

INDEX

Index.....	2
Abstract.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Statement of the problem.....	9
Justification.....	11
Literature review.....	12
Methodology.....	27
Results.....	32
Major findings.....	44
Limitations.....	47
Conclusions.....	48
Recommendations.....	50
References.....	51
Annexes.....	53
Annex 1.....	54
Annex 2.....	56
Annex 3.....	58
Annex 4.....	59
Annex 5.....	62
Annex 6.....	63
Annex 7 Diagnosis.....	66

Abstract

This paper reports on the findings of a study conducted to investigate the language Learning Strategies used by students of the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador and their Learning Style with Oral Proficiency Development. The study found that there was a significant relationship between the correct use of Learning Strategies according to students' Learning Styles and English Oral Proficiency. It was found that the more a student used a variety of language Learning Strategies that match their learning styles, the more proficient a student became in language learning, and the use of some specific strategies was positively correlated to improvement of sub-language skills such as oral communication.

Introduction

Learning English around the world has become important and useful because it opens many doors and gives better opportunities to take advantage of; therefore, the interests of studying this language has grown up in the recent years. Many people from different countries, cultures and different backgrounds are willing to learn a second language; it is in this context when difficulties arrive. For example, while reading students are not able to infer meaning from context; besides, when writing, coherence and cohesion among ideas are not reached, among others. However, one of the most relevant aspects is that after a time, students start wondering why they cannot speak fluently and worry because they are not able to communicate their ideas accurately, in other words, they do not reach oral proficiency.

Some researchers have shown that some learners are not able to reach the expected level of proficiency and therefore, they are left behind (Genesee 1987; Harley et al., 1990; Harley & Swain, 1984; Swain, 1985). It is in order to solve this difficulty that many researchers have been carried out with the goal of helping students improve their ability to communicate. For example, an investigation conducted by Zhang Mingyuan (2003) reports on the findings of a study conducted to investigate the language Learning Strategies used by students in the intensive English program. The study examined the relationship between the students' use of Learning Strategies and their English proficiency. That study found that there was a strong relationship between strategy use and English proficiency; the use of some specific strategies was positively correlated to improvement of sub-language skills such as oral communication. Moreover, considering “that good language learners appeared to use a larger number and range of strategies than poor language learners, the implications of understanding strategy use have seemed increasingly important “(Cohen, 1998). However, those researchers have left apart one important element at the time of learning a foreign or second language, Learning Styles. Gold 2002, claimed that students with greater Learning Styles flexibility are also greater achievers. As they are able to process the information in whatever way it is presented.

Like Gold 2002, some other researchers agree that Learning Strategies do not work in isolation but they have a positive influence if students use them according to their learning

styles. For example, Rebecca L. Oxford stated that learning styles and strategies help determine a particular learner's ability and willingness to work within the framework of various instructional methodologies. In fact, every foreign language student uses more than one learning strategy, but they do not have an idea about what kind of learning styles they are; so they continue worrying about their oral proficiency. The problem is that if students do not know their learning styles and use Learning Styles at random, those strategies will not work out and their oral proficiency will not improve. For all above, students at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador are not the exception. Accordingly, this project is addressed to study students' Learning Styles and the usage of the Learning Strategies in order to improve their oral proficiency. Since Learning Styles and Learning Strategies are not apart, the key terms under study in this project are: Learning Styles, Learning Strategies and Oral Proficiency.

The first key feature in this study is Oral proficiency. According to Omaggio (1986) "oral proficiency is the ability to communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way in the target language." There are many factors that influence oral proficiency development, one of them is the use of different Learning Strategies based on their own Learning Styles. Another concept under study is Learning Style which is according to Ehrman and Oxford "the overall patterns that give general direction to learning behavior" (1990) Also, they classified thirteen different Learning Styles: Visual, Auditory, Tactile/Kinesthetic, Extraverted, Introverted, Random-Intuitive, Concrete-Sequential, Closure- Oriented, Open, Global, Particular, Deductive and Inductive. Many other researchers agreed that those Learning Styles complement each other for a student will not have a single Learning Style, but a mixture of them; although, students can have a strong tendency of being one type of Learning Style.

Another key term used in this project is Learning Strategies. Oxford defined Learning Strategies as specific actions taken by the learner to make learning suitable, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more effective. Also, others stated that the concept of Learning Strategies depends on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and Learning Strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional directions and learning techniques. However, those researchers gave a wide

classification of Learning Strategies. Whereas, Oxford's Learning Strategies' classification is as follow: Cognitive, Metacognitive, Memory-related, Compensation, Affective, and Social Learning Strategies, (1985). Since Oxford's definitions represent a broader classification than the other researchers of Learning Styles and Strategies, this study will work under her classification

The present research paper reports on the early stages of a large research project which attempts to examine the existent relationship between English language strategies usage, English Learning Styles and students reported oral proficiency in the second language learning process. It also attempts to investigate if the use of Metacognitive, Cognitive, Social, Compensation, Memory and Affective Learning Strategies are predictors of student's improvement or success in a second language learning environment. The research involved a sample of Sixty English students from the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador. Students answered individually a seventeen questionnaire items about the different strategies they employ to improve their skills; and a fifty Learning Style Test divided in eight categories. The reported strategies were compared to the grades they achieved in oral evaluations of the current level in order to identify if students use appropriately Learning Strategies according to their Learning Styles.

In general, the results obtained through this study would contribute to the understanding of what Learning Strategies are and the way they influence student's oral proficiency in a second language environment. Moreover, to make students be aware of what their Learning Style is, and the appropriate Learning Strategies students can apply while learning a foreign language. The outcome of the study then will help improve second language instruction and quality of learning as well if instructors develop awareness of the benefit it will bring to encourage students not only to know their learning styles, but also to use the appropriate Learning Strategies according to their styles. Moreover, this study attempts to make teachers aware of the importance of knowing their own students' learning styles in order to provide students a diversity of class activities and to have better academic results. To sum, it is addressed to help Foreign Language Department's students of the

University of El Salvador improve their oral proficiency through the knowledge of their own Learning Styles and the appropriate use of Learning Strategies.

This report consists of five chapters arranged in the following way: After the introduction goes the literature review which accounts all the theories and previous knowledge gotten through the search of similar topics with the professional expertise viewpoints. It also considers how the different point of view regarding Learning Strategies, Learning Styles together with Oral Proficiency motivated the research. Thus, gaps in the literature that generated the thesis under discussion were examined. The next chapter is a compilation of the different methods and approaches employed to get the richest information. The major instruments to get the data were a questionnaire through which specific examples of Learning Strategies use are presented. Also a test to identify students' Learning Styles, with eight different categories including the thirteen Learning Styles, was administered. The procedures, justification and description of the chosen methods are provided in this chapter.

Moreover, the results of the study are presented in the next chapter. Quantitative analyses are showed in graphs and tables for a better understanding of all the data gathered in order to answer the research question of this study. In this chapter, each graph and table is described; the graphs describe the students' age, grades, and gender. Tables present students' reported Learning Strategies usage and styles together with grades obtain in an oral evaluation; also a detail account of the results is attached. What follow are the major findings of the study in which the details of the analysis of the findings are presented. The results gathered are discussed in the different areas in which the project was based on. Then, this report provides the limitations faced while carrying out the study. These limitations were teachers and students' willingness to cooperate and the lack of time in order to wait for oral evaluation grades of one class group.

Then, in the conclusion it is presented the essential part of the results gathered throughout this project. This includes specific information that answers the research question under study in a brief but clear summary of results. Next, it is presented the recommendations addressed for: further researchers in order to include other factors that

were not taken into account in this project; students to know their own Learning Styles and specifically to know what the Learning Strategies are; also, for the teachers to engage their students to use Learning Strategies, and to know their students' Learning Styles to apply methodologies that benefit their students' proficiency; and for the Foreign Language Department in order to have better results in the outcome of every foreign language student. Finally, within this paper report presents the annexes, with the instruments used to gather the data and some pictures while students were taking the instruments and at the time students were given their Learning Styles' reports with the strategies to use.

Statement of the problem

All English teachers dream is to have a classroom in which students learn successfully everything they are taught; in which students are motivated to participate and carry out all the tasks assigned. In Fact, in order to have a successful learning, it is necessary to apply thinking skills, encourage motivation, understand learning styles and practice strategies as well successful learning does not occur by chance (Moranski & Townsend, 2006); for some students learning a second language is easier than for others. Currently, students face lots of obstacles when learning a second language. Since El Salvador is not a bilingual country, students have to strive to learn the target language using all the resources at hand; these resources include technology usage, paying for extra English courses, etc.

In a diagnosis carried out to determine the main problems Foreign Language Department students face when learning a foreign language, the results show that the three principal difficulties students go through are large groups, little time for practicing the language, and students` inappropriate study habits. Ideally, the amount of students in a classroom should range between one and fifteen; in that way the class can be personalized; thus, students can get more chances to participate in the class; besides, the teacher can provide feedback to each student, etc. But nowadays, in the Foreign Language Department the number of students in a classroom is around thirty or forty students.

Furthermore, students do not have enough time to practice the language in class. Since we do not live in a bilingual country, most students do not practice the language outside the classroom. Besides that, most courses last one hour daily and being the class groups too large, little opportunity is given to students to express their ideas or opinions using the target language inside the classroom.

Lastly, teachers and students agreed that the inappropriate use of study habits widely affect students performance and competences in the target language. And although many students claim to know about Learning Strategies, their grades in the course do not reflect their effective usage for. If students had the correct instruction and knowledge on how to apply the techniques and activities that help them develop their skills, they would get higher

grades and would have better performance. In addition, the area that seems more affected and with lower proficiency is the oral skill.

Being students' inappropriate study habits the top problem identified why students do not go forward in their English skill development, it is important to go after the implications of the topic especially when the concept of study habits is closely related to the terms learning styles and Learning Strategies which refer to the characteristics of each student and the most effective way for them to learn a second language. Thus, the present paper work attempts to answer the question: How do Learning Strategies and learning styles influence students' oral proficiency in the English major of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador?

Also, having found that student's main problem is the inappropriate use of Learning Strategies, this project tries to investigate if students really know what Learning Strategies to use, Do they know what their learning style is? Do they know what Learning Strategies correspond to their own learning style? Do students apply Learning Strategies to enhance their Oral Proficiency?

Justification

Every year hundreds of students are registered in the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador in the BA in English Teaching; however, not all of them perform the same way. There are some students that show better competence in the language than others. But, why do some students perform better than others? What factors determine students' success in the target language? Like these, many questions come to teachers' mind when teaching a foreign language. This paper work attempts to answer one of the most common teachers and students' questions regarding oral proficiency development. Many teachers have experiences with different type of students, with different skills and backgrounds, and so teachers start wondering what the factors that determine students' success and improvement in a second language (L2) are.

Previous research have been carried out taken into account the learning strategy use (Mcnamara, 2010; Woolley, 2010; Flavell, 1992; and, Gough & Tunmer, 1986) but just a few of them considered the usage of Learning Strategies in oral development (Mingyuan 2003 & Lunt, 2000). Since those studies have not shown a clear indication about the influence of Learning Strategies use according learning styles in oral proficiency development, this research tries to find out if the topics under study have a positive or negative influence in Reading and Conversation I students in the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador. In addition, this investigation is aimed at Reading and Conversation students because in this level they would practice and strengthen the abilities and skills they have acquired during the Intensive English subjects.

Literature review

Nowadays, in every part of the world, a person who speaks English is valuable in school and at work as well. Thus, many people are worrying about learning English. But, it is so easy to learn a foreign language such as English? During the process of learning a foreign language, students begin to face many difficulties to develop the different macro skills; Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking; and sub skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and so on. Above all, one commonly aspect that seems to be the most difficult for language learners is to communicate accurately in the target language.

