowledge on grammar students have. In the previous graph, different kinds of errors are presented that may affect the sense of the message in some way, but not the complete meaning. Here the highest percentage is for the comma omission (74.4%), followed by misuse of prepositions (59.0%).

Phonetics

6.2.9. Graphic 9. Eighth question.

8. Are all the phonetic symbols difficult for you?

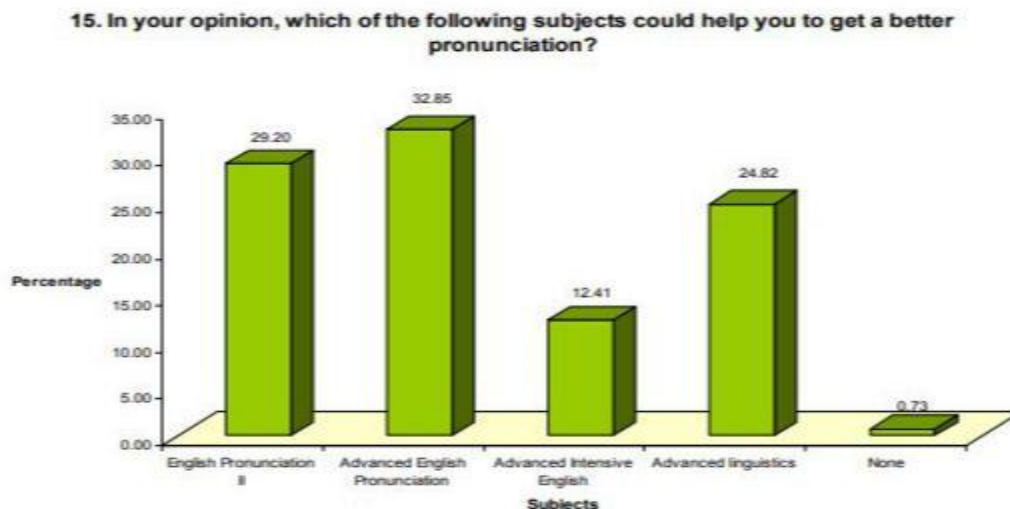


Taken from: Oliva, Hernandez, and Salazar, 2008.

Oliva, Hernandez, and Salazar (2008), stated that “phonetics seems to be troublesome for students. They mentioned that “lack of explanation” of the phonetic symbols results in a bad pronunciation most of the students have”. According to the next graph, a considerable percentage of students say that they do not find phonetics symbols difficult 54.12%. However, an important percentage 41.18% of students admit they find these symbols troublesome.

Pronunciation

6.2.19. Graphic 19. Fifteenth question.



Taken from: Oliva, Hernandez, and Salazar, 2008.

As claimed by Oliva, Hernandez, and Salazar (2008), the research also shows that specialized subjects related to linguistics are required in order to enhance students' pronunciation proficiency. There are no advanced courses in English pronunciation into the study plan of the FLD and that is a big problem for students because there aren't any other spaces where they can improve this. And it is essential because English is studied in a non-English environment. The graph shows that students from the FLD consider pronunciation as an important subject, therefore, other subjects specifically to deal with pronunciation are needed.

STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEVEL

English Language Teaching

Level	ELT	%	Global %
C2	3	8%	49%
C1	16	41%	
B2	17	44%	49%
B1	2	5%	
A2	1	2%	2%
A1	0	0%	
Total	39	100%	

Modern Languages

Level	ML	%	Global %
C2	11	22%	67%
C1	22	45%	
B2	12	25%	31%
B1	3	6%	
A2	1	2%	2%
A1	0	0%	
Total	49	100%	

Table taken from: Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego, 2018.

“What is the English proficiency level that students from the B.A. in English Teaching Option and from the B.A. in Modern Languages Specialization in French and English students have according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEFR)?” (Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego, 2018).

According to a study carried out by Deras, Monterrosa, and Abrego (2018), the highest proficiency language level that students from English Language Teaching reach is between B2 and C1 of the CEFR. In comparison, the highest proficiency language level that students from Modern Languages have is up to C1 according to CEFR.

6. SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS ANALYSIS.

1. To what extent do affective factors influence students' majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages at the Foreign Languages Department at The University of El Salvador, English language development while learning English as a foreign language?

According to our study, it was found that several affective factors influence positively and negatively students' performance which are attitude, anxiety, shyness, and motivation at the Foreign Languages Department of The University of El Salvador. Most of the students have a positive attitude towards learning, this means that this factor influences them positively. Anxiety also influences them positively being that the majority of students said that they do not feel nervous when performing in English. Moreover, according to the data collected from other studies, the majority of students from the researches consulted shyness influences them negatively since they found themselves embarrassed or shy in certain situations. Finally, the last factor, which is motivation, showed that it influences most of the students positively due to the fact that they are more willing to improve their language proficiency.

