



Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla

Facultad de Lenguas BUAP

Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés

“Awareness of Proficiency and Effective Learning Strategies among
Students of the BA in ELT”

Agosto del 2020

Tesis presentada para obtener el grado de Licenciado en la
Enseñanza del Inglés

Presenta: Jonathan Calixto Lazcano

Director de tesis: Dr. Josué Cinto Morales

Asesora de tesis: Dra. María Amelia Xique Suárez

Asesor de tesis: Dr. Benjamín Gutiérrez Gutiérrez

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest gratitude to Ph.D. Josué Cinto Morales for all his support, unbendable endeavor, patience and all his time invested in me throughout these years. I want to thank you for planting the seed of knowledge every day in my life. You, a friend, a professor, and an academic guide.

Special thanks to professors María Amelia Xique Suárez and Benjamín Gutiérrez Gutiérrez for their continued support and for assisting me in this project.

To all the admirable teachers that I have had who made me realize that I had made the best decision in life. I appreciate all your efforts and I admire your commitment, not only during your class but in the accomplishment of your students.

Professors Leticia Serrano Castillo, Astrid Longholz and professori Sara Laura Vázquez Corona, Jaime Magos and Alejandra Platas, grazie mille!

I would like to thank all the peers and participants who contributed to this research and made possible for me to turn to another page.

DEDICATIONS

I am extremely grateful to my parents, Moy and Lucy. The only owners of my achievements, the ones responsible for my self-realization as an individual and as a professional. The ones who always trusted me and gave me the chance to make my own decisions.

To my brothers Edgar, Abraham and Alan. Thank you for being part of a great brotherhood.

To all my family. Thank you for showing me the right path. Education is the solution to solve global and human issues. I would like to express my gratitude for the valuable assistance, the advice and the encouragement that I always received from all of you.

To Valeria Pechenkina. Thanks for all the support, love and inspiration I always get from you. For believing in me and following me on this distant horizon.

To my friends Yair Cordero, Lic. Claudio Pio Decimo García Vázquez, Humberto Ruiz, Juan Pablo García and Rubén Flores. You are the family members I decided to add. Thank you for enriching me as a person and human being with all the experiences we passed through, the “little help from my friends” I needed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	i
Dedications	ii
Content Chart	iii
Figures	v
Charts.....	vi
Abstract.....	vii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem	3
1.2 Purpose of the Study.....	5
1.3 General Objective.....	5
1.3.1 Specific Objectives	6
1.4 Research Questions.....	6
1.5 Methodology	6
1.6 Significance of the Study	7
1.7 Research Content and Organization.....	7
1.8 Definition of Terms.....	8
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 English Language in the XXI Century.....	10
2.2 Language Policies	15
2.3 Curriculum	17
2.4 English Teaching Background	27
2.5 Language Learning Strategies Early Assumptions.....	33
2.6 Language Learning Strategies Conceptions, Current Classification and Research .	41
2.7 Oxford LLS Classification: Indirect Strategies	53
2.8 Oxford LLS Classification: Direct Strategies	56
2.9 O’Malley and Chamot LLS Classification.....	61
2.10 LLS Instruction	65
2.11 LLS Identification and Effective Use	71
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	76
3.1 Setting	76

3.2	Subjects	77
3.3	Methodology	77
3.4	Instrument	79
3.5	Procedure.....	79
3.6	Design and Data Analysis	81
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....		84
4.1	Background.....	84
4.1.1	English Previous Studies.....	84
4.1.2	Levels of English	86
4.1.3	Beliefs and Proficiency Levels	88
4.1.4	Certification & assessment	92
4.2	Students' Awareness of Certification Levels Attainment	95
4.2.1	Goals Setting	95
4.2.1.1	Language Improvement and Proficiency	97
4.2.1.2	Awareness of Proficiency Requirements	100
4.2.1.3	Action-oriented Goals and Assessment	102
4.2.2	Certification in L2.....	103
4.2.2.1	Appropriacy of Learning Strategies.....	104
4.2.2.2	Goals and Satisfaction	106
4.2.2.3	Curriculum Deficiencies	109
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		114
5.1.1	Students' Awareness of What Attaining Certification Levels Takes.....	114
5.1.2	Obstacles Learners face to Develop Learning to Learn Strategies.....	115
5.1.3	Opportunities to use the Language.....	117
5.2	Conclusions.....	118
5.3	Limitations.....	120
BIBLIOGRAPHY		121
APPENDIX		125
INSTRUMENT		125

FIGURES

Figure 1: Strategies definitions	40
Figure 2: LLS use	45
Figure 3: Motivation	48
Figure 4: Direct and Indirect Strategies	52
Figure 5: LLS classification	53
Figure 6: Metacognition	54
Figure 7: Indirect Strategies	56
Figure 8: Cognitive Direct Strategies	57
Figure 9: Compensatory Strategies	58
Figure 10: Memorization Strategies.....	60
Figure 11: O'Malley and Chamot Metacognitive Strategies	62
Figure 12: O'Malley and Chamot Socio-Affective Strategies.....	63
Figure 13: O'Malley and Chamot Cognitive Strategies.....	65
Figure 14: LLS Instruction Process	70

CHARTS

Chart 1: Background	85
Chart 2: Placement	86
Chart 3: Experience.....	89
Chart 4: Certification before the BA.....	93
Chart 5: Early goals	96
Chart 6: Actions taken.....	98
Chart 7: Expected L2 level.....	101
Chart 8:Actions to accomplish the desired level	102
Chart 9: Belief of L2 level.....	104
Chart 10: Goal satisfaction	107
Chart 11: Certification accomplishment	110

ABSTRACT

The formal curriculum of the BA program in ELT of the BUAP emphasizes the development of autonomy and, therefore, all the formative processes are focused on learning to learn. Within this framework, Language Learning Strategies, conceived as actions taken by students to follow self-directed learning, play a very important role in the development of autonomous learning, student's motivation, awareness of weaknesses and strengths as well as learning encoding process.

When students are oriented to follow certain steps that fulfill their goals and accomplish the curriculum requirements, there is an implicit assumption that learners become independent students and they can take charge of their own learning process, making it meaningful, enjoyable, effective and self-directed. However, learners' wishes, desires, actions and efforts do not always seem to be oriented to autonomous learning, so pupils display a low sense of self-efficacy.

Thus, this research is intended to understand the development of learning strategies in students of the BA in ELT as a result of the learners' awareness of communicative and linguistic weaknesses and strengths, opportunities to use the language, evaluation criteria and the certification. This is a qualitative study as it enables the researcher's closeness to reality and proximity to the phenomenon to be studied. In tune, Phenomenology was the method chosen to accomplish the purpose of understanding aspects that could prevent LLS development in students of the BA in ELT. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), an experiential-qualitative, inductive method was used to analyze the collected data.

The results show that current educational conditions within the program scarcely promote learning to learn and students become dependent on the teacher, which in turn, affects language proficiency. Learners' awareness, success criteria as well as their voluntary involvement in individual actions affect the development of high proficiency levels and the accomplishment of certification, which therefore may have a great impact on curricular and professional accomplishments.

Key Words: Curriculum, awareness, strategies, metacognition and communicative competence.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The different changes and innovations that educational programs have experienced during the last years are somehow determined by economic situations and the existing global phenomena. In fact, changes in everyday life lead to the construction of alternatives to fulfill social, academic and labor necessities which impose the challenge to properly design and apply tasks that would lead individuals to understand and accept their new role in the learning process in order to actively contribute to society.

Consequently, global and social changes do have an important impact on the curriculum and the modifications of each educational program. Currently, international organizations promote educational policies as a purpose to eradicate social lacks. These policies are commonly integrated with the basis of educational curricula in formal instruction. Although the concept of “curriculum” is traditionally considered as a plan for action or a written document (Tyler, 1949) that includes strategies for achieving desired goals or ends (Howard, 2007), it should also be conceived as an essential device of dialogue, reflection, research, theorizing and improvement, in constant construction and reconstruction process that involves both the design and development (Sacristán, 1988).

Thus, a curriculum must be conceived as a social contract between the State and the educational professionals with regard to the educational experiences that learners should undergo during a certain phase of their lives (Braslavsky, 2005). This document describes learners’ responsibilities, obligations and rights (Cinto, Valdez, & Gutiérrez, 2016) and, at the same time, integrates international criteria in order to reduce social lacks and promote social development. Strategies are, then, assumed as the basis for the curriculum but for

lifelong learning as they result from a high level of awareness as well as the establishment of the objectives.

Lifelong-learning, a proposal developed by the “United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization” (UNESCO) in the 1990s, has become a policy which fosters learning as a complete process (Delors, 1996), not only aimed at a specific population nor to a period of time, but as a continuous development of competencies in all the social sectors during all the stages of life (Yang, Schneller, & Roche, 2015). Consequently, the integration of this policy has an important impact on the curriculum and the modifications of each educational program.

As a result, with the educational model implemented in 2009, denominated “Modelo Universitario Minerva” or MUM, the BUAP based its fundamentals on principles such as Humanism and Constructivism aiming to promote both concepts, either in the educational practice or the values of members in the university. The model “Minerva” which is the response of the “Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla” (BUAP) to social, educational and pedagogical demands as well as the global requirements, is based on a constructivist perspective.

Accordingly, the formal curriculum of the BA program in ELT must emphasize the development of autonomy and learning to learn, based on the interaction with the environment along with fellow students and teachers (BUAP, 2009). Students are required to become critical actors who are aware of the needs and problems of the society that they live in and who can sensibly implement actions to improve the condition in their environment. Humanism also emphasizes the importance of allowing students to select what to learn and, therefore, promoting motivation in the class. Humanistic approach states for the development of values, critical thinking, self-confidence, and decision making in

students. It is also established that learners actively construct their own knowledge based on their previous experiences by developing authentic tasks. Indeed, learners perform an active role in their own learning process differently from what it is thought. Thus, it is important for students to understand the necessary actions to take in order to develop independent learning which fulfills constructivism.

Since the educational model is based on a constructivist perspective, students should be oriented to recognize aspects that allow them to prioritize what and how to learn as well as constructing their interpretation of information according to their background. Then, this research has the purpose of describing language learning strategies and language learners' awareness in relation to success criteria as well as their voluntary involvement in individual actions to accomplish either personal expectations or curricular requirements.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The professional profile of the Bachelor of Arts in ELT specifies that the graduate students will have developed a B2 level at the end of “Lengua meta IV, that is English IV, which corresponds to an upper-intermediate proficiency level in English according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). If the Cambridge scale is considered, that is a First Certificate (FCE), it would take from 500 to 600 of instruction (Desveaux, 2017). Then, apparently, the time students are exposed to language use and instruction should be enough to accomplish the goals.

Firstly, students take 4 English learning courses that refer to multiple skills mastery: speaking, writing, listening and reading skills. When they complete those courses, they have accumulated an amount of 640 hours. Likewise, students take 5 different skills-development

workshops which should contribute to the achievement of such curricular goals which refer to 240 hours of exposure and use of the language. At this point, although students do not take the certification test when they have completed the four levels and the workshops, they should be capable of achieving a certification that fulfills the B2 level specified in the curricular profile as they have accumulated 840 hours of instruction.

Thereafter, one more English course is provided in which students are exposed to 96 hours more of language use. Additionally, students have to take content courses in different areas such as Education, Linguistics, and Pedagogy, that is, a total amount of 19 content classes in English related to the previously mentioned areas. This amounts to 1302 hours of further practice not just for general but also Academic English. Thus, the learners accumulate an average of 2142 hours of both use and exposure to English, which should suffice not just for B2 but for C2.

As if that weren't enough, all this instruction is provided by experts in the field. Then, curricular goals should be successfully accomplished, and students are supposed to develop language learning strategies that allow them to have more opportunities to use the language and to develop, consequently, constant feedback, self-confidence, and autonomous learning.

However, it is firstly observed that the number of students who decide to take a certification in the second language is reduced or almost nonexistent, so at the level of certification, it is impossible to determine whether students accomplish the level or not; the majority of students skip the certification process. Secondly, it is perceived that learners demonstrate a lack of voluntary participation when the use of English is involved. They tend to adopt a passive role during the class and try to avoid interaction in English with other students or

their teachers inside and outside the classroom. Actually, the learners' mother tongue seems to be the regular system of interaction. Thirdly, those pupils who participate show significant grammatical mistakes when they express spontaneously to the class or develop a written task.

