

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



**LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY THE STUDENTS OF
READINGS AND CONVERSATIONS I AT THE FOREIGN
LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL
SALVADOR, SEMESTER II, 2013.**

PRESENTED BY

Alicia Yoselin Guerra Quant

GQ05007

José Leonel Herrera Gutiérrez

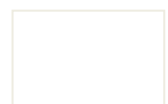
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**FINAL RESEARCH REPORT PRESENTED BY UNDERGRADUATE
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ENGLISH TEACHING**

M ED. Ricardo Garay Salinas
ADVISOR

MTI. Edgar Nicolás Ayala
GENERAL COORDINATOR OF THE DEGREE PROCESSES

FEBRUARY, 4TH, 2014.
MAIN CAMPUS, SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR



AUTHORITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

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RECTOR

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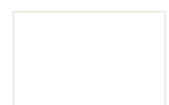
LIC. ALFONSO MEJÍA ROSALES
SECRETARY

AUTHORITIES OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

MTRO. JOSE RICARDO GAMERO ORTIZ
HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT

MTI. EDGAR NICOLAS AYALA
GENERAL COORDINATOR OF THE DEGREE PROCESSES

RICARDO GARAY SALINAS, M Ed.
ADVISOR

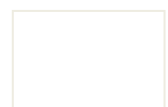


INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades learner centered approaches have become increasingly studied while the grammar translation method and other approaches had gone out of fashion, Rahimi and Farvardin (2009). Thus, in order to lead students to develop an independent and autonomous language learning, it is necessary to point out the language learning strategies students are using at the Foreign Language Department to enhance the learning of the English language. Nevertheless, research in this area has shown that not all learners use learning strategies in the same fashion. Rebeca Oxford and Nyikos (1989), Oxford (1990) stated that there are many variables inferring in the type and frequency of the learning strategies used by second foreign language learners.

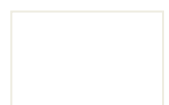
This study is divided in six chapters preceded with an introduction which is a general view about this work. Thus, the first chapter is the statement of the problem which presents a brief description of the problem, the justification, the general and specific objectives and the key terms. The second chapter is the review of related and relevant literature linked directly with the aims of this work.

This literature also presents important support for the research question is this study. The third chapter is the design of the study in which it is stated the general organization of this work and the procedure to follow in order to prove or disapprove the goals intended in chapter one. It also contains main features about the survey which is the method used in this research and the SILL which is adapted from the version 7.0 developed by Rebeca Oxford (1990). Besides, some researches are recalled in chapters two and three to support the validity on this research and the use of the SILL itself. The fourth chapter is a set of findings in this work. It contains a summary on the information gathered in the field work. It also contains some tables and the corresponding explanation on



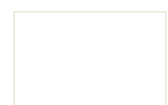
the most significant findings. Then, a general discussion arises in chapter five summarizing the research.

To conclude, chapter six presents the conclusions and the findings along the research. Additionally, this chapter presents a general view of researcher's outcomes and its corresponding recommendations for the intended auditory.

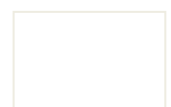


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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 Description of the problem

To be able to communicate effectively in English, students need to manage the four macro skill which are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The students of the subject Readings and Conversations I have already reached the half of the English major which are 16 subjects. This represents the 45% of the major and it is expected that by this time they should be able to manage the English language to an advanced level. Meaning, they should have the enough knowledge to become independent and autonomous to develop their language proficiency by their own. According to the researchers experience, most of the students at the FLD do not show confidence when they were asked if they feel capable to identify which are the learning strategies they have implemented up to their level. So a question arises: Are students aware of what are the learning strategies that better fit them to improve their proficiency in the four macro skills? Some students apply unconsciously some learning strategies that really help them to enhance proficiency into the target language. However, some other do not know which are the learning strategies the better fit with them. Taking into account that there are different kinds of learners, not all the students learn in the same way.

According to the Multiple Intelligences Theory, “learners are able to know the world through language, logical mathematical analysis, special representation, musical thinking, the use of the body to solve problem or to make things, and understanding of other individuals, and an understanding of ourselves.” (Howard Gardner,1991). Moreover, at the foreign language department, not all the students start the major with the same level. Researchers have found that some years ago a little percentage of students

started the university having attended to previous English courses. On the other hand, most of the students did not have any training on English.

1.2 Justification

To describe how easy or difficult is for a student to learn by his own becomes often a hard work to accomplish. The students of English at the foreign language department at the University of El Salvador are not the exception. According to, Garcia, Morejon and Salmeron (2009); Martinez and Tobar (2009); Escobar, Marroquin and Mena (2007), there is a little information about this topic. Therefore, there is a need of knowing what are the techniques and strategies are that better fit students for they to learn by themselves. Oxford (1990) stated that learning strategies became widely recognized throughout education in general (Rebecca Oxford, 1990). Given the importance of the role that learning strategies play on the development of the students' language proficiency, the researchers consider this work is an important tool that is useful not only for the students but also for the teachers to screen the way students learn the target language so that the FLD can use it as an aid to be updated and to work in overcoming the barriers that stop students to develop their language proficiency.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General

To determine the type of learning strategies used by the students of the readings and conversations I course of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador.

1.3.2 Specifics

- ✓ To know which are the learning strategies that the students of Readings and Conversation I use the most.
- ✓ To identify which are the learning strategies that better help the students to improve the knowledge of the English.
- ✓ To establish the main differences between students' performance and the type of strategy they use.
- ✓ To know which of the techniques that characterized each of the strategies are the most used by the students.

1.4 Key terms

- ✓ **Learning strategies:** are “specific actions, steps or techniques used by students to enhance their own learning.” (Oxford, 1992) When the learner consciously chooses strategies that fit his or her learning style and L2 task at hand, these strategies become a useful toolkit for active, conscious, and purposeful self-regulation of learning.
- ✓ **Learning:** is a goal-directed act. Learning is acquiring new, or modifying and reinforcing, existing knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, or preferences and may involve synthesizing different types of information.
- ✓ **Learning style:** is an individual's natural or habitual pattern of acquiring and processing information in learning situations. A core concept is that individuals differ in how they learn. The idea of individualized learning styles originated in the 1970s, and has greatly influenced education.
- ✓ **English as a Foreign Language or EFL:** It is usually learned in environments where the language of the community and the school is not English. EFL teachers have the difficult task of finding access to and providing English models for their students.
- ✓ **SILL:** System inventory language learning

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

For decades, there have been implemented theories, methods and approaches for teaching English as a foreign language; for example, the Grammar Translation Method, audiolingualism and the communicative approach. However, little attention has been paid to the learner's role into the learning process and much less attention to the language development process.

