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

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

UNDERSTANDING THE LEARNING PROCESS OF FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE BY IDENTIFYING THE LANGUAGE SKILLS THAT REPRESENT A CHALLENGE FOR THE STUDENTS AND THE LEARNING STRATEGIES THEY USE TO SUCCEED

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:
LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS MODERNAS OPCION FRANCÉS E INGLÉS

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DEDICATION

We would like to dedicate this research paper first of all to God, from whom we received the intelligence, strength and all necessary things to develop this study. Secondly, to our parents whose support has been very important on walking this way along these years at the university and for having encouraged us in everything we ever did. Finally, to our professors for whose advice and support over the time involved in this project were very enlightening.

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INTRODUCTION

This research begins with the premise that strategies are important if students are to learn effectively, and that this applies not only to language but also to any other field of learning. Therefore this study looks into the strategies used by the students from the Modern Languages Major in language skills development, so they could successfully complete their studies in French. The research used a questionnaire to gather the information to apply the quantitative measurement. Besides, this study identifies the strategy patterns by looking into the effects of some individual factors such as gender, learning style, strategy preference in skills and categories of the strategies implemented. The findings highlight the importance in strategy usage for the development of the learning of French and question its effectiveness through the learning process of the individuals. In addition, implications of the findings for the learning situation are discussed. The patterns of strategy used identified in this study may help instructors get better understanding of Modern Languages students' performance. The different strategy choices found in this approach also offer some insights into pedagogical practices that can successfully be employed in the French learning contexts.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Learning French has been a challenge for the students in the Modern Language Major. There is no single key to succeed in learning French or any other foreign language. While going to the first language class some students made the promise of trying to do the best effort in order to reach an ideal performance in managing a foreign language. But according to the results of a previous research based on "The main reasons why students from modern languages decided to change major"[1], the level of difficulty on learning French proved to be one of the main problems of students. Thus, the following queries were formulated:

The French learning process most of the time represented a problem for the students in the different areas. It was critical to find the elements into language learning process that have represented serious difficulty through their studies as well as to make a diagnosis of the students work in and outside classroom. This provided useful information to be fully acquainted with the development of the students. In addition, this helped to distinguish the factors that cause students' high or low performance. Besides, it was very important to know the way undergraduates have faced their own academic situation. Likewise, it was to determine what the learning techniques are and strategies students commonly applied in order to improve their performance. Finally, it was important to explore how learners apply the different strategies and study techniques to reach an acceptable development throughout the learning process.

Essentially, this approach aimed at emphasizing the importance of language learning strategies in French language learning. It summarizes the background of language learning strategies and techniques; it defines the concept of a language learning strategy and

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[1] Survey carried out in the Seminar course under the instruction of Professor Edgar Nicolas Ayala, 2009.

highlights the importance of knowing that everybody has his own learning style. Therefore, this research focused on the students work in and out of the classroom regarding the learning strategies implementation.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To explore the learners' performance in order to describe what they do to succeed in French learning by determining their sensory preferences and learning strategies to improve their academic outcomes

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To discover the learning style among students according to their sensory preference when learning French and suggest suitable learning strategies.

2. To identify the most difficult language skills handled by learners and suggest the learning strategies that can help them deal with their weakest areas.

3. To determine the different study techniques students have implemented to improve their performance and describe the learning strategy implementation in the Modern Language major.

4. To detect, according to students' opinion, what the better techniques are in acquiring French as a foreign language.

5. To analyze the strategy implementation by men and women to find out if there is any difference regarding to the frequency in language strategy use among them.

6. To gather the necessary data from the students and other sources to support the initial assumptions this research is based on so as to provide solid theories.

JUSTIFICATION

There are many reasons why people study foreign languages. Nowadays speaking another language can be useful to get a better job as well to study abroad. No matter the reason French is a good option if someone wants to learn a foreign language. French has become the second most frequently spoken language in the world after English. The International Organization of Francophone has 56 member states and governments, "French is spoken as a native language in more than two dozen countries". French is the only language besides English spoken on the five continents with 72-79 million native speakers and another 190 million secondary speakers making it a real possibility that speaking French will become handy practically anywhere. In addition, it is important to mention that based on the most recent survey by the Modern Languages Association (2006), French enrollments are on the rise. Clearly, it can be pointed out that today French is the language that will give people the most choices later on in their studies or life.

The Foreign Language Department (FLD) of the University of El Salvador offers the newest choice in the domain of French, which is "the Modern Languages Major" (ML), providing the opportunity of learning both English and French at the same time. This appealing program has been designed to open better opportunities for students and an avant-garde choice in the field of foreign language learning. In fact, this major has shown an increase in the demand of students that would register in the aforementioned program. Likewise, after enrolling and going through the Modern Languages Major and having noticed the difficulty on handling French in the learning process it was fundamental to research on the following issues:

i. The identification of the most common learning style basing on the students sensory preferences

ii. The learning areas which students found most difficult to handle in the course of the process

iii. The strategies students implemented to overcome academic troubles in the learning process.

This approach vis-à-vis the difficulty in the students' academic performance, peculiarly, within the four language skills and the "tools" they commonly applied to improve French learning, aimed to raise awareness about how students' academic work has been on the French Language field.

Throughout the last years, students from this major have experienced serious academic troubles concerning the four language learning areas "the skills" in the learning process. This fact maybe puzzles teachers but mainly students themselves. The reason apparently has obeyed to personal issues like the inappropriate language self-training (use of learning strategies) or on the other hand the difficulty of learning French. In a word, it was important to find out why students have faced many troubles in learning French in order to help the new generation of Modern Language students.

In this research, students identified the main reasons why they did not usually succeed in this major. For instance, there might be personal matters like aptitude that students were not aware of, which was important to know in order to succeed in any major. In addition, students should see if they have the ability to accomplish their studies. For example, the study methodologies[2] they implemented were not accurate. Once the factors that influence on the students' failure are found, teachers as well as the corresponding college authorities would help to reduce the issue.

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[2] Note: practices and procedures used by a student to learn a foreign language accurately.

In the end as students of the Foreign Language Department, we expect this research might be useful not only to generate a discussion but also to encourage everybody involved in this learning process of French to help lessen this issue and meet the students' needs.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Most people who desire to learn a new language do it because of different reasons, and it is usually done to communicate in that language. In order to learn either French or any other language accurately it is important to study a balance of the four basic language skills, reading, listening, writing and speaking, these are the main skills in learning a language. The fact of being very good at one of these skills does not mean to have a good learning level. Therefore to look into the variables such sensory preferences, learning strategies affecting language learning and skill training is a need. Furthermore, learning styles and strategies are among the main factors that help determine how well students learn a second or foreign language. This section presents an overview of all the elements involved in the process of learning a foreign language.

Learning Speaking

The speaking skill ensures the language learners to be able to communicate actively in a target language. Thus, one's eloquence in using a target language orally is greatly determined by how well students learn speaking skills. However, learning speaking is not an easy task. Students often have to face up many difficulties. For instance, not to be self-confident and being afraid of making mistakes could be some of the psychological barriers that hold the learners back from moving on in their study.

Learning Listening

Wallace (2004) states "*Listening skill is indispensable as it trains students to get insights and information*". The insights and information about the target languages and all its' features could help the students keep more knowledge about the language they are studying. In addition to that, some learners claim that listening helps them in speaking.

By listening to native speakers' speech, for example, the motivated learners can help themselves to speak the way natives do.

However, the students who are willing to learn can sometimes be discouraged. For some reasons they cannot listen well, some others are discouraged when native speakers start to speak uncontrollably fast. The learners start to feel that catching up is a hard mission.

Learning Writing

The author Wallace (2004) remarks "Writing is the final product of several separate acts that are hugely challenging to learn simultaneously". These acts include note-taking, making drafts, editing, etc. writing in its relation to language learning is very essential in helping the learners to acquire grammar knowledge more comprehensively. They apply all the grammar knowledge they have acquired. The problems in writing could be the most complex among the other skills. Most learners admit that writing is the hardest activity to do in learning French.

As pointed out by Wallace (2006) *"To become better writers, students may need to read good— even great—literature, that can serve as a model for their own efforts'*.

Learning Reading

Pang (2003) maintains "Reading is about understanding written text". It is important to know how reading can open the students' thought to the "new world". They understand another person's thought, and most importantly in language learning they understand the native speakers' thoughts. In addition, reading helps the learners to get grammar knowledge.

But reading is not so popular and some examples proving that learners are just too busy with other fun stuffs that reading is not considered to be a great activity. They are also discouraged by the fact that texts they are about to read are too hard. Some learners are not engaged with adequate knowledge about English or French and feel reading is useless.

Learning styles

Learning styles basically refer to how each person prefers to receive and process information. Therefore, each person has his or her own learning style. The learning styles are characterized on how people acquire and understand new knowledge and skills.

For that reason, the cognitive style, which describes how individuals acquire knowledge and processes information, is linked to his/her learning style, being the cognitive style the way students actually process and retain the information about a new skill or knowledge they are given.

Boiling down, learning styles are defined as a certain specified pattern of behavior and/or performance, according to which the individual takes in new information and develops new skills, and the process by which the individual retains new information or new skills. Students may present troubles while processing information, trying to learn or be assessed if the method used is not comfortable to them.

Language learning styles and strategies are two of the most important factors that determine how well students learn a second or foreign language. A foreign language is any language learned after the first language or mother tongue. Mother tongue is the language learned naturally as a child and it is the main vehicle of every day communication. On the other hand, a foreign language is to be understood in this research as a language studied in an environment where it is not the primary vehicle for daily interaction and where input is restricted. Following the tradition in that field, the term "L2" is used in this research to refer to either a second or a foreign language.

Throughout the different researches focus on foreign language learning, the different learning styles can not be emphatically classified as ¨present or absent¨, as in this research. Learning styles generally function either on continuous or on multiple way and this can be determined by diverse factors concerning personality, environment, goals, etc. For example, a person could be more extraverted than introverted, or more closure-oriented than open, or equally visual and auditory but with lesser kinesthetic and tactile involvement. Ehrman and Oxford (1990) cited 9 major style dimensions relevant but this

section discussed the aspects specifically regarding sensory preferences, which are strongly linked with foreign language learning:

Sensory Preferences

Sensory refers to ¨physical senses of touch, smell, taste, hearing and seeing¨ Then, sensory preferences can be broken down into four main areas: **visual, auditory, kinesthetic (movement-oriented), and tactile (touch-oriented**). Those sensory preferences refer to the physical, perceptual learning channels with which the student is more comfortable.

Visual students

For this type of students it is critical to ¨show¨ the aid of pictures, maps, films, slides, models, blackboards, etc. it is necessary in order to understand and to remember easily the topic studied because these students take more advantage of visual stimulation. Visual students can find very confusing a topic if they just have oral instructions without any visual back up.

Auditory students

These types of students learn through listening. They can easily perform a task and learn a topic without too much visual stimulation, their main way of learning depends on hearing and speaking. Auditory students feel comfortable with lectures, conversations or oral directions and they are good at oral exams. The auditory learners take more advantage from group discussions, verbal directions or reading aloud. However, they may have difficulty with written work.

Kinesthetic and tactile students

In this learning style the physical activity is the main factor. Students with a kinesthetic/tactile predominant learning style are considered to be natural discovery learners because they rather prefer ¨to do¨ than listen, watch or think before doing an

action. They need to be part of the activities being developed on the classroom in order to do lots of movement and enjoy working with tangible objects, collages, and flashcards. Kinesthetic students are good at chemistry experiments, acting or sports activities. They have the ability to remember things by going back in their minds and remember what their body was doing.

According to Ehrman & Oxford, the strategy usage often relates to style preferences; when left students to their own plans and if not encouraged by the teacher or forced by the lesson to use a certain set of strategies, they typically use learning strategies that reflect their basic learning styles (p 7). As shown later visual style students are used to apply cognitive and affective strategies, while move-oriented style tends to implement more memory and compensation strategies. Social and metacognitive strategies are mostly used by the auditory style, proving the influence and diversity of the learning style choice. However, teachers can actively help students "stretch" their learning styles by trying out some strategies that are outside of their primary style preferences.