Therefore, it might be said that students of the BA in the ELT do not develop the necessary strategies to become autonomous learners and, consequently, they might not fulfill learning to learn standards.

Some of these issues might be the consequence of aspects such as unawareness of the language level, unsatisfactory communicative competence and lack of opportunities to use the language as well as poor evaluation criteria. Indeed, the nonexistence of an assessment procedure, as well as poor involvement of learners in their own learning process, may greatly contribute to the absence of effective strategies oriented towards language proficiency.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to understand the development of learning to learn strategies in students of the BA in ELT as a result of the learners' levels of awareness of communicative and linguistic weaknesses or strengths, opportunities to use the language, evaluation criteria and the due certification levels to attain. The accomplishment of the certification of the B2 level is, in turn, thwarted by this lack of strategies.

1.3 General Objective

To describe the development of learning to learn strategies, with a focus on the learners' awareness of their communicative and linguistic weaknesses or strengths by means of their opportunities to use the language, evaluation criteria and the due certification levels to attain.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

Therefore, the following objectives have been derived from the previously stated research questions, and they will define the path to take for the development of the research:

- Determine whether students are aware of what it takes to attain certification levels.
- Analyze the nature of the factors which prevent learners from developing learning to learn strategies.
- Identify the opportunities to use the language and evaluation criteria which help learners realize their communicative and linguistic weaknesses or strengths.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions aimed to be answered in this research are:

- Are students aware of what it takes to attain certification levels?
- What prevents learners from developing learning to learn strategies?
- Do opportunities to use the language and evaluation criteria help learners realize their communicative and linguistic weaknesses or strengths?

1.5 Methodology

This research will take a qualitative approach as it enables the researchers' closeness to reality. It results to be the most effective methodology for the analysis of the students' decision-making in order to understand the strategies that they use with the intention of developing communicative skills and promoting metacognitive structure.

In tune with the qualitative approach, a questionnaire will be designed and the interview will be the method to be used. The in-depth interview is considered the most reliable method to

gather data about the experiences that practitioners undergo during their formative processes and understand their thoughts of their individual learning process and their own results. Due to its face-to-face interaction with the student, this seems to be the best method to obtain information.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Since the aim of this research is to understand aspects that prevent the development of learning to learn strategies in students of the BA in ELT, it is expected that findings contribute to identifying those areas which require some modification so as to promote learning to learn strategies. Then, if learning to learn strategies come true, both certification processes and the attainment of the professional profile might be more likely to take place. By means of learning to learn strategies, language learners are supposed to recognize the way they learn, how it is easier and more enjoyable, and foster actions that take them to the accomplishment of personal expectations, goals and the formal curriculum objectives.

1.7 Research Content and Organization

To start with, in this first chapter, the reader will find the introduction to the problem, the research questions and objectives which will guide the development of the research. Thereafter, in chapter II, the main theoretical constructs which conform the referential framework for the interpretation of the collected data will be found. Afterwards, the methodology, subjects, setting, instrument, and procedures will be described in chapter III. Subsequently, in chapter IV, the main results of the research are presented, interpreted and discussed. Finally, in chapter V, the main conclusions drawn after the analysis of data will be offered.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Assessment: “A systematic process of collecting information about the students’ progress towards the achievement of learning goals” (Linn and Miller, 2005, cited in Mussawy, 2009).

Awareness: “A conscious engagement process in which an individual reflectively recognizes and understands where it is going, what is being done as well as why it is being done” (Lier, 1996).

Certification: “The public recognition of a test performance. The ability to carry out specific language-based tasks. It is a formal document provided through a process that verifies, evaluates, and confirms the achievement of specific linguistic goals in the mastery of a foreign language” (Davies, et al., 2006).

Common European Framework of Reference: “The model which is intended for assessment as well as for learning and teaching of languages. Its main aim is to provide common criteria in foreign language proficiency such as levels of mastery, learning materials, contents and assessment delivery process” (Bagaric & Mihaljevic, 2007).

Communicative competence: “It can be defined as the ability to make use of language in a social context, or to communicate, in a culturally-appropriate manner in order to create meaning and accomplish social tasks with efficacy and fluency through extended interactions” (Davis Tarvin, 2014).

Language competence: “The ability to mediate information fluently in a spoken system of communication. It involves linguistic competence and control over the rules of language use” (Davies, et al., 2006).

Learning to learn strategies: “Specific actions, behaviors, steps or techniques used by students to enhance in their own learning” (Oxford, 2017).

Language learning strategies: “The steps or actions consciously selected by learners either for the learning of a second language, the use of it, or both” (Cohen & Macaro, 2007). LLS are also considered as “conscious, teachable, intentional, self-chosen and self-regulated thoughts and actions for learning the target culture and language” (Oxford, 2017, cited in Mega Sartika, Santihastuti, & Wahjuningsih).

Proficiency: “The degree to which users of a language successfully achieve their communicative purpose in the different language skills and to a wide number of situations and topics” (Arndt, Harvey, & Nuttall, 2000).

Strategy: “Actions, techniques and behaviors that are employed having the fundamental intention of reaching goals effectively. These goals can be solving a problem, completing a task, etc.” (Marcos Garcia, 2015).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Interest in the area of Language Learning Strategies (LLS) is based on understanding that some actions might reduce the time spent during the process of language learning in order to make it self-directed. Thus, the assumption of an existent problem in a context such as the BA in ELT and the personal experiences as a language learner, justify and make the research highly relevant.

In this chapter, all the theoretical findings and background in English Language, Curriculum, Learning, Language Policies, and Language Learning Strategies are presented and discussed in order to construct the theoretical foundations for the development of the research, construction of the instruments and the interpretation of the data collected.

2.1 English Language in the XXI Century

The twentieth century brought constant and meaningful changes to the day-to-day life around the world.

On the one hand, scientific and technological advances determined continuous progress in communication, medicine and social development; improving both people's life and *modus vivendi*. Nowadays, nations are interconnected, and it is possible to have access to either consistent or simultaneous information about the events occurring in the world. Similarly, improvements in medicine have allowed eradicating or preventing mortal illnesses and threats that have made it possible to increase longevity in human beings. The previously mentioned changes are currently essential in everyday life, and aspects such as life quality,

data accessibility as well as interaction among individuals have become some of the man's major accomplishments in continuous modification, improvement and development.

On the other hand, international economic, political and cultural tendencies such as “Globalization” and “Neoliberalism” have arisen as intentions to promote global development, proper trade competitiveness-openness, communication and a robust implementation of technology in the world economic production. Trade policies in constant integration around the world aim for a coordinated interaction and participation among nations in order to massively exchange services, products and resources (B. Merriam & M. Baumgartner, 2020). However, these policies have also provoked negative issues reflected in society. Countries with an underdeveloped economy, in-growing factories, and inconsistent political structures have been highly affected when they try to compete with structured and functional nations. Some of the negative effects are observed in low salaries, inefficient social security service and violence. The population of these affected countries struggle with issues such as famine, injustice, insecurity and poverty; therefore, people are forced to migrate to another country searching for better conditions on life or job opportunities. For instance, Mexico has been one of the countries suffering from improper conditions in which it is possible to notice the different phenomena in society that lead people to migrate to the United States. Moreover, some of the caused problems are perceptible not only in unequal goods distribution, migration and poverty, but, in education. In fact, the structure and organization of educational instruction in all the stages are based on standards that set the purpose of reducing the current global needs and lacks in society. Consequently, education works as a necessary tool to prevent the adverse effects that international

tendencies have brought to the world and prepare human beings who can quickly adapt to the current demands by fulfilling social needs.

Some of the most important aspects that have notoriously changed in contemporary society are perceived in the conditions that require people to operate technology and regularly interact with information. New generations are nowadays required to manipulate Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to have access to different sources of human knowledge and have the chance to produce and share information. Today, it is possible for the majority of the global population to consult, reach, reply and manipulate material on the net and, at the same time, communicate with people from different countries and receive data instantly; a fact that years before, would have been impossible. Participating in current society implies learning how to interact with information and knowledge critically, sensibly and reflectively (Torres, 2006; cited in Ek Uicab, 2016).

The development of technology and the increase of people who could control it have allowed improvements in communication, distribution of knowledge as well as in education. In fact, institutions around the world promote the use of ICTs in schools and include this aspect as part of educational programs. Then, the instruction of students in technology use becomes part of a global standard. Individuals are demanded to fulfill informatics literacy by developing the capacity to use it through different stages of life or adapting to this innovation in new contexts such as labor, entertainment or product acquisition.

Moreover, advances in technology also improved the way human beings communicate and interact. These achievements have allowed society to increase possibilities to get in constant contact, despite aspects such as the distance and language. Contemporary individuals have

access to a wide variety of sources and devices that make possible for them to instantly get and share information. One of those achievements is the advent of the internet. It was during the 1990s that a new virtual source was designed and developed to the use of the worldwide community. Then, new devices were developed facilitating the spread of information all around the world in a matter of seconds. Every time more and more people could have access to the net by having a computer at home. The interaction of people with information on the internet, differently from other media resources such as the television or the radio, created a different means of selection of what it was desired to read, watch, listen and, reply. The individual was no longer a passive receiver of information but now it was possible to take part in the discourse and share or create resources by oneself. However, not all the contents developed on the internet were in the same language and technology did not offer a reliable solution to linguistic and cultural differences. In the production of information and the creation of social networks, people and companies of developed countries had the advantage to possess cutting-edge technology and technical devices. Then, a large distribution of information dominated in the language spoken in those countries. As a consequence, the necessity to learn a foreign language was reinforced since it became a tool that allowed the constant acquisition and distribution of information in a massive source of data delivery.

Currently, the majority of information is produced and distributed in English. Even before the massive development of technology during the XX century, this language had acquired importance in trade, culture, and education. Baugh and Cable (2002) claim that languages become important due to historical events that give nations the status of power. Then, after the main conflicts of the previous century such as the Great War and the World War II, English gained importance as a contact language (Fulcher, 2003) and it was remarked as a

lingua franca because of the number of speakers that there existed derived from the various British Colonies around the world. The economic and military status of English-speaking countries such as Great Britain made it obligatory for other nations to communicate in English for trade, literary and technological purposes. In the XX century, the role and status of English were also reinforced by media development such as the development of radio, film and television (Richards, 2001). Suddenly, more instruction in the language was required in different countries in order to satisfy the need for interaction in English with native speakers but also among people of various nations with different mother tongues. Thus, English did not only remain as a *Lingua Franca*, but it became a global language by obtaining importance in technology, science, economy, military, and political systems worldwide. English has been, consequently, a requirement for current citizens who need to integrate and adapt successfully to modern society.

Nowadays, there is an estimated 380 million of native speakers of English, around 400 million of speakers as a second language and adding people who have some knowledge of this language to communicate; it results in approximately one and a half billion speakers of English (Baught & Cable, 2002). Although English is not the official language of the United States, it is one of the six official languages of the United Nations. Thus, the language is addressed as prestigious not only politically and economically, but in different aspects of life. For instance, a significant number of universities in different countries offer courses in English, even if this language is not the official language of the nation. Therefore, individuals aiming to participate in academic development for professional growth, international exchanges and different diploma programs are asked to be proficient in English. Those students who develop proficient skills in English communication and understanding of

information in that language are more likely to take advantage of academic and labor opportunities.

2.2 Language Policies

The need for competent speakers of second languages, such as English in non-English speaking countries, made necessary the creation of tools that could measure the level of proficiency and mastering in foreign languages. In the past, lower possibilities to interact did not demand a document that verifies the aptitudes in the use of a second language. However, new teaching methods, communication tools development that made possible a constant information interaction as well as international labor and educational required proficiency evidence in a second language demanded the creation of institutions uncharged of testing language achievement, that is, certification processes.