According to Rebecca L. Oxford ¹ learning styles and strategies help determine a particular learner's ability and willingness to work within the framework of various instructional methodologies. It is known by everyone that is not an easy task that a single L2 (target language) methodology could possibly fit an entire class filled with students who have a range of stylistic and strategic preferences. Instead of choosing a specific instructional methodology, L2 teachers would do better to employ a broad instructional approach, notably the best version of the communicative approach that contains a combined focus on form and fluency. Such an approach allows for deliberate, creative variety to meet the needs of all students in the class. If there is a connection between learning styles and Learning Strategies students can use a methodology that better fits their needs to improve their foreign language learning process. Since Language learning styles and strategies are among the main factors that help students to improve their skills, such as writing, reading, listening and mainly their oral abilities, when learning a second or foreign language it is preferable to take them into account.

Learning Styles

Learning styles can be defined as “the overall patterns that give general direction to learning behavior” (Cornett as cited in Oxford's work, 1983, p. 9). Also, Dunn & Griggs

¹ Oxford, R.L (2003), Language Learning styles and Strategies: and overview, GALA

Oxford, R.L. (1990a). Language Learning Strategies and beyond: A look at strategies in the context of styles. In S.S. Magnan (Ed.), *Shifting the instructional focus to the learner* (pp. 35-55). Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

(1988) stated that “Learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others”. For many researchers, learning style is the strongest contributor for learning a foreign language because, since learning styles are the ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retains, and retrieves the new information of the target language (Richard M. Felder, 1993). Some of the researchers have classified these learning styles into a variety of groups, for example, Felder et al. (1988, 1993) derived the learning styles into five dimensions: Sensing and, Intuitive Learners; Visual and, Verbal Learners; Active and, Reflective Learners; Sequential and, Global Learners; Inductive and, Deductive Learner.

The chart bellow shows the definition and classification about learning styles that each author presents.

Table 1. Learning Styles

Category	Definition	Clasification
Richard Felder (1993) ²	“Learning is the strongest contributor to learn a second language since learning styles are the ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retains and retrieves the new information of the target language”.	Sensing and Intuitive Visual and Verbal Active and Reflective Sequential and Global Inductive and Deductive
Dunn and Griggs (1988)	“It is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful of some and terrible for others”.	Environmental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound • Light • Temperature • Design Emotional

² Felder, R.M (**LEARNING STYLES AND STRATEGIES**, North Carolina State University

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Persistence • Responsibility • Structure <p>Sociological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning alone • In a pair • With peers • With a teacher and/or in a variety of social patterns <p>Physiological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception • Intake while learning • Chronobiological energy patterns • Mobility needs
<p>Ehrman and Oxford in 1990³ cited Cornett's definition</p>	<p>"Learning styles are the overall patterns that give general direction to learning behavior"</p>	<p>Sensory preferences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual • Auditory • Kinesthetic • Tactile <p>Personality type</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extroverted vs introverted

³ Ehrman, M. & Oxford, R. (1988). "Ants and grasshoppers, badgers and butterflies: Qualitative and quantitative exploration of adult language learning styles and strategies." Paper presented at the Symposium on Research Perspectives on Adult Language Learning and Acquisition, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intuitive random vs sensing sequential • Thinking vs feeling • Closure-oriented • /judging vs open /perceiving <p>Desired degree of generality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global or holistic • Analytic <p>Biological differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biorhythms • Sustenance • Location
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Ehrman and Oxford (1990) cited 9 major style dimensions but the most strongly associated with the foreign language learning process are described in this paper work; however, it is sensory preferences, personality types and desired degree of generality the core of this investigation.

Sensory Preferences

Sensory Preferences refer to the physical, perceptual learning channels with which the student is the most comfortable. Sensory preferences can be broken down into four main areas: visual, auditory, kinesthetic (movement-oriented), and tactile (touch-oriented). Visual students like to read and obtain a great deal from visual stimulation. For them, lectures, conversations, and oral directions without any visual backup can be very confusing. In contrast, auditory students are comfortable without visual input and therefore enjoy and profit from lectures, conversations, and oral directions without visual objects. They are excited by classroom interactions in role-plays and similar activities. They sometimes, however, have difficulty with written work. Kinesthetic and tactile students like lots of movement and enjoy

working with tangible objects, collages, and flashcards. Sitting at a desk for very long is not for them; they prefer to have frequent breaks and move around the room.

Personality Type

Another style aspect that is important for L2 education, according to Oxford (1990), is Personality Type, which consists of four strands: extraverted vs. introverted; intuitive-random vs. sensing-sequential; thinking vs. feeling; and closure-oriented/judging vs. open/perceiving. In the first group Oxford (1990) divided students' personality in extraverted and introverted. Extraverts gain their greatest energy from the external world. They want interaction with people and have many friends. In contrast, introverts derive their energy from the internal world, seeking solitude and tending to have just a few friendships. Also, students can be Intuitive-Random or Sensing-Sequential. Intuitive-random students think in abstract, futuristic, large-scale, and nonsequential ways. They like to create theories and new possibilities, often have sudden insights, and prefer to guide their own learning. In contrast, sensing-sequential learners like facts rather than theories, want guidance and specific instruction from the teacher, and look for consistency. Another category is Thinking vs. Feeling. Thinking learners are oriented toward the truth, even if it hurts some people's feelings. They want to be viewed as competent and do not tend to offer praise easily –even though they might secretly desire to be praised themselves. In comparison, feeling learners value other people in very personal ways. They show empathy and compassion through words, not just behaviors, and say whatever is needed to smooth over difficult situations. The last strand of personality types is Closure-oriented/Judging vs. Open/Perceiving. Closure-oriented students want to reach judgments or completion quickly and want clarity as soon as possible. These students are serious, hardworking learners who like to be given written information and enjoy specific tasks with deadlines. In contrast, open learners want to stay available for continuously new perceptions and are therefore sometimes called “perceiving.” They take L2 learning less seriously, treating it like a game to be enjoyed rather than a set of tasks to be completed. Open learners dislike deadlines; they want to have a good time and seem to soak up L2 information by playing rather than hard effort.

Desired Degree of Generality

The third dimension of learning style, called Desired Degree of Generality, contrasts the learner who focuses on the main idea or big picture with the learner who concentrates on details and two categories are drawn: global or holistic and analytic. Global or holistic students like social interaction, communicative events in which they can emphasize the main idea and avoid analysis of grammatical details. They are comfortable even when not having all the information and they feel free to guess from the context. On the other hand, Analytic students tend to concentrate on grammatical details and often avoid more free-flowing communicative activities. Because of their concern for precision, analytic learners typically do not take the risks necessary for guessing from the context unless they are fairly sure of the accuracy of their guesses.

Biological Differences

The last dimension of learning style is Biological Differences that refers to biological factors, such as biorhythms, sustenance, and location. The first factor, biorhythms, reveals the times of day when students feel good and perform their best. Some L2 learners are morning people, while others do not want to start learning until the afternoon, and still others feel better studying in the night. Second, Sustenance refers to the need for food or drink while learning. Quite a number of L2 learners do not feel comfortable learning without a candy, a cup of coffee, or a soda in hand, but others are distracted from study by food and drink. Finally, Location involves the nature of the environment: temperature, lighting, sound, and even the firmness of the chairs.

Learning Strategies

According to Oxford⁴ in Language Learning Styles and Strategies “to learn a foreign language implies that there is not too much or little input of this language studied, so that students do not get immersed in it”. It is in this context in which is necessary to use some methods and techniques, like Learning Strategies, to make the learning process workable. Since strategies are conscious, students actively participate in their selection and use.

⁴ Oxford, R.L. (2003), Language Learning styles and Strategies: and overview, GALA

Strategies are not isolated actions but a process in which many actions are included such as learners' learning style in order to achieve a learning goal. When learning a foreign language, it is essential that Learning Strategies work altogether with students learning style for "learning styles have a significant influence on students choice of Learning Strategies and both affect learning outcomes" (Ehrman & Oxford, 1988,89). As Cohen⁵ claimed "good language learners appeared to use a larger number and range of strategies than poor language learners, the implications of understanding strategy use have seemed increasingly important" (1998).

In 1960s, when research into language Learning Strategies began, developments in cognitive psychology influenced much of the research done on language Learning Strategies (Williams and Burden 1997:149). The primary concern has been on "identifying what good language learners report they do to learn a second or foreign language" (Rubin and Wended 1987:19). In 1966, the first attempt on learner strategies was made with the publication of Aaron Carton (1971), "The Method of Inference in Foreign Language Study". After Carton (1971), Rubin⁶ started doing research which focused on the strategies of successful learners and stated that, once identified such strategies could be made available to less successful learners (Hismanoglu, 2000). Rubin (1975) classified strategies in terms of processes contributing directly or indirectly to language learning. Wong-Fillmore (1976), Tarone (1977), Naiman et al. (1978), Bialystok (1979), ³Cohen and Apehek (1981), Wenden (1982), Chamot and O'Malley (1987), Politzer and McGroarty (1985), Conti and Kolsody (1997), and many others studied strategies used by language learners during the process of foreign language learning (Hismanoglu, 2000).

Learning Strategies are a set of operations employed by the learner for acquiring, retaining, retrieving or performing" (Rigney, 1978). On the other hand, Rubin (1987), who pioneered much of the work in the field of strategies, classified strategies in terms of processes contributing directly or indirectly to language learning and makes the distinction between strategies contributing directly to learning and those contributing indirectly to learning.

⁵ Cohen, A.D. (1990). *Language learning: Insights for learners, teachers, and researchers*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

⁶ Rubin, J. (1975). What the "good language learner" can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly*, 9, 41-51

According to Rubin, there are three types of strategies used by learners that contribute directly or indirectly to language learning. These are: Learning Strategies, Communication Strategies and Social Strategies. However, it is believed that “the concept of learning strategy is dependent on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and Learning Strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional directions and learning techniques” (Stern, 1992, p. 261). He classified five main language Learning Strategies; these are as follows: Management and Planning Strategies, Cognitive Strategies, Communicative - Experiential Strategies, Interpersonal Strategies, Affective Strategies. However, O’Malley, Chamot,⁷ (1990) stated that Learning Strategies are the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information. They classified strategies in three broad categories: cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies (1985). Moreover, Oxford (1990) said that “Learning Strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, more transferable to new situations” (p.8).

The chart bellow shows the definition and classification about Learning Strategies that some authors present.

Table 2. Learning Strategies

Author	Definition	División
O’Malley, Chamot, et all (1990)	“Learning Strategies are the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive • Metacognitive • Social
Rigney, 1978	“Learning Strategies are a set of operations employed by the learner for acquiring, retaining, retrieving or performing”.	*no classification was found.

⁷ O’Malley, J.M., & Chamot, . (1990). *Learning Strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rubin, 1987	“Classified strategies in terms of processes contributing directly or indirectly to language learning”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Strategies • Communication Strategies • Social Strategies
Stern, 1992	“Learning strategy is dependent on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and Learning Strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional directions and learning techniques”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and Planning Strategies • Cognitive Strategies - Communicative - Experiential Strategies • Interpersonal Strategies • Affective Strategies

In 1985, Oxford in her studies has grouped Learning Strategies into six categories: cognitive, metacognitive, social, compensation, memory, affective strategies which in turn are the key features of our study along with oral proficiency.

Cognitive Strategies

To Oxford in “Language Learning Strategies” cognitive strategies are the important functions in the process of becoming competent in using the new language and highly useful for understanding and recalling new information. These are strategies that enable the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways. Oxford considered cognitive strategies involved note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas (knowledge structures), practicing in naturalistic settings, and practicing structures and sounds formally, receiving and sending messages strategies, analyzing and reasoning and creating structure for input and output (1990). She also stated that “...good language learners employ the new language directly with cognitive strategies, such as practicing naturalistically, analyzing contrastically and summarizing”. Moreover,

Cognitive strategies were related to L2 proficiency in studies by Oxford and Ehrman (1995), Oxford, Judd, and Giesen (1998), among others.

Metacognitive Strategies

Oxford stated that metacognitive strategies are employed for managing the learning process overall. These strategies are classified in three different dimensions: centering students' learning, arranging and planning students' learning and evaluating students' learning. Examples of these are identifying one's own learning style preferences and needs, planning for an L2 task, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and a schedule, monitoring mistakes, and evaluating task success, and evaluating the success of any type of learning strategy. In conclusion, metacognitive strategies (beyond the cognition) regulate their own cognition and to focus, plan and evaluate their progress as they move toward communicative competence (Rebecca L. Oxford). Studies of EFL learners in various countries (e.g., in South Africa, Dreyer & Oxford, 1996; and in Turkey, Oxford, Judd, & Giesen, 1998) uncovered evidence that metacognitive strategies are often strong predictors of L2 proficiency.