Learning strategies

Learning strategies are different from learning styles. As seen previously learning styles are more like personality that influences individuals' learning. It refers to consistent and enduring tendencies or preferences within an individual. Besides learning styles are general characteristics of intellectual functioning and personality type that refer to individuals and differentiate them from someone else. On the other hand, learning strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information (Brown, 2007, p.119). Many researchers have defined "language learning strategy" as follows:

In 1983, Tarone stated a language strategy definition **"*an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language"*** (p.65).

- In 1987, Rubin defined *"language strategies as any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information."*

- In 1990, O'Malley and Chamot defined *"learning strategies are the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information."*

- Oxford indicated in 1990, *"language 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 16).

- Later on, Oxford in 1992/1993 gave a clearer definition of language learning strategies, which is *...language learning strategies -- specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability.* (p. 18)

Language learners use language learning strategies either intentionally or unconsciously when processing new information and performing tasks either in the language classroom or outside. Therefore language learning strategies are important and inescapable.

Language learning classrooms are like problem-solving environments where language learners might face new input and difficult tasks given by the instructors, so students try to find the quickest or easiest way to do what is required. (Hismanoglu, 2000, p. 2)

Background and history of language learning strategies

In the 1960s, researchers started to look into language learning strategies. During that period, research of language learning strategies was affected by the developments on

cognitive psychology a lot. Therefore, most of researchers' main concern had been on *"identifying what good language learners report they do to learn a second or foreign language"* (Hismanoglu, 2000). In 1966, Aaron Carton published the first attempt on learner strategies, *"The Method of Inference in Foreign Language Study"*. Later on, in 1970s, people's knowledge of foreign language acquisition increased. Researchers and teachers realized that there was no single research finding and method of language teaching that would lead to success in learning a foreign language. It was stated that certain language learners seemed to be successful regardless the methods or techniques of teaching used by instructors.

Therefore, researchers and teachers began to notice the importance of individual variation in language learning, that is**: personal characteristics, styles and strategies**. In the middle 70s, Rubin summarized some characteristics of good language learners and indicated that good language learners:

1. find their own way, taking charge of their learning

2. organize information about language

3. make their own opportunities for practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom

4. use memory strategies to recall what has been learned

5. make errors work for them and not against them

6. use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their first language in learning a foreign language

7. use contextual cues to help them in comprehension

8. learn to make intelligent guesses

9. learn certain tricks that help to keep conversations going

10. learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language

according to the formality of the situation (Brown, 2007, p.133)

In recent years, researchers found a shift of focus away from searching for cognitive and affective characteristics of successful learners. Some researchers implemented a socio-cultural approach that looks at learners as participants in a community of language users in "local contexts in which specific practices create possibilities for them to learn a foreign language." Fundamental to their point of view is the identity that each learner creates in a socially constructed context. As learners began to invest in their learning process, they create approaches to success (Brown, 2007, p. 133).

Characteristics of language learning strategies

Although many researchers have stated different names and definitions of language learning strategies, there is a number of basic characteristics in the generally accepted view of language learning strategies:

- They are specific actions or techniques that learners generate.

- They help students develop communicative ability.

- They help students become more self-directed in their learning.

- They are not always observable. For example, behaviors, steps, and techniques are observable, but thoughts and mental processes are unseen.

- They enhance language learning and help develop language competence in four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

- Strategies can be taught. Teachers can help students realize what strategies are suitable.

- Strategies can be changed and they are flexible. Every individual might apply different strategies based on one's age, environment, and learning task.

- Strategies are influenced by a variety of factors. For instance, motivations, goals, learning styles and some other personal factors. Moreover, teachers' expectation,

ages, genders, races are important factors, too (Lessard-Clouston, 1997, P. 2)

Classification of language learning strategies

There are many different but interrelated language learning strategies that have been categorized by many researchers. Most of them covered cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective domain. In the following passage, we discuss O'Malley and Oxford classifications of language learning strategies.

O'Malley's classification of language learning strategies (1985)

a. Metacognitive strategies

These strategies refer to executive function. Learners use metacognitive strategies for planning, learning and monitoring their production or comprehension; then they evaluate their learning after an activity is completed. The metacognitive strategies include:

- ✓ **Advanced organizers:** it involves making a comprehensive summary of the organizing principle in an anticipated learning activity.

- ✓ **Directed attention:** it means to ignore any distractor, deciding in advanced to attend in general to a learning task.

- ✓ **Selective attention:** it is to be determined to attend to specific aspects of language input that will prompt the language retention.

- ✓ **Self-management:** it implies understanding the conditions that reinforce learning, and disposing the environment to bring about such conditions.

- ✓ **Functional planning:** it is regarding planning and reviewing

linguistics components necessary to succeed an upcoming language task.

✓ **Self-monitoring:** it is correcting one's speech for suitability or accuracy in pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary.

✓ **Delayed production:** it denotes intentionally deciding to postpone speaking for learning at first through listening.

✓ **Self-evaluation:** it is about having an internal measure of accuracy; to evaluate the outcomes of one's own language learning.

b. **Cognitive strategies**

These are specific learning tasks. They are directly related to manipulation of learning material itself. The following are the most important cognitive strategies:

✓ **Repetition:** to imitate a language model by practicing and rehearsing**.**

✓ **Resourcing:** to use target language reference material.

✓ **Translation:** to use mother tongue to understand and produce the target language.

✓ **Grouping:** to classify the material to be learned based on common attributes.

✓ **Deduction:** to apply rules to produce and understand the target language.

✓ **Recombination:** to produce meaningful sentences by combining known elements in a new way.

✓ **Imagery:** to relate new information to visual stimulation.

✓ **Auditory representation:** to retain of the sound for a word or phrase.

✓ **Keyword:** this strategy can be done in 2 different ways: 1. by identifying a familiar word in the mother tongue that sounds like or otherwise resembles the new word in the target language or 2. by generating images of some relationship between the familiar word and the new word.

c. **Socioaffective strategies**

This kind of strategy is related to social-mediating activity and interaction with others. Some of the socioaffective strategies are the following:

✓ **Cooperation:** to work with one or more classmates to share information, get feedback or perform a language activity.

✓ **Question for clarification:** to ask teacher or a native speaker for repetition, paraphrasing, explanation or examples.

(Brown, 2007, P. 134-135).

Oxford's classification of language learning strategies (1990)

Oxford sees language learning strategies as "direct" and "indirect", two main groups. Direct Language learning strategies directly involve the subject matter, second/foreign language. Indirect language learning strategies are then opposite.

I. Direct strategies

a. **Memory strategies**

These strategies are used for the storage of information. There are three stages in

human beings' memory, that is, sensory memory, short-term memory and long-term memory. When people receive new information, the information will temporarily stay in sensory memory. Next, the information will be organized in short-term memory and then deleted if something is not important. Finally, the most important information will stay in long-term memory and it could be retrieved. For example, learners use pictures, actions, sounds and so on to reinforce memory to help them learn. (Oxford, 1990, p. 311) These strategies are:

✓ **Creating mental linkages**

In other words, grouping. The creation of group of words and images related in some way is the creation of mental linkages. Elaborate this association helps in the retention of new vocabulary, for example; placing new words in a context easy to remember and linked by the learner.

✓ **Applying images and sounds**

A good example of this strategy being applied is the semantic mapping; that is the graphical representation of concepts, an amazing way to extend the foreign language knowledge by displaying words in categories related to one another. This strategy implies the use of key words, also the representation of sounds in memory.

✓ **Reviewing well**

This means to create a structured review. It is important to follow an order when creating a review always creating linkages; with an organized review the learner's retention will increase.

✓ **Employing action**

It involves physical responses or sensations; the individual retains the new

knowledge by remembering the sensation when pronouncing a phrase or when doing a specific action related to what he/she has learnt.

b. Cognitive strategies

Following with Oxford classification, this group of strategies is used by learners to make sense of their learning. For instance, students can practice new sentences over and over again by saying them or writing them; to apply later the new sentences into different situations. The cognitive strategies are:

✓ **Practicing**

It basically involves repetition over and over, then practice with sounds and writing systems, continue with the usage of patterns to finally be able to make combinations.

✓ **Analyzing and reasoning**

It is about reasoning in a deductively way, it implies analyzing expressions and analyzing contrastively from mother tongue to the foreign language.

✓ **Creating structure for input and output**

This can be achieved by taking notes, those notes will need then to be summarized and also it is necessary to highlight the key information.

c. Compensation strategies

This sort of strategies is used to help learners to overcome knowledge gaps, continue their communication and support their learning. For example, students can guess the meaning of new vocabulary based on prefixes, roots or context. Learners can also use gestures, body movements, or simple vocabulary or grammar to

express themselves when they face difficulties using the target language. Compensation strategies are especially important to the learners who have low language proficiency.

    ✓ **Guessing intelligently**

That means guessing by using linguistic clues.

    ✓ **Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing**

When speaking, compensation strategies can be to change to the mother tongue in such way that the speaker uses mimes or gestures to deliver the message. When it comes to overcome writing limitations the individual can carefully select the topic to approximate the message, also the usage of synonyms is acceptable.

II. Indirect strategies

a. Metacognitive strategies

These strategies belong to indirect strategies, which do not directly involve the learning process itself. These are related to planning, arranging, focusing and evaluating students' own learning. For instance, learners tell themselves pay attention when they are listening to a conversation; students set learning goals and schedules to study so that they can improve their abilities or skills. By taking tests or exams, learners can assess their learning and find out where they need more practice. In addition, they can determine the reasons why they are either successful or unsuccessful in the learning process. (Oxford, 1990, p. 314)

✓ **Centering the learning**

It involves paying attention when studying, also the learner can overview the information and link new information with already known information. The learner can even delay the speech production to focus on listening.

✓ **Arranging and planning the learning**

It is about doing some researches about language learning, organizing the notes and new information of every lesson studied. Setting goals and objectives for each language skill. But it also implies, seeking for practice opportunities.

✓ **Evaluating learning:**

This type of strategies help students to discover the level of learning they are by doing self-evaluations.

b. **Affective strategies**

This sort of strategies enables learners to control their feelings, emotions, motivations, and attitudes toward language learning. For example, learners can take a deep breath or listen to music to lower their anxiety; students can give rewards to themselves after they complete tasks or pass tests to encourage and keep motivating themselves. (Oxford, 1990, p. 315)

✓ **Lowering anxiety**

It can be achieved by simply taking a deep breath, listen to music or laugh.

✓ **Encouraging oneself**

This is in other words, to make positive statements of oneself's progress; this includes rewarding oneself for the goals achieved.

✓ **Taking the emotional temperature**

One effective way to take the emotional temperature is by writing a language learning diary so the progress on the language learning can be checked and measured periodically. To discuss with someone else the feelings can also help when it comes to check the emotional temperature.

c. **Social strategies**

This kind of strategies is used to facilitate interaction with others and increase interaction with the target language. Students can ask questions for clarification, verification or correction to have a better understanding of the target language. Students can also work with peers or proficient users of the target language to facilitate their learning. More importantly, students can empathize with others to develop cultural understanding and become aware of others' thoughts and feelings (Hismanoglu, 2000, P. 3-4).

✓ **Asking questions**

Questions can be asked for clarification, verification or correction. Either way it is vital that the learners ask questions so he/she can increase their knowledge.

✓ **Cooperating with others**

The recommendation is to cooperate with either native speakers or proficient users of the target language always with the goal of amplifying the practice opportunities.

✓ **Empathizing with others**

When learning a foreign language it is necessary not only to develop the

basic skills as speaking, reading, writing or listening but it also involves developing cultural understanding. It is critical to study the culture of the country where the target language comes to be aware of others' thoughts and feelings.

As a conclusion, in this chapter the most important elements regarding the process of learning a foreign language have been reviewed by exploring students' sensory preferences when learning a foreign language. All these details and aspects explained will be a parameter to have a better understanding of the following chapters in this research.

HYPOTHESES

a) Individual Learning style predetermines the tendency when choosing learning strategy.

b) Students from the modern language major at UES have been using only a few learning strategies from the inventory.

c) Productive skills such as speaking and writing are considered the most difficult learning areas in the major.

d) Women implement mostly a variety of learning strategies than men.

Conceptual definition of the variables.

After making a thoroughgoing literature review the next concepts are presented to understand better the important elements including in this approach.

Learning strategies:

Learning strategies are the specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques unconsciously or intentionally used by students to enhance their own foreign language learning. These strategies are sorted in different groups depending on the nature of the function in learners' utilization.