According to Larsen and Freeman (2001), educators have "underestimated the significance of the learner's role". As the years has gone through, more and more researchers have become interested in the language learning process, so new approaches have arisen in order to improve it.

Based on the cognitive theory, the language learner is always considered as an active participant in his own learning process using various mental strategies in order to learn the system of the target language. In this way the learner is no longer a passive receptacle of the knowledge but he is a thinking participant who is responsible and can influence his own learning and who must charge responsibility for the development of the language. So it becomes necessary to link learning strategies direct to the outcome which is language proficiency at the end of all. Brown (2001) explains that successful mastery of the second language will be due to a large extend to a learners own personal "investment" of time, effort, and attention to the second language in the form of an individualize battery of strategies for comprehending and producing the language.

Wenden (1986) considered is an old proverb: "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime". Applied to the language teaching and learning process, it means that if students are given the answers, the immediate problem is solved, but if they are thought the strategies

to work themselves on the answers, they may be empowered to manage their own learning. Rebecca Oxford supports this statement in her book "What every teacher should know".

According to Oxford (1990), learning strategies are important because they are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. Strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence, appropriate language learning strategies result in improve and greater self-confidence.

Learning strategies are implemented by experienced students without any problem, but it must be taken into account that the strategies have to be learned before they could be used to enhance language proficiency. There are some cases in which some students never manage to grasp this kind of procedural knowledge. Rebecca Oxford (1990) stated one of the most used for learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations".

Recent researchers have retaken oxford's theory and they have used the SILL which is a very useful tool she created in her book "What every teacher should know"; for example, Carol Griffiths (2003) at the university of Auckland applied the SILL in her research "The relationship between patterns of reported language learning strategy (LLS) used by speakers of other languages (SOL) and proficiency with implications for the teaching/learning situation". Also Pannak and Chiramanee (2011) applied it in their thesis "Language Learning Strategies Used by First Year Students at Thaksin University, Songkhla Campus, Thailand". Besides, Rahimi and Farvardin (2009) used it in their thesis "the relationships between attitude, self-confidence, compensation strategies,

teacher evaluation and class evaluation in Iranian university students”. In sum, these three researchers coincide on the importance of the SILL and they support the validity of this tool to measure learning strategies.

Rebecca Oxford (1990) stated: “Now, for the first time, learning strategies are becoming widely recognized throughout education in general. Under various names, such as learning skills, learning-to-learning skills, thinking skills, and problem-solving skills, learning strategies are the way students learn a wide range of subjects, from native language reading through electronic troubleshooting to new languages. Within the language instruction field, teachers are starting to discuss learning strategies among themselves.

Years ago, learning strategy work-shops were drawing big crowds at language teachers’ conventions. Researchers identified, classified, and evaluated language learning strategies and those efforts were the result of the steady stream of articles on the topic. Most encouraging of all, increasing numbers of language learners recognized the power of their own strategies.” This theory was supported and retaken by Rahimi and Farvardin (2004)

Early classifications of language learning strategies were reduced to simply list strategies based on the performance of good learners, but more recent classification divided them into direct and indirect strategies. This model has been also broadly used by researchers like Mohammad Rahimi and Farvardin (2004) in the research “An investigation into the factors affecting the use of language learning strategies by Persian EFL”. Also those strategies are divided in six categories by Rebecca Oxford (1990) The six categories are included in the strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) created by Rebecca Oxford in her book “What every teacher should know” and broadly used as mentioned before in many researchers in the learning strategies field.

Griffiths (2003); Rahimi and Farvardin. (2004); Pannak and Chiramanee (2011) among others.

Next, there is presented and explained the way she arranged the six categories in her book “What every teacher should know”;

A. Direct language strategies

The direct strategies are beneficial to the students because they help store and recover information. These strategies help learners to produce language even when there is gap in knowledge. They also help to understand and use the new language.

1. Memory Strategies

Memory strategies are based on simple principles like laying things out in order, making association, and reviewing. These principles are employed when a learner faces challenge of vocabulary learning. The words and phrases can be associated with visual images that can be stored and retrieved for communication. Many learners make use of visual images, but some find it easy to connect words and phrases with sound, motion or touch.

The use of memory strategies are most frequently applied in the beginning process of language learning. As the learners advance to higher level of proficiency memory strategies are mentioned very little. It is not that the use ceases, but the awareness of its use becomes less.

Here is an example to apply memory strategy by making association. If a learner wants to remember the name Solange of a French person, it could be associated by saying Solange is face is so long.

2. Cognitive Strategies

These are perhaps the most popular strategies with language learners. The target language is manipulated or transformed by repeating, analyzing or summarizing. The four sets in this group are: Practicing, Receiving and Sending Messages, Analyzing and Reasoning, and Creating Structure for Input and Output.

Practicing is the most important in this group which can be achieved by repeating, working with sounds and writing, and using patterns. The tools of receiving and sending messages are used when learners try to find the main idea through skimming and scanning. It is not necessary to check every word. The adult learners commonly use analyzing and reasoning strategies. These are used to understand the meaning and expression of the target language. These are also used to make new expressions.

Here is an example of a learner who practices with sounds of the words that have letters *ough*.

The words through, though, tough, and trough contain ough but sound different. To understand them better the learner may make own phonetic spelling: *throo, thow, tuff, and troff*.

3. Compensation Strategies

Learners use compensation strategies for comprehension of the target language when they have insufficient knowledge of the target language. These strategies make up for the deficiency in grammar and vocabulary. When learners do not know new words and expressions, they guess the meaning. A learner brings own life experience to interpret data by guessing.

Compensation strategies are also used in production when grammatical knowledge is incomplete.

When a learner does not know the subjunctive form of verb, a different form may be used to convey the message.

Here is an example of guessing based on partial knowledge of the target language. When a learner recognizes the words shovel, grass, mower, and lawn in a conversation, it could be understood that it is about gardening.

B. Indirect Language Learning Strategies

Indirect language learning strategies work together with the direct strategies. They help learner regulate the learning process. These strategies support and manage language learning without direct engagement and therefore called indirect strategies.

1. Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies go beyond the cognitive mechanism and give learners to coordinate their learning. This helps them to plan language learning in an efficient way. When new vocabulary, rules, and writing system confuse the learner, these strategies become vital for successful language learning.

Three sets of strategies belong to this group and they are: Centering Your Learning, Arranging and Planning Your Learning, and Evaluating Your Learning. The aim of centering learning is to give a focus to the learner so that the attention could be directed toward certain language activities or skills. Arranging and planning learning help learners to organize so they may get maximum benefit from their energy and effort. Evaluating learning helps learners with problems like monitoring errors and evaluation of progress. Research has found

that compared to cognitive strategies metacognitive strategies are used less consistently by the learners.