As a response to the current trends, emerging approaches in social sciences such as praxeology support the verification of goal achievement through a rigorous procedure of revision and examination. Praxeology relates to the study of accuracy and it is integrated into the revision of international demand attainment. This is an accurate demonstration of the effectiveness of the steps taken and an indicator of the missing aspects to cover.

In Education, by following a process of verification is possible, either for the instructor or the learner, to gather reliable fulfillment data of the goals established at the beginning of a course or in an existing program. The verification of achievement can be linked to an evaluation process which determines in different stages the realization of curriculum goals, learning standards as well as students' desires and objectives, also known as assessment. Assessment is described as a systematic process of information gathering about the students'

progress as well as their results towards the achievement of learning goals (Linn and Miller, 2005; cited in Mussawy, 2009). Assessment forms are described as sources that “provide an estimate of a person’s current status” (Brown, Bull, & Pendlebury, 1997, p. 7). In tune, formative assessment refers to the process of providing continuous feedback to students during a course or a specific level in order to create opportunities to improve (Brown, Bull, & Pendlebury, 1997).

Consequently, linguistic policies were developed as it was required to assess the improvement in language learning by having common standards for students all around the world. After 15 years of revision and edition of the document, the European Council, which is the organization whose function concerns developing and promoting cultural and educational standards in Europe, developed the methodology that integrated description of linguistic mastery designed in 6 different levels of development presented as Breakthrough, Waystage, Threshold, Vantage, Effective Operational Proficiency and Mastery (Dominguez Gonzales, 2008). The Common European Framework of Reference for Foreign Languages is described as a standard elaborated by experts in the field which aims to provide a common model for the preparation of educative language programs, curricular orientation, exams and assessment criteria, materials, etc. (European Council, 2017). In consequence, institutions, companies and organizations around the world demand individuals to have a certification in foreign languages to participate in exchange programs, promotions, and postgraduate degrees. Thus, certification is described as an assessment procedure that is based on the criteria of the CEFR, in the majority of European Languages, which allow the speaker to recognize the achievement of specific linguistic goals. Then, language proficiency is a

condition that allows personal growth for people who own a certification in a foreign language and a restriction to improve either academic or professionally for those who do not.

Currently, certification in a foreign language is not only required in order to have a job promotion or to study abroad, but it is a document commonly asked in different educational institutions. Hence, standards rise as expectations for students to accomplish “what students should know and be able to do in different subject areas at particular grade levels or ages” (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999, p. 3). Standards are implemented and promoted in schools in order to foster multiethnic and linguistic interaction. In the “National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project”, there is an extract entitled “The 5 C’s”, i.e. specific goals to accomplish for language learning. These goals are Communication (speak in more than one language), Cultures (Understand, have the knowledge, and interact with other cultures), Connections (Get information of different areas and disciplines), Comparisons (Develop insight into the nature of language and culture) and Communities (Communicate and interact with multilingual communities around the world) (Cockey, 2014). These goals are also described as standards or expectations for language learners to fulfill as competent users of a language. Then, since there are language policies promoted by international organizations, language proficiency results are necessary for individuals around the world in order to formally measure and determine their level of achievement of those standards.

2.3 Curriculum

Likewise, the different changes and innovations that educational programs have experienced during the last years are somehow determined by the previously discussed economic

situations, global phenomena as well as international policies. These continuous changes and innovations are not only perceptible in school's resources, equipment and infrastructure but the organization and development of curriculum. Historically, there are different perceptions of curriculum arising at the beginning of the XX century which emerged as a need to collect accurate information about the most important aspects that made possible the fulfillment of social demands. Developed through different stages in time which integrated and complemented the conceptions, foundations, beliefs as well as ideas of the concept, curriculum emerged as the document that specified characteristics of academic instruction.

Tyler firstly had an impact in curriculum development by emphasizing the importance of recognizing elements such as learning objectives, learning situations or activities to carry in order to achieve learning objectives, materials and resources to use as well as evaluation criteria that functioned as a foundation for instructors. In Tyler's model, an analysis of learners' context as well as their relation within is necessary in order to establish goals. Likewise, Tyler claimed that "goals illustrate or describe the expected behavior to achieve in students" (Tyler, 1949, p. 19). It is possible to observe that all the aspects depend mainly on the establishment of the appropriate goals. Tyler (1949) proposed four basic principles for curriculum development that are: 1. Define the purposes of the curriculum 2. Describe the educational experiences related to the purposes 3. Define the organization of these experiences 4. Determine the evaluation of the purposes. Thus, the goals established, in Tyler's model, function as a guide to determine the materials to be used, the situations to develop during the course, the order to implement the learning activities and the establishment of the evaluation criteria. Thus, a curriculum is a written document which specifies the necessary actions to follow in order to achieve a goal or reach an end.

Moreover, different conceptions of the concept of curriculum as well as emergent theories of learning made curriculum development evolve. Current interpretations of the concept describe it as the frameworks that outline the knowledge, experiences, competences and skills that learners are expected to acquire at specific levels (Cockey, 2014). Additionally, Richards defines curriculum development as:

“[the process that] focuses on determining what knowledge, skills, and values students learn in schools, what experiences should be provided to bring about intended learning outcomes, and how teaching and learning in schools or educational systems can be planned, measured, and evaluated”

(Richards, 2001, p. 2).

A curriculum is developed by integrating philosophical fundamentals, methodology, evaluation criteria, knowledge, values as well as the abilities aimed to promote in students and teachers that will be reflected in society. Therefore, a curriculum determines the objectives to achieve during and at the end of a formative process. These objectives are recognized as propositions that declare the expected outcomes in individuals and establish the actions to be implemented towards their realization. In order to guarantee their accomplishment, evaluation criteria should be contemplated so that a constant regulation of the actions leads to efficacy. In a curriculum, the stated objectives and evaluation are aspects of continuous interaction because one determines the fulfillment of the other. In addition, curriculum should be presented as a complete collection of all the aspects to be integrated into an institution. Curriculum is also defined, according to the Hispanic Encyclopedia 2003,

as the process of formulation of objectives, contents, learning conditions and activities that are developed in an academic institution for a level, course or subject (BUAP, 2009).

The model “Minerva” which is also known as MUM, was the response of the “Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla” (BUAP) to satisfy the social, educational and pedagogical demands and according to the global requirements. This model is based on two main principles: a constructivist theory and a humanistic perspective.

On the one hand, constructivism is conceived as a learning theory which emphasizes learners to self-construct their learning based on the interaction with the environment and their relatives. Taber (2011) states that in the areas related to the study of teaching and learning or *Science education*. Then, constructivism is considered as the accepted model for thinking about learning as well as a modern perspective whose function is to understand how people figure out their experiences. Previous data and experiences have an important role in the construction of their own learning process which is determined as “learners use their background knowledge of the world as an initial frame for relating to new information” (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999, p. 159). Under the light of Seymour Papert, Martínez (2013) interprets that the basis of constructivism is stated within the conception that learning occurs when an individual interacts with the physic, social and cultural world in which he/she is immersed. Additionally, Martínez claims that knowledge is a result of intellectual endeavors and experiences that a person has undergone since he/she is born.

Good and Brophy present accepted aspects of constructivism summarized in four statements.

- *Learners construct their meaning.* Contrary to what is commonly believed, they play an active role in their own learning process. They must display efforts in order to

make sense of the information, transform it into knowledge and be capable to use it in emergent situations.

- *New learning builds on prior knowledge.* Students create connections between prior information and new information. These connections imply a reorganization and reconstruction of knowledge. Students create new realities by comparing knowledge and linking it to previous experiences.
- *Meaningful learning develops through authentic tasks.* Students must realize that whatever they learn and experience will be useful and somehow practical either in real life or in their daily assignments.
- *Learning is enhanced by social interaction.* By comparing and sharing ideas, students have the opportunity to resolve conflicts in their understanding. It allows students to express their beliefs, receive feedback and, at the same time, learn from others' ideology and create their realities.

(1994; cited in Cinto, Cordero, & Calixto, 2016)

On the other hand, the MUM takes humanism as an essential component of its fundamentals by declaring the development of values, critical thinking, autonomy, self-confidence and dignity of every individual in the institution. Humanism states for the promotion of critical thinking which demands individuals to prioritize what decision to make based on a sensitive judgment. Critical thinking is defined as a process of reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to do or what to believe in (Ennis, 1985). It results to be an essential component in classroom interaction since it allows individuals, with their own, particular, and specific characteristics, abilities and knowledge, to work together to

accomplish common goals, solve problems, complete tasks or simply learn something (Cinto, Cordero, & Calixto, 2016). Moreover, humanistic oriented students are able to, sensibly, select information that is useful and reliable as well as identify data that is not trustworthy. All in all, the integration of humanism in the BUAP curriculum has an essential purpose of awareness-raising in students so that they can perceive the problems and the society lacks where they live in, and actively contribute reducing the existing issues. BUAP students are encouraged to make aware decisions adopting an active role regarding the necessities of current society and the environment.

BUAP model integrates responses to prepare individuals who can cope with current international demands such as internationalization and globalization. Some of these responses, besides fundamentals and ideology of the model, are somehow reflected in the selection of obligatory formative subjects of the university. In the MUM and the formal curricula of superior teaching, content subjects that go beyond disciplinary and traditional thematic subjects are integrated denominated as “Ejes Transversales” (BUAP, 2009), literally, Lateral Shafts. These content and formative subjects are claimed to promote values, critical thinking, problem-solving, and foster either abilities or capacities that are necessary to properly integrate into a modern society. The contents that refer to “Ejes Transversales” are:

1. Human and Social development
2. Complex thinking abilities development
3. Abilities development in the ICTs
4. Foreign language learning
5. Education to research

Subjects based on the development of these characteristics such as ICTs instruction and English as a second language are integrated with educational programs of all levels aiming to foster complementary instruction in members of the university of two types. The former, resolution of demanding problems that concern contemporary society such as instruction in the use of ICTs or communication in a foreign language, and the latter, development of ethic, cultural and esthetic values as well as attitudes for the proper understanding of the context (BUAP, 2009).

Current international trends also state the promotion of independent learning in students in which autonomy is one of the main goals of the education system (Benson, 2012). Josephine claims that “developing autonomy is essential for all students living in the present society of information and communication” (2016, p. 94) and it is believed that learners are more effective achievers when they are oriented to take control of their learning (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999). Even if this term does not represent a great issue for researchers talking about a possible accepted definition, the focus of specialists in certain areas such as language learning as well as the fact of knowing if autonomy is inherent in all human beings or if it is developed through stages of life generate constant discussion.

In Etymology, this term comes from ancient Greek that literally means “Self-regulation” (Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 40), a concept that nowadays refers to independence in regulating personal actions and decision-making. Holec (1981, cited in Little, 2017) describes autonomy as the process of taking charge of the own learning process. This means, at the same time “to have the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of learning” (Holec, 1981; cited in Cinto, Cordero, & Calixto, 2016, p. 428). Moreover, Kohlberg (1972; cited in Barra, 1987) states that autonomy is the highest level of moral development. He claims that

autonomy is reached by individuals after passing through a heteronomous process as a consequence of punishment avoiding.

In the previous century, one of the most discussed issues regarding autonomy was if this concept, indeed, was natural to each individual existing *per se* or if it had to be promoted and acquired through different stages of life.

As it is noticed, autonomy achievement is a controversial topic of discussion. Similarly, proving an accepted theory whether autonomy in education is generally an inner element belonging to all the learners in an institution or it has to be fostered and reinforced by teachers, is still a subject of constant discussion. Benson declares that most of the teachers' responsibilities and students' chances to choose and control their learning depend on how clear autonomy is conceptualized. Young states that "although the potential for autonomy may be intrinsic to the human condition, autonomy itself is something that must be acquired and maintained over the course of a lifetime" (1986; Cited in Benson, 2012, p. 32). Similarly, Holec claims that even if autonomy is thought to be intrinsic in human beings, it must be developed either by natural means or by receiving formal instruction (cited in Little, 2017). Some of the means that can have a great impact in autonomy development are fostering motivation in the language classroom, setting goals based on students' desires or interests or, as described by Cinto, Cordero and Calixto (2016), promoting collaborative learning to complete tasks by enriching from the other's knowledge is making students play an active role on their own learning.