Memory-related Strategies

The third element in this classification is Memory-related strategies which help learners link one L2 item or concept with another but do not necessarily involve deep understanding. Various memory-related strategies enable learners to learn and retrieve information in an orderly string (e.g., acronyms), while other techniques create learning and retrieval via sounds (e.g., rhyming), images (e.g., a mental picture of the word itself or the meaning of the word), a combination of sounds and images (e.g., the keyword method), body movement (e.g., total physical response), mechanical means (e.g., flashcards), or location (e.g., on a page or blackboard) (Oxford, 1990). In previous studies carried out by Oxford & Ehrman (1995), memory-related strategies have been exposed to relate to L2 proficiency in L2 courses designed for native-English speaking learners of foreign languages.

Compensatory Strategies

Another component is the compensatory strategies which Oxford (2002) defines as strategies that help the learner make up for missing knowledge. Example of this category are guessing from the context in listening and reading; using synonyms and “talking around” the missing word to aid speaking and writing; and strictly for speaking, using gestures or pause words. However, Little (personal communication, January, 1999) and Oxford (1990, 1999) contend that compensation strategies of any kind, even though they might be used for language use, nevertheless aid in language learning as well. In spite of everything, each instance of L2 use is an opportunity for more L2 learning. Oxford and Ehrman (1995) verified that compensatory strategies are notably allied to L2 proficiency in their study of native-English-speaking learners of foreign languages.

Affective Strategies

The fifth in the list are Affective strategies. These strategies help learners take control of their feelings and serve to regulate emotions, motivation, and attitudes. Examples of these are identifying one’s mood and anxiety level, talking about feelings, self-rewarding, and using deep breathing or positive self-talk, have been shown to be drastically related to L2 proficiency among native English speakers learning foreign languages (Oxford, 1996; Oxford and Ehrman, 1995). Also, Oxford identified three different strategies such as lowering learners’ anxiety, encouraging oneself and taking learners own emotional temperature. All the researchers agree that social and affective strategies are the strongest contributors to improve one’s speaking and oral proficiency.

Social Strategies

The last element in this classification is social learning strategy. It is considered as the “activities learners engage in which afford them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge”. According to Rebecca Oxford (1995 and 1996), the use of social strategies helps the learner work with others and understands the target culture as well as the language. Social strategies were considerably associated with L2 proficiency in studies by the South African EFL study by Dreyer and Oxford (1996) and the investigation of native-English-

speaking foreign language learners by Oxford and Ehrman (1995). Rebecca L. Oxford stated that social strategies provide increased interaction and more empathetic understanding, two qualities to reach communicative competence. Based on this framework, the next social strategies were drawn: asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, asking for help in doing a language task, talking with a native-speaking, conversation partner, cooperating with others, empathizing with others, and exploring cultural and social norms. In 2006, Macaro combined social strategies and affective strategies into the so-called socio-affective learning strategy. Social strategies, he said, are “clusters of cognitive and metacognitive strategies that lead to Strategic Plans, while affective strategies require the knowledge of oneself as a learner through recurrent monitoring of one’s learning” (Macaro 2006, p. 328). But also, Rebecca L. Oxford stated that social strategies provide increased interaction and more empathetic understanding, two qualities to reach communicative competence. Based on this framework, three social strategies were drawn: asking question, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others. Asking for help and giving help are social strategies that may benefit performance if students are encouraged to cooperate with peers, to help each other and to offer help. Positive self-talk is an affective strategy in which the learner can reduce anxiety and other affective factors if he or she is able to motivate himself or herself. As a result, “the strategy may help students maintain a favorable, psychological state that could facilitate the successful completion of a task” (Macaro, 2006).

The table bellow shows the classification and definition of Learning Strategies that Oxford presents.

Table 2.1 Learning Strategies (Rebecca L. Oxford, Ph.D)

Category	Definition	Examples
Cognitive	These strategies enable the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways	Reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas (knowledge structures), practicing in naturalistic settings, and practicing structures and

		sounds formally
Metacognitive	These strategies are employed for managing the learning process overall	Identifying one's own learning style preferences and needs, planning for an L2 task, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and a schedule, monitoring mistakes, and evaluating task success, and evaluating the success of any type of learning strategy
Memory-related	Help the learner link one L2 item or concept with another but do not necessarily involve deep understanding.	Various memory-related strategies enable learners to learn and retrieve information in an orderly string (e.g., acronyms), while other techniques create learning and retrieval via sounds (e.g., rhyming), images (e.g., a mental picture of the word itself or the meaning of the word), a combination of sounds and images (e.g., the keyword method), body movement (e.g., total physical response), mechanical means (e.g., flashcards), or location (e.g., on a page or blackboard)
Compensatory	These strategies help the learner make up for missing knowledge	guessing from the context in listening and reading; using synonyms and "talking around" the missing word to aid speaking and writing; and strictly for speaking, using gestures or pause words
Affective	These strategies help	Identifying one's mood and anxiety

	learners take control of their feelings and serve to regulate emotions, motivation, and attitudes	level, talking about feelings, rewarding oneself for good performance, and using deep breathing or positive selftalk
Social	These strategies help the learner work with others and understand the target culture as well as the language	asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, asking for help in doing a language task, talking with a native-speaking conversation partner, and exploring cultural and social norms

Previous studies have been carried out taken into account the learning strategy and learning styles use (Mcnamara,2010; Woolley,2010; Flavell,1992; Gough & Tunmer, 1986) but just a few of them considered the usage of Learning Strategies in oral development. For example, Mingyuan⁸ (2003) reports on the findings of an investigation on language Learning Strategies used by students in the intensive English program. The study examined the relationship between the students' use of Learning Strategies and their English proficiency. It found that there was a strong relationship between strategy use and English Oral proficiency. On the other hand, Lunt⁹ (2000) examined the relationship between oral proficiency, and reported learner strategy use in an ESL migrant context but no clear evidence of a positive relationship was identified. Since those studies have not shown a clear indication about the influence of Learning Strategies use and oral proficiency, this research tries to find out which of these tendencies apply to English major students of the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador.

To sum, the study of Learning Strategies have become a growing research body which has been a subject of argumentation among educational settings because researchers differ in

⁸ Mingyuan, Z. and Xiaoping, L. (2003) Language Learning Strategies and English Language proficiency: An investigation of Chinese ESL students at NUS, Singapore University Press, National University of Singapore.

⁹ Lunt, H (2000) **The Learning Strategies of Adult Immigrant Learners of English: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives**, University of Melbourne, Department of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics.

the approaches and outcomes of their investigations. Afore-mentioned, many categories have been drawn from Learning Strategies and Learning Styles, but given the scope of the present study, Oxford's taxonomy on Learning Styles and Learning Strategies would be considered because her division is broader and includes a variety of circumstances and factors in which students learn a foreign language that the other educational researchers do not consider in their investigations. Furthermore, Oxford's taxonomy has been the framework upon which many researchers in the area have started their investigations. Based on her learning styles and strategies' classification, this study attempts to identify if English major students from the University of El Salvador use the Learning Strategies based on their learning styles; besides, it would be determined if such strategies have a positive or negative impact in their oral proficiency.

Methodology

✓ Description of research design and procedures used

The present chapter presents a detail account of the different methods and approaches used to conduct the investigation. The survey method is employed as a mean to get the richest possible data to answer the research question. A description of the sampling is given as well as a justification why this sample in specific was chosen. It is followed by an overview of the process of data collection and the steps to accomplish the data analysis. In addition, considering the importance that reliability and validity have in a research study, it is explained the measures taken to enhance them. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the preceding sections.

Among the very many research methods to address social science studies, the survey was the most appropriate method for conducting this investigation. For “researchers have used survey research to investigate the characteristics, attitudes and opinions of language learners (...) therefore, survey research instruments allow researchers to operationalize (and consequently, measure) these constructs ” (Wagner,2010). Based on Wagner’s point of view, the variation of the survey used to obtain the necessary data for conducting this investigation, were the questionnaire and the test. These were the best options to gather the data for answering the research question under study due to the limitations regarding instrument time administration, students sample accessibility and teachers’ willingness to cooperate. To strengthen this study, the information obtained through the students was compared with the teacher reported oral mid-term evaluation grades. Among the advantages of using this types of technique are that it “can be administered to a large number of participants easily, can be objectively scored and the data can be analyzed quantitatively” (Wagner, 2010). Thus, in order to quantify variables and factors, the quantitative approach was applied.

✓ Sampling procedures

The sample of the present study was carried out with the help of 60 Reading and Conversation I students of the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador. A convenience sampling was administered due to limited resources, which is useful

to know the relationship of the three variables in the investigation (Oxford, 2008). Six Reading and Conversation I groups of classes were taking the subject; within those six, three groups of the subject under study that attending in different schedules (morning, afternoon, and afternoon-night) were selected. Having those three groups, all the students belonging to these group's classes administered the sample. It is considered that the rest of the students that were left out, were no necessary, because the purpose of the study is to identify the relationship between Oral Proficiency with Learning Styles and Learning Strategies, but not students' Learning Style nor the what Learning Strategies they used. There are two main reasons why such groups were selected; first of all, Reading and Conversation I course is the last course aimed at developing students' language skills at an advance level according to the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. The second reason, is because at this level students are supposed to have developed many language skills for the contact they have had with the language; the majority of the participants have studied English as a foreign language a mean of three years.

✓ **Methods and instruments of data gathering**

The requiring data for this study was gathered with the administration of a questionnaire and a test.

A questionnaire

This questionnaire is “a written instrument in which respondents read questions or statements and they answer these questions by selecting a choice offered” (Wagner, 2010). Through this instrument, information that is not available from production data, such as performance or observational data is gotten (Mackey and Gass, 2005). The questionnaire contained 17 closed questions related to the use of cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective and social Learning Strategies in oral English proficiency that were appropriate to the developmental level of the learners participating in the study.

A test

By the other hand, a test contains a series of questions, problems, or physical responses designed to determine knowledge, intelligence, or ability (Wagner, 2010) and in

this case it was administered with the purpose of determine students' learning styles. The test was divided in eight parts; each part contains six statements about circumstances and factors in which students learn. Besides, questionnaires and tests were administered in English and both of them requested personal information such as the name, the gender, and the age of the participants. Furthermore, teachers' authorizations were requested prior giving the surveys to the students.

Analysis of grades

After administering the questionnaires and the tests, the information obtained through these instruments was compared with the students' mid-term oral evaluation grades.

✓ **Reliability and validity**

To increase the credibility and confidence of our research findings, reliability was taken into account. First of all, "Reliability refers to score consistency across administration of one's instrument" (Gass, 2010). To achieve reliability in the present study, it was necessary to provide the same sample instrument to all sixty Reading and Conversation I students. The external conditions under which the instrument was administered were the same; for instance, the light, the quality of photocopies, the time to answer the questions, among others. One of the possible threats to reliability is that different teachers evaluate oral proficiency during the mid-term; therefore, in order to increase reliability, the same rubric for oral evaluation was applied for all Reading and Conversation I groups. Moreover, to enhance it, the instrument was constructed on the six main areas related to the strategies students employ to improve their oral proficiency. "Thus, both validity and reliability are ways of ensuring quality in research" (Gass, 2010).

Another concept into discussion is validity which is defined as "the correctness and appropriateness of the interpretation a researcher makes of his or her study" (Gass, 2010). In order to make the result of the research as trustworthy and valid as possible, some measures were taken. Validity could be affected by the fatigue. Anyone who has ever completed a questionnaire that was too long could become fatigue and lose concentration. With the purpose of avoiding this, the questionnaire and the test used were brief and concise but

effective and reliable at the same time. In many respects, validity increased the trustworthiness of this research.