Here is an example of arranging and planning learning. For a learner who wants to listen to the news in the target language can plan the task by first determining what topics might be covered in the program. Most news programs have segments of politics and economics. The learner can look up the words related to the topics before listening to the news. This would better prepare the learner.

2. Affective Strategies

The affective factors like emotion, attitude, motivation, and values influence learning in an important way. Three sets of strategies are included in this group: Lowering Your Anxiety, Encouraging Yourself, and Taking Your Emotional Temperature.

Good language learners control their attitudes and emotions about learning and understand that negative feelings retard learning. Teachers can help generate positive feeling in class by giving students more responsibility, increasing the amount of natural communication, and teaching affective strategies.

Anxiety could be both helpful and harmful. It is felt that a certain amount of anxiety is helpful for learners because it helps them obtain their optimum level of performance. Too much anxiety has the opposite effect where it hinders language learning. Anxiety often takes forms of worry, frustration, insecurity, fear, and self-doubt. A common high anxiety creating situation for learners is to perform before the peers and teacher when they are not prepared.

Here is an example of how learners try to lower the anxiety. Some listen to their favorite music for a few minutes before practicing the target language.

3. Social Strategies

Social strategies are very important in learning a language because language is used in communication and communication occurs between people. Three sets of strategies are included in this group: Asking Questions, Cooperating with others, and empathizing with others.

Among the three, asking questions is the most helpful and comes closest to understanding the meaning. It also helps in conversation by generating response from the partner and shows interest and involvement.

Cooperation with others eliminates competition and in its place brings group spirit. Studies show that cooperative learning results in higher self-esteem, increased confidence, and rapid achievement. Learners do not naturally apply cooperative strategies because of strong emphasis put on competition by educational institutions. Sometimes competition brings a strong wish to perform better than others, but it often results in anxiety and fear of failure. It is important to help learners change their attitudes from confrontation and competition to cooperation.

Empathy is very important in communication. Empathy means to put oneself in someone else's situation to understand that person's point of view. Learners can use social strategies to develop cultural understanding and become aware of thoughts and feelings of others.

Learners can apply the strategy of cooperating with others by doing something together in the language they are learning. Daily telephone conversation with a friend in the target language is an example to practice listening and speaking skills.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a brief explanation of the context of the study. Additionally, it explains the population and sampling, the description of the instrument (**see appendix A**). In addition, the chapter concludes with a summary of the variables.

3.1 The Context of the Study

The educational system at the FLD at the University of El Salvador is divided in five years and ten semesters correspondingly. There is a difference between the major of English teaching and Modern Languages. Thus, English teaching major requires 36 subjects and Modern Languages major requires 37 subjects to be completed. The two majors also have similarities because students taking the subjects of Readings and Conversations have already gained the half of the subjects of the major. Hence at this point students manage the same English level regardless the major and most of them are in their third year of studying which should be the normal. The subject is assigned in the second semester of the third year in both majors' curriculums.

3.2 The Participants

One hundred eleven students out of 223 students from the subject readings and conversations I constituting the 50% of the population, 41 male equal to the 37% and 70 female equal to the 63% at the FLD at the University of El Salvador participated in this study (**see appendix A**). There were included 73 students of the major of English teaching which is the 65.8% and 38 of the major of Modern Language which is the 34.2% of the sampling. Further information will be explained in the next chapter.

3.3 Description of the Instrument

The instrument (**see appendix A**) used for data collection was the SILL. This instrument was designed by Rebeca Oxford (1990) and adapted from the version 7.0 published in her book “What every teacher should know”. (**see appendix A**) It has been used several times to research learning strategies. For instance, “The relationship between patterns of reported language learning strategy (LLS) used by speakers of other languages (SOL) and proficiency with implications for the teaching/learning situation”. Griffiths (1994.); “Language Learning Strategies Used by First Year Students at Thaksin University, Songkhla Campus, Thailand” Pannak and Chiramanee (2011); “The Relationships Between Attitude, Self-confidence, Compensation Strategies, Teacher Evaluation and Class Evaluation in Iranian University Students” Rahimi and Farvardin (2009).

The survey was aimed to students of Readings and Conversations I at the FLD at the University of El Salvador, semester II, 2013. The survey had as a main objective to determine the type of learning strategies used by the students of Readings and Conversations I course at the FLD at the University of El Salvador.

The survey consisted of a set of questions divided in two parts: the first one is intended to research sex, major, age, employment status, GPA and finance of studies. The information is designed to characterize individuals and the second part is built on with an adaptation of the SILL. Six blocks that evaluated the different ways in which learning strategies are ranked using a Likert scale with four levels: never, occasionally, often and always.

3.4 Description of Variables

In the first part of the survey eleven variables described below are obtained:

Sex: this variable is qualitative type and represents a descriptive factor of individuals, since it cannot be used as a parameter for comparison between subgroups in this case is known as a priority that the number of female individuals is in a large quantity than the male gender, it would be irrelevant to establish comparison.

Major: this variable is qualitative type and keeps information about the specialty of the students who attend the major.

Age: this is a quantitative continuous type variable and in order to be managed more effectively, there was written a sheet of answers in advanced for each interval so every individual's answer becomes easier to rate and classify in sup groups.

Employment status: this is a qualitative variable that keeps information about the students' currently laboral situation.

GPA: this is a continuous quantitative type and evaluate per intervals between the values that each of the individuals locate the GPA they have accumulated up to this level.

Financement of the studies: this is a qualitative variable type and explores who pays for the education of the individual or if they have a scholarship.

The second part is composed by the specific questions prepared in the SILL previously described .It helped to determine the type of strategy with which individuals identify the most and It was measured by using a Lickert scale of four levels.

The six blocks which were structured as follows:

Block 1: Strategies of memory

Block 2: Cognitive strategies

Block 3: Strategies of compensation

Block 4: Metacognitive strategies

Block 5: Affective strategies

Block 6: Social strategies

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the gathered data which was analyzed in order to determine the type of learning strategies used by the students of the Readings and Conversations I course at the FLD at the University of El Salvador. As this study involved 111 participants, they provided the required information. Those participants expressed their opinion through the SILL (**see appendix A**), which was divided into two areas such as background information, and six blocks related with the learning strategies. After gathering the qualitative data, statistical procedures were done so SPSS 15.0 statistical software was employed to get tables and pie charts with relevant data. After that, the results were represented as mentioned before, and were described as well as explained what they mean. In sum, tables and pie charts support the gotten results from the data as well as their respective comments.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

For the realization of this study, researchers will consider as the target population the students of Readings and Conversation I at the FLD at the University of El Salvador, semester II, the data up to now of the number of students enrolled is seen in the following table:

GROUP	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	31	19%
2	27	16%
3	22	13%
4	28	17%
5	33	20%
6	29	17%
7	25	15%
8	28	17%
TOTAL	223	100%

In the present investigation was neither possible nor desirable to conduct a census because it was hard to find a 100% attendance of students in the groups, based on that researchers choose a sample, understood as a representative part of the population, through the technique simple random sampling; this tool is therefore indispensable for conducting scientific research, whose basic function is to determine which portion of a population must be examined, in order to make inferences about that population.