Cohen and Macaro provide a generally accepted term referring to autonomy in language learners as:

“learning which has as its ultimate goal to produce self-motivated students who take control of the ‘what, when, and how’ of language learning and learning successfully, independently of a teacher, and possibly outside of the classroom without any external influence”.

(Cohen and Macaro, 2007, p. 40)

Furthermore, Macaro (2003) states that language learning development in curricula should consider learners’ progress so that it leads students to the promotion and achievement of language autonomy. He defines autonomy as two types: autonomy language as the ability to say what it is desired to be said without the intervention of other speakers and autonomy learning as a process of taking responsibility for each individual’s own learning generally and, on those occasions when the teacher is not available nor to provide support or encouragement.

In 1990 the “United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization” (UNESCO) proposed a principle named "Lifelong learning" which was based on the educational lacks that were affecting society and an alternative to face social and global challenges. This proposal has as fundament the idea that learning cannot be determined just by a specific period of life and to a specific age; instead, learning should be followed at every stage of life and adding all the contexts in which people interact, creating knowledge that is meaningful to them (Delors, 1996). Lifelong learning primary goals can be described in the next quotation which emphasizes strategies to be followed during the formative process.

The following strategies may help facilitate lifelong learning, effective cultural exchange, and interactions: (1) starting from the formative years, expose learners to diverse cultural

information and experiences; (2) combine foreign language learning programs with culture learning; (3) develop culture learning programs with culture relativity as a main theme; and (4) develop learning indicators for individual learners' cross-cultural competencies (Medel-Anonuevo, Ohsako, & Mauch, 2001).

Thus, Mauch, Ohsako and Anonuevo (2001) claim that citizens are asked to produce new outcomes and processes that make individuals learn new skills and competencies. Within the development and implementation of ICTs, the role of some areas has been affected and modified. In education, the role of students and teachers has changed considerably from what it used to be before half of the twentieth century. Within the framework of the UNESCO'S 's proposal, there are also included three parameters to be developed in superior studies: Pertinence, Quality, and Internationalization. Furthermore, learner autonomy is included in the skills to foster in this document mentioned as *savoir-apprendre* which is defined, according to the Council of Europe as the ability to observe, reflect, and participate in a new experience with the intention to incorporate new knowledge into existing knowledge, modifying the latter every time it results to be necessary (cited in Little, 2017).

Additionally, the professional profile of the BA in ELT determines that the graduated students will be experts in the use of the English language and English Teaching. It is specified that these graduated learners will achieve a B2 level according to the CFRE. Moreover, undergraduates have to take different professional content courses such as Language Pedagogy, Linguistics, English Literature and Culture as well as 2 additional formative courses, Translation and Spanish Teaching to international students. Based on the standards of the MUM, there is a requirement besides the English B2 certification which asks students of the BA in ELT to study a foreign language (or third language). Undergraduates

are allowed to select from a variety of languages such as German, Italian, Mandarin, French, etc. At the end of the degree, students must deliver two certifications: B2 English and A2 optional foreign language.

2.4 English Teaching Background

The attempt to communicate in a different language with people who speak another language has always been a natural activity of human beings. Communication relates to the Latin word “*communicare*” which means “make common” (Romo Martínez, 1984). It refers to a process of using a form of communication in order to represent the same thoughts or ideas in somebody else’s brain, that is, interacting and mediating meaning and information from one person to another.

In the past, as it is today, it was necessary to get in contact with people of diverse linguistic backgrounds by using a common language depending on different situations but, naturally, without the intervention of technological tools that made it easier and immediate. Trade and militarism gave importance and status to some kingdoms or empires. Therefore, the language of the existing hegemony had to be used in order to interact, trade and enrich economically and culturally. Then, a *lingua franca* is commonly the language of a dominant group used by different populations in a particular context where communication is a necessity and, without it, communication would be impossible to achieve (Baught & Cable, 2002).

Latin was, for centuries, the *lingua franca* in Europe as well as parts of Asia and Africa. The speakers of this language, the Romans, conquered different provinces, settled there and created colonies in different regions. Then, there was an emerging need for speakers of other different languages or members of other domains to learn Latin. Similarly, other languages

such as French, German, English, Chinese and Spanish in the modern era emerged as contact languages because of the significant amount of speakers of those languages or the importance of the countries speaking one of those languages. Within the arousal of either dominant languages or a *lingua franca* in certain periods of history, the need for individuals to communicate in a foreign language became a necessity due to the constant interaction of people from different countries.

The first methods to teach a foreign language are described as a traditional instruction to the second language by using, as a fundamental part of the methodology, texts of the most influential writers of the language to learn. Translation of those texts, from the original to the second language and vice-versa, was the main focus to follow in that method. These first means of instruction were thought to be effective in order to internalize linguistic and cultural aspects in the brain. By translating the most influential writers from L2 to L1, learners were able to recognize aspects of grammar, vocabulary and syntax. In fact, this method was named Grammar-translation due to the importance given to grammar as a means to acquire the language. Grammar was a fundamental aspect of the language to learn since it was the means to construct phrases, understand the main authors and writings of the culture in the new language and translate them into the mother tongue. At the same time, the use of the mother tongue was a common act in the acquisition of grammar rules, structures and contents. This is also known as the “Grammar school” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

However, it was during the XX century that significant changes in Language Teaching Methodology took place. Changes in society after the Great War and World War II made the population of different nations to constantly interact. Similarly, improvements in technology during the XX century made it possible for a large population to access mass media devices

such as the radio and the television and therefore it was possible for people to get access to immediate, accessible and varied sources of information distribution.

One of the main reasons why certain nations spread their language whether intentional or unintentional to other countries was because of mass media. Besides the existing military and economic status in those countries, massive information distribution of information by means of electronic devices increased, even more, the use and practice of their languages. Therefore, the constant interaction of individuals from different linguistic backgrounds demanded people speak more than one language every time more and more and, consequently, it made language teaching experts update their teaching methodology.

The rote methodology used in grammar-translation instruction was no longer satisfying the need of population at the beginning of the XX century whose arising interest was no longer acquiring infinite erudite data in Latin or Greek languages but fulfilling “a demand for oral proficiency in foreign languages” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 7) since modern languages were the source of everyday interaction, rather than classical ones. Then, these languages became part of European and international curricula. However, Richard and Rodgers (2001) mention that teaching methodology was still oriented to the instruction based on transmitting grammar, rules provide long sets of vocabulary and, spontaneously, make practice of speaking skill by reading aloud or repeating structured statements.

The development of language teaching methodologies was strongly influenced by the existent learning theories and the intellectual movements of the time. For instance, psychological hypotheses and explanations of human learning influenced the educational practice and development of teaching theories.

Behaviorism is a psychological learning theory proposed by Skinner that had a great impact on the teaching methodology during the middle of the XX century. It emphasizes that learning is a process of habit creation, values envisage and proper behavior achievement. In this theory, it is stated that good stimuli reinforce learners' responses or outcomes. In behaviorism, it is stated that "language learning was very much like other forms of learning. We learn through two processes: imitation and repetitive action, and these lead to habit formation or conditioning" (Macaro, 2003, p. 22). Therefore, individuals are demanded to repeat a series of structured activities so that they shape their acting and associate a command to a specific response. Macaro also claims that language was thought to be learned by following methodical mechanisms. This theory also was based under the light of John Locke thinking that there are no innate ideas in the human mind, it is described as an empty sheet and what we perceive and know is originated from experience. Language learning methods that received influence from behaviorism, at that time in which this learning theory dominated, were the Audiolingual Method, Total-Physical response and Silent Way.

Some theorists in the area of Language Acquisition claim that individuals do not come with an empty brain or what it is described as *tabula rasa*. One of those language acquisition theorists was Chomsky who claimed that "our genetic inheritance is also to predispose us to learning a human language" (Cited in S. Taber, 2011, p. 47). This refers that humans are biologically programmed to acquire a language and, since we are born, human beings unconsciously start collecting information and constructing a system of communication between members of the species. Chomsky describes it as an internal structure in the brain that facilitates and arranges any input reception (Macaro, 2003) called *Language Acquisition*

Device (LAD) present in all human beings, though, there is no biological evidence of neither the appearance nor the existence of a physical LAD in the human brain.

Piaget is acknowledged to set the basis of constructivism. In this learning theory, it is stated that all learning is constructed based on previous knowledge through experience (McMullin, 2016) and “learners actively construct meaning as they encounter new information (Brandsford, Barclay, & Franks, 1972, Spiro, 1980; Cited in Uhl Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999). Background experiences are remarked to be an important factor affecting the development of new ways of thinking as well as understanding, storing, and recalling information.

The socio-cultural perspective of constructivism was developed by Vygotsky in the XX century emphasized that human beings come to knowledge by means of interaction with their community and relatives. McMullin (2016), under the light of Vygotsky, says that collaborative interaction promotes language learning.

Current approaches stand for the promotion of oral interaction or speaking in the methodology of language learning. Communicative Language Teaching is one of those movements that aim to displace grammar as the main element to focus on language learning. Differently, what is called communicative movement aims to create authentic spaces of interaction in the classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) for real communication among individuals. CLL teaching also included humanistic practices such as considering the student as an entire individual considering emotions, linguistic aspects and behavior as “what the student feels, thinks, and knows with what he is learning in the target language” (Moskowitz, 1978, cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 90).

Moreover, information and communication technologies have acquired a central role in language teaching (Dominguez Gonzales, 2008) since, nowadays, it is possible to provide language learners with an infinite number of sources and activities that can maximize opportunities to practice, evaluate and be exposed to their own language process.

Electronic tools are claimed to support and enable learners either to accomplish or succeed in tasks as well as resolve complex problems that differently, they would not be able to (Reiser, 2004). By implementing tools that support learners, it is stated that they can maintain the direction of their learning in which additional structure is provided, complexity is somehow reduced and learners are able to recognize and prioritize goals to reach, which is defined as Scaffolding. Reiser stated that scaffolding is a process in which a more experienced and knowledgeable person supports another whose task is beyond reach without assistance, is a prominent practice towards taking proper advantage of learning opportunities. In this process of guiding an inexperienced individual, tools can help reach learning objectives. That is, assistance can be provided and monitored not only by a human teacher or assistant but by electronic tools or software. This is part of what is called a process of problematizing in which students are encouraged to face complexity in task resolution and demanding, at the same time, specific actions in order to improve performance and problem solving (Reiser, 2004). Thus, there must be a shortcut that allows language learners to increase the exposition to the second language and therefore create more opportunities to use it. There should be different actions that can have an impact on language learning that can be taken, regulated, monitored and selected by the learner.

2.5 Language Learning Strategies Early Assumptions

The study of language learning strategies (LLS) arises during the 1970s as a fundamental shift of perspective in thinking about the processes of language learning (Cohen & Macaro, 2007). Rubin and Stern are acknowledged as pioneers in this area who, in 1975, made the first attempts to provide a list of the actions followed by “good language learners” or students who were successful in the process of second language learning (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999). In the first classificatory description, Rubin claimed that there are two processes that contribute to learning: a direct and an indirect. The direct processes of an ideal learner suggested by Joan Rubin in the book “What the ‘Good language learner’ can teach us” are:

- A. Clarification and verification
- B. Monitoring
- C. Memorization
- D. Guessing/inductive inference
- E. Deductive reasoning
- F. Practice

(Rubin, 1975, cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 11)

Then, the list provided by this researcher aimed to describe the techniques and actions implemented by those learners who seemed to have larger progress in second language learning. Rubin stated that ideal language learners are:

“willing and accurate guessers; have a strong drive to communicate; are often uninhibited; are willing to make mistakes; focus on form by looking for patterns and analyzing; take advantage of all practice opportunities; monitor their speech as well as that of others, and pay attention to meaning”.