Learning style:

Learning styles are certain specified patterns of behavior and/or performance, according to which the learner takes in new information and develops new skills, and the process by which he/she retains new information or new skills. These are grouped in sensory preferences, personality types, desired degree of generality and biological differences.

Language skills:

Language skills are the different areas that students have to learn, manage and train along the learning process of a foreign language. The four skills may be classified in two dimensions: receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing).

Operational definition of the variables

It was required to operationalize the variables so that they can be measured and expressed quantitatively. The following instruments were used to gather the important information for this research:

Learning strategies:

Questionnaire with the inventory of the different language learning strategies applied by individuals in language skill training "*Applied Language Learning*" Rebecca Oxford, 1996.

Learning style:

Administration of standardized questionnaire to explore the learners' sensory preference.

Language skills:

To Survey learners to rate information about the difficulty of training the four macro-skills in French learning "*Language Skills Development*" Carol Griffiths, 2004.

III. METHODOLOGY

- Type and level of research: **Descriptive.**

Based on the nature of the research and what it intended to fulfill, the researchers aimed to describe the learning strategies that students report as effective in the French learning process.

- Design of research: **Non-experimental-transactional - descriptive**

The development of the current research thoroughly focused on describing the students' learning strategies used in French subjects throughout the major. It also describes the incidence of strategy implementation in learners' performance and analyzes students' sensory preferences.

- Population and sample

The current study was carried out in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador during the academic year 2010. 100% of the participants in this study were fifth year students of the Modern Language Major at Universidad de El Salvador.

- Techniques and instruments to collect data

Before the formal administration of the data collection instruments, it was very important to validate the surveys in order to avoid any inconsistency in the process of gathering crucial information for the study. For that purpose, a representative sample was asked to complete a trial run. Once the instruments were validated, the surveys were handed out to be completed in two stages to avoid the fact of being boring. This was done in the students' classroom and handed back as soon as they finished. The instrument of this study involved different sections:

The instrument developed for this study was divided into five sections. The first part included the personal information (biodata).The second part was related to a self-evaluation of linguistic development in which students graded their performance in the four skills based on their individual experience in the major. The third section was designed to discover the predominant learning style amongst students regarding their perceptual preference; It contained different ways (statements) students were more comfortable when learning French. For instance "I learn best when I am shown how to do something and I have the opportunity to do it"; they chose a statement by rating from 1 to 3 the option applied most to them. Then the research team totaled to get the score and to know the learning style students are.

The fourth section had to do with the traditional four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) and the strategies that undergraduates were used to apply in skill development. Ten statements were made regarding each skill, for example "I make summaries of what I read", "I plan my writing before I start", "I listen for key words", "I plan in advance what I want to say". Students were asked to rate each statement from 1 (never) to 5 (always) according to the frequency of use. The fifth set of questions was related to the sub-categories of the strategies students applied (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social), the basic instrument for this section of language learning strategy use in the current study was the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990). It is the 50-item adapted version for speakers of other languages learning French, who were involved in the present study. The SILL is a self-scoring, paper-and-pencil survey which consists of statements such as "I review French lessons often" or "I ask questions in French" to which students were asked to respond on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The strategies included in the SILL were gathered

from an extensive literature review. Nevertheless, the SILL is still, of necessity, somewhat selective since dozens and perhaps hundreds of such strategies exist. Based on factor analyses, the SILL items were divided into sub-categories (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, social), listed previously.

- Data analysis plan

Gathered data was meticulously checked and graphically represented for getting useful insights relating to strategy use, learning style among learners and language skill performance. The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) for Microsoft Windows and EXCEL was used to complete the analysis of the collected data. Descriptive statistics, including percentages were implemented in order to investigate the demographic data. The strategy questionnaire data was examined for mean frequency of reported strategy use in skill training. The perceptual preference questionnaire was studied by verifying the total score of each student to identify important information of their learning style and to find out predominant sensory preference.

As far as possible, the SILL was administered according to the procedures outlined; as the research purpose has been explained. After the questionnaire was completed during class time, this normal classroom activity aimed at getting students to reflect on their learning and to raise awareness of strategy options. Once collected, the data from the SILL questionnaires were transferred to databases, which enabled the data to be analyzed. Several statistical procedures were followed. The data was examined for reliability over the entire questionnaire and according to the six sub-groups; average reported frequency of use was calculated across all students for each strategy category, the overall average reported frequency of strategy use and averages were examined for highly frequent use. Summing up, significant findings were presented as important facts of this research.

IV. PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

In this section the results of the study are to be presented. The facts were analyzed and scrutinized to describe how students have taken advantage of using the inventory of the strategies. Students were assessed in order to express their point of view. Most of them (52%) affirmed that the process of learning French has been very good, while a smaller part of the students (22%) said this process has been excellent, and fewer learners (17%) think the learning process was just good. Moreover, it is important to mention that students did not have a bad opinion on the French learning process.

Besides, learners have a good opinion about their own performance in the four language macro-skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking). In regards of the development in speaking, 60.86% of students affirmed to have very good level, but 34.78% of them rated it as good and 4.34% reported to use French as native speakers. Concerning writing, 52.17% of the learners stated that they have a good level handling this skill, 43.47% said to be at a very good level and only 4.34% considered to have a native management on the skill. In the case of reading, most of the individuals (86.9%) supported the idea that they have a very good ability, while 8.69% of them stated to be good in this skill and only 4.34% said that they handle this skill as native speaker. Viewing the listening skill, most of students (56.52%) declared to be very good, while 34.78% of them said to have good level and just 4.34% believed to manage this skill like native speakers.

In addition, it was researched the level of advice that learners have received about managing and improving language skills. According to the data, 61% of learners maintained to have received advice of dealing with skill training, whereas 39% did not received any kind of advice on it.

The frequency of learning strategies used in the skills among the students was explored. In reading, the strategy that students reported to use the most was "To use the dictionary to get the exact meaning" (40%); while the least used strategy was "To make summaries of what they read" (43%). In writing, students reported one strategy as the most implemented, "To think another way to express a meaning when they do not have the correct expression" (56%), and the least used strategy was "to write a diary in French" (78%). In the case of listening, learners rated "To listen carefully French native speakers' pronunciation" (70%) as the most frequently strategy used, whereas "to attend events where French language can be listened" was the least used strategy (30%). As for speaking "to use similar words when they do not know the vocabulary" was the most common strategy implemented (56%). On the other hand "to practice French with other students", "to plan in advance what they want to say" and "to seek people whom to speak with" are the strategies they have applied the least, all the above (22%). Thus, strategy implementation in every macro-skill showed the following general percentages: with the highest rate, speaking is the macro-skill in which learners applied learning strategies (27%). In contrast, writing was the macro-skill they least implemented strategies (23%). Listening and reading were the macro-skills used at an average frequency (25%).

In addition, analyzing the results based on the SILL test by strategy categories; it was found that learners of French rarely applied memory and affective strategies, (15%) each. Then, the compensation group (16%), cognitive and social (17%) each are the strategies that were not usually implemented by students, which means that students have not taken advantage of the use of the strategy repertoire in order to improve their learning of French. However, metacognitive strategies were surprisingly highly used (20%) by students; this fact showed students have consciously taken into account the organization in the management of their own learning and it was relevant to remark.

After analyzing the mean of sub-groups implementation in the SILL test, it is important to mention that men have had the highest score in all the categories, so it can be stated that male students implemented more efficiently all the strategies from the inventory than female students did. Furthermore, to be acquainted of how students learnt best, it was necessary to find out about the sensory preferences. Based on the gathered information, the main sensory preference was visual (39%). 35% of the learners was classified into the move-oriented style and only 26% of them belonged to auditory preference.

After detecting learners' learning style, the relation between sensory preference and learning strategy usage (SILL) was determined. It was discovered that move-oriented students got the highest score (3.18) in memory strategies use, so from the leaning style (sensory preference) they mostly implemented that category of strategies. In relation to cognitive strategies, visual learners had the highest average (3.38) in applying that sub-group of strategies. Concerning the compensation category, move-oriented students were the learning style that utilized this kind of strategies the most (3.20). Regarding metacognitive category, auditory learners were the ones who implemented the strategies most frequently (3.95). In reference to affective strategies, visual people got the greatest score (2.96) in using this category, and auditory learning style is the predominant (3.49) in utilizing in social strategies.

According to the gender, there were 11 (48%) male students and 12 (52%) female students. The results of this study indicated that men reported using language learning strategies (average=3.46) more frequently than women (average=3.18). In spite of the fact that these averages indicated that males were reported using language learning strategies slightly more frequently than females, the differences in strategy use according to the gender were not found to be statistically significant enough. Besides, according to the test and the overall average score on the SILL was **3.32 (**the medium mark). It is important to highlight

that as university students they should have better used the learning strategies from the inventory.
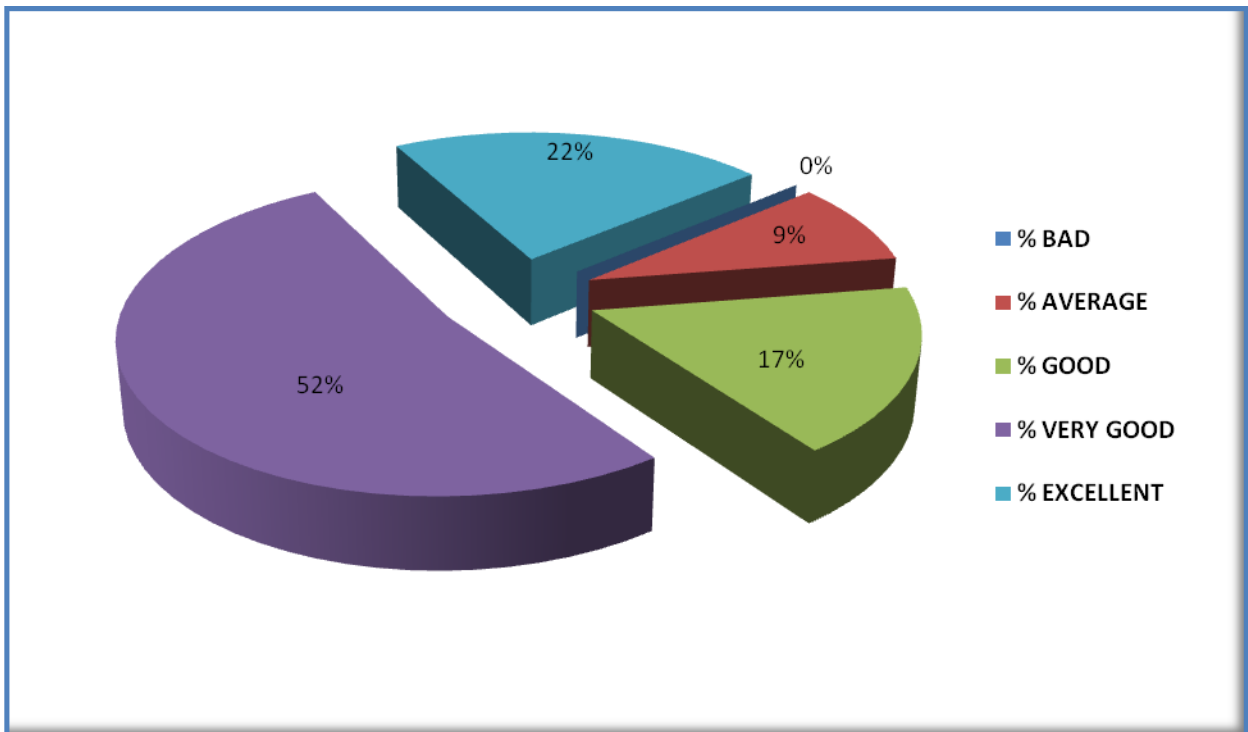
GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF TEST-TAKERS
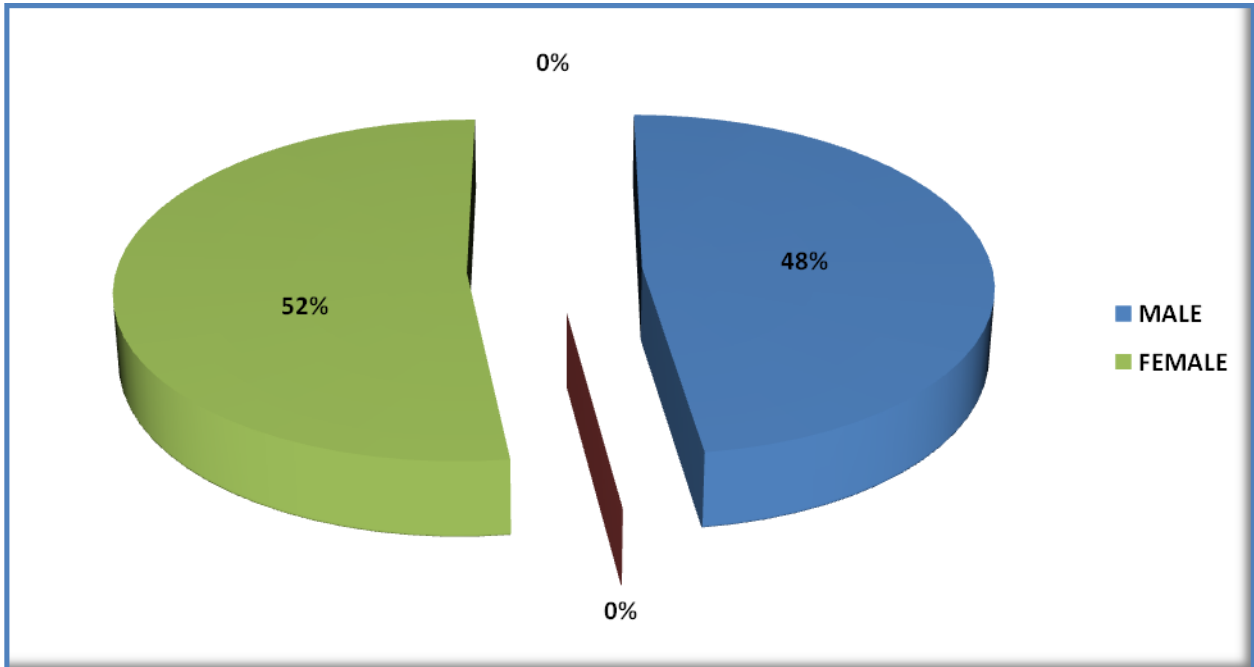
In this chart, the gender distribution of the sample of test-takers is represented. 52% of the surveyed learners were women and 48% were men.

STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF FRENCH LEARNING IN THE MAJOR

How would you evaluate your French learning along the major?

This graphic shows how students evaluate the learning of French. 52% of the polled learners consider that their learning was very good. 22% thinks that it has been excellent along the major. 17% believes the learning was good. Only 9% conceives it as average and there is no bad opinion about learning.

STUDENTS' SELF-EVALUATION OF LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

How would you evaluate your linguistic competence in the major?
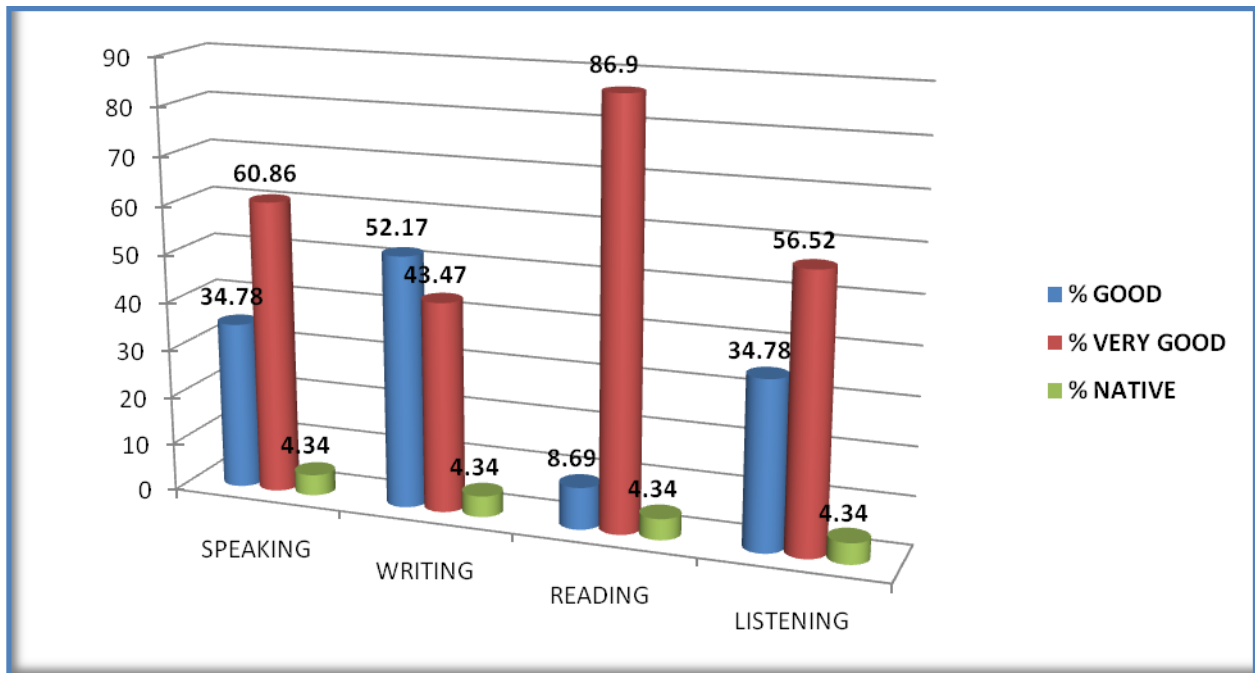
In this graphic, students rated their linguistic competence regarding the main four language skills. In relation to speaking 34.78% of the students stated they are good at this area, while 60.86% considers they are very good, and only 4.34% says they have a native competence. As for writing, 52.17% thinks they are good at this skill, whereas 43.47% affirms to be very good, and 4.34% believes they have a native level. Regarding reading, 8.69% sustains they are good at the reading field, on the other hand 86.9% of them are sure to have a very good level, and 4.34% judges they have a native performance. On the other hand, in the listening macro-skill, 34.78% states to have a good command of this ability. 56.52% guarantees to be very good, and 4.34% deems to have a native-like level.

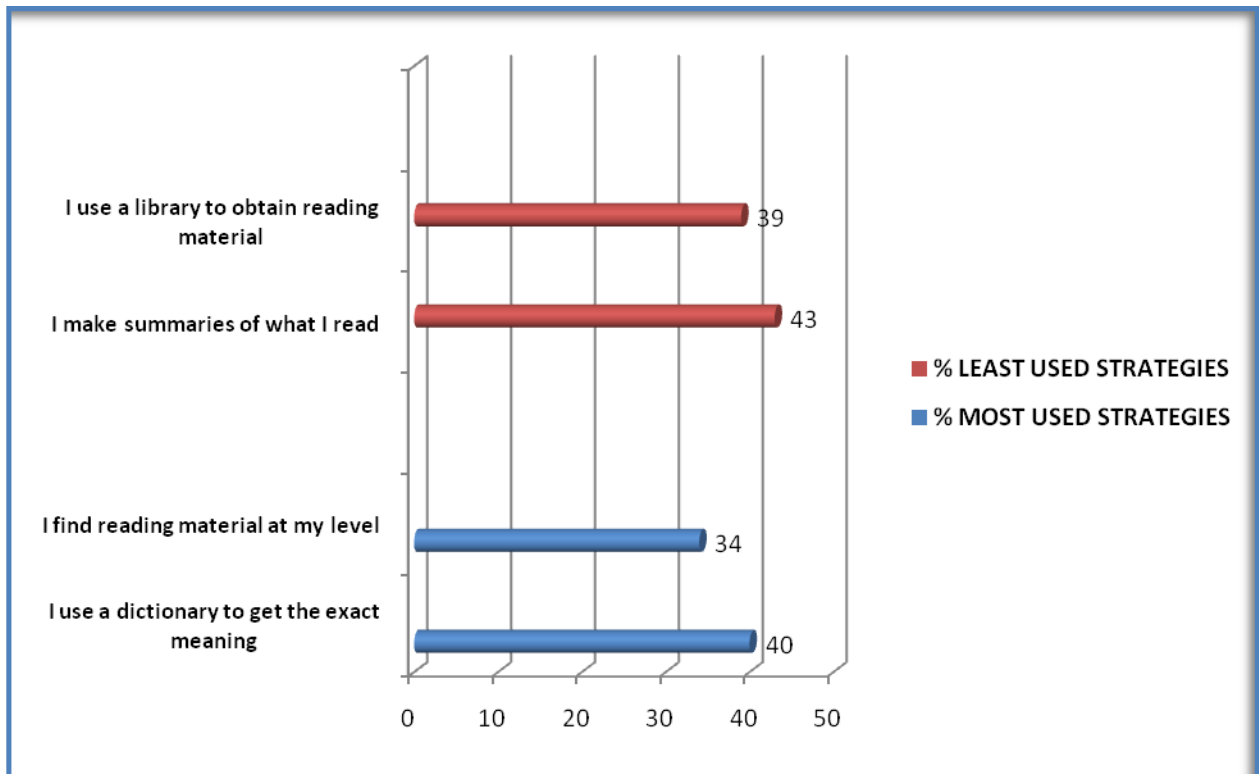# LEVEL OF ADVICE TO DEAL WITH THE SKILL TRAINING

Did you receive any advice on how to deal with skill training?
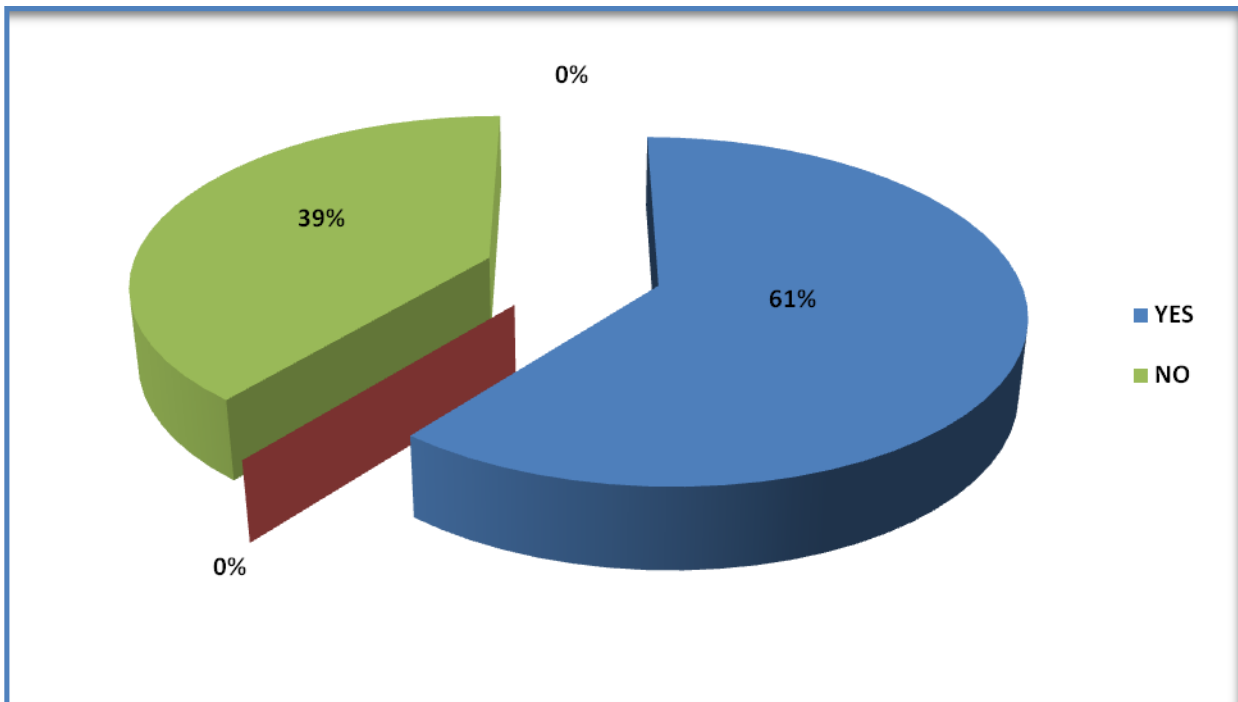
In this graphic students answered if they received any type of advice from their French speakers about how to deal with any difficulty on the skill training. 39% of the learners pointed out they did not get any advice against 61% who said they did receive recommendations on that matter.