For a sample to be representative, and therefore useful, it must reflect the similarities and differences found in the population, thus to provide an example of the characteristics of this sample.

In this case it was possible to sample a simple random sampling in which the sample size was determined as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 p q N}{NE^2 + Z^2 p q}$$

Where:

n is the sample size;

Z is the confidence level, **(95% taking a value of *Z* = 1.96)**

p is the positive variability; **(0.5)**

q is the negative variability; **(0.5)**

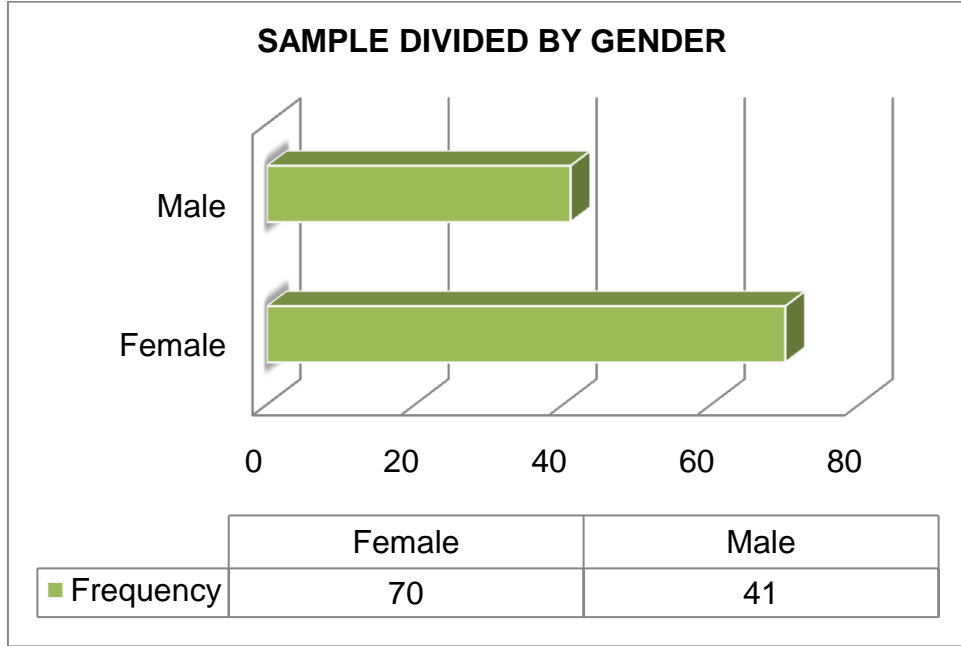
N is the population size; **(223)**

E is the precision or error **(0.01=1%)**

By using this formula is estimated that the sample size should be 111 students chosen randomly from the different groups of students enrolled in the subject.

The sample characterized by gender is presented below:

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
FEMALE	70	63%
MALE	41	37%
TOTAL	111	100%



From the table below we can see that the sample size for each gender is different since the sample for the female case is 63% and the male case only 37%, this occurs because the distribution of individuals in the population behaves in this way because in this major always the female population outnumbers the male population.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

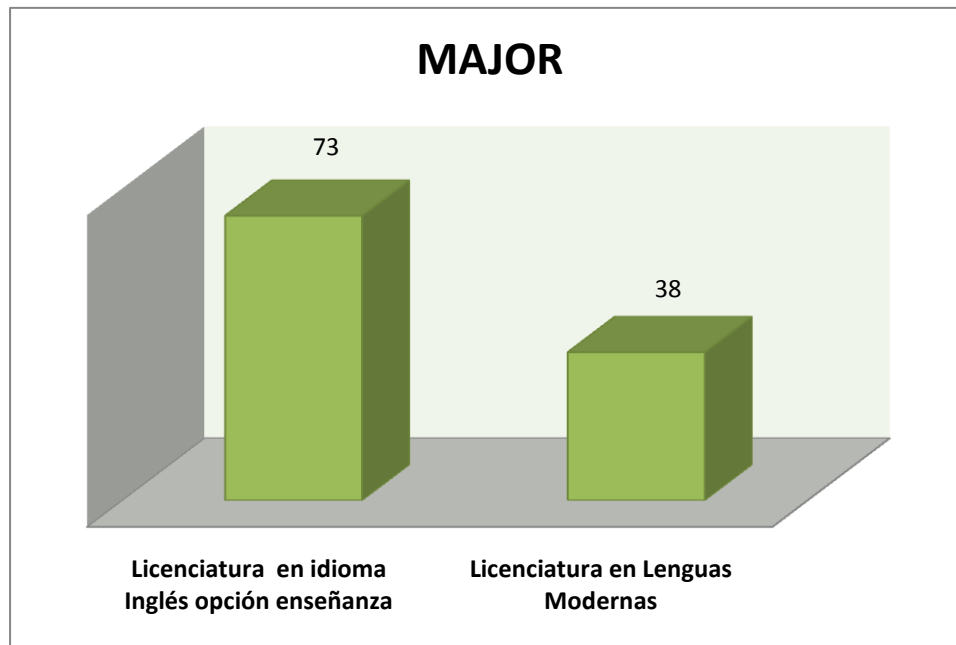
Once the data was collected, it was necessary to proceed with the descriptive analysis of the data by using frequency tables and graphics that better suit to present the information, which corresponds to a univariate analysis of the phenomenon. The results are shown below:

UNIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF DESCRIPTIVE VARIABLES

For each of the variables describing the studied sample is below a frequency table and the graphic of the same for a better understanding of the results.