(Oxford, 1994, p. 1)

The indirect processes proposed by Rubin refer to those approaches that contributed indirectly to learning. They are classified in two characteristics:

- A. Creates opportunities to practice
- B. Production tasks related to communication

(Rubin, 1975, p. 125-125; cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 11)

The innovations in the field of that time are nowadays addressed as descriptive focused studies of language strategies (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999). It is possible to perceive that, in the early stages of LLS research, a contrast between good and less successful language learners was made as in Rubin’s framework. Rubin’s list is oriented on a set of simultaneous activities applied by successful learners that drive language students through organized mechanisms to language achievement. This is confirmed by Cohen and Macaro (2007) who claimed that Rubin’s list could have been intended to provide a set of activities for learners to follow whenever a demand was confronted in second language learning or copied and implemented by those language learners who seem to struggle.

Moreover, a second list proposed by Stern based on a non-empirical approach but a teacher-based experience (Stern's own professional experience as a teacher) aimed to define the 10 characteristics of a Good Language Learner (GLL):

1. A personal learning style or positive learning strategies
2. An active approach to the task
3. A tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and empathy to its speakers
4. Technical know-how about how to tackle a language
5. Strategies of experimentation and planning with the object of developing the new language into an ordered system and/or revising this system progressively
6. Constantly searching for meaning
7. Willingness to practice
8. Willingness to use the language in real communication
9. Self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use
10. Developing the target language more and more as a separate reference system and learning to think in it.

(1975, p. 31; cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 11-12)

Chamot (2004) claims that the pioneers in LLS used mainly their experiences and observation processes to describe the dominant activities, or strategies, which lead learners to a higher level of language proficiency differently from other students. Within the development of further research of Rubin and Sterns' contemporaries, it was possible for researchers such as Hosenfeld, Naiman, Fröhlich, and Todesco to come up with a cutting-edge list of, not only

general actions but specific qualities, characteristics and techniques employed by good language learners. Those characteristics of a prominent language learning achiever are:

- Is an active learner
- Monitors language production
- Practices communicating in the language
- Uses prior linguistic knowledge
- Uses various memorization techniques
- Asks questions for clarification

(Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999, p. 164)

As can be seen, the former list provided a more sophisticated study detailed with characteristics and practices defined as “language learning ability” which referred to the use of techniques that are employed when learning a language rather than a long speculative theorem. Yet, these presented sets of characteristics were claimed to be useful for professors and students when it is intended to reply or “pass” the mentioned behaviors and actions implemented by good learners to less successful learners “assuming that such transfer is possible” (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, and Todesco, 1978,1996, Naiman et al. 1978,1996; cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 12). And yet, Macaro suggests “one cannot simply study good language learners and then propose that the behavior observed should be the behavior adopted by low achievers in order to make them high achievers” (2001, cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 22). Macaro also claims that observing less successful language students’ behaviors and actions was also required and as important as observing successful ones (as

Rubin and Stern did) in order to collect information enough of low achievers' procedure (Griffiths, 2004).

Though the previously presented repertoires of activities and qualities have been updated, they are crucial in the development of the concepts and studies of LLS. Oxford (1994) states that a contribution of this second set of characteristics is that researchers added aspects of how learners learn to think in the second language and addressed accepted affective aspects of language acquisition. Moreover, it is said that these descriptive studies "provided important information to guide experimental studies to identify the effects of learning strategies instruction on students" (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999, p. 163) by arising the questions "what makes a good language learner be that accomplished?" or more specifically, what do good language learners do that less successful learners do not? (Cohen & Macaro, 2007).

Back in time, in the early stages of research in this area, even before the term "strategy" emerged as a specific concept in language learning, the actions made by language learners were defined differently covering "a wide variety of linguistic behavior and included techniques, tricks, tactics, attitudes, exercises, and learning activities" (Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 13). The term is described as complex to be generally defined since it is used in different areas (Marcos García, 2015) and it has been used for a long time. Similarly, Chamot et al. claim that "descriptive studies of LLS have taken several forms" (1999, p. 163). These studies started by gathering sets of characteristics of successful learners, then, collections of different categories of actions related to emotion were developed and instruments that could measure psychological aspects were also created in order to recognize the strategies used by language students.

The concept of “Strategy” gets a place in the areas of Applied Linguistics, Language Acquisition and Language Learning during the 1970s during the development of Rubin’s What the ‘Good language learner’ Can teach us and either Chomsky or Hyde’s proposals and descriptions of the term competence and strategic competence (Cohen & Macaro, 2007).

In terms of etymology, the word strategy comes from the Greek word *strategia* that refers to the actions or steps taken having the intention of defeating in war (Oxford, 2003), a term that is currently still used in military functions defined as a set of coordinated actions that are focused on reaching a specific target (*Le Trésor de le langue Français*, 2004, cited in Marcos García, 2015). Oxford claims that the meaning of this word has “fortunately” changed its original meaning related to war when used in Pedagogy or Applied Linguistics. The term strategy is a common concept in the field of Education associated with the fulfillment and resolution of emerging requirements, tasks or problems.

In order to become what it is currently known as the study of LLS, the first studies developed in the area passed from a provided structured list of activities, in the early stages, to checklist of characteristics, behaviors, techniques and qualities of learners which were presented as the description of effective learners’ activities, and, later on, these mentioned behaviors started being addressed as studying activities or techniques, learner strategies or learning strategies. However, having a common term to define the study of strategies in learning a language has been a conflict between experts in the area. As Macaro (2001) states, learner strategies are actually perceived as difficult to define at an international level and with full consensus. He also claims that different authors have regarded the term strategy as “Language Skills, language processes, mechanisms to compensate for a lack of language, actions, plans, etc.” all of them to refer to language learning strategies. Similarly, authors and researchers have

referred to the study area with three main definitions. Firstly, as Learner Strategies, secondly Learning Strategies and thirdly, as used in this paper, Language Learning Strategies. Some authors involved in the area of language learning refer to the concept indifferently using learner strategies or LLS depending on the researcher's claim towards the terminology, the year in which writing or research was carried, etc. In fact, Cohen and Macaro (2007) claimed that referring to LLS as the term of the discipline that studies learner's actions was perhaps never formally used before June 2004, year in which specialist in the area met to discuss the main and still dominant issues concerning language strategies and agreed on common standards either in the definition of the concept-related terms and classification. Therefore, the current definition of LLS might not be addressed as in this paper before 2004 and it would be more likely to find literature referred to as either learner strategies or learning strategies.

Even if both of the concepts, LLS and learner strategies, are related or seem to be synonyms of one the other, there is a slight difference between the former and the latter. Macaro defines LLS exclusively to the process of language learning or linguistic problems that break communication. Learner strategies are, similarly, related to the resolution of "language-related tasks" placing the learner as an active participant, but the use of this concept might also be related not only to language learning. Learning strategies can refer to actions implemented for the learning of any subject (Macaro, 2001).

In the chart below, differences between the terms learner strategies, learning strategies and LLS are presented:

Figure 1: Strategies definitions

Learner Strategies	Learning Strategies	Language Learning Strategies (LLS)
<p>General activities used by an individual to solve problems.</p> <p>The individual or learner is an active participant.</p> <p>Tools used to accomplish tasks.</p>	<p>Activities that can be applied to any content-subject learning.</p> <p>General activities used by an individual in order to accomplish a learning goal.</p>	<p>Activities to satisfy linguistic gaps or solve language-related problems.</p> <p>Actions that compensate for “communication breakdowns”.</p> <p>Steps taken to accomplish interaction.</p>

Cohen and Macaro (2007) claim that the distinction between the use of the learning strategies and learners’ strategies should be observed within the analysis of “learning” and “learner”. Learner strategies are, therefore, conceived as general behaviors while LLS are described as communication or linguistic strategies that fulfill social-interactive activity. Moreover, Learning Strategies research focuses on learner’s decision-making processes and the behaviors involving learning decisions aimed at maximizing results and learning more successfully (Lee, 2010).

2.6 Language Learning Strategies Conceptions, Current Classification and Research

The study in the area of LLS, as seemed before, commences with the first attempts to develop a congruent theorem that supported students to keep track of their own learning. Developed during the 1970s firstly by Stern and Rubin (Griffiths, 2004), it was aimed to detect and contrast the proper activities that language learners engaged and performed so that these actions could be implemented by no highly successful language learners (as it appears in Rubin's "Good Language Learner" proposal).

“[Early] applied research on language learning strategies investigates the feasibility of helping students become effective language learners by teaching them some of the learning strategies that descriptive studies have identified as characteristics of the good language learner”

(Chamot, 2004, p. 14)

The innovations in the area of language learning research can be remarked also as the beginning of “comprehensive classification schemes of language learning strategies” (Chamot, 2004, p. 16) or what is described as emphasis shifting that, rather than identify the different actions implemented by successful learners into broad diverse categories, the emerging approach allowed either researchers or teachers to focus on the learning process, specifically in the individual learner. Suddenly, interest in the mechanism employed in the process of language learning by individual learners came to give answers rather than the average prominent mechanisms of language (Cohen & Macaro, 2007).

LLS research focuses, on the one hand, on the learner's decision-making processes and the behaviors involving learning decision-oriented to get the most out of results (Good & Brophy, 1994). They are regarded as a determinant factor for language teachers that demonstrate and allow detecting "how and how well" learners are doing on their learning (Oxford, 2003). LLS are conceived as the actions that learners implement in order to achieve a goal or resolve a particular problem. They are described as every action (immediate or long term, observable and unobservable), with which learners engage in order to help themselves to learn (Macaro, 2003) and maximize their opportunities to solve problems.

Then, in the enhancement of the learning process, LLS are generally perceived as important aspects to foster in language learners to support their learning indifferently of the nature of observable demonstrations or unobservable reflection of language learners' performance. Indeed, the most recognized researchers in the field consider either behavioral or psychological aspects in the individual (language learner) interacting with other elements such as the learning context, the learners' backgrounds, the complexity of learning tasks and motivation. Oxford and Scarcella define learning strategies as "specific actions, behaviors, steps or techniques used by students to enhance their own learning" (1992, cited in Oxford, 2017, p. 2). O'Malley and Chamot (1994) state that strategies are the tools for self-directed active involvement needed for developing L2.

Similarly, the CEFR defines it as any organized line of performance, intentioned and regulated, chosen by any individual in order to accomplish a self-proposed or an emergent task (Marcos García, 2015). Actually, LLS represent the opportunity for students to recognize their learning styles, take actions that allow them to accomplish personal and curricular goals

(Oxford, 2003), develop knowledge about oneself as a learner as well as factors that might impact performance (Lai, 2011).

A generally current accepted definition of strategy declares that it “is some form of activity that is used in response to problems when and where they arise” (Grenfell and Macaro, 2007; cited in Meng, Kumar, Nagami and Walker, 2015, p. 243). Therefore, it is implicit that, in order to use a strategy, it is necessary to face different kinds of arising issues in different situations, some of them arranged or indicated and some others spontaneously. Therefore, the previous authors claimed that language learning is *per se* a problematic process, problems that can occur in aspects such as in the discourse, inside the social context or even in the learner’s mind. In fact, the level and type of tasks, as well as the complexity of it, is a determinant aspect for students to select specific actions that would fulfill and overcome demands.

In second language learning, it is implicit that language learners struggling with linguistic requirements will have language accomplishment as a solution to their needs. However, the process to reach this ending does not have to be overwhelming, painful and long for students. Learners can be orientated to connect their needs, goals and desires to the curricular goals in an institution and the process of learning a language. Oxford states that, under the right conditions of instruction, strategies “make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations” (Oxford, 1990, p. 8; cited in Ghannam, 2019, p. 32). Furthermore, Marcos García (2015) adds that these actions, techniques and behaviors are employed with a fundamental intention that is reaching goals effectively, solve a problem, complete a task, etc.