LEARNING STRATEGIES IN READING

Chart:
- I use a library to obtain reading material: 39 (% LEAST USED STRATEGIES)
- I make summaries of what I read: 43 (% LEAST USED STRATEGIES)
- I find reading material at my level: 34 (% MOST USED STRATEGIES)
- I use a dictionary to get the exact meaning: 40 (% MOST USED STRATEGIES)

Legend:
- ■ % LEAST USED STRATEGIES
- ■ % MOST USED STRATEGIES

On this chart the strategies learners commonly apply on the reading skill is analyzed, and which ones they do not use. The strategies they have not used are "to use a library to obtain reading material" (39%) while "to make summaries of what they read" is the strategy they have applied the least (43%). On the other hand, "to find reading material at their level" is used by 34% of the learners, and "to use a dictionary to get the exact meaning" is the strategy students have used the most (40%) in the reading training.

LEARNING STRATEGIES IN WRITING
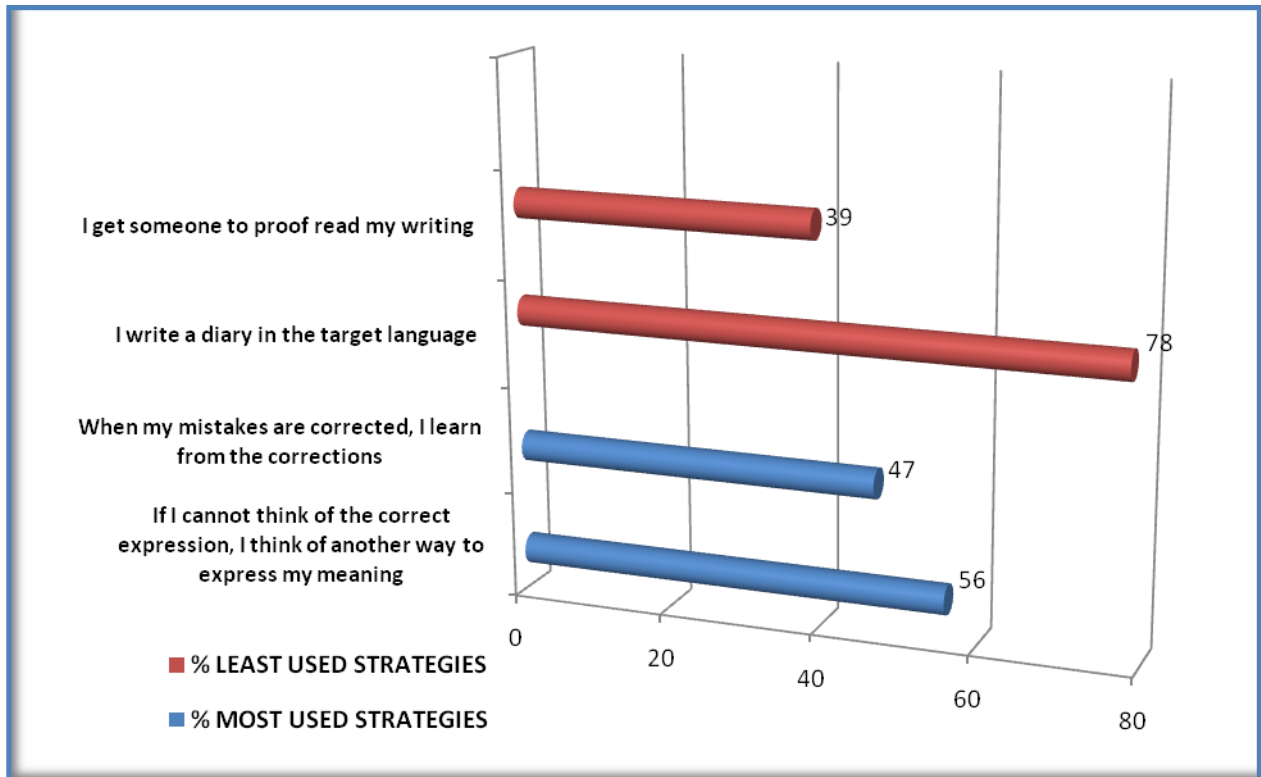
This chart is about strategy implementation in writing skill. It is proved that "to get someone to proof read writing work" is not usually applied (39%), and "to write a diary in the French language" is strategy learners used the least (78%). In contrast, the strategies learners have mostly used are "when mistakes are corrected, I learn from the corrections" (47%) and "to think another way to express a meaning when they do not have the correct expression" (56%).

LEARNING STRATEGIES IN LISTENING
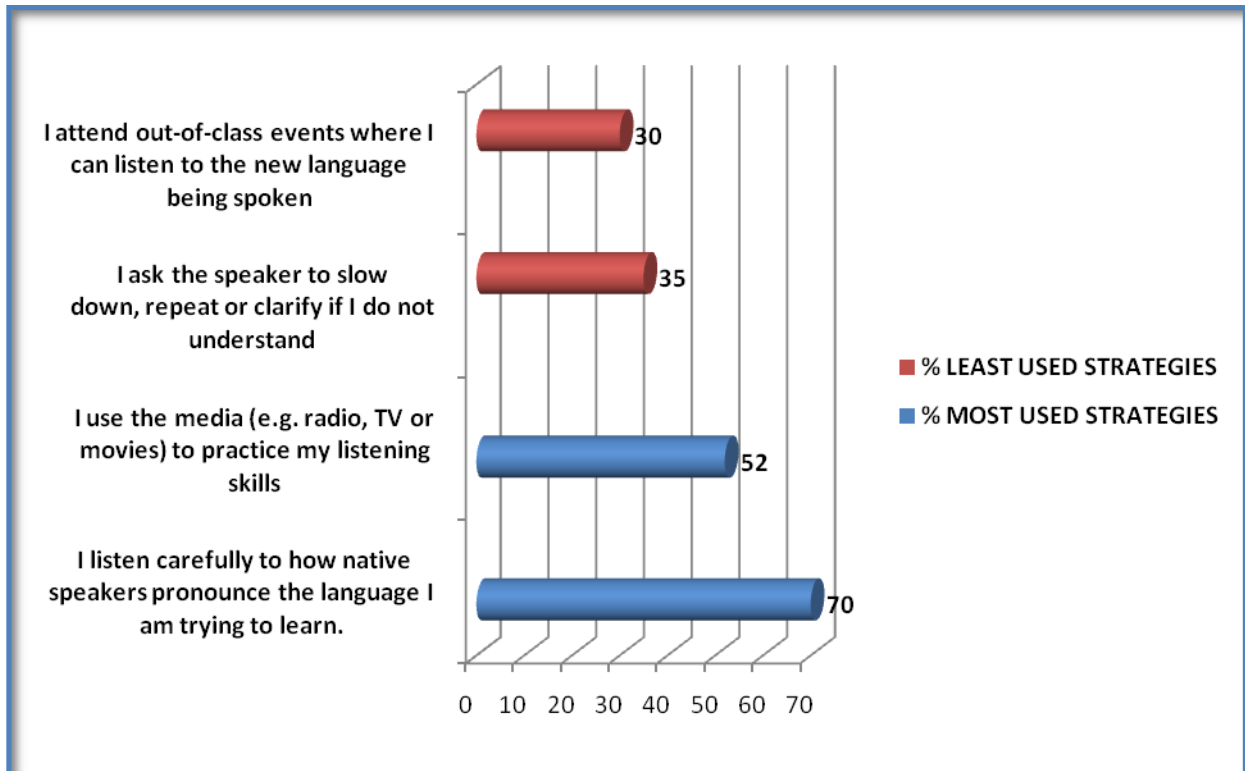
This graphic is concerning strategy implementation in listening; the strategies learners have implemented the least are "to attend events where French language can be listened" (30%) and "to ask speakers to repeat, slow down or clarify when they do not understand" (35%). In contrast, students expressed that "to use media to practice listening" (52%) and "to listen carefully French native speakers' pronunciation" (70%) are the strategies they have usually applied.

LEARNING STRATEGIES IN SPEAKING
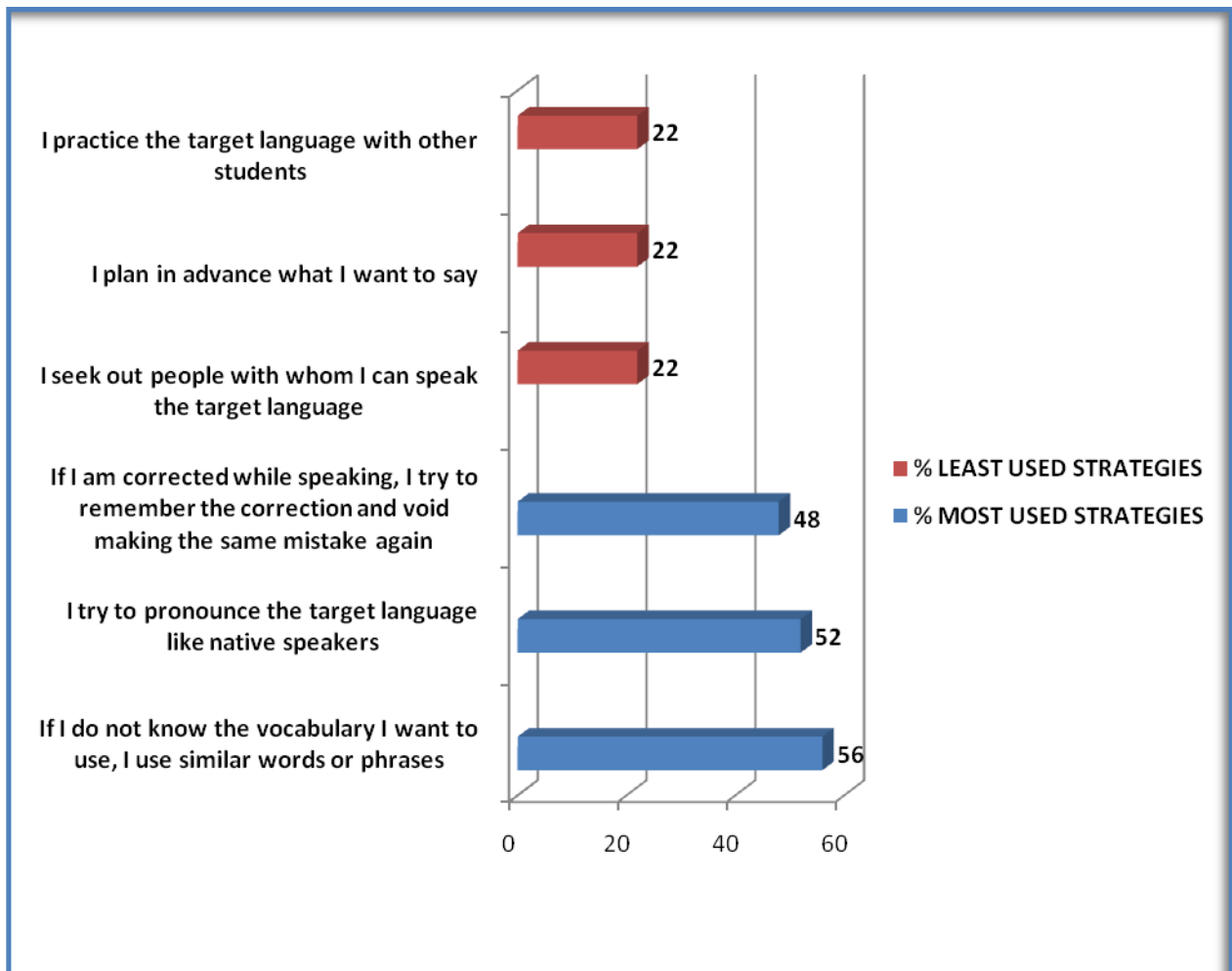
This chart presents the strategies students used to implement in speaking; they asserted that "to practice French with other students", "to plan in advance what they want to say" and "to seek people whom to speak with" are the strategies they have applied the least (22%). On the other hand, "to remember the corrections made while speaking" (48%), "to try to pronounce as native speakers" (52%) and "to use similar words when do not know the vocabulary" (56%) are the strategies they reported to have implemented the most in this skill.