The next table describes the variable that contains the information about the major of the students who attend the course of the Readings and Conversations I, the results are shown below:

		MAJOR	
		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
VALIDS	Licenciatura en idioma Inglés	73	34.2
	Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas	38	65.8
	Total	111	100.0

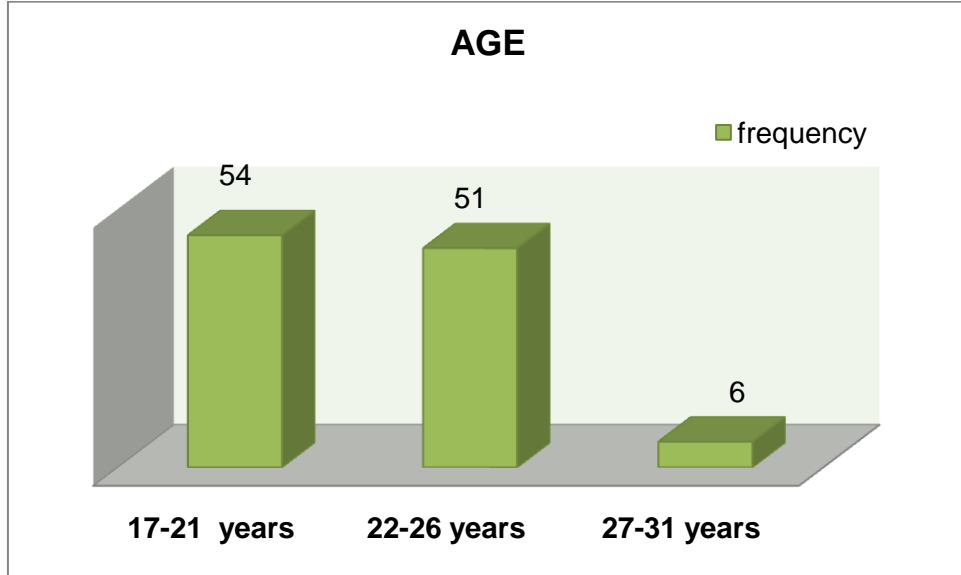


You may notice that most of the students in the sample are enrolled in the Major of English language teaching, this as a reflection of what happens in the study population as this major has increased demand.

Below the age intervals among students are presented in the following table:

AGE

		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
VALIDS	17-21 years	54	48.6
	22-26 years	51	45.9
	27-31 years	6	5.4
	Total	111	100.0

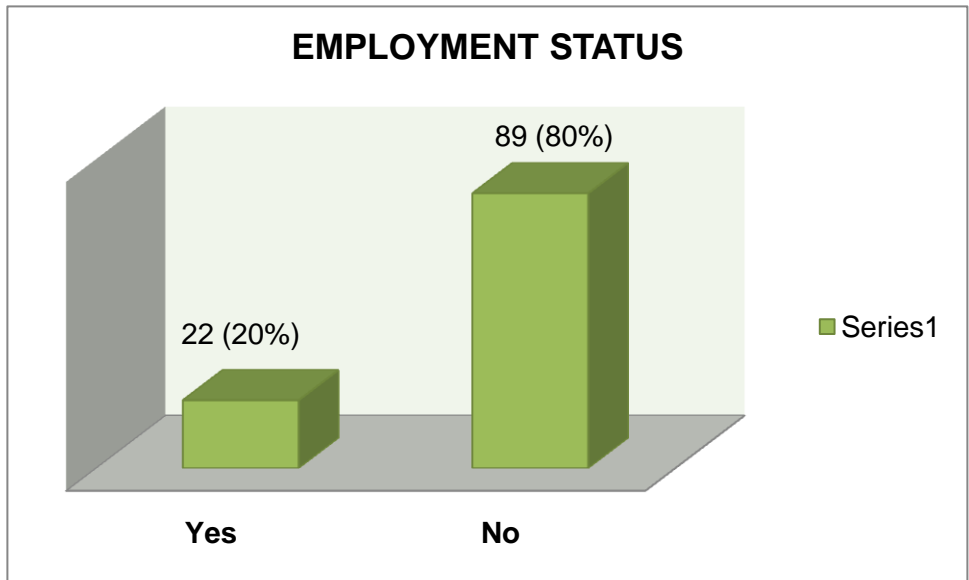


In this variable can be observed that most students are between 17 and 21 years old, closely followed by the age group of 22-26 years, the chart shows a clear downward trend toward older students' group in which only 6 students are observed in the sample.

The next variable explores the current employment status of students in the sample, it is understood that those who work run both at the same time as they are working and studying. The results for this variable are as follows:

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
VALIDS	Yes	22	19.8
	No	89	80.2
	Total	111	100.0

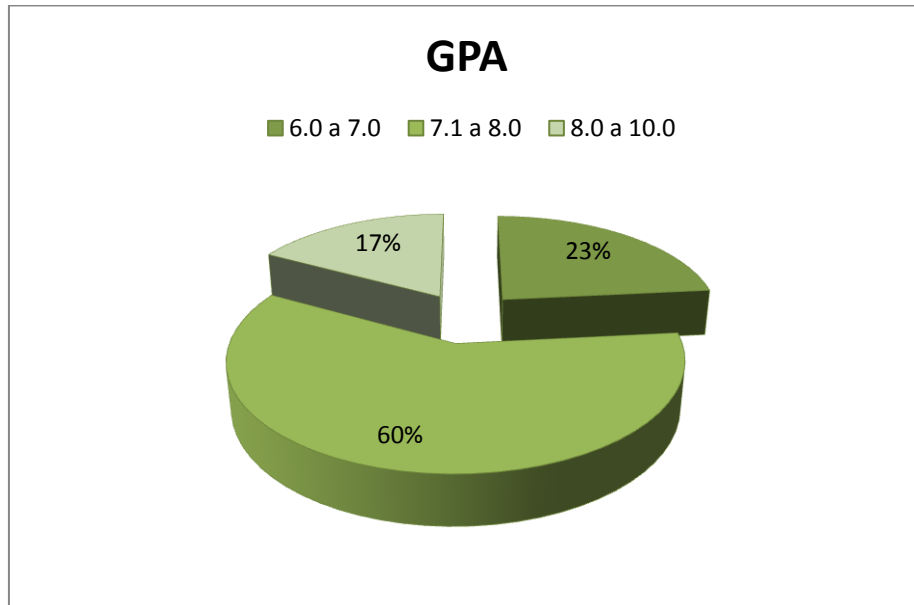


In this case we see that only 20% of students are working and studying, the rest is dedicated solely to his studies.