✓ **Statistical treatment**

In this study, the data analysis used was determined by the research question of the study and the data collection method employed by the researcher. Questionnaire data was analyzed quantitatively in order to know students' learning style, the Learning Strategies students use, and discover the relationship between the Learning Strategies (cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective and social), learning styles and students' oral proficiency. After having student's reported learning styles and Learning Strategies, each questionnaire was revised to verify if they had been fully completed. Later, participants' identifications codes were assigned for future reference. Subsequently, learning style tests were analyzed with the purpose of identify students learning styles. After that, students' learning styles were compared with the Learning Strategies questionnaires in order to know if students use the strategies according to their learning style. It is important to mention that after analyzing the data on students' learning styles, students were given a written report on their learning style and the Learning Strategies that are more appropriate for them to use.

For quantification of data analysis, participants were divided in two categories, the ones who got in the oral exam six that is the lower grade to pass a course and the ones who got higher than six; questionnaires were separated accordingly. Then, the questionnaires were coded according to the style they belong to and the strategies they use. A deep analysis of the data gathered using SPSS Program was made in order to determine if there exists a positive or negative relationship between the variables under study; namely, oral proficiency, Learning Strategies and learning styles. Moreover, the data obtained permitted to find out if students who use Learning Strategies according to their learning style have a better performance that the students who use Learning Strategies randomly.

This chapter has drawn the research design and described the research process used in detail. In order to gather the necessary data to conduct this investigation in our setting, it was

important to use the survey method as a means of data collection; specifically, the questionnaire and the test were used because they met the needs and conditions under which the study was carried out. In addition, another source of data was the students' oral mid-term evaluations grades which were taken into account to make a deeper analysis. Moreover, to determine the relationship between the variables it was adopted the quantitative approach for it provided numerical data. Besides, Reading and Conversation I students of the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador were the main source of information needed to develop the study. Finally, to increase credibility and trustworthiness of our study, two basic concepts were considered; these were validity and reliability.

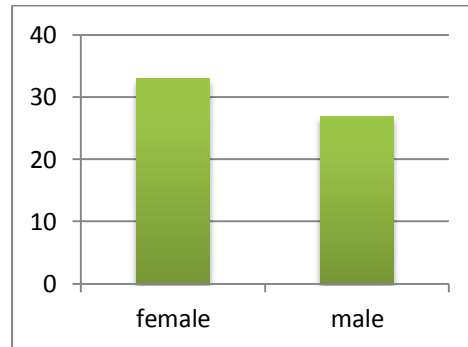
Results

The present chapter reveals the results of research data gathered for answering the research question. First, some details of the methodology used are presented with the purpose of having a better comprehension of the analysis made. Then, the tables with the background information of participants like the age and the gender are presented, followed by a brief description of each table. In addition, a table with a summary of students' oral mid-term grades with the mean, media and mode are presented. After that, the summary of the correlation found between variables is illustrated as well as the coefficient summary table. Then, the frequency tables are divided into the six strategies this study has contemplated and the different students learning styles contrasted with students' oral grades; after each cluster a brief description of the results is shown.

The requiring data for this study was gathered with the administration of a questionnaire and a test. The questionnaire contained 17 closed questions related to the use of six Learning Strategies in oral English proficiency that were appropriate to the developmental level of the learners participating in the study. Moreover, a test designed by Rebecca Oxford was administered with the purpose of identify students' learning styles. Besides, both instruments requested personal information such as the name, gender, and age of the participants. They were provided in English and permissions were obtained from the teachers prior to giving the surveys to the students to pass the surveys and to get students' oral mid-term grades. After administering the questionnaire, the information was compared with the students' mid-term oral evaluation grades. Data was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) in order to discover the relationship between the Learning Strategies students use, students learning styles and their oral proficiency. A deep analysis of the data gathered was made in order to determine if there exists a positive or negative relationship between the variables under study; namely, oral proficiency, Learning Strategies and learning styles.

Table 1.0: Gender

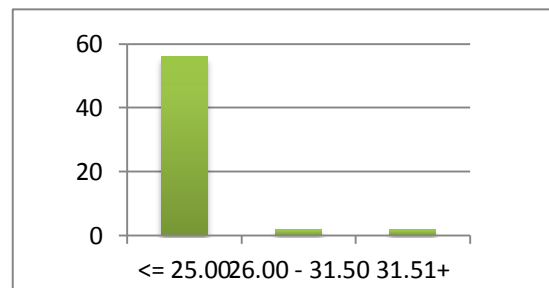
	Frequency	Percent
Female	33	55
Male	27	45
Total	60	100



The table 1.0 illustrates the background information of the sample group. The table shows generally the gender of the participants. There were a total of 33 females and 27 males collaborating with the study. In general, 60 students of Reading and Conversation I participated in the study. The graph presents the information in a more understandable form.

Table 2.0: Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
<= 25.00	56	93.3
26.00 - 31.50	2	3.3
31.51+	2	3.3
Total	60	100



In table 2.0 it is represented the age of participants. The 93.3% of students are between 19 and 25 years old, 3.3% of participants are between 26 and 31 years old and the other 3.3% are more than 31 years old. In the graph the information is displayed for a better understanding.

Table 3.0: Grades

Minimum	4.0
Maximum	9.3
Mean	6.6
Median	6.7
Mode	5.10 ^a

	Frequency	Percent
<= 6.00	19	31.7
6.01+	41	68.3
Total	60	100.0

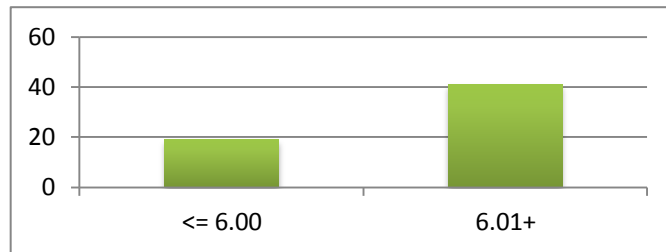


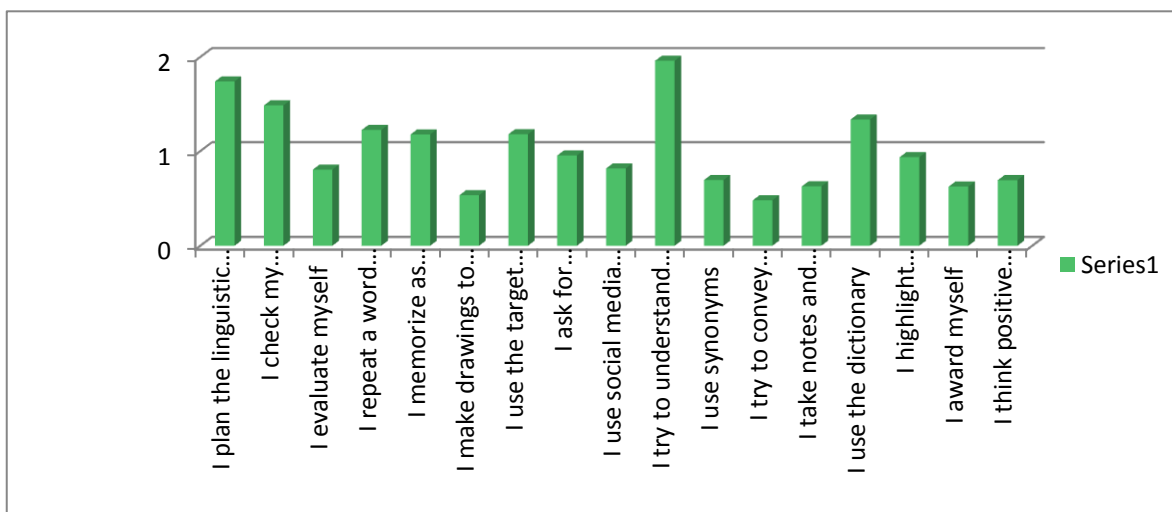
Table 3.0 is the summary table of students` oral mid-term grades of participants in the survey; such grades vary being the minimum 4.0 and the maximum grade 9.3. The data mean 6.6; the median is 6.7 and the mode is 5.1. In general, 41 out of 60 students passed the oral evaluation and 19 failed it. A graph is included for a better understanding of the information presented in the tables.

Frequency tables about Learning Styles and Learning Strategies

Table 4.0: Learning Strategies Summary Table

ANOVA					
Strategies		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Metacognitive	I plan the linguistic components	12.117	0.404	1.74	0.07
	I check my performance	15.05	0.502	1.485	0.145
	I evaluate myself	9.867	0.329	0.804	0.722

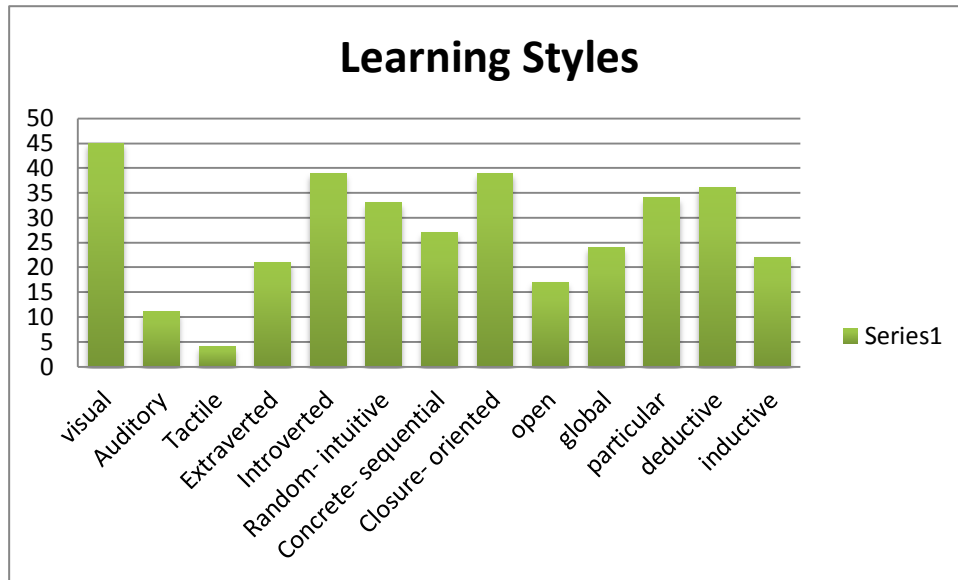
Memory	I repeat a word several times if I can not pronounce it	13.633	0.454	1.224	0.294
	I memorize as many words as possible	15.183	0.506	1.177	0.331
	I make drawings to remember meaning	10.3	0.343	0.534	0.953
Social	I use the target language outside the classroom	15.483	0.516	1.179	0.33
	I ask for clarification when I do not understand something	14.7	0.49	0.954	0.552
	I use social media to practice English	23.35	0.778	0.817	0.708
Compensatory	I try to understand meaning from context	11.283	0.376	1.959	0.037
	I use synonyms	9.167	0.306	0.694	0.837
	I try to convey ideas using my hands	303.133	10.104	0.481	0.975
Cognitive	I take notes and make summaries	12.033	0.401	0.627	0.896
	I use the dictionary	17.6	0.587	1.336	0.219
	I highlight important information	12.217	0.407	0.935	0.573
Affective	I award myself	12.333	0.411	0.625	0.897
	I think positive about my evaluation outcomes	6.933	0.231	0.693	0.838



In table 4.0 all the questions included in the questionnaire to find out the strategies students use were included. Such table shows the most used strategies for learning a second language which are planning the linguistic components before an oral evaluation, check one self's performance (metacognitive strategies), memorizing words (memory), using the language outside the classroom (social), understanding meaning from context (compensation) and using the dictionary (cognitive). on the other hand, the strategies that were used the least in the foreign languages department are the awarding oneself and think positively about the evaluation outcomes (affective), making drawings to remember the meaning of a word (memory), take notes and summaries (cognitive) and conveying ideas with the hands (compensatory). Table 4.0 is followed by a graph to have a better displaying of the data presented.