# LEARNING STRATEGY COMPARISON IN THE FOUR SKILLS
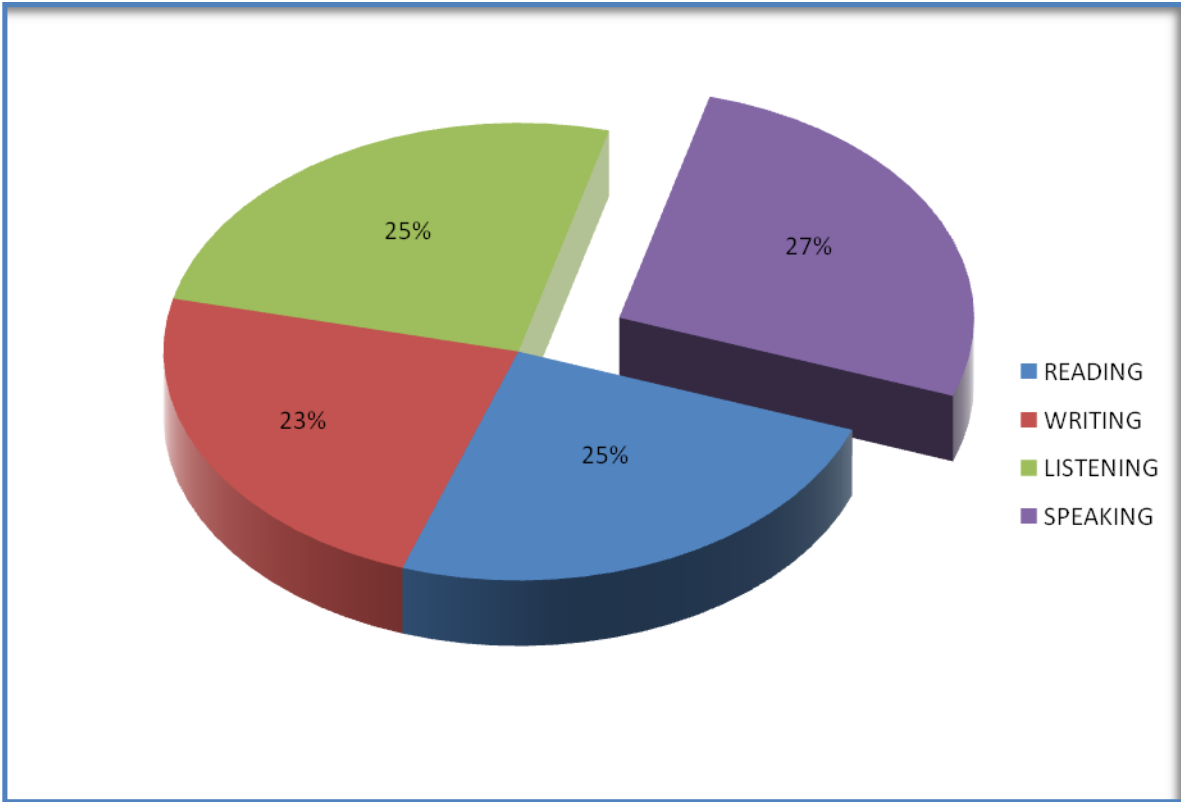
This pie chart indicates the degree of strategy implementation in the four language skills; writing is the skill in which learners have applied strategies least (23%). In the case of listening and reading the surveyed students have applied strategies a little more (25%), and speaking is the skill in which they have implemented most the strategies (27%).

LEARNING STRATEGIES BY CATEGORY (SILL)
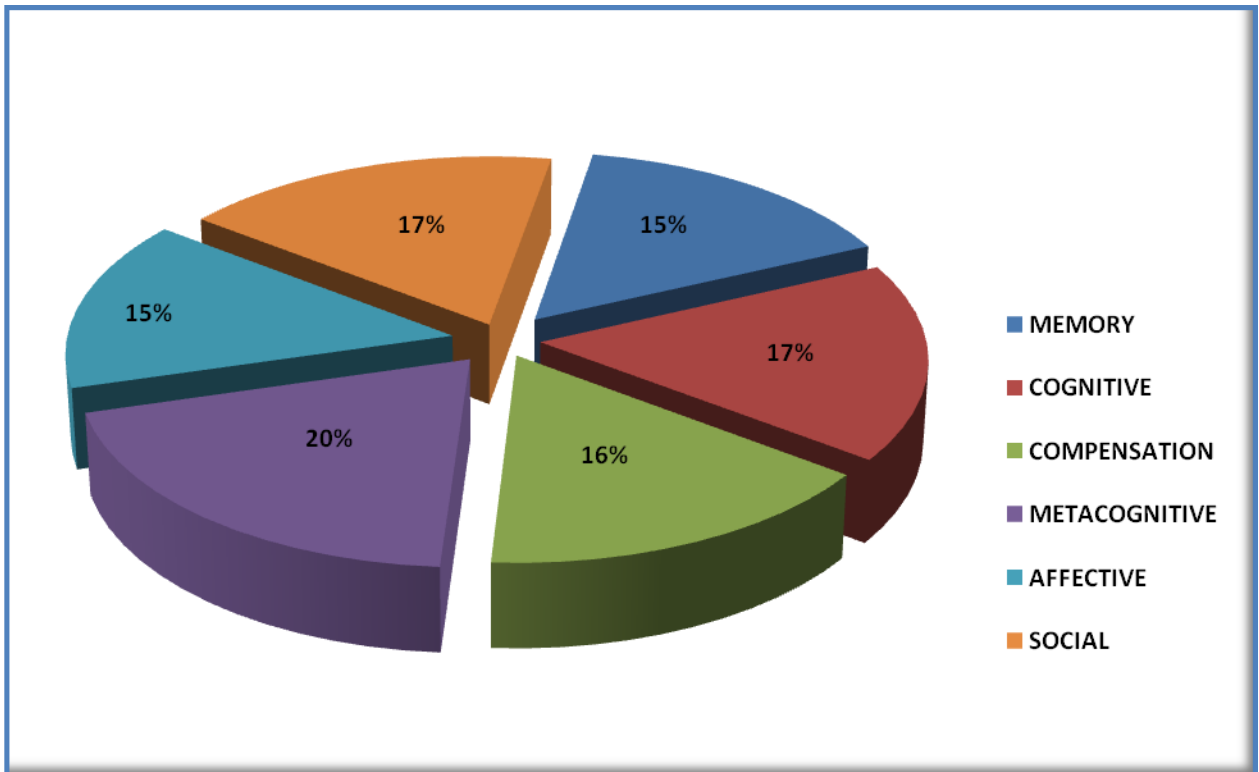
On this graphic, the usage of Learning Strategies grouped according to the category they belong to is determined. The results show, Memory and Affective strategies, as the categories the learners used the least (15%), while the group of Compensation strategies was a little bit more used (16%). It was also found that Cognitive and Social strategies (17% each) are the groups of strategies students have usually applied in the learning of French only behind the Metacognitive group, which is the most representative group of strategies utilized by the learners (20%).

SILL AVERAGE SCORE AND GENDER
(5.0 is the highest score)
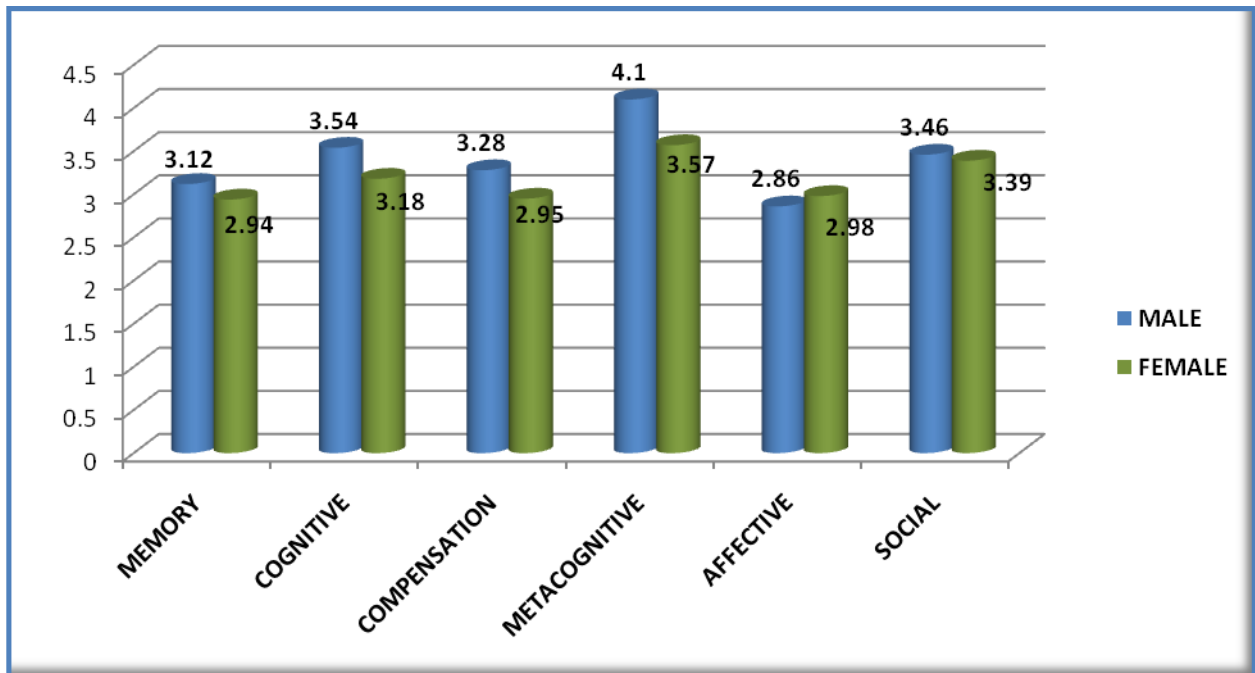
On this chart the comparison of the scores in strategy group usage and test-takers' gender is established. In relation to memory strategies men had a higher score (3.12) than women (2.94). In the use of cognitive strategies men scored 3.54 and women, 3.18 while in compensation strategies women had lower score (2.95) than men (3.28). It is remarkable that in metacognitive group both men and women had the highest averages over the rest of strategy groups, men scored 41 and women 3.57. On the other hand, affective rates are to be pointed out as the lowest average comparing all the groups, where women scored 2.86 and men, 2.98. In the Social strategies group men scored 3.46 and women, 3.39.