The GPA reached by students up to this level of the major is analyzed as follows:

GPA

		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
VALIDS	6.0 to 7.0	26	23.4
	7.1 to 8.0	66	59.5
	8.0 to 10.0	19	17.1
	Total	111	100.0

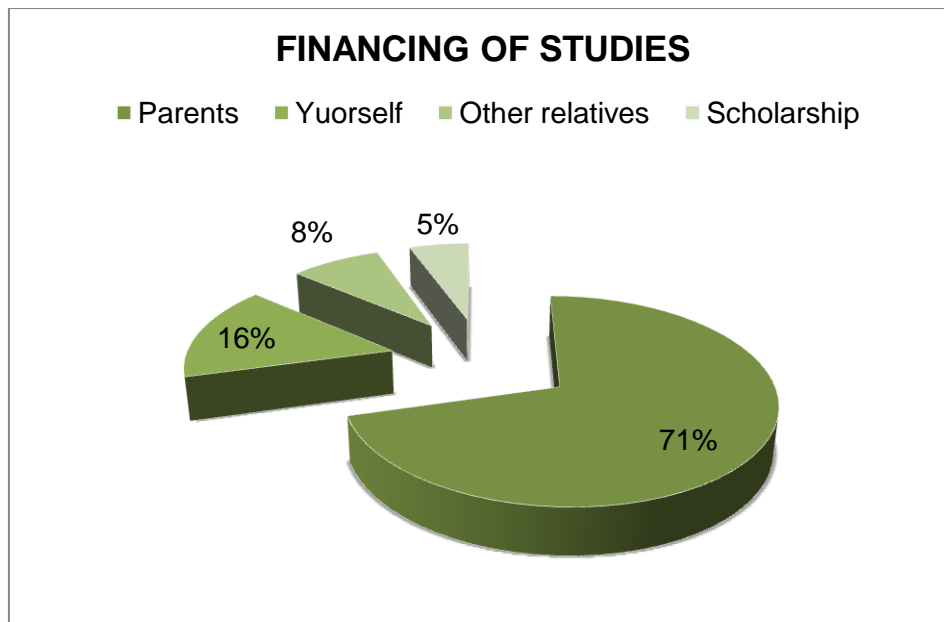


In this case it is alarming to note that 23% of students are in the lowest category of the scale obtain an average between 6.0 and 7.0, it is also important to note that at this point in the major only 17% of students remain within an average that they can ensure the honorary GPA which exonerates her graduation work.

The next table describes who finances the studies of the students, the results are shown below:

FINANCING OF STUDIES

		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
VALIDS	Parents	77	69.4
	Yourself	17	15.3
	Other relatives	9	8.1
	Scholarship	6	5.4
	Total	109	98.2
missing		2	1.8
TOTAL		111	100.0



It can be observed that most students receive financial support from their parents to pay for college, followed by 16% who pay themselves and the fewer amounts of those who are paid by other family members, it is also important to note that only 5% of students in the sample have scholarship reflecting that only few students enjoy this benefit.

BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

Once the analysis of the descriptive variables is completed, we will continue to respond to the specific objectives by studying contingency tables for each of the variables of interest in each of its categories, this analysis begins with the intersection and descriptive variables.

CONTINGENCY TABLE GENDER * GPA

		GPA			TOTAL	
		6.0 to 7.0	7.1 to 8.0	8.0 to 10.0	6.0 to 7.0	
GENRE	FEMALE	Recounting	19	39	12	70
		% of GENRE	27.1%	55.7%	17.1%	100.0%
	MALE	Recounting	7	27	7	41
		% of GENRE	17.1%	65.9%	17.1%	100.0%
TOTAL		Recounting	26	66	19	111
		% of GENRE	23.4%	59.5%	17.1%	100.0%

In this case we see that both genders behave very similar between the different intervals of the grades according to their percentages way, so it is possible to say that there are no significant differences in the results of the GPA of individuals that can be attributed to gender.

Then GPA differences in the different major are studied:

CONTINGENCY TABLE MAJOR * GPA

			GPA			TOTAL
			6.0 to 7.0	7.1 to 8.0	8.0 to 10.0	
MAJOR	Licenciatura en idioma Inglés	Recounting	6	25	7	38
		% of MAJOR	15.8%	65.8%	18.4%	100.0%
	Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas	Recounting	20	41	12	73
		% of MAJOR	27.4%	56.2%	16.4%	100.0%
TOTAL		Recounting	26	66	19	111
		% of MAJOR	23.4%	59.5%	17.1%	100.0%

In this case we see that the GPA shows a better performance in students studying the major of English teaching rather than modern languages although the differences are not very large and in both cases it is noted that both samples are agglomerated in category between 7.1 and 8.0, being the only category with the grades with interesting differences between 6.0 and 7.0 in which are located 11.6% of students of the major of Modern Languages more than the major of English Teaching .

Then we analyze whether the type of financing that have students for college plays an important role in their academic performance:

**CONTINGENCY TABLE FINANCIAL SUPPORT * GPA
COUNT**

		GPA			TOTAL
		6.0 to 7.0	7.1 to 8.0	8.0 to 10.0	
FINANCIAL SUPPORT	Parents	17	48	12	77
	Yourself	5	11	1	17
	Other relatives	2	5	2	9
	Scholarship	1	2	3	6
TOTAL		25	66	18	109

Indeed it is observed that those with parental support are those with a higher number in the categories of 8.0 to 10.0 scales by suggesting that having funds helps get better results. It is attributable to students dedicated solely to their studies that they do not deal with the stress of work and monthly payment.

Then the impact of the employment status of students in their GPA is analyzed as follows:

CONTINGENCY TABLE EMPLOYMENT STATUS * GPA

		GPA			TOTAL	
		6.0 to 7.0	7.1 to 8.0	8.0 to 10.0	6.0 a 7.0	
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Yes	Accounting	9	11	2	22
		% of employment status	40.9%	50.0%	9.1%	100.0%
	No	Accounting	17	55	17	89
		% of employment status	19.1%	61.8%	19.1%	100.0%
TOTAL	Accounting	26	66	19	111	
	% of employment status	23.4%	59.5%	17.1%	100.0%	

It is observed a better the performance of only those students who are dedicated to study only because they are better positioned in the categories of the scale, with only 19.1% who are positioned in the lower values.

Once appropriate crosses between descriptive variables have been analyzed, it is to analyze the behavior of GPA toward learning strategies studied in the test; the results from the study are shown below:

**CONTINGENCY TABLE GPA * STRATEGIES OF MEMORY
COUNT**

		STRATEGIES OF MEMORY				TOTAL
		Never	Occasionally	Often	Always	
GPA	6.0 to 7.0	0	5	10	11	26
	7.1 to 8.0	1	11	33	23	68
	8.0 to 10.0	0	2	9	6	17
TOTAL		1	18	52	40	111

**CONTINGENCY TABLE GPA * COGNITIVE STRATEGIES
COUNT**

		COGNITIVE STRATEGIES				TOTAL
		Never	Occasionally	Often	Always	
GPA	6.0 to 7.0	5	10	10	1	26
	7.1 to 8.0	6	31	26	5	68
	8.0 to 10.0	3	8	5	1	17
TOTAL		14	49	41	7	111