Table 5.0: Learning Styles

Styles	visual	Auditory	Tactile	Extraverted	Introverted	Random- intuitive	Concrete- sequential	Closure- oriented	open	global	particular	deductive	inductive
frequency	45	11	4	21	39	33	27	39	17	24	34	36	22
percent	75	18.3	6.7	35	65	55	45	65	28.3	40	56.7	60	36.7



In table 5.0 a summary of students learning styles' frequency is presented. From the 60 participants in the investigation, 75 % is visual just followed by far below 18.3 % of auditory and 6.7% of tactile students. Moreover, the majority of the students are introverted (65%), random-intuitive (55%), closure-oriented (65%), particular (56.7%) and deductive (60%). The data from table 5.0 is displayed in a graph too.

Table 5.1: Relationship between compensatory strategy, student's learning style and students' oral grades summary

Compensatory		Styles												
		Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Extraverted	Introverted	Random-intuitive	Concrete-sequential	Closure-oriented	Open	Global	Particular	Deductive	Inductive
<=6.00	Agree	14	2	2	7	11	11	7	9	7	5	12	11	6
6.01+	Agree	30	8	2	13	27	21	19	29	9	18	21	23	16

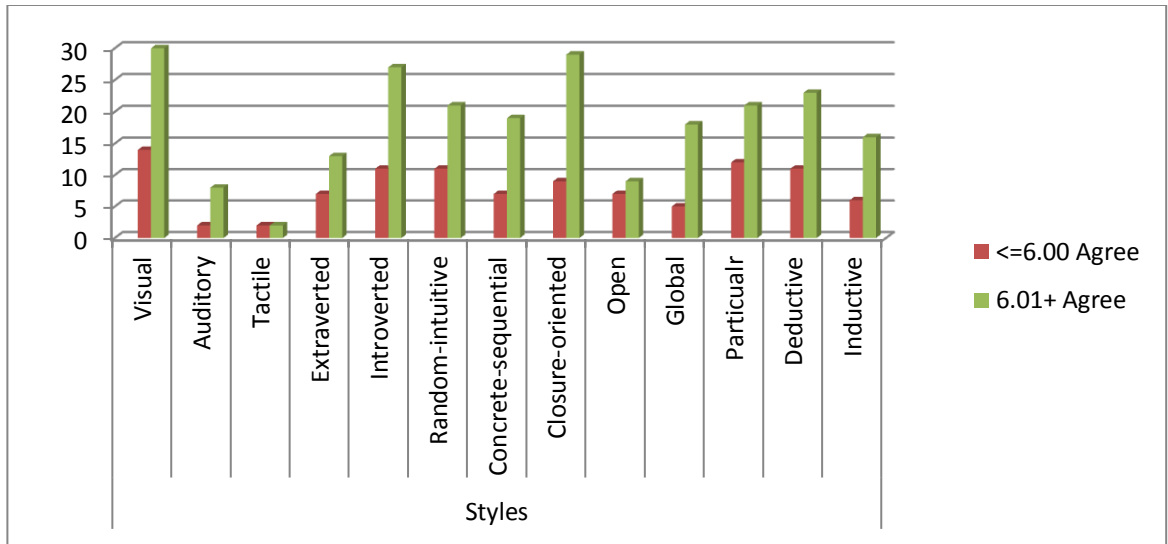


Table 5.1 shows the relationship between compensation strategy, student’s learning style and students’ oral grades summary. The sample of the present study was carried out with the collaboration of 60 Reading and Conversation I students of the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador. Students that got 6.0 or lower than that use less this strategy. Moreover, visual students (who rely more on the sense of sight, and learn best through visual means), introverted students (who like to do more independent work), and closure-oriented students (who focus carefully on most or all learning tasks, strive to meet deadlines, plan ahead for assignments, and want explicit directions) are the type of students that use it more than the rest. This data is better shown in the graph that follows table 5.1

Table 5.2: Relationship between social strategy, student’s learning style and students’ oral grades summary

Social		Styles												
		Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Extraverted	Introverted	Closure-oriented	Open	Random-intuitive	Concrete-sequential	Global	Particular	Deductive	Inductive
Use these	<=6.00	11	2	2	6	9	6	7	9	6	3	11	10	5
strategies	6.01+	22	7	1	10	20	25	4	15	15	13	16	17	13

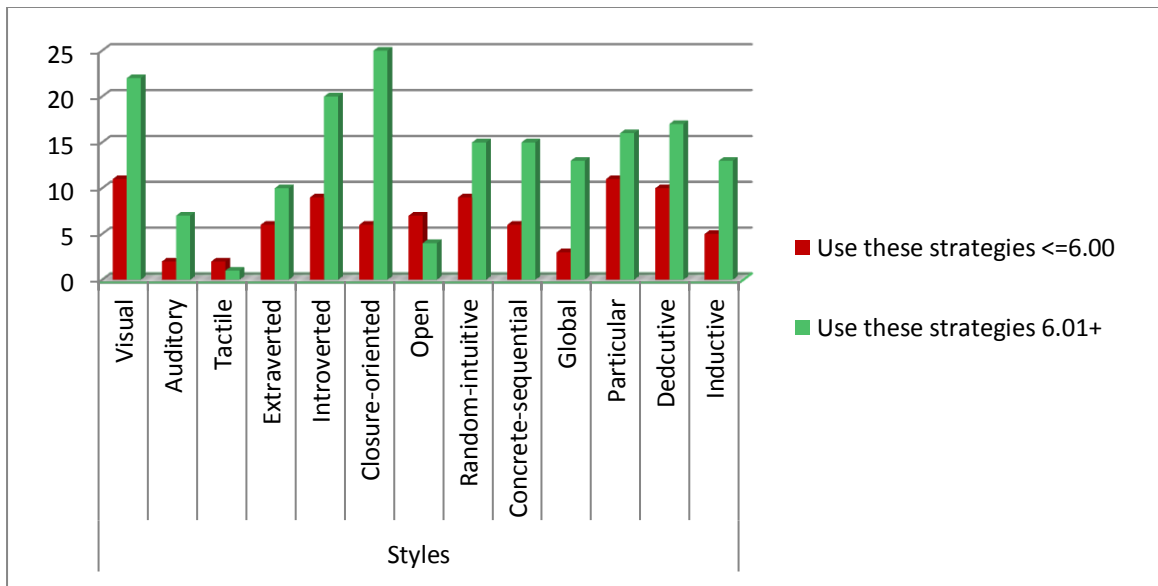


Table 5.2 represents the students’ learning styles and the usage of social Learning Strategies; it also includes grades students have gotten in their oral evaluations. Independently of students’ learning styles, social strategies are used by most students; however, it is visual, introverted and closure-oriented students the ones who use them in a higher percentage. On the other hand, tactile, extraverted, open and global students use these strategies in a lower degree. These results are outstanding since extraverted students use social strategies in a lower degree than introverted students. This demonstrated that the usage of Learning Strategies is not the appropriate for student’s learning style. A double column graph displays table he results shown in 5.2.

Table 5.3: Relationship between affective strategy, student’s learning style and students’ oral grades summary

Affective		Styles												
		Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Extraverted	Introverted	Random-intuitive	Concrete-Sequential	Closure-oriented	Open	Global	Particular	Deductive	Inductive
Use these strategies	≤6.00	15	2	1	7	11	10	8	8	8	4	13	11	6
	6.01+	30	9	2	14	27	22	19	30	9	19	21	24	16

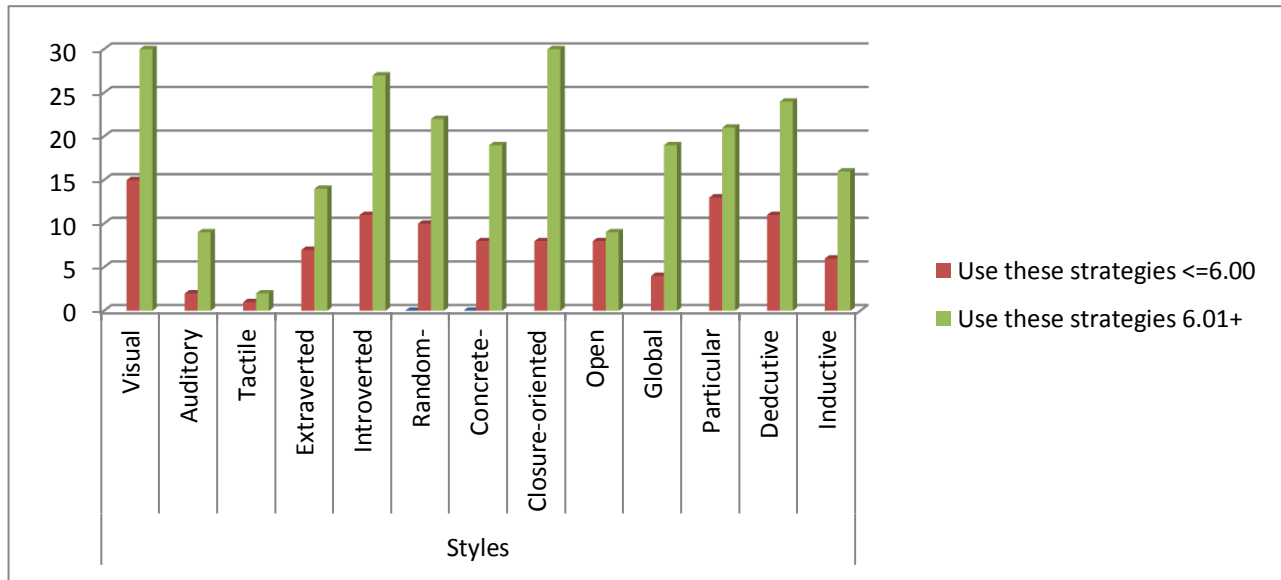


Table 5.3 shows the relationship between the affective Learning Strategies and students learning styles; it also reveals if those students failed or passed the oral evaluation. Although the majority of students use affective strategies, it is visual, introverted, random-intuitive, particular, and deductive students that use them in a higher level; whereas, tactile, global and open students use this strategies the least. Table 5.3 is followed a double column graph which presents the data in a more understandable form.

Table 5.4: Relationship between metacognitive strategy, student’s learning style and students’ oral grades summary

Metacognitive		Styles												
		Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Extraverted	Introverted	Random-intuitive	Concrete-sequential	Closure-oriented	Open	Global	Particular	Deductive	Inductive
Use these strategies	<=6.0	15	2	2	7	12	11	8	9	8	5	13	12	6
	6.01+	29	9	1	14	25	22	17	29	8	18	20	24	14

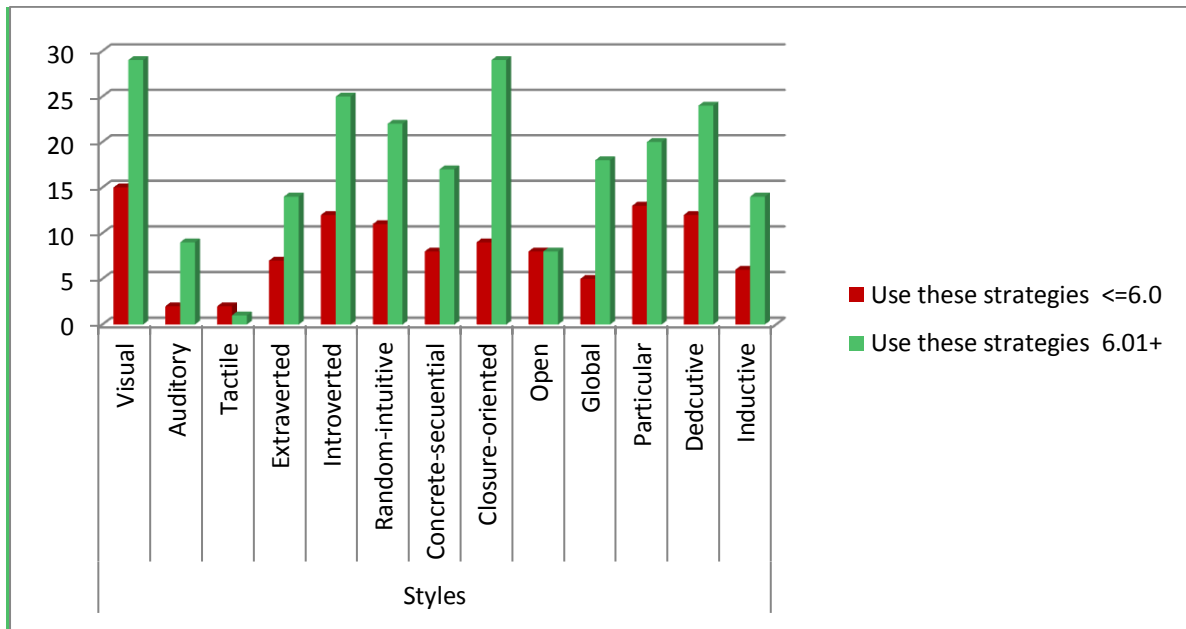


Table 5.4 shows the association between metacognitive strategies, students learning styles and oral evaluation grades. The results revealed that visual, introverted, random-intuitive, closure-oriented, and deductive students are the ones that use this type of strategies in a higher degree. In contrast, tactile and open students use less this group of strategies. Since tactile students benefit from doing projects, working with objects, and moving around (games, building models, conducting experiments; and open students enjoy discovery learning (in which they pick up information naturally) and prefer to relax and enjoy their learning without concern for deadlines or rules, it is not a surprise that this type of students do not metacognitive strategy in a higher percentage. The data from this table is better presented in the graph that follows it.