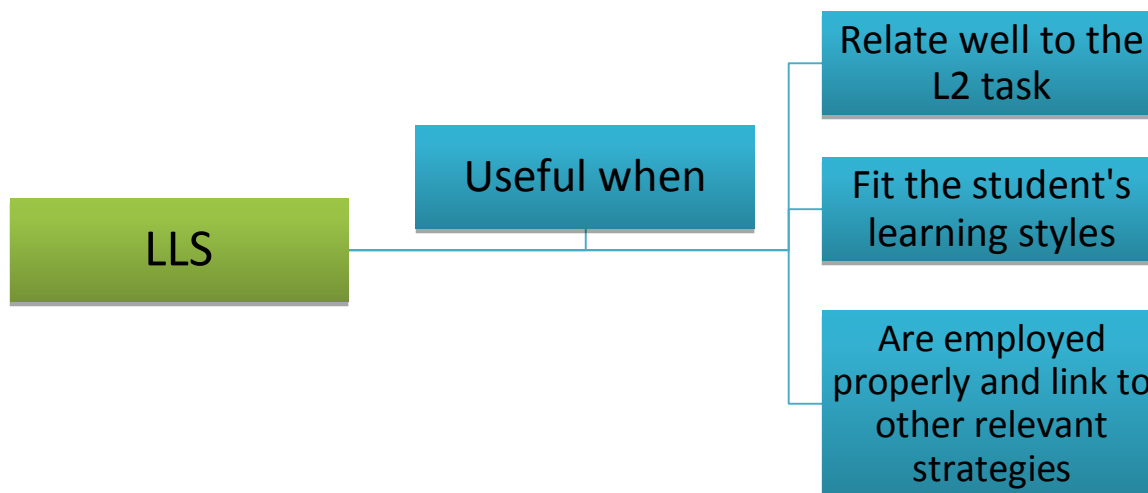
García-Ros, Pérez-González, Martínez and Alfonso (1998) summarize some of the accepted learning strategies aspects as can be seen in the list below:

- Learning strategies are proceeds that facilitate the information processing and, therefore, the learning process.
- They are responsible for selecting, organizing, and regulating the cognitive and metacognitive processes having as purpose to face particular learning situations (both, general and specific).
- They are under learner's control; generally delivered, planned, and sensibly employed.
- They integrate a sequence of activities more than isolated facts, in terms that the individual is required to know either the component processes or the necessary routine to organize these processes.
- Their application is elastic. They might be used in different contexts and their application might vary according to the characteristics of the task and the learning-teaching situation. This implies that knowing when to use a strategy is as important as how to employ it.

Learning Strategies are, moreover, described as neutral that is, given strategies are not inherently good nor bad but it is valued-neutral until the context (or the specific situation) of its use is thoroughly considered (Oxford, 2003). This implies that strategies do not have a positive or negative, good or bad value by themselves. They adopt a value in the practice, that can be effective or ineffective depending on the user's approach to perform. Indeed, LLS are acknowledged by Hsiao and Oxford as having the potential to be used effectively, but they can also lead to failure if not employed or followed properly (Cohen & Macaro, 2007). Oxford (2003) provides generally accepted aspects that make strategies to get a positive

value, and, therefore, be useful in practice for students if certain conditions are fulfilled and followed:

Figure 2: LLS use



(Oxford, Language Learning Styles and Strategies: An Overview, 2003)

Similarly, certain strategies might be addressed as clearly effective for some students when solving a problem but, this same set could be useless for a different learner facing the related tasks or problems than user 1 or when students are required to overcome problems with different level of difficulty and types, they might require to select and use diverse strategies to accomplish demands successfully.

Macaro (2001) claims that pupils are not homogeneous. Thus, learners arrive at the classroom with different learning styles, different levels of motivation, expectations, wishes, goals, etc. Consequently, affective aspects, denominated also as learner variables, are influential in the success of language learners, the development of autonomy on students as well as in the selection and application of learning strategies (either effective or ineffective). Some of the

learning variables on individuals recognized and investigated by most experts in LLS research are: proficiency level, learning styles, age and gender, motivation, learning goals, culture, and context (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; El-Dib, 2004; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; cited in Chamot, 2004). Between the most important aspects to define in this paper are learning styles and motivation.

Learning styles are defined as overall approaches that individuals undergo in order to learn either a language or content of any subject (Oxford, 2003) that, as all the learning variables, are acknowledged to affect learning and the possible selection of specific language strategies (Oxford, 1994). Oxford (2003) states that students tend to be different in learning styles that are, among the 9 main dimensions presented by the author, two of them are discussed in this paper since they seem to be the most influential in LLS selection: sensory and biological. In the sensory schema it is easy to recognize the visual element which is mainly recognized by perceiving letters, forms or symbols as looking to images, watching videos, animations, other people performing, etc. Differently, auditory refers to those learners who gather information by detecting as well as recognizing sounds such as in oral communication, dialogues and interaction with other peers. Then, kinesthetic learners are those who prefer learning by having physical movement such as dancing, acting, performing role-plays, etc. Quite similar, synesthetic are those learners oriented to work by having close interaction with touchable elements as it happens in painting, writing, typing in electronic devices, etc.

Moreover, in the biological scheme, it is possible to find learners' preferences such as time to work or perform tasks defined as biorhythms. In this aspect, it is declared that learners might feel more determinative, energetic or motivated depending on the time of the day in which they are taking a class. Sustenance is a concept recognized in this group that relates to

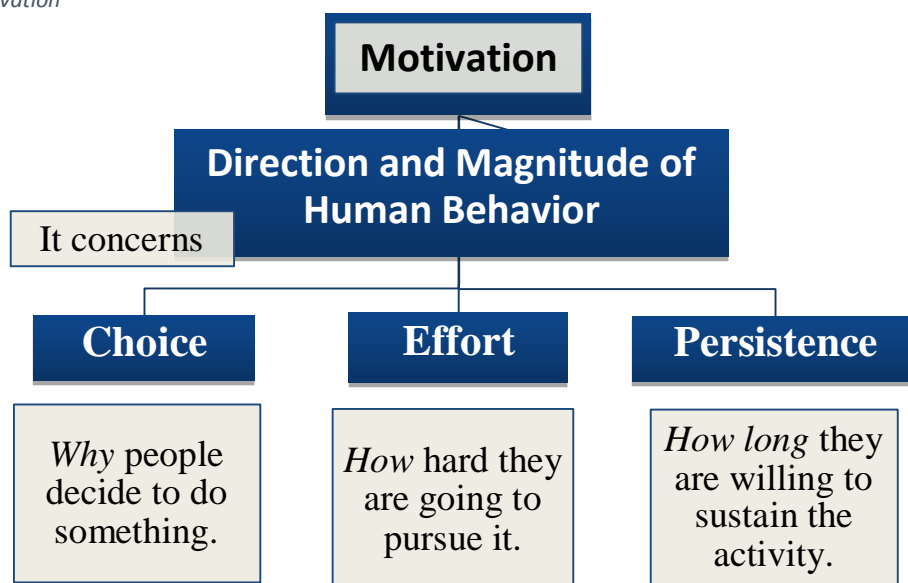
the need of certain students to consume food, snacks or liquids in order to keep the track of the class in a sense of energy, concentration, motivation, etc. At the same time, there might be students or teachers and even institutions that reject this idea in class, some of them even not allowing it since sustenance is considered to be distracting or disturbing. Finally, an important element of biological aspects is the location that states for the preferences of learners to study in specific conditions and environments.

Learning styles are claimed to be inherent elements in every human being. As Dunn and Griggs state, learning styles are biological and developmental imposed set of features that make the same teaching methodology wonderful for some learners and terrible for others (Dunn & Griggs, 1988; cited in Oxford, 2003). These variables represent a different approach to construct meaning, prioritize decisions, efforts and goals for each individual. Then, inclusive methods should be implemented in the educational practice in order to fulfill the different existing personal variables within the curricular demands and the learners' desires. Additionally, Oxford states that "the more that teachers know about their students' styles and preferences, the more effective they can orient their L2 instruction" (2003, p. 16). If students and teachers are focused on recognizing the most effective ways in which every single student learns a language, learners will be oriented to take actions by themselves without the persistent presence and instruction of the teacher.

Motivation is another important variable in the selections of LLS. It refers to wishes and behaviors that make learners get involved and participate in their learning process. Macaro (2003) conceives the term motivation reflected in behavior as certain inner forces that fuel the desire to learn. Dörnyei (2001) states that motivation concerns directions and magnitude of human behavior and, at the same time, provide three acceptable dimensions to recognize

motivation: Choice that refers the decisions made by learners to support their learning; effort, seen as the amount of energy invested; and, persistence that is the amount of time that students hold activities or are willing to do it. Dörnyei’s proposal of aspects that have to do with motivation can be seen in the following chart.

Figure 3: Motivation



(Dörnyei, Teaching and Researching Motivation, 2001)

Furthermore, Oxford (1994) mentions that recognizing and understanding the specific reasons for students to select and study a second language are important aspects in the choice of strategies in students. These reasons are related to learners’ wishes, expectations, interests, and also to goal setting. Language learners’ active involvement is claimed to be highly influenced by their goals, related at the same time to emotional and affective preferences. Gardner and Zamber (1972, cited in Dörnyei, 2001) state that motivation is a desire for goal achievement combined with student energy to work towards. Then, motivation should be considered as an important element of self-directed learning and self-regulation since research made in motivation indicates that “successful and highly motivated learners adopted

more strategies [than less motivated ones], especially those involving planning, evaluation and monitoring” (Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 15).

Additionally, it is claimed that learners that self-regulate their learning are also motivated students who are able to direct their own learning since they are confident of success when using and selecting other strategies they have learned or used (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999).

Macaro (2003) also states that the teacher’s input will not specifically determine the learner's output. However, the teacher is the one in charge of encouraging students to take actions that allow them to resolve communication issues. This exposition to linguistic gaps leads students to create their own plans and make efforts to resolve emerging problems that they face in different situations.

Then, allowing learners to discover and experience learning strategies might facilitate the student selection of actions and steps to take whenever an issue arises. Chamot et al. (1999) claim that if students are encouraged to use appropriate strategies, a feeling of success in assigned experiences is promoted. This allows language learners to develop self-efficacy and promote motivation in the activities or experiences that they undergo. In fact, Chamot (2004) states that too much attention had been paid to give a name, describe, classify, organize and categorize strategies but, few efforts were made to really identify the necessities, interests and goals that language students have.

Regarding the accepted organization of language learning strategies, Marcos García (2015) mentions that it was until the 1980s that specialists in the area started establishing an exhaustive classification of LLS. Naturally, some of these proposed taxonomies might vary

depending on the researcher and the time in which the classifications were developed (as can be seen in Rubin, Stern and their contemporaries' schemes). Early classifications aimed to describe the profile of an ideal language learner so that it can be passed or transferred to not successful learners (Grenfell & Macaro cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007). Then, after researchers started focusing more on the types of strategies used by individuals in specific contexts and depending on the nature of the task rather than general profiles of successful language learners, there came the so-called first shift in the area of LLS (Cohen & Macaro, 2007). In this change of perspective, researchers began to have an interest in recognizing and dominating the different possible strategies used according to the situation. Similarly, they had then the duty of organizing and classifying strategies in different schemas which varied depending on the researcher and the learning theory in which the classification was based on.

Cohen states that:

"learning strategies are for the most part unobservable, though some may be associated with an observable behavior. For example, a learner could use selective attention (unobservable) to focus on the main ideas while listening to a newscast and could then decide to take notes (observable) in order to remember the information"

(cited in Chamot, 2004, p. 15).

As can be seen, some researchers claimed that LLS were somehow observable behaviors or actions such as taking notes, making vocabulary lists, elaborating flashcards, etc. Besides, a large majority seemed to be mental unobservable processes (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999). Then, a simple classification scheme of LLS might be divided and classified

into two categories: Observable and unobservable. The former refers to all the visible actions that are somehow related to noticeable behavior and can be measured by a teacher based on perception, responses to specific tasks, etc. and the latter, concerning abstract processes, non-simply actions or less perceptible behaviors. However, Cyr claims that learning strategies are “behaviors, techniques, tactics, goals, aware mental procedures, unconscious, or potentially conscious, cognitive or functional abilities, as well as problem-solving techniques observable in the individual who meets a learning situation” (1998, p. 4; cited in Marcos García, 2015, p. 127). Therefore, LLS could not be necessarily classified into two general groups as strategies might be physically perceived, abstract processes, mental procedures, etc. Then, it was necessary to develop more accurate categories to classify LLS.