**CONTINGENCY TABLE GPA * STRATEGIES OF COMPENSATION
COUNT**

		STRATEGIES OF COMPENSATION				TOTAL
		Never	Occasionally	Often	Always	
GPA	6.0 to 7.0	1	6	14	5	26
	7.1 to 8.0	0	17	36	15	68
	8.0 to 10.0	0	5	9	3	17
TOTAL		1	28	59	23	111

**CONTINGENCY TABLE GPA * METACOGNITIVES STRATEGIES
COUNT**

		METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES				TOTAL
		Never	Occasionally	Often	Always	
GPA	6.0 to 7.0	1	9	11	5	26
	7.1 to 8.0	4	16	39	9	68
	8.0 to 10.0	1	8	6	2	17
TOTAL		6	33	56	16	111

**CONTINGENCY TABLE GPA * AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES
COUNT**

		AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES				TOTAL
		Never	Occasionally	Often	Always	
GPA	6.0 to 7.0	0	7	10	9	26
	7.1 to 8.0	3	14	27	24	68
	8.0 to 10.0	0	4	10	3	17
TOTAL		3	25	47	36	111

**CONTINGENCY TABLE GPA * SOCIAL STRATEGIES
COUNT**

		SOCIAL STRATEGIES				TOTAL
		Never	Occasionally	Often	Always	
GPA	6.0 to 7.0	1	12	6	7	26
	7.1 to 8.0	5	23	31	9	68
	8.0 to 10.0	1	6	6	4	17
TOTAL		7	41	43	20	111

To summarize the following table contains the frequency of students receiving ratings between 8.0 and 10.0, in concordance with the categories “often” and “always” from the scale as it follows:

TYPE OF STRATEGIE	OFTEN	ALWAYS	TOTAL
Strategies of Memory	9	6	15
Cognitive Strategies	5	1	6
Strategies of Compensation	9	3	12
Metacognitive Strategies	6	2	8
Affective Strategies	10	3	13
Social Strategies	6	4	10

In the table we see that the strategies that lead to better results are memory strategies, followed by affective strategies and closely followed by compensation strategies, since students that implement such strategies are those with a higher GPA in the study.

We already analyzed the most commonly used strategies by students in the sample. Next, it is reviewed if they have chosen those strategies which can better benefit them as shown above leading to better averages:

	NEVER	OCCASIONALLY	OFTEN	ALWAYS	TOTAL	Cumulative Frequency (often and always)
STRATEGIES OF MEMORY	179	375	367	123	1044	57%
	17%	36%	35%	12%		
COGNITIVE STRATEGIES	197	567	582	293	1639	54%
	12%	35%	36%	18%		
STRATEGIES OF COMPENSATION	70	214	266	152	702	60%
	10%	30%	38%	22%		
METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES	45	275	422	312	1054	70%
	4%	26%	40%	30%		
AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES	140	155	234	170	699	57%
	20%	22%	33%	24%		
SOCIAL STRATEGIES	88	215	263	135	701	57%
	13%	31%	38%	19%		

It is noted that the type of strategy that students used more often or metacognitive strategies are always followed by reward strategies, suggesting

that students have first choice strategies that generate higher profits than are strategies and affective memory, but if make good use of compensatory strategies that help also to improve academic performance.

Then we analyze which technique is the most commonly used by students for each of the different strategies in study, analysis starts with memory strategies:

PART A (Strategies of Memory)

N°	STATEMENT	Never	Occasionally	Often	Always
1	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	1	21	49	40
2	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.		51	50	10
3	I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word.	7	40	44	19
4	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	17	26	49	18
5	I use rhymes to remember new English words.	64	34	13	1
6	I use flashcards to remember new English words.	50	39	15	6
7	I physically act out new English words.	17	58	29	7
8	I review English lessons often.	4	53	47	5
9	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	10	39	46	16

In this strategy the technique with which students are mostly identified is: “I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.”

PART B (Cognitive Strategies)

N°	STATEMENT	Never	Occasionally	Often	Always
10	I say or write new English words several times.	16	45	41	9
11	I try to talk like native English speakers.	21	38	33	18
12	I practice the sounds of English.	11	40	41	19
13	I use the English words I know in different ways.	3	43	47	16
14	I start conversations in English.	5	44	48	14
15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	4	21	36	50
16	I read for pleasure in English.	14	34	36	27
17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	7	29	45	28
18	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	6	27	52	25
19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	25	48	28	10
20	I try to find patterns in English.	14	48	38	11
21	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	33	44	24	9
22	I try not to translate word-for-word.	7	28	39	37
23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	28	46	32	5

Regarding the cognitive strategies that more students choose when studying is to make use of technology and Watching TV or videos (shows or movies) and music in English .Thus, at this point students make use of media to practice English and it works for them.

PART C (Strategies of Compensation)

N°	STATEMENT	Never	Occasionally	Often	Always
24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	2	28	56	25
25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	7	35	46	23
26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	43	45	15	8
27	I read English without looking up every new word.	7	39	42	23
28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	6	39	50	16
29	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	3	18	42	48

In this strategy the students tend to use words that are associated to the idea they want to express, even though they don't know the exact meaning of the word. It suggests that at this level they try to keep in touch using the target language.

PART D (Metacognitive Strategies)

N°	STATEMENT	Never	Occasionally	Often	Always
30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	6	36	52	17
31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	2	8	52	49
32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	1	10	38	62
33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	1	22	45	43
34	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.	11	55	34	11
35	I look for people I can talk to in English.	11	45	40	15
36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.	6	40	35	30
37	I have clear goals for improving my English skills.	2	27	48	34
38	I think about my progress in learning English.	2	22	48	39

Within cognitive strategies, students tend to use mostly the strategy of paying attention to whoever talking so they pay close attention and try to understand what the speaker is saying.

PART E (Affective Strategies)

N°	STATEMENT	Never	Occasionally	Often	Always
39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	3	26	47	35
40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	6	12	47	45
41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.	13	27	40	30
42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	7	19	44	39
43	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	87	13	10	1
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	20	53	29	9

In this strategy the technique with which most students are identified is speaking more fluently than accurately while they are conscious of their mistakes when producing the language.

PART F (Social Strategies)

N°	STATEMENT	Never	Occasionally	Often	Always
45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	7	43	42	19
46	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	22	34	30	25
47	I practice English with other students.	6	27	55	23
48	I ask for help from English speakers.	26	47	25	13
49	I ask questions in English.	5	28	53	24
50	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	19	31	35	26

For the social strategies, the strategy that students prefer is getting any available info about the English culture so they can make use of their language knowledge to link it to English culture.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

5.1 Meaning of results

The findings of the study provide a better understanding of the learning strategies that students use and the relations they have with other variables like the major, age, employment status, GPA and financial support. The variables influence in some way the overall use of the learning strategies as well as the use of the learning strategies by category and individual strategies in different ways. Thus, to have a better idea of the students' patterns of learning strategies use and their implications, it becomes very important to take into consideration all of these variables.