Table 5.5: Relationship between memory strategy, student’s learning style and students’ oral grades summary

Memory		Styles												
		Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Extraverted	Introverted	Random-intuitive	Concrete-sequential	Closure-oriented	Open	Global	Particular	Deductive	Inductive
Use these strategies	<=6.00	13	2	1	6	10	8	8	6	8	3	12	10	5
	6.01+	26	7	1	12	22	20	14	25	7	13	20	21	12

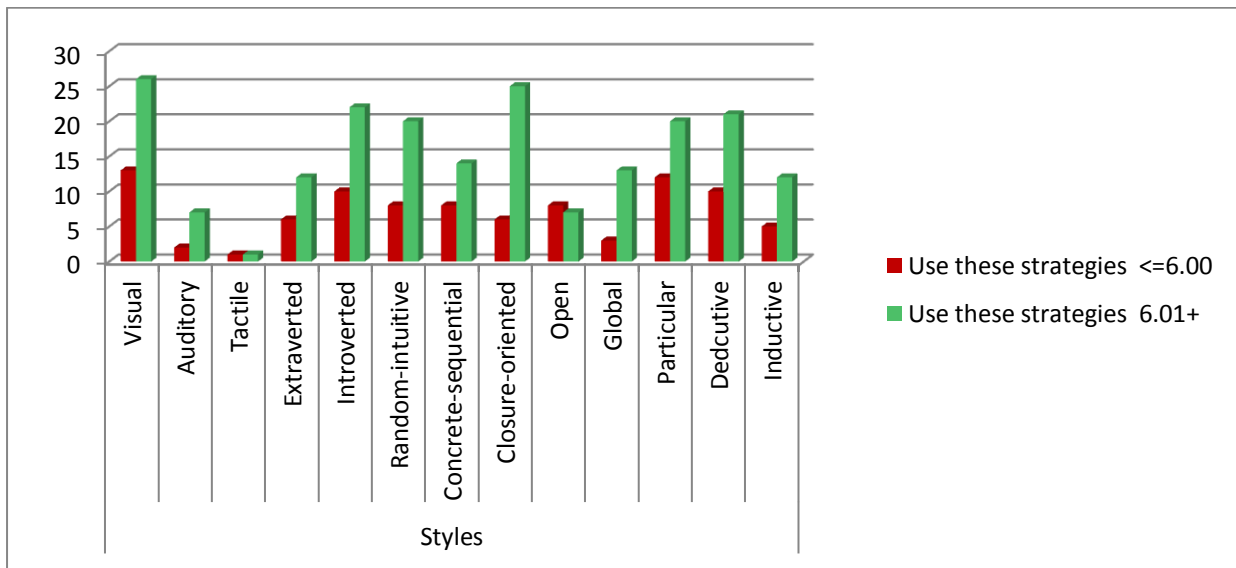


Table 5.5 displays results related to memory strategies, students learning styles and oral evaluation grades of the participants. It is not surprising that visual students and introverted students are the one that make use of this strategy in a higher degree in comparison with the rest of learning styles. The type of students that use this group strategies with less frequency are auditory, tactile, and open students. Again students that got better grades (6.01 or more) are the ones that use this type of strategy in a higher degree. The results from table 5.5 are exposed in the graph that follows it.

Table 5.6: Relationship between cognitive strategy, student’s learning style and students’ oral grades summary

Cognitive		Styles												
		Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Extraverted	Introverted	Random-intuitive	Concrete-sequential	Closure-oriented	Open	Global	Particular	Deductive	Inductive
Use these strategies	<= 6.00	12	2	2	7	9	9	7	7	7	5	10	19	6
	6.01+	27	8	1	12	24	20	16	26	8	17	18	22	13

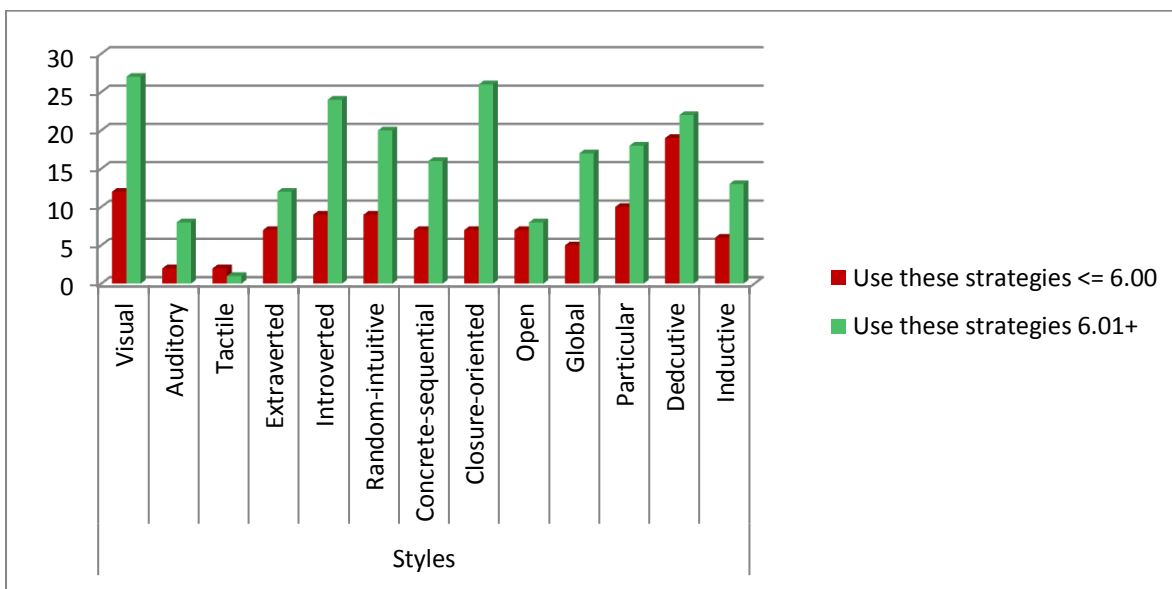


Table 5.6 presents the results related to the use of cognitive strategies; students own learning styles; and oral evaluation grades. Visual, introverted, closure-oriented, and deductive students make use of social strategy in a higher level. On the other hand, open and extraverted students are the type of students that use it less though these two types of students might benefit from the use of social strategy for they are relaxed in the way they learn. Using this type of strategies might benefit their learning in order to get a balance in their learning process. The graph that follows the table shows the result in a more comprehensible structure.

Major findings

The present chapter provides in details the analysis of the findings gathered throughout this study. First, the answers for the research questions are presented together with the aims of the investigation. Second, an overall description of the findings in the different areas is shown. Next, the results of the study are discussed in relation to previous research. It is followed by the expectations considered in the study. Finally a conclusion and recommendation for future research is provided.

The first research question that this investigation attempts to answer studied the relation between Learning Strategies and students` oral English proficiency and which strategies are most commonly use. This question aims are to find out whether Learning Strategies can be used as predictors of students` oral achievement. In order to gather this information it was necessary to apply the survey method and have participants access and collaboration to administer the questionnaire and get students mid-term oral grades; and the method for data analysis was the quantitative. Such scores were contrasted with the participants` self-reported Learning Strategies used and their learning styles.

- The results of this investigations reveal that the Learning Strategies that contribute the most to Oral proficiency development are the following: planning the linguistic components before an oral evaluation, checking one self`s performance (metacognitive strategies), memorizing words (memory), using the language outside the classroom (social), understanding meaning from context (compensation) and using the dictionary (cognitive).
- On the other hand the strategies that have a lower significance to the oral proficiency are as follows: the awarding oneself and think positively about the evaluation outcomes (affective); making drawings to remember the meaning of a word (memory); taking notes and elaborating summaries (cognitive); and conveying ideas with the hands (compensatory).

- The styles that are predominant among foreign language students are visual, introverted, random-intuitive, particular and deductive styles.
- Extraverted students do not use social Learning Strategies which are the ones that best work for them.
- Visual students are not used to highlight important information or make drawings or take notes.
- In general, students use different strategies to improve their learning process but they do not use the strategies that are more suitable to their Learning Style; therefore, their grades are low and they are not able to develop their oral skills fully.

Correlation analysis indicated that the Learning Strategies under this investigation generally had a strong relation as a predictor of students' oral performance. What has been identified in the study was that students' oral proficiency improves with the use of Learning Strategies if those strategies are applied according to their learning style. Consistently metacognitive and memory Learning Strategies had the highest positive correlation and frequency with students' oral grades; in opposition with affective strategies which showed a weak relationship and low frequency. One of the reasons of such results is because the memory and metacognitive strategies depend upon themselves, their own pace and study rhythm, besides, their own willingness to learn and improve their proficiency; moreover, these strategies had been part of students' instruction from their mother tongue and they apply such strategies more comfortably in the target language. In turn, within the social Learning Strategies students can employ, it is necessary the exposure and immersion into the language; like asking for clarification using the target language and using the media to practice the language, etc; however, just a minority of participants in the survey showed a high interaction in the language.

The findings of the relationship between the use of Learning Strategies and oral proficiency indicates that the application of Learning Strategies is a predictor of students' oral English achievement but if students use the strategies according to their style they will help them better. This result supports Mingyuan's work (2003), he found that there was a strong relationship between strategy use and English proficiency; the use of some specific strategies

was positively correlated to improvement of sub-language skills such as oral communication. However, Helen Lunt`s work (1994) in which she examined the relationship between oral proficiency, and reported learner strategy use in an ESL migrant context didn`t find a clear positive correlation.

It was expected that the six Learning Strategies were used with the same frequency and that they influenced students` performance in the same level. Also, it was expected that specific strategies such as monitoring themselves, using the mass media, finding out unknown words in the dictionary and asking for clarification had the highest frequency. However, the results showed that not all the strategies are used and not all of them help students with the same intensity either. The social learning strategy, for instance, had the lowest frequency; within this cluster was using the mass media. The only strategies that fulfilled our expectations were students` planning the linguistic components before an oral presentation (metacognitive strategy) and finding out unknown words and asking for clarification (cognitive strategies). From all our expectations, a third part was accomplished.

The findings above reveal that Learning Strategies such as metacognitive, memory, and social, although they are used by a majority of students they don`t really help them to improve their oral English proficiency because they are not used according to their own Learning Style.

Limitations

Unwillingness to help: The most obvious limitation to carry out his study was students and teachers' unwillingness to cooperate with the investigation providing grades and the accessibility to administer the test. In despite of that, the sample results can be generalized to a greater community for students were chosen randomly and so were the schedules under the investigation.

Reduction of samples: Another disadvantage was that the research was intended to have a sample of 80 students. However, there was a delay in the delivering of oral evaluation grades of one of the class group and for that reason 20 students were not taken into account later in the research. Though this group of students was not included in the final phase of this study, they were benefited since they received an individual report with their own learning styles and strategies that they can use in order to improve their oral development. So the sample had to be narrowed from 80 to 60 participants.