LEARNING STYLE (SENSORY PREFERENCE)
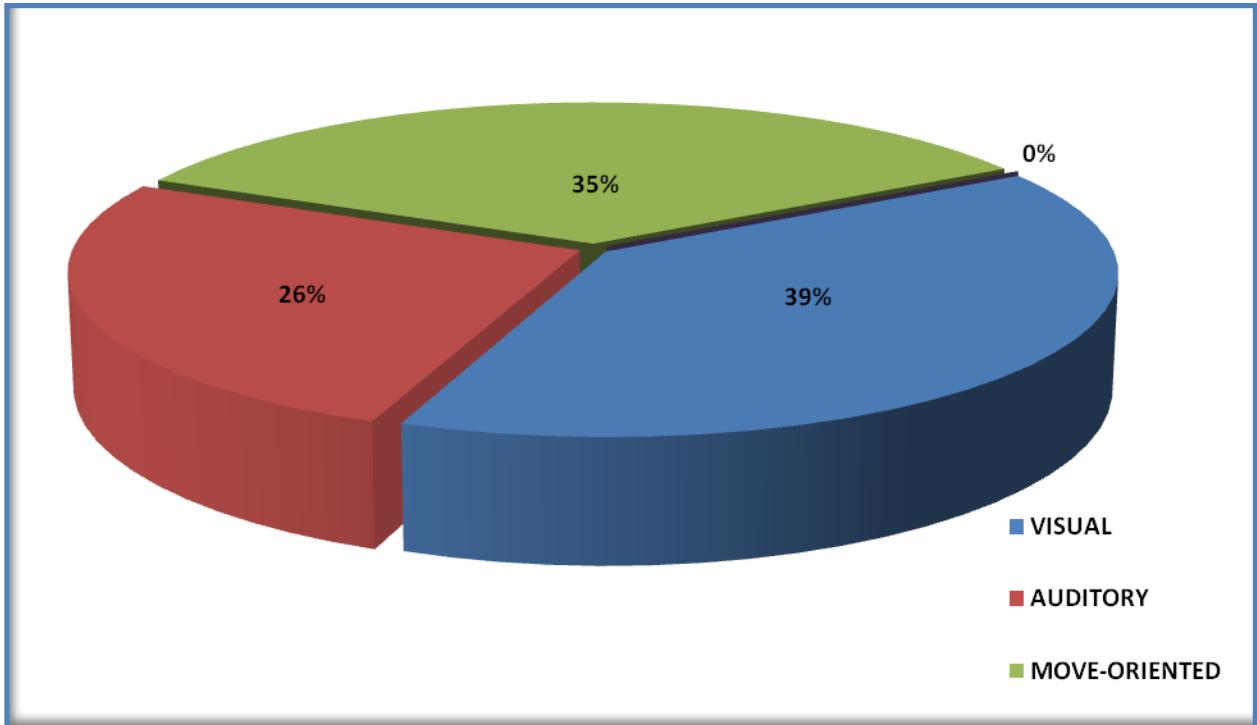
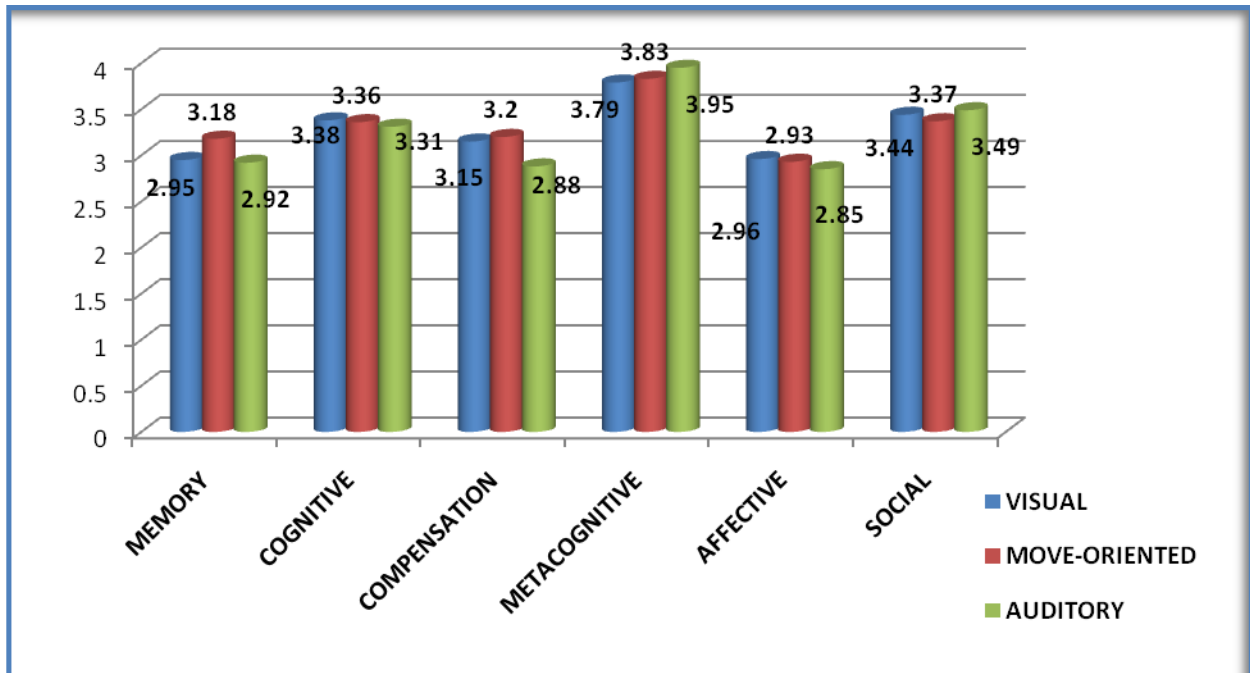

This pie chart demonstrates the learning style which students belong to according to their sensory preferences. It demonstrates that the visual learning style is the most predominant (39%) among the students. It is followed by the move-oriented learning style (35%) and the auditory learning style (26%).

LEARNING STYLE AND STRATEGY USE (SILL)

This graphic shows a contrast between the use of every strategy category and sensory preference. In regards to Memory strategy group Move-oriented students had the highest mark (3.18), the visual style (2.95) and auditory style (2.92). According to cognitive group, the visual students had the highest average (3.38), followed by the move-oriented style (3.36) and the auditory style (3.31). In the group of compensation strategies, the move-oriented style had 3.2, the visual style 3.15 and the auditory style 2.88. In reference to Metacognitive group, auditory learners got the highest average (3.95), move-oriented had 3.83 and visual 3.79. About the affective group, visual students rated 2.96, moved-oriented students 2.93 and auditory students 2.85. As for the social group, auditory students got 3.49; the visual students got 3.44 and the move-oriented students, 3.37.

SILL GENERAL SCORE BY GENDER
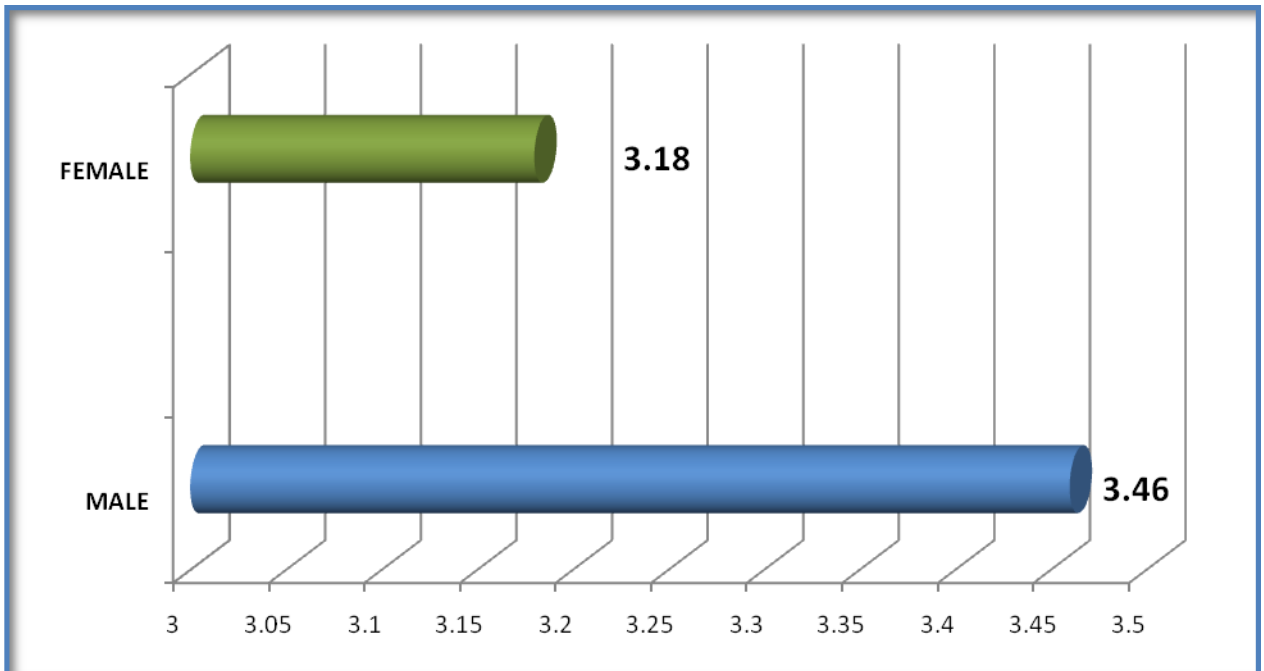
On this chart the average score by gender is presented; as seen on the graphics, men have gotten the highest grade (3.46), whereas women have gotten 3.18.
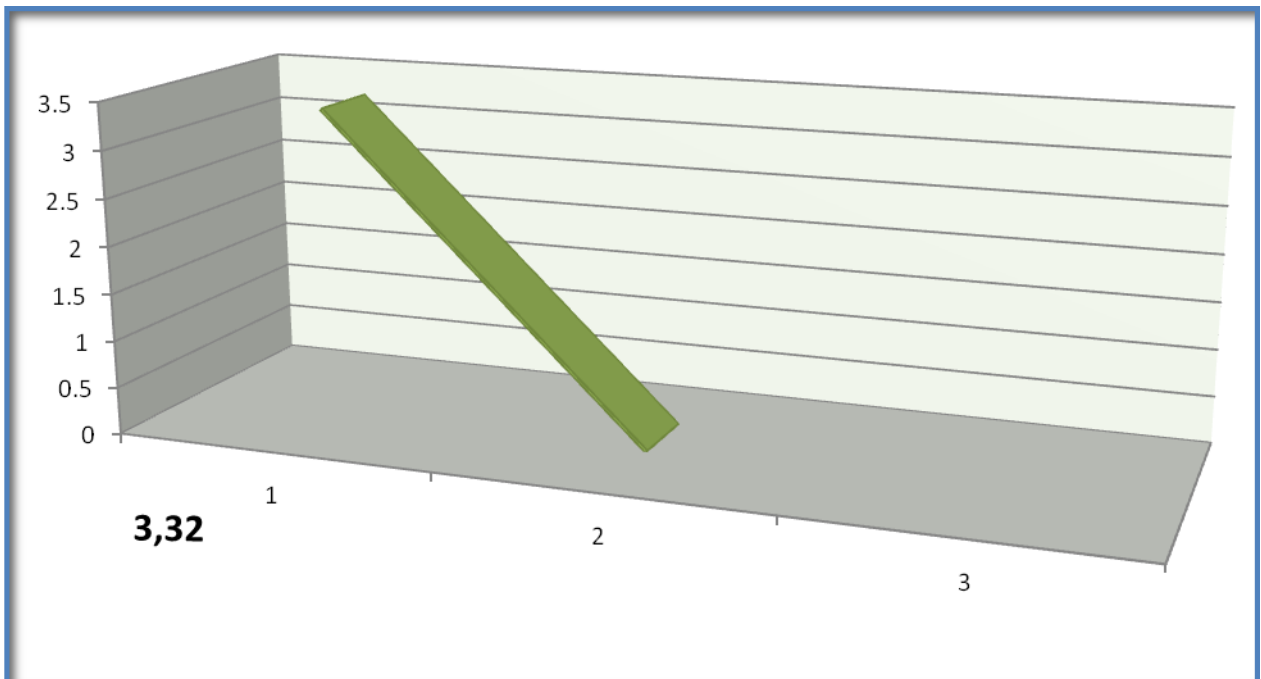
TOTAL AVERAGE SCORE OF THE COURSE

On this graphic the final score of the whole class is presented (3.32).

V. DISCUSSION

This section of the research analyzes all important facts (perception of the individuals' learning, linguistic competence, strategy used in skill training, sensory preference, SILL results, and gender) for their relationship. The purpose of this examination was to attempt not only to describe how learners have managed the learning of French but also to investigate the differences in learning variables; fact that might be related to the language learning strategies typically used by a group of students of French.

The aim to discover all important facts for the research was really useful to explore students' view of their performance through the major. Students mostly rated "very good" the self-evaluation about the French learning process; as they asserted, nobody held the idea that learning process was "bad". In general, the learners have a positive opinion and experience of the major. In addition, it is important to mention that some individuals considered the learning of French as an average process.

The students also evaluated the way they have handled the learning and training of the four skills. According to the data students assured they have a very good level in speaking, reading and listening, showing reading as the skill they have managed best. A very low percentage affirmed to have a native ability; whereas writing seems to be the troublesome skill which students had to train. As general rule, it was evident that learners think they have been doing well in the language skills. Despite the students have a "very good" opinion about their performance in the skills, evidence about receiving advice of dealing with skill was underlined. A significant percentage of students affirmed they did not get any piece of advice ever on dealing with skills. This reality made us figure out the way learners have implemented the learning strategies in skill training.

The findings showed that "using a dictionary" was the most frequently used of the strategy items in the reading section of the questionnaire, and it could probably come as no surprise to those who work in the field of teaching French in the Modern Languages major. This strategy is so commonly used by students throughout the major. At the other end of the frequency ratings, making summaries of the read material was used the least, and it was negative relating to reading skill training. This indicated that students have not applied broadly the strategies to improve the reading area. In the light of this finding, perhaps teachers and students might consider how useful the recommended strategies are.