In the first part, there is analyzed the variables of major concluding the 65.8% percent belong to the major of English teaching and the 34.2% belong to the major of Modern languages. Also, it is important to note the 48.6% of the sample range from 17 to 21 years old, the 43.9% range from 22 to 26 years old and only the 5.4% range from 27 to 31 years old. Note that there are few students ranging from 22 to 26 and they should be in an upper level already.

Next, the variable of employment status shows that the 20% is working and studying at the same time meaning the 80% of the sample are being supported their studies.

The GPA students have reached up this level is mostly from 7.1 to 8.0 with the 59.5% followed by the 23.4% with 6.0 to 7.0 and the 17.1% with honorific GPA 8.0 up. The financing of studies is mostly sponsored by their parents (69.4%) and only 5.4% have a scholarship. Those findings were collected using the SPSS version 15.0 with the descriptive univariate analysis.

Secondly, it is shown a descriptive bivariate analysis to cross some variables in order to see how some variables influences in some way the GPA and categories of the learning strategies.

5.2 Restatement of general and specific objectives

After analyzing the data, researchers move on to see if the main and specific objectives were reached. Thus, researchers realized that the strategies students use the most are the metacognitive closely followed by compensation strategies and affective strategies in the third place. On the other hand, the strategies that lead students to better results are memory strategies followed by affective and compensation strategies. Note that students are not taking advantage of those strategies that better work for them but they tend to use the metacognitive ones even though they almost coincide when using compensation and affective strategies.

Finally, the specific techniques students use the most are the memory strategies, students prefer to think of the relationship between what they already know and the new thing they learn in English. For the cognitive strategies the preferred technique for students is to make use of media by watching TV shows or movies in English. Regarding compensation strategies they prefer to use the idea or similar word for a word they want to express instead of saying the exact word. In the metacognitive strategies students like to pay attention when they hear to someone speaking in the target language. For the affective part, the preferred technique is to encourage themselves to speak in English even when they are aware of making mistakes. At last, for the social strategies the preferred technique is gather as many information as possible from the English culture in order to improve their learning.

To conclude, by answering the specific objectives, the researches determine which are the type of learning strategies that students of the subject

of Readings and Conversations I use the most are the metacognitive strategies closely followed by the compensation strategies when they should be using the memory and affective strategies because the research have proved that these strategies generate higher profits for students. It is also stated the correlation and the important role that some variables such as major, age, employment status, GPA, and the financing of studies play regarding those learning strategies.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

- ✓ The strategies that students in the subject of Readings and Conversations I use the most are the metacognitive ones.
- ✓ The strategies that generate highest profit for students are the memory strategies.
- ✓ Students are not using the strategies that better help them to learn as their first option.
- ✓ The specific techniques that students prefer from memory is to think of the relationship between what they already know and the new things they learn, from the cognitive ones is to make use of media, from the compensation ones is to use a similar or related idea to what they want to say, from the metacognitive ones is to pay attention to whoever talking in English, from the affective ones is to encourage themselves to speak in English even been aware of their committing mistakes when speaking and from the social ones is to gather as much information as they can from the English culture.

6.2 Recommendations

- Teachers of Intensive English Courses at the FLD should promote among students to use those strategies in which they are better and not the ones they like the most.
- Students working on their undergraduate project may use this research as an aim to develop learning strategies to become better English learners.

- Teachers of Intensive English Courses at the FLD can use the findings on the research to better understand students' needs and references regarding learning strategies.
- Students working on their undergraduate project can benefit themselves with the findings on this research to try themselves about the do's and don'ts on learning strategies and also to identify with their own way of learning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT
University of El Salvador
School of Arts and Sciences, Foreign Language Department

Objective: To determine the type of learning strategies used by the students of the Readings and Conversations I course at the FLD at the University of El Salvador.

Instructions: Write an "X" on the option with the one you identify the most in each of the questions, use only blue ink, any question just let us know and it will be a pleasure to explain it to you. Thank you for your participation, the information given will be very important for our investigation.

1. Gender: **Female:** _____ **Male:** _____

2. Major you are currently studying:

Licenciatura en idioma inglés opción Enseñanza: _____

Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas: _____

3. Age: **17-21** _____ **22-26** _____ **27-31** _____ **32 or more** _____

4. ¿Are you currently working? **YES:** _____ **NO:** _____

5. In which of the following intervals GPA carrying accumulated ranks major:

6.0 - 7.0: _____ **7.1-8.0:** _____ **8.0 – 10:** _____

6. Who funds your studies?

Parents: _____ **Other relatives:** _____

Yourself: _____ **Scholarship:** _____

Below are presented a set of questions to determine the type of learning strategy that you apply we suggest you not to answer based on what you think might be or what other people think. **Remember there is no right or wrong answers.** (SILL instrument from the book "What every teacher should know" by Rebecca Oxford) and his honesty in these questions will produce accurate results.

PART A (Strategies of Memory)

N°	STATEMENT	never	occasionally	often	always
1	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.				
2	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.				
3	I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word.				
4	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.				
5	I use rhymes to remember new English words.				
6	I use flashcards to remember new English words.				
7	I physically act out new English words.				
8	I review English lessons often.				
9	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.				

PART B (Cognitive Strategies)

N°	STATEMENT	never	occasionally	often	always
10	I say or write new English words several times.				
11	I try to talk like native English speakers.				
12	I practice the sounds of English.				
13	I use the English words I know in different ways.				
14	I start conversations in English.				
15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.				
16	I read for pleasure in English.				
17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.				
18	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.				
19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.				
20	I try to find patterns in English.				
21	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.				
22	I try not to translate word-for-word.				
23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.				

PART C (Strategies of Compensation)

N°	STATEMENT	never	occasionally	often	always
24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.				
25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.				
26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.				
27	I read English without looking up every new word.				
28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.				
29	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.				

PART D (Metacognitive Strategies)

N°	STATEMENT	never	occasionally	often	always
30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.				
31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.				
32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.				
33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.				
34	I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.				
35	I look for people I can talk to in English.				
36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.				
37	I have clear goals for improving my English skills.				
38	I think about my progress in learning English.				

PART E (Affective Strategies)

N°	STATEMENT	never	occasionally	often	always
39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.				
40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.				
41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.				
42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.				
43	I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.				
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.				

PART F (Social Strategies)

N°	STATEMENT	never	occasionally	often	always
45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.				
46	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.				
47	I practice English with other students.				
48	I ask for help from English speakers.				
49	I ask questions in English.				
50	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.				