Conclusions

The present study investigated the relationship between the use learning strategies, learning styles and oral students' proficiency. Consequently, two instruments were necessary to obtain the appropriate data from the sample so that all questions could be puzzled out. First, a questionnaire was used to discover the type of learning strategies students make use of. The second instrument was a test to identify students own learning style.

The results of this quantitative study led to five major conclusions. First of all, evidence points out that the styles that are predominant among foreign language students are visual, introverted, random-intuitive, particular and deductive styles. Other salient finding is that students show improvement in their oral proficiency with the use of learning strategies if those strategies are applied according to their own learning style. What is relevant to point out is that metacognitive and memory learning strategies had the highest positive correlation with closed oriented and visual students, respectively. There were some strategies that showed a high frequency and they are: planning the linguistic components before an oral presentation (metacognitive strategy) and finding out unknown words and asking for clarification (cognitive strategies).

Additionally, students use different strategies to improve their oral learning process but they do not use the strategies that are appropriate for their own Learning Style as a result they got low grades and it makes difficult for them to develop their oral skills completely. For example, the social learning strategy had the lowest correlation with students' oral grades, that is due to the fact that students who could benefit from these strategies are not using them to improve their oral abilities or are using them inappropriately. For instance, Social Learning Strategies work better with extraverted and auditory students but according to the results of this investigation students with those styles do not use them.

This study permitted to know that learning strategies help to improve students` oral proficiency if they are used according to their own learning style. Thus, the investigation demonstrated that strategies used by Reading and Conversation I students are not related to students` own learning style that is the main reason why they get low grades in their oral evaluations.

Recommendations

For further researchers

- It is necessary to consider other factors that can influence students` proficiency like their background (age, gender, economic level, etc) to enrich the study.
- Also, it is advice to use a more suitable method for the examination of Learning Strategies and oral proficiency because they are difficult variables to research about.
- Develop an experimental research on the topic.

For students

- Students should get aware of their learning styles.
- Apply strategies according to their learning styles to improve their learning process.
- Use the resources that they have at hand such as technology and social media.

For the teachers

- Get aware of their students` learning styles to apply methodology that favors learners.
- Encourage students to know their learning style and the importance of the Learning Strategies` use for their oral development.

For the Foreign Language Department

- To create projects which aim is to be aware of the different learning styles and the strategies that favor each style.
- To booster the use of learning styles in second language context.
- To encourage teachers to know students learning styles at the beginning of each course

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Questionnaire about Learning Strategies

University of El Salvador
School of Arts and Sciences
Foreign Languages Department



Questionnaire

Objective: to find out the Learning Strategies the students in Reading and Conversation put in practice in order to improve their oral proficiency.

Researchers: Julia Zarceño, Zulma Tobar, Gloria Tobar, and Vilma Ramírez

Instruction: completely the following information

Name: _____ **Age:** _____

Gender: **F** **M**

Part 1

Instructions: read the following statements and circle the one that is true for you.

1. I plan the linguistic components, the parts and sequence of ideas to express for a forthcoming oral task

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

2. I check my performance while I am speaking.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

3. I evaluate how well I accomplished an oral task.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

4. When I cannot pronounce a word, I repeat it until it come out smoothly

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

5. I memorize as many words as possible

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

6. I make drawings to remember the meaning of a word

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

7. I use the target language outside the classroom with my classmates.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

8. When I don't understand something, I ask for clarification.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

9. One of the main purposes of using facebook, twitter, and other social media is putting in practice my English.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

10. When I do not understand a word or phrase during the class, I try to understand meaning from context.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

11. If I do not know how to say a word, I use synonyms.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

12. When I am speaking, I try to convey ideas with my hands.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

13. I make lots of summaries and take notes during the class.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

14. I use the dictionary to find out the pronunciation of an unknown word

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

15. I highlight very important information in a handout.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

16. When I reach a goal, I award myself.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

17. I am positive about my evaluation outcomes.

Agree completely agree disagree completely disagree

Thank you for your help!

Annex 2. Learning Style Test

University of El Salvador
 School of Arts and Sciences
 Foreign Languages Department



Learning Style Test

Objective: to determine students' learning styles.

Researchers: Julia Zarceño, Zulma Tobar, Gloria Tobar, and Vilma Ramírez

Instruction: Completely the next information

Name: _____ **Age:** _____

Gender: **F** **M**

Instructions: read the next items and check how often you develop each activity

Part 1: HOW I USE MY PHYSICAL SENSES	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I remember something better if I write it down.					
When I listen, I visualize pictures, numbers, or words in my head.					
I use color-coding to help me as I learn or work.					
I remember things better if I discuss them with someone.					
I prefer to learn by listening to a lecture rather than reading.					
I like to listen to music when I study or work.					
If I have a choice between sitting and standing, I'd rather stand.					
I think better when I move around (e.g., pacing or tapping my feet).					
Manipulating objects helps me to remember what someone says.					
Part 2 : HOW I EXPOSE MYSELF TO LEARNING SITUATIONS					
I learn better when I work or study with others than by myself.					
I learn better in the classroom than with a private tutor.					
It is easy for me to approach strangers.					
I prefer individual or one-on-one games and activities.					
When I am in a large group, I tend to keep silent and listen.					
I want to understand something well before I try it.					
Part 3 : HOW I HANDLE POSSIBILITIES					
I try to find many options and possibilities for why something happens					
I like to discover things myself rather than have everything explained to me					
I add many original ideas during class discussions.					
I trust concrete facts instead of new, untested ideas.					
I prefer things presented in a step-by-step way.					
I dislike it if my classmate changes the plan for our project.					

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Part 4: HOW I DEAL WITH AMBIGUITY AND WITH DEADLINES					
My notes, handouts, and other school materials are carefully organized					
I like to be certain about what things mean in a target language.					
I like to know how rules are applied and why.					
I let things pile up on my desk to be organized eventually.					
I don't worry about comprehending everything.					
I don't feel the need to come to rapid conclusions about a topic.					
Part 5 : HOW I RECEIVE INFORMATION					
I prefer short and simple answers rather than long explanations.					
I get the main idea, and that's enough for me.					
When I tell an old story, I tend to forget lots of specific details.					
I need very specific examples in order to understand fully.					
I pay attention to specific facts or information.					
When I try to tell a joke, I remember details but forget the punch line.					
Part 6 : HOW I FURTHER PROCESS INFORMATION					
I can summarize information easily.					
I can quickly paraphrase what other people say.					
When I create an outline, I consider the key points first.					
I have a hard time understanding when I don't know every word.					
I like to focus on grammar rules.					
I am good at noticing even the smallest details regarding some task.					
Part 7 : HOW I DEAL WITH LANGUAGE RULES					
I like to go from general patterns to the specific examples in learning a target language.					
I like to start with rules and theories rather than specific examples.					
I like to begin with generalizations and then find experiences that relate to those generalizations.					
I like to learn rules of language indirectly by being exposed to examples of grammatical structures and other language features.					
I don't really care if I hear a rule stated since I don't remember rules very well anyway.					
I figure out rules based on the way I see language forms behaving over time.					
Part 8 HOW I DEAL WITH RESPONSE TIME					
I react quickly in language situations.					
I go with my instincts in the target language.					
I jump in; see what happens, and make corrections if needed.					
I need to think things through before speaking or writing.					
I like to look before I leap when determining what to say or write in a target language.					
I attempt to find supporting material in my mind before I set producing language.					

ANNEX 3. Example of Students' Report

University of El Salvador
Foreign Language Department
School of Arts and Sciences

Results on learning styles test according to Oxford's taxonomy

Student's name: **Evelin Angel Avalos.**

You got the next results:

- You have a moderate preference in the following learning styles: visual, introverted, concrete-sequential, closure-oriented, particular, and deductive. Remember that students' learning styles are not black or white but a mixture of them.

In the next chart a brief description of the learning styles is provided

LEARNING STYLE	CHARACTERISTICS
VISUAL	You rely more on the sense of sight, and you learn best through visual means (books, video, charts, and pictures).
AUDITORY	You prefer listening and speaking activities (discussions, lectures, audio tapes, role-plays).
TACTILE KINESTHETIC	You benefit from doing projects, working with objects, and moving around (games, building models, conducting experiments).
EXTRAVERTED	You probably enjoy a wide range of social, interactive learning tasks (games, conversations, discussions, debates, role-plays, simulations).
INTROVERTED	You like to do more independent work (studying or reading by yourself or learning with a computer) or enjoy working with one other person you know well.
RANDOM INTUITIVE	You are most likely more future-oriented, prefer what can be over what is, like to speculate about possibilities, enjoy abstract thinking, and tend to disfavor step by-step instruction
CONCRETE SEQUENTIAL	You are likely to be more present-oriented, prefer one-step-at-a-time activities, and want to know where you are going in your learning at every moment.
CLOSURE ORIENTED	You probably focus carefully on most or all learning tasks, strive to meet deadlines, plan ahead for assignments, and want explicit directions.
OPEN	You enjoy discovery learning (in which you pick up information naturally) and prefer to relax and enjoy your learning without concern for deadlines or rules.
GLOBAL	You enjoy getting the gist or main idea and are comfortable communicating even if you don't know all the words or concepts.
PARTICULAR	You focus more on details and remember specific information about a topic well.
DEDUCTIVE	You like to go from the general to the specific, to apply generalizations to experience, and to start with rules and theories rather than with specific examples.
INDUCTIVE	You like to go from specific to general and prefer to begin with examples rather than rules or theories.

NOTE: some of the strategies that will help you: you have to study on your own, practice English by yourself, try to practice your English with other people a little more and try to talk more with your classmates when you do group work in class. Repeat words until them come smoothly; you should try listening to other people and paying attention to certain sounds, reading aloud just to practice pronouncing English. During the class, you should write down important words for you; take risks saying things that aren't quite correct, do not worry too much about grammar rules. You are doing good using compensatory and the other strategies and continue using them

ANNEX 4. Students' Learning Styles Summaries Delivered to Teachers

First Group

University of El Salvador
Foreign Language Department
School of Art and Sciences

Reading and Conversation I
Licda. Cecilia Reyes de Amaya
Graduation Work on Learning Styles

Learning Styles Students' Report

Nº	Student's name	Learning Styles												
		Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Extraverted	Introverted	Random Intuitive	Concrete Sequential	Closure Oriented	Open	Global	Particular	Deductive	Inductive
1	Denis Rivas		X		X		X		X		X			
2	Cristina Rubio			X		X	X			X	X			
3	Àndres Deras		X		X		X		X		X			
4	Vicente Hernández		X		X				X		X		X	
5	Roxana Cisneros	X				X	X		X		X			X
6	William Díaz			X		X		X	X		X			
7	Esperanza Alvarenga			X		X		X			X			X
8	Cecilia Dubòn	X			X		X		X				X	
9	Ronald Cortez	X					X		X			X	X	
10	Cecilia Lòpez	X			X			X	X			X		
11	Manel Beltràn					X		X	X			X	X	
12	Elva Martínez	X			X					X	X			X
13	Josè Daniel Molina Alfaro				X		X		X		X		X	
14	Marvin Ernesto Ortiz Castro		X		X							X	X	
15	Cristian Ademir Mendoza Palacios		X		X				X		X			
16	Fatima Gabriela Salguero	X				X			X			X	X	
17	Dina Lizeth Menendez	X			X		X		X					X
18	Claudia Lizeth Mendoza	X				X						X	X	
19	Àngel Gòmez		X		X		X		X		X			
20	Marvin Noè Escamilla	X				X	X				X			
21	Julia Cristina Avalos Vàsquez		X		X		X		X				X	
22	Ever Oldinez Nieto Pèrez	X						X	X			X		X
23	Josùè Ramòn Claros Gonzàles	X							X			X	X	
24	Joel Ernesto Còrdova Aquila					X	X					X	X	
25	Ricardihno Fuentes					X		X				X	X	
26	Cindy Stephanie Cortez Q		X		X		X		X		X			
27	Oscar Armando Henríquez Alemàn			X		X		X	X			X		
28	Saül Esteban Palacios Bernal		X		X					X	X			X
29	Manuel Reynaldo Cortez		X		X		X						X	
30	Adriana Mercedes Vanegas Gòmez					X	X			X		X		X
	TOTAL	11	10	4	17	12	15	7	19	4	14	12	13	7

Remember that students' learning styles are not black or white but a mixture of them.