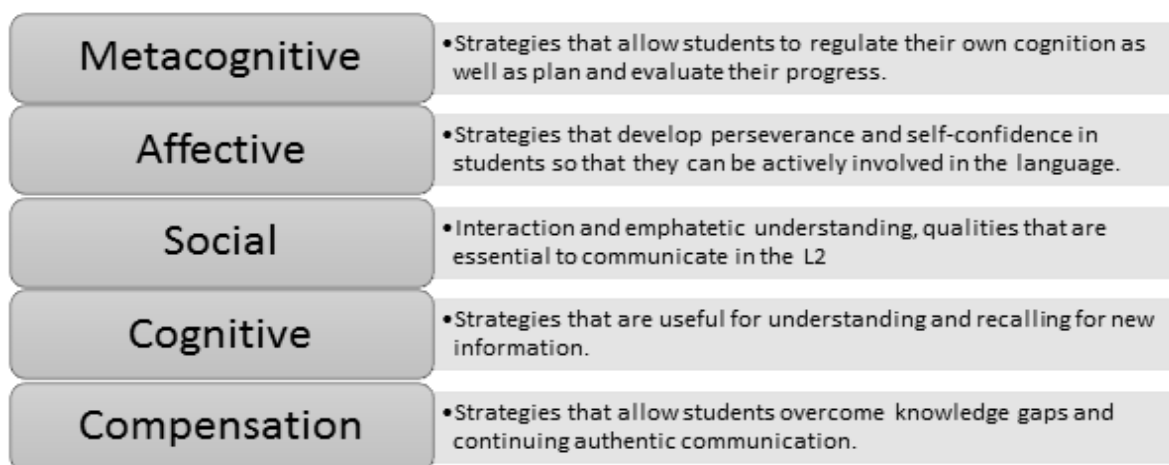
One of the most recognized classification schemes of LLS is the one developed by Oxford. She provided a distinction of language learning strategies, considering either observable or unobservable actions, divided into two groups: Direct and Indirect strategies. Indirect strategies concern metacognitive, affective and social strategies while direct strategies involve compensation, cognitive strategies (1986; cited in Uhl Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999) and later on, memorization distinction was added (Oxford, 1990) as can be seen in the following chart.

Figure 4: Direct and Indirect Strategies

Oxford LLS classification (1990)	
Direct Strategies	Indirect Strategies
Cognitive Strategies	Metacognitive Strategies
Compensation Strategies	Affective Strategies
Memorization Strategies	Social Strategies

Oxford’s division consists, on the one hand, in the assumption that direct strategies affect directly a specific language learning task such as memorizing steps followed in order to learn vocabulary or “direct manipulation of the target language” (1994; cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 17). Then, compensation, cognitive and memorization strategies, since they are claimed to directly affect the language use or the manipulation of language for their development, are part of this distinction. On the other hand, actions that are considered to have indirect contributions such as planning how to carry a task, predicting, inferencing, etc. belong to the group of indirect strategies. They are perceived as actions whose process undergoes through supported and managed learning without involving language *per se* (Cohen & Macaro, 2007). Metacognitive, affective and social strategies belong to indirect strategies.

Figure 5: LLS classification



(Oxford, 1990)

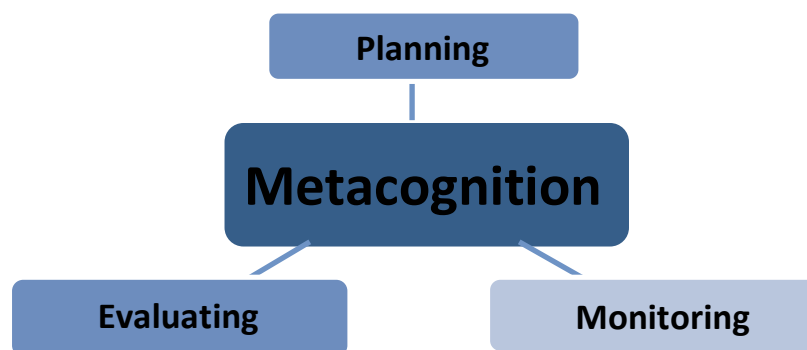
Each category of Oxford's LLS classification schemes is explained below, adding not only description from this author but complementary information, contributions and perceptions of other researchers to Indirect and Direct strategies.

2.7 Oxford LLS Classification: Indirect Strategies

Metacognitive strategies relate to planning, monitoring, and evaluating the cognitive processes (Cohen & Macaro, 2007) problem solving (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999) as well as directing attention, self-regulation and self-assessment (Marcos García, 2015). Similarly, they are acknowledged as a guide of learners' cognitive understanding, their use and awareness of personal strategies (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999) and moderating own learning. In fact, Oxford defines metacognitive strategies as those actions "employed for managing the learning process overall" (2003, p. 12). Chamot describes a metacognitive strategy as the "executive control over thinking processes" (1999, p. 158). This category of strategies has been recognized by experts in the area as one of the main goals to achieve as well as the main characteristic of successful learners as well as the

most detected absent in less successful ones (Macaro, 2001; cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007). In fact, the description of successful learners, also defined as strategic learners, is for students who have metacognitive knowledge about their own learning approaches as well as their own thinking and, a good understanding of what a task involves, and the ability to orchestrate the strategies that best meet both the tasks demands and their own learning strengths (Chamot, 2004). Metacognitive strategies can be summarized as “the orchestrating mechanism for combining strategies effectively in any given situation” (Grendell & Macaro, 2007; cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 23). Additionally, this group of strategies is defined as essential to develop towards the achievement of proficiency in language learning. In fact, Chamot and El-Dinary (1992; cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007) mention that good language learners are those who monitor and adapt the strategies that they use, whereas less successful learners tend to stick to the same catalog of actions to solve general problems that, in turn, are denominated as ineffective strategies.

Figure 6: Metacognition



Affective strategies are related to the emotional aspects of language learning. This contact with feelings, either positive such as confidence when communicating, or negative such as reflecting about anxiety, has been remarked as essential components of language proficiency

based on research made in the area (Oxford, 2003). Dealing with affective strategies allows language learners to identify and control their preferences, interests, feelings, wishes as well as controlling the situations in which they might feel pressured or uncomfortable, that means, eradicating negative environments in learning a language. Therefore, having awareness and control of emotional aspects increase motivation and encourage learners to act more confidently. Affective realization can be achieved by following actions such as praising or rewarding for good performance, self-talk and supporting oneself. Affective strategies are seen as “strategies that contribute to achieve a positive learning environment, helping [learners] to pay attention and be alert of learning stimuli, controlling levels of anxiety as well as keeping establishing and keeping motivation” (García-Ros, Pérez Gonzales, Martínez, & Alfonso, 1998, p. 260).

Social strategies concern dealing with interpersonal, communicative and somehow is related to affective interactive aspects in language learning situations. They are described as actions that “integrate all the strategies that concern conscious interaction with others to facilitate the learning process or the accomplishment in a specific learning task” (García-Ros, Pérez Gonzales, Martínez, & Alfonso, 1998, p. 260). Interaction refers to a mutual mediation of information with other peers, which relates to elements that interfere in language acquisition. Then, based on pedagogical fundamentals such as constructivism, it is evident that interaction and collaborative participation have a strong influence on the construction of learners’ knowledge and, consequently, in second language acquisition.

Figure 7: Indirect Strategies

Metacognitive	Planning for a L2 task Monitoring mistakes Evaluating task success
Social	Asking questions to get verification Exploring cultural and social norms Asking for help in doing a language task
Affective	Self-rewarding for good performance Identifying anxiety level Using deep breathing or positive self-talk

(Oxford, Language Learning Styles and Strategies: An Overview, 2003)

Oxford states that social strategies “help the learner work with others and understand the target culture as well as the language” (2003, p. 14). Since communication is the everyday means of interaction, participation and information acquisition in human beings, social strategies become essential for language learners in the development of a new vehicle for information mediation, distribution and social contact. Strategies to overcome tasks such as collaborative work, peer assessment, speaking with native speakers and searching for language peers are examples of social strategies.

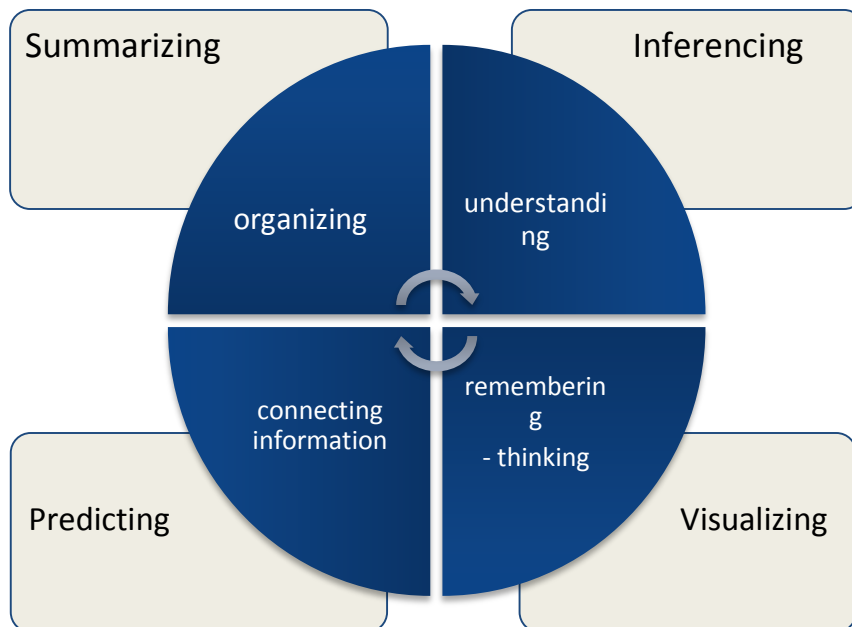
2.8 Oxford LLS Classification: Direct Strategies

Cognitive strategies refer to intellectual actions related to the processing of information in the brain by means of direct management or handling of materials and learning resources. Strategies such as *summarizing*, *visualizing*, *inferencing* and *predicting* belong to this group as they facilitate the processing of thinking, understanding, remembering, organizing,

elaborating and connecting information as well as learners' thoughts (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999). Oxford describes this category of LLS as those strategies that

“enable the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways, e.g. through reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesis, outlining, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas, practicing in naturalistic settings, and practicing structures and sounds formally” (2003, p. 12).

Figure 8: Cognitive Direct Strategies

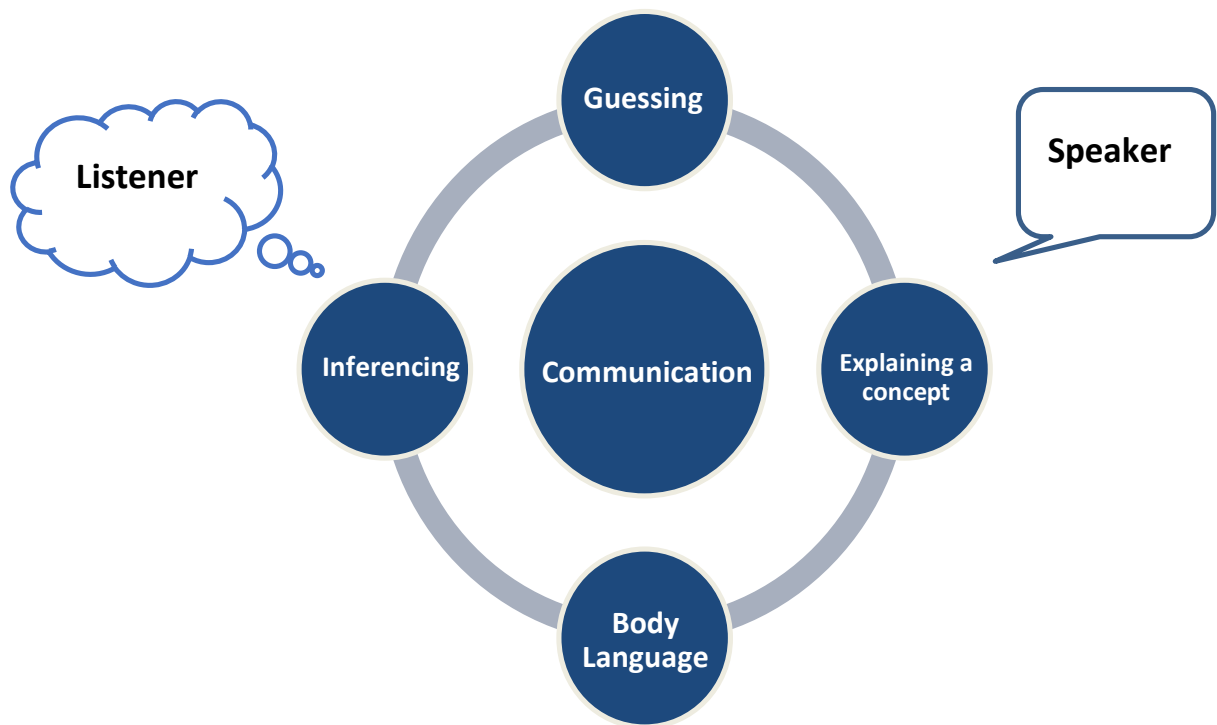


These strategies have been claimed to be useful in the processing, storing and recalling of information since they are part of human reasoning and analysis of data. Similarly, cognitive strategies are related to the organization and production of linguistic structures as well as sound patterns in the language. Furthermore, Oxford (2003) claims that different studies, made in the area of LLS of different languages studied by English native speakers, have shown the significant relation of cognitive strategies with language proficiency. In addition,

cognitive strategies are described as the strategies that “imply a high personalization of information, modifying and restructuring substantially the basic characteristics of the presented information” (García-Ros, Pérez Gonzales, Martínez, & Alfonso, 1998, p. 260).