2. Do academic factors play an important role to develop English proficiency in students majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador?

There are different academic factors that play an important role in the process of learning a new language. In this study and according to the collected data; from

other studies there are four academic factors that influence students at the Foreign Languages Department, they are: GPA, academic background, socioeconomic status, and study habits. First of all, it was found that the majority of students at the FLD reach GPA between 6.1 and 7.5. Moreover, related to academic background the data collected demonstrated that previous knowledge of the language helps students to have a better performance in the learning process. Additionally, it was found that socioeconomic status influences either positively or negatively, since students of higher economic status show better performance. At last, the researches related to study habits showed that students who spend more time studying on their own have better proficiency. Besides that, students have different study habits which help them to improve in the foreign language learning.

3. How do linguistic factors influence EFL learners majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages of the Foreign Languages Department at The University of El Salvador?

The investigation showed that students seem to be affected by some linguistic factors such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Throughout this research, it was noticed that for students, learning vocabulary is essential when communicating in the target language. A study made at the FLD found that 63% of the students said that learning vocabulary was not considered a difficult task. In addition, one study showed that a number of grammatical mistakes were made by students. Some of these errors affect the sense of the message some others

do not, a big percentage (74.4%) was for comma omission, followed by misuse of prepositions (59.0%). Furthermore, in a different study, students were asked for a different subject that might help them improve their pronunciation and they suggested the ones related to advanced pronunciation.

4. Are students reaching a good level of English when majoring in English Teaching and Modern Languages at the Foreign Languages Department at The University of El Salvador?

According to the data collected from other researches, the highest proficiency language level that students from ELT reach is between B2 and C1 of the CEFR. In comparison, the highest proficiency language level that students from Modern Languages have is up to C1 according to CEFR.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Foreign Languages Department

To the Foreign Languages Department, the research team suggests creating an introductory online course in which students of low socioeconomic status can access free materials in order to reinforce their basic knowledge of the foreign language before studying the major.

Additionally, the FLD and the School of Humanities should implement workshops for students who are already studying in the Department to strengthen their skills in learning strategies, study habits, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and phonetics in order to improve their academic competencies.

The Foreign Languages Department should create permanent Conversation Clubs, tutoring not only for English but for all the subjects in order to provide students with more resources to strengthen their language skills.

The professors

The professors should continue building a good atmosphere in the classroom in order to make students feel comfortable and motivated to express their ideas and

doubts so that they can have a positive attitude towards learning and avoid anxiety in their learning process.

Professors should take advantage of strong students to help them with weak students to reinforce their language knowledge in order to create a confident environment in the classroom.

As the way they explain topics clearly, the professors should continue showing empathy with the purpose of making students feel confident to have good communication.

To students

To the students, to make good use of the resources that the Foreign Languages Department provides them with in order to improve their knowledge and grades.

Students should be self-taught and take advantage of the resources nowadays we have, such as the internet, books, blogs, websites, articles, videos, platforms, apps, etc.

Students should be aware of the importance of being a college student and the responsibility that this implies for example to attend every single class and evaluations, complete the tasks on the due date, etc.

8. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of the study, the team analyzed the information gathered from the literature in order to determine how the academic, affective, and linguistic factors influence the level of English achieved by students from both majors. Therefore, the research team concludes the following:

- According to our research question the team found out through previous investigations carried out in the FLD, that academic, linguistic, and affective factors are the ones that influence positively (study habits, positive attitude, motivation, and vocabulary.) and negatively (socioeconomic status, anxiety, and grammar) the level of English by EFL students from both majors.
- In essence, academic factors, affective factors, and linguistics factors are imperative to reach an outstanding level of English since students with a higher economic status, positive attitude, an exceptional vocabulary and grammar knowledge seem to be more successful when learning English.
- Most of the students from the B.A. in English Teaching Option and the B.A. in Modern Languages Specialization in French and English, 65%, have a GPA between 6.1 and 7.5.
- According to the literature and the data consulted from previous studies in the FLD, students who have established study habits get better grades than the ones that don't have any study habits.

- It was determined that students are truly influenced positively by affective factors being that students that show a positive attitude towards learning a language appear to have a better performance in their academic development.
- In accordance with the information and previous researches, it was found out that most of the students sometimes experience anxiety when performing in public which makes them fail at the time of expressing their ideas.
- Certainly, the level of English achieved by the students is influenced by the academic, affective, and linguistic factors. A high percentage of Modern Languages students reach a C1 level, meanwhile most students from English Language Teaching reach between B2 and C1 level (CEFR). Modern Language students seem to have a strong academic background.

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