Regarding the writing skill, the strategy that learners reported to use the most is thinking of another way to express the meaning when not having the correct expression, and writing a diary in French was the strategy they did not often applied along the major. Therefore, students did not get any benefit from using the different strategies; this could be due to the fact that they do not consider this skill as important as it is in the process of learning French. In reference to listening, the strategy most frequently applied by students was "listening carefully to native speakers' pronunciation"; this affirmation was surprising because it is not common to have contact with native French speakers so as to take advantage from their linguistic mastery. On the other hand, the data showed that "learners did not ask speaker to slow down, repeat or clarify when they did not understand". This was the least used strategy.

Speaking was the skill in which students applied most learning strategies. For instance, "using similar words when they did not know the vocabulary they wanted to use", was the strategy learners had highly implemented and, in contrast, "practicing French with other students" was applied least in this skill.

It is important to remark that the students had a lot of classmates and available time to practice French. This confirmed that the learners did not take advantage of practicing with other learners of French, and they only made in-class participation. Despite of the fact that the four skills were trained almost the same, only speaking was rated slightly higher than the remaining three skills. According to the overall percentages the level of strategy used in all skills was too low.

Following the Oxford's taxonomy included in the SILL, the findings showed what kind of strategies learners preferred to use in training French language. Firstly, it was pointed out that male students have implemented better the strategy inventory than female students. It was noted that the students had been aware of the organization and evaluation of their learning as well. Metacognivite group of strategies was the most frequently applied. Secondly were the cognitive and social categories of strategies. This showed that students used their mental processes, and they interacted with others in any way during the learning of French. In addition, the compensation, memory and affective groups were least used, proving that learners almost did not use resources like remembering more effectively and managing their emotions when learning.

According to the sensory preferences and categories, the tendency towards the visual style was predominant in using the social, affective and cognitive groups of strategies, while the memory and compensation strategies were prevalent in the move-oriented style. The auditory learners had the higher average in using metacognitive and social strategies. However it was necessary to remark the slight difference regarding learning styles and the strategy categories.

In spite of the popular beliefs, no significant differences were discovered in the reported frequency on the strategies used according to gender. Previous research has also shown that females tend to use strategies more frequently than males. Nevertheless in this study, no significant differences were found in the use of strategies applied by male and female students. The overall mean score of strategy used for both groups showed that male students used several strategies more frequently than female students did. Still the total mean score of the whole sample was too low in relation to how the university students' profile is supposed to be.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

1. Despite the report of an important number of students stating they did not receive any advice on skill training, they affirmed not to have had serious difficulty in those areas rating their performance as very good.

2. In the learning of French, in terms of the skills training, speaking and writing were the areas learners found it more difficult throughout the major. However speaking has been the skill in which students use more the repertoire of learning strategies.

3. Reading was the skill in which students showed more confidence since a considerable amount of students (90%) rated their mastery of that skill as very good.

4. Due to the fact that students are not receiving enough advice or any advice at all regarding learning strategies, they may not be aware of what strategies they use, or might not reflect the frequency with which they use them.

5. Modern languages students prefer "to listen carefully to a native French speaker than to attend events where French is spoken" in order to improve their listening skill and it is the strategy learners used most frequently from the inventory. On the other hand, the strategy used the least by learners was found in writing training: "writing diaries in the target language (French)"

6. The findings indicated that this group of students throughout modern languages major tended generally to use more strategies about managing and evaluating their own learning.

7. Interaction and communication are the strategies they did not implemented, so it is the evidence for the belief that these students did practice French only when it is required.

8. Sensory preferences were almost equally found among students, this issue was helpful to compare the tendency of strategy preference according to the learning style. But visual preference was the predominant learning style when learning French among the polled students.

9. Comparing gender, male participants in this study tended to use more strategies regarding the management of learning than female students.

10. Learners have implemented only few strategies in order to be more integrated into the learning of the French environment. Therefore, the students were rated just a little over the ideal mean in the SILL test.

VII. SUGGESTIONS

The approach intends to become a fruitful tool for either teachers or students who are committed to the process of learning French. Therefore the following recommendations are deployed:

1. Guide students since the beginning of the major to identify their own weaknesses, capacities and potential because effective learning can only be achieved when students are aware of needs.

2. In all Modern Languages classrooms, there will be students with multiple learning styles and students with a variety of major, minor, and negative learning styles. An effective means of accommodating these learning styles in the classrooms is by changing their own styles and strategies and by providing a variety of activities to meet the needs of the students' different learning styles.

3. Assist students in becoming more effective language learners by understanding and respecting individual diverse learning ways, teachers provide instructional alternatives to address the students' differences. Thus teachers should plan lessons to match student's individual learning way.

4. Promote and explain learners about the importance and usefulness of implementing the vast repertoire of learning strategies to be successful not only in French but also in any other languages.

5. Encourage students to raise awareness on the individual performance improvement. Since the study as a whole suggests the success of language learners.

Suggestions for further research

This study has provided some interesting findings regarding strategies and techniques reportedly used by a group of learners of French at the University of El Salvador. Some other areas of further research might be: personality characteristics, cognitive styles, attitudes, and learning environments. It would be useful to return to the present research and to undertake the following inquiry: (1) Studying critically the different inventories of learning strategies and techniques and to develop an exhaustive list, clearly related to a French learning model. (2) Creating a wider study similar to the present one but with instruments such as observation schedules, interviews, and tests that are specifically designed to seek confirmation (or rejection) about the strategy inventory.

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STUDENTS' SURVEY
Objective: to survey students about learning strategies use and skills development.

I. BIODATA. Complete the blanks with your personal information.
GENDER: MALE: _____   FEMALE: _____   AGE: _____

II. LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE SELF-EVALUATION. Mark the option applying for you

1. How would you evaluate your French learning along the major?

A) bad   B) average   C) good   D) very good   E) excellent

2. How would you grade your linguistic competence in the major?

SKILLS	BAD	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD	NATIVE
READING					
LISTENING					
SPEAKING					
WRITING					

3. Did you ever receive any advice from your teachers on how to deal with skill learning?
A) YES   B) NO

4. Read each statement and grade them using the following scores.

3 - Often applies   2 - Sometimes applies   1 - Never applies

1. I remember something better if it is written down.	
2. Papers with very small print or poor photocopies bother me.	
3. When trying to remember someone's telephone number, it helps me if I get a picture of it in my head.	
4. I understand how to do something if someone tells me rather than to read the same thing to myself.	
5. I remember things I hear rather than things I see.	
6. Before I follow directions, it helps me to see someone else do it first.	

7. I listen better when I look at the person talking.	
8. I am not skilled in giving verbal explanations.	
9. When I read, I mix up words that look alike, such as 'them' and 'then' or 'bad' and 'dad'.	
10. It's hard for me to understand a joke when someone tells me	
11. I think better when I have the freedom to move around.	
12. When I can't think of a specific word, I'll use my hands a lot.	

III. LEARNING STRATEGY USE.

The following questionnaire contains some strategies students use in order to assist the development of skills in the language they are learning. Please read the following strategy items and grade **each** according to the frequency you use it.

1. Never   2. Almost never   3. Sometimes   4. Usually   5. Always

READING	
1. I read extensively for information in the target language	
2. I read for pleasure in the target language	
3. I find reading material at my level	
4. I use a library to obtain reading material	
5. I first skim read a text then go back and read it more carefully	
6. I look for how a text is organized	
7. I make summaries of what I read	
8. I make predictions about what I will read next	
9. I guess the approximate meaning by using clues from the context	
10. I use a dictionary to get the exact meaning	

Taxonomy from "*Language Skills Development"* Carol Griffiths, 2004

1. Never   2. Almost never   3. Sometimes   4. Usually   5. Always

WRITING	
1. I write letters or e-mails to friends in the target language	
2. When my mistakes are corrected, I learn from the corrections	
3. I write a variety of text types in the target language (e.g. notes, messages and lists)	
4. I plan my writing before I start	
5. If I cannot think of the correct expression, I think of another way to express my meaning (e.g. synonyms)	
6. I use reference materials (e.g. a dictionary) to check that what I am writing is correct	
7. If I am unsure about something, I want to write I try to express my meaning and do not worry too much about correctness.	
8. I write a rough copy before writing a good copy	
9. I write a diary in the target language	
10. I get someone to proof read my writing	

1. Never   2. Almost never   3. Sometimes   4. Usually   5. Always

LISTENING	
1. I attend out-of-class events where I can listen to the new language being spoken	
2. I use the media (e.g. radio, TV or movies) to practice my listening skills	
3. I listen to native speakers in public places and try to understand what they are saying	
4. I listen for key words which seem to carry most of the meaning	
5. I predict what the other person will say next based on context, background knowledge or what has been said so far	
6. I ask the speaker to slow down, repeat or clarify if I do not understand	
7. I avoid translating what I hear word-for-word	
8. I use the speaker's tone of voice, gestures, pauses or body language as a clue to meaning	
9. If I am unsure about meaning, I guess	
10. I listen carefully to how native speakers pronounce the language I am trying to learn.	

Taxonomy from "*Language Skills Development"* Carol Griffiths, 2004

1. Never   2. Almost never   3. Sometimes   4. Usually   5. Always

SPEAKING	
1. I repeat new language to myself in order to practice it	
2. I seek out people with whom I can speak the target language	
3. I plan in advance what I want to say	
4. If I am corrected while speaking, I try to remember the correction and void making the same mistake again	
5. I ask questions	
6. I do not worry about correctness as long as I can communicate my meaning	
7. If necessary, I use gestures to convey my meaning and keep a conversation going	
8. I practice the target language with other students	
9. If I do not know the vocabulary I want to use, I use similar words or phrases	
10. I try to pronounce the target language like native speakers	

Taxonomy from "*Language Skills Development"* Carol Griffiths, 2004

IV. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Directions: *This form of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) is for students of French as a foreign language. You will find statements about learning French. Please read each one and answer in terms of how well the statement describes you (use the frequency scale below). Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Work as quickly as you can without being careless. This usually takes about 20-30 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, let the researcher know immediately.*

1. Never.   2. Almost never.   3. Sometimes. 4. Usually.   5. Always.

Part A	
1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in French.	
2. I use new French words in a sentence so I can remember them.	
3. I connect the sound of a new French word and an image of the word to help me remember the word.	
4. I remember a new French word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	
5. I use rhymes to remember new French words.	
6. I use flashcards to remember new French words.	
7. I physically act out new French words.	
8. I review French lessons often.	
9. I remember new French words by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	

Part B	
10. I say or write new French words several times.	
11. I try to talk like native French speakers.	
12. I practice the sounds of French.	
13. I use the French words I know in different ways.	
14. I start conversations in French.	
15. I watch French TV shows spoken in French or go to movies spoken in French.	
16. I read for pleasure in French.	
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in French.	
18. I first skim a French passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in French.	
20. I try to find patterns in French.	
21. I find the meaning of a French word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	
22. I try not to translate word-for-word.	
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in French.	

Taxonomy from "*Applied Language Learning*" Rebecca Oxford, 1996

1. Never. 2. Almost never. 3. Sometimes. 4. Usually. 5. Always.

Part C	
24.	To understand unfamiliar French words, I make guesses.	
25.	When I can think of a word during a conversation in French, I use gestures.	
26.	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in French.	
27.	I read French without looking up every new word.	
28.	I try to guess what the other person will say next in French.	
29.	I can think of a French word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	

Part D	
30.	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my French.	
31.	I notice my French mistakes and I use that information to help me do better.	
32.	I pay attention when someone is speaking French.	
33.	I try to find out how to be a better learner of French	
34.	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study French.	
35.	I look for people I can talk to in French.	
36.	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in French.	
37.	I have clear goals for improving my French skills.	
38.	I think about my progress in learning French.	

Part E	
39.	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using French.	
40.	I encourage myself to speak French even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	
41.	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in French.	
42.	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using French.	
43.	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	
44.	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning French.	

Part F	
45.	If I do not understand something in French, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	
46.	I ask French speakers to correct me when I talk.	
47.	I practice French with other students.	
48.	I ask for help from French speakers.	
49.	I ask questions in French.	
50.	I try to learn about the culture of French speakers.	

Taxonomy from "*Applied Language Learning*" Rebecca Oxford, 1996