Second Group

READING AND CONVERSATIONS 1
LICDA. Nelda Iveth Henriquez
Graduation work
LEARNING STYLES STUDENTS' REPORTS

Student's name	Learning styles												
	Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Global	Particular	Introverted	Exroverted	Random Intuitive	Closure Oriented	Concrete sequential	Open	Deductive	Inductive
Chen Sheng		x		X			X			X	X		X
Sonia Flores		x		x		X			X	X			
VanessaHernandez		X			X	X			X			X	
Jose Gerson Lopez Mejia		x			X				X	X			X
Victoria Azucena Rodriguez	X			X			X	X	X			X	
Elida Zulema Aguilar Garcia	X			x	X	X				X	X		X
Gerson Alonso Zelada Lopez	X	x			X	X			X	X			X
Evans Belinda Matozo	X					X	x	X	X			X	
Lorena Beatriz Lopez Espinoza	X				X	X		X	X			X	
Jenny Lisbeth Vasquez Mancia	X				X			X	X			X	
Rene Adalberto Ramirez	x			x		X			X	X		X	
Carlos Manuel Lopez Martinez	X			x		X				X	x		X
Alexander Antonio Gallardo		x				X			X	X			
Eduardo Andre Rauda Mena	x				X	X		X	X			X	
Hade Marisol Ayala Rivera		x			X	X			X	X		X	
Karen Cecilia Gomez Vasquez	x				X	X		X	X			X	
Dalia Beatriz Alvarenga	X			X			X	X	X			X	
Ana Gabriela Campos	x					X			X	X			
Isis Vanessa Serrano Cruz	x			x			x		X	X		X	
Diana Callejas	x				X	X	x	X	X			X	
Jennifer Rivas	x					X			X	X		X	
Emelyn Haydee Elias Urrutia								X	X				X
Fatima Osorio			x		X	X				X	X		X
Wendy Guadalupe Salazar Claros		x		X								X	
Gabriela Olivia Paniagua Recinos			x					X	X				X
Kenia Adelina Morales Nieto	x	x			X	X			X				
Erick Edenilson Martir Ascencio	x				X				X		X		
Andres Samuel Rosales		x					x	X					X
Andres Samuel Rosales													
Gabriela Beatriz Madrid Lopez		x			x			X	X			X	
Edwin Amilcar Lopez	x				x	X		X	X				
Yuliana Marielos Alvarez		x			x			X	X			X	
total	18	12	2	8	16	18	7	14	25	13	4	16	9

Third Group

READING AND CONVERSATIONS 1
 LICDA. Sara Mendez
 Graduation work
 LEARNING STYLES STUDENTS' REPORTS

Student's name	Learning styles												
	Visual	Auditory	Tactile	Global	Particular	Introverted	Exroverted	Random Intuitive	Closure Oriented	Concrete sequential	Open	Deductive	Inductive
Evelin Angel Avalos	X				x	X			x	X		x	
Ruth Rodríguez	X				x		x	x	x			x	
Alma Portillo						X		x					
Jennifer Vásquez	X					X				X			
Napoleón Pérez	X					X				X			
Karla Alfaro	X				x	X			x	X			X
Marina Montenegro	X			x		X				X	x	x	
Nefi Ortiz			x	x		X			x	X			
Mario Humberto Rodriguez				x		X			x	X			X
Graciela Sánchez	X					X		x		X	x	x	
Iris Meléndez		X		x		X			x	X		x	
Stanley Gutiérrez			x	x				x	x				x
Karla López	X			x			x	x	x			x	
Milton Zamora	X				x		x	x	x			x	
Tania Bérnabe	X			x			x		x	X			x
Gemmy Alvarado		x			x	X			x	X		X	
Gerson Sánchez	X				x	X		x	x			x	
Luis Berríos	X				x		x		x	X		X	
Diego Muñoz		x			x				x	X			x
Leydy Aguilar	X						x						
Total	13	3	2	7	8	12	6	7	14	13	2	10	5

ANNEX 5. Example of Students Oral Evaluation Grades

Evaluation N. 2/Quiz

	Name	Grade
1	Aguilar Garcia, Elida Zulema	5.7
2	Alvarez Rodriguez, Dalia Beatriz	5.4
3	Álvarez Gutiérrez, Yuliana Marielos	0
4	Ávila Romero, Irvin Jacob	8.3
5	Ayala Rivera, Hade Marisol	4.3
6	Callejas Quijano, Diana Vanessa	5.4
7	Campos Orellana, Ana Gabriela	6
8	Elías Urrutia, Emelyn Haydeé	5.1
9	Gallardo Calero, Alexander Antonio	6
10	Gomez Vásques, Karen Cecilia	4.8
11	Guzmán Hernández, Josué David	x
12	Hernández Hernández, Vanessa Yamileth	7.1
13	Jack Chen, Jung Sheng	6
14	Jaimes, Manuel Alberto	5.4
15	López Espinosa, Lorena Beatriz	4
16	López Martínez, Carlos Manuel	6.6
17	López Mejía, Jose Gerson	7.7
18	López Sánchez, Edwin Amílcar	5.4
19	Madrid López, Gabriela Beatriz	5.1
20	Martin Ascencio, Erick Edenilson	6.3
21	Matozo de Salguero, Evans Belinda	5.4
22	Morales Nieto, Kenia Adelina	5.1
23	Navarrete Flores, Jenny Carol	4.3
24	Nieto Flores, Sonia Esther	5.4
25	Osorio Alvarado, Fátima Beatriz	6
26	Paniagua Recinos, Gabriela Olivia	6
27	Ramírez, René Adalberto	4.3
28	Rauda Mena, Eduardo André	4.6
29	Rivas Sánchez, Jennifer Guadalupe	6.3
30	Rodríguez Gallardo, Victoria Azucena	7
31	Rosales Reina, Andrés Samuel	5.1
32	Salazar Claros, Wendy Guadalupe	4
33	Serrano Cruz, Isis Vanessa	4.3
34	Trejo Vásquez, Elmer Ignacio	6.3
35	Vásquez Mancía, Jenny Lisbeth	8.6
36	Zelada López, Gerson Alonso	5.1

ANNEX 6. Pictures of the recollection of samples



Students of Reading and Conversation listened carefully to the direction given on how to fill in the test and questionnaires.



Students paying attention to the instructions



The researchers were monitoring students at the moment of taking the questionnaires.



The researchers explaining the meaning of the charts in the written reports given to the students



Researchers handing over the reports of students learning styles and strategies.



After getting the reports of their learning styles and the recommendations about the strategies they could use to improve their oral proficiency, students interested in knowing the results read the reports.

Annex 7

Diagnosis

Objectives

General Objective

- To get familiar with students' and teachers' point of view about the main factors that affect negatively oral proficiency development of students registered in Readings and Conversation II course.
- To comprehend the Reading and Conversation course's role in the English language development skills.

Specific objectives:

- Determine teachers and students' knowledge on the terms: learners' characteristics, learning styles and Learning Strategies.
- To identify the main factors that affect students' oral proficiency development.
- To find out students' and teacher's opinions about the importance of being aware of learning styles in the classroom.
- To analyze the Reading and Conversation courses' programs in English language skills.

Methodology

This diagnosis was based on Reading and Conversation courses because it is the last course aimed at developing students language skills at an advance level according to the ACTFL Proficiency guidelines; its purpose was to find out the academic difficulties students face when studying English as a foreign language in the Foreign Language Department. To carry out this research it was necessary to administer a survey to teachers and students of the subjects under study; to analyze the courses programs; and to collect and compare the scores students got in previous semesters.

The survey consisted in a questionnaire which objective was to get familiar with teachers and students` perspectives on oral skill s development of students registered in the Reading and conversation courses. It had eight close questions for students and a similar quantity for teachers. Six professors who currently teach the subject of Reading and Conversation completed the test and a random sample of 35 students who are currently taking the subject did it as well. Moreover, the programs of Reading and Conversation were analyzed to get information about the subject, the objectives and goals, activities and tasks and the evaluation system. Besides that, previous semesters students` scores were collected to compare their performance in the subject with students current reported skill developmental level.

Curriculum description

Four are the values that build up the major in English teaching in the Foreign Languages Department. At the end of their major, students must have acquired the knowledge on those series; the first element is the development of English language skills like speaking, reading, listening, writing and some others. Then, students learn how to teach the language they are learning. The subjects related to this matter are included in the didactical domain. After they have acquired the English language skills, they are ready to learn specific abilities like literature analysis. About the ending of the major, students are taught different techniques in methods of investigation; this is the research area which prepares students for their future graduation project.

In the first area mentioned above, English language skills development, one of the most important skills is the oral ability in which students learn or interact with others, make presentations, and express themselves in the language. The subjects that focus on this ability are ten: Five English intensive course, 3 English Grammar courses, 2 Reading and Conversations courses. Reading and Conversation are the last courses in the list of English language skills development.

The development of oral skills is a long process that does not just involve a single subject, but a series of subjects that follow a pattern addressed to the skills development. This pattern basically begins with a Basic English course and ends up with Readings and Conversations I and II. Since the Reading and Conversation are the last language skills

development subjects, it is the appropriate level to measure students` English oral skills. Because of this, students of Reading and Conversation were subjects of our investigation; in which, the purpose was to know if students had reached a considerate percentage of their oral abilities. The results show that students have not reached the expected proficiency to be in that level. Thus, Readings and Conversation students reported a lower oral proficiency than was expected, being the mode 75% of their speaking skills.

Currently, the syllabus of reading and conversation implies the development of communicative skills such as discourse, linguistics, social abilities, etc and writing skills. So, different activities are developed along the course so that students can practice and show that they are learning, among these activities students have carried out:

- oral presentations
- debates
- taking stands about a specific topic
- lexis notebooks
- blog discussions

Findings

After administering the questionnaire and analyzing the programs of Reading and conversation we can mention the following findings:

Findings on the Reading and Conversation courses` programs

- There are two courses that belong to the developmental area and studied at the fourth academic year.
- Each course has duration of 16 weeks where the principal aim is to develop fluent and critical readers` ability to reflect and discuss about a wide range of topics.
- A primary focus is to teach readers how to approach readings without having to continually stop and use a dictionary.

- A secondary aim of the courses is to develop the speaking skill by having discussions in pairs and groups and the class about specific topics related to the readings.
- Class time is mostly devoted to the enhancement of the reading and speaking skills.
- Students use a textbook (Active) for the class time.
- There is a balance between the exercises in the book with some communicative activities incorporated to the methodology used in class.
- Furthermore, oral presentations, debates, role-plays and other activities will be part of the oral expression process.
- The book exercises will increase the student's lexicon and its use, and communicative activities will develop fluency.

Finding on the survey

Students` survey

- Students are familiar with the term Learning Strategies
- A majority of students are aware of their learning style
- Most students have been interested about knowing their learning style.
- Most students have searched for information about Learning Strategies that help them improve their oral skills.
- Students like discussing a topic with classmates, watching movies and videos and playing games.
- Students do not like creating charts, performing dramas and roleplays and giving oral presentations.
- Most students have developed their oral skills in 75%.
- Most students watch movies and videos, sing English songs and read books and magazines to improve their oral performance.
- In students` opinion, large groups and their own study habits interfere negatively in their learning process.

Teachers` survey

- Most teachers are familiar with the concepts of learning styles, Learning Strategies and learning characteristics.
- All the teachers consider it is important to take into account students` learning styles because they learn better and their needs are fulfilled.
- All the teachers are aware of their students learning styles and consider it is important the own students know it.
- All the teachers incorporate students learning styles in the teaching methodology
- All teachers consider important to apply Learning Strategies in students` oral proficiency.
- The majority of teachers consider that students` study habits, students` attitude and large groups interfere negatively in students` oral performance.

Conclusions

- The objectives of the program are focused on process rather than on attitude.
- Though students claim to know their learning style and apply different Learning Strategies, they reported a low percentage in their development.
- Students have a negative attitude towards oral presentation in the classroom.
- Teachers and students, as well, agreed that the factor that affects negatively the students` language development is study habits.