Compensatory or compensation strategies are remarked as useful sources and actions that allow students to overcome linguistic lacks, knowledge gaps and avoid communication breakdowns. They are defined by Oxford as the strategies that “help the learners make up for missing knowledge” (2003, p. 13).

Figure 9: Compensatory Strategies



It is established that motivated language learners are those that take advantage of every opportunity to use the language in order to practice and improve, then, this group of strategies results to be essential for continuing with sequential interaction and language exposition. Inferring, guessing, following clues and predicting meaning are some of the compensatory

strategies used when students find vacuums in terms of vocabulary or structures in receptive skills. Regarding the productive ones, speaking and writing, students might use synonyms, descriptions or, even use body language such as gestures when speaking to compensate gaps or even unknown aspects of the L2. Therefore, compensation strategies concern the fulfillment and overcoming of knowledge limitations, and they are important elements that maintain students either motivated or confident of their capacities to deal with unexpected linguistic problems.

Memorization or memory-related strategies are the actions done by students that allow them the storing of new information, sounds, and concepts as well as being in constant interaction with data already stored. They are described as the creation of relations or links that allow remembering, retrieving, and recalling what has been learned. Under the light of Oxford, this group is defined as the strategies that “help learners link one L2 item or concept with another but do not necessarily involve deep understanding” (2003, p. 13). Moreover, other researchers might refer to this group of repetition strategies. Although the denominated name for this group might vary, researchers agree that the use of these strategies does not require great intellectual endeavor but the recognition and aggregation of sounds and meanings. For instance, some researchers refer to memory or repetition strategies as the category that is “integrated by strategies whose objective is keeping literally the material, without personalizing the information and that require minimal cognitive control employed by the subject” (García-Ros, Pérez Gonzales, Martínez, & Alfonso, 1998, p. 260). Actions such as grouping, categorizing, classifying and associating belong to memorization strategies. This group seems to be added after the first publication of 1986 Oxford’s LLS classification scheme proposal that, according to Chamot et al., “[Oxford] used more than 60

strategies identified from the literature on second language learning to develop the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning” (Chamot et al., 1999, p. 164) which will be discussed later.

Oxford (1990) provides detailed examples of memory-related strategies not only in terms of learning activities but in language teaching methods. Some examples of memorization strategies can be seen in the chart below:

Figure 10: Memorization Strategies

Type of process	E.G.
Strategies that enable learners to learn and retrieve information in an orderly string.	Acronyms
Techniques that create learning and retrieval via sounds	Rhyming and Sound imitation
“ “ that create learning and retrieval via images	Mental pictures
“ “ that create learning and retrieval via body movement	Total Physical Response
“ “ that create learning and retrieval via combinations of sounds and images	The Keywords Method
“ “ that create learning and retrieval via mechanical means	Flashcards
“ “ that create learning and retrieval via location	On a p. or blackboard

(Oxford, Language Learning Styles and Strategies: An Overview, 2003, p. 13)

The classification proposed by Oxford has been widely recognized and used by experts in the field and language teachers. In fact, this arrangement is defined by Chamot as “superior in accounting for the varieties of strategies reported by language learners” (2004, p. 17) according to research carried which contrasted three main different LLS classifications.

2.9 O'Malley and Chamot LLS Classification

O'Malley and Chamot (1995), moreover, establish another language learning strategies taxonomy that included only 3 categories: metacognitive, social (or socio-affective), and cognitive. This LLS classification scheme is also recognized by some researchers in the area described as more synthesized, rigorous and accurate than the others (Cyr, 1999, cited in Marcos García, 2015) and somehow described by some other authors as an alternative classification (Oxford, 2003). Nonetheless, this taxonomy is important and at the same time regarded as one of the three most transcendental LLS scheme proposals as Rubin 1975 and Stern's 1975 (Griffiths, 2004), both regarded as the first chronological proposal, then O'Malley and Chamot's scheme 1990 as the second and Oxford's 1990 classification as the third) in the development of LLS research (Chamot, 2004). Chamot claims that extensive study was made in order to develop this classification of learning strategies that "relied on categories derived from research in first language contexts" (2004, p. 17). The three categories of O'Malley and Chamot's taxonomy is explained and exemplified below.

Metacognitive Strategies: On the one hand, this group of strategies refers to all the processes that imply an analysis and reflection about aspects such as the own learning, preparation to learn, control of the activities, and self-assessment, also referred to as self-regulation (Marcos García, 2015). On the other hand, Chamot refers to the general concept of as a whole study of the individual decision making and the practical use or performance of specific actions as can be seen in the following quote: "overseeing the choice and application of learning strategies is the learner's metacognition or understanding of his own or her own thinking and learning processes" (2004, p. 17).

As seen in Oxford’s taxonomy, metacognition is an essential element of what it is described as successful and autonomous language learners. Similarly, O’Malley and Chamot emphasize the development of this category as well as the promotion of self-management during the language class. The authors claim that by focusing on aspects such as reflection, monitoring and evaluation, students will be more likely to recognize the specific and required strategy to be used according to the situation as can be seen in the following statement: “In the language classroom it is important that teachers strive to develop students’ own metacognition, as that will help them select the most appropriate strategies for a given task” (Chamot, 2004, p. 18). Other authors might vary when referring to metacognitive strategies as a) assessment b) goal-setting and c) planning (Celce-Murcia & Dörnyei, 1995).

Marco Garcia (2015) provides a list with the strategies that belong to a metacognitive category based on O’Malley and Chamot taxonomy:

Figure 11: O’Malley and Chamot Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive Strategies

1. Anticipation or Planning
2. General attention
3. Selective attention
4. Self-management
5. Self-regulation
6. Identifying a problem
7. Self-assessment

Socio-affective Strategies: This category generally refers to all the interactive and emotional strategies involved in language development. Therefore, there are two main characteristics to consider that are human communication and individual psychological aspects. This group is described as those strategies that “imply an interaction with another person, having as intention the promotion of learning and the control of the implicit affective dimension” (Marcos García, 2015, p. 15). For instance, looking for a conversation partner is one socio-affective strategy that involves mutual interaction and motions. Self-talk might be one of the best examples socio-affective strategy in this group (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999) that at the same time is controversial in regard of Oxford’s classification, considered less general compared to O’Malley and Chamot’s, since it allows LLS users to foster interaction and motivation even when it is not possible to communicate with another speaker. The controversy might refer to the delimitation of what is required to fulfill what socio-affective strategies require in order to be part of this group. If interaction with another speaker is required in order to fit, self-talk would obviously not satisfy the requirement. Thereafter, it will only be considered as an affective strategy (which suits more with Oxford’s taxonomy).

Figure 12: O’Malley and Chamot Socio-Affective Strategies

Socio-affective Strategies	1. Clarification and verifying
	2. Cooperation or collaborative work
	3. Emotional controll and management
	4. Self-encouragement

(Marcos García, 2015)

Cognitive Strategies: These strategies are not only seen as intellectual operations or imperceptible procedures in the brain but as body and mind connected processes uncharged of analysis, reflection, processing and even reflection of the information mediated in the human brain. Then, rational unobservable aspects are elements in this category but they do not involve all cognitive actions, external factors are also considered as important stimuli as can be seen in the following description: “cognitive strategies imply an interaction with the subject to study and mental or physical manipulation of this subject as well as employment of specific techniques towards the accomplishment of a learning task” (Marcos García, 2015, p. 129).

Similar to Oxford’s taxonomy, the description of cognitive strategies in O’Malley and Chamot agree with the idea that cognitive strategies concern the construction of what is called “knowledge structures” (Oxford, 2003, p. 12) that allow the recognition of information throughout the development of meaningful interconnected schemas. Some of the examples provided in this classification are:

Figure 13: O'Malley and Chamot Cognitive Strategies

**Cognitive
Strategies**

1. Repetition

2. Using resources

3. Classifying, Categorizing or Grouping

4. Deduction and Induction

5. Notes taking

6. Substitution.

7. Elaborating

8. Summarizing

9. Translating

10. Conveying knowledge or experiences

11. Inferencing

(Marcos García, 2015)

2.10 LLS Instruction

As seen before, LLS have been described differently according to the author and the time but they generally concern the implementation of self-directed actions that aim to satisfy and accomplish personal goals, fulfill requirements, solve linguistic tasks and overcome problems. Similarly, one of the most discussed topics by specialists in the area is the way that strategies are acquired by language students, whether by a process of developing or inherent arousal of LLS.

Chamot et al. (1999) emphasize that LLS are not innate and, therefore, researchers claim that strategies can be learned or developed by language learners. However, they state that there

are important characteristics to consider in order to reach successful LLS instruction such as individual (student's beliefs) and instructional (teacher's beliefs, classroom context, approach, etc.) factors. On the one hand, it is stated that, in order to reach successful instruction of LLS, students must believe that they would be able to become independent learners who sensibly use strategies in order to take charge of their learning. Students are expected to be willing to use strategies by taking advantage of every learning situation and practicing new actions to face a problem. On the other hand, appropriate conditions to develop and practice LLS should be set by the language teacher. They should be aware that strategies can be taught and, therefore, confidence in learner's individual strategy selection and use must be fostered (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999).

Chamot (2004) states that language learning strategies instruction must aim for individuals to become independent learners. Those learners can determine the best actions to implement according to the situation, the context and in order to resolve language-related problems that satisfy the function of LLS in practical terms, and process what is defined by experts in the field as "procedures or techniques that learners can use to facilitate a learning task" (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999, p. 2). LLS instruction is, at the same time, explained to be based on the idea that language learners are effective students and problem solvers when they take control of their learning. Therefore, the appropriate instruction, selection, and use of strategies might allow them to face and overcome emerging problems related to the use and development of a second language. LLS are considered as "conscious, teachable, intentional, self-chosen and self-regulated thoughts and actions for learning the target culture and language (Oxford, 2017; cited in Mega Sartika, Santihastuti, & Wahjuningsih, 2019, p. 12).

Moreover, there are certain requirements specified by LLS researchers that need to be fulfilled in the process of language instruction. These requirements are stated as essential since they allow learners to undergo and be prepared when facing different tasks, problems and become effective selectors and performers of LLS. Under the light of Chamot, the specific goals to achieve in language learners during an instructional process are described as:

“Language learners need to explore different learning strategies, experimenting and evaluating, and eventually choosing their own set of effective strategies. In addition, all learners can profit from learning how to use metacognitive strategies to plan, monitor, and evaluate themselves throughout their learning efforts”

(Chamot, 2004, p. 18)

As can be seen, researchers agree that learners do require an exposition to different situations in which they can choose and practice a wide variety of actions. Language learners should recognize and evaluate the situation to be faced and, therefore, be aware of the range of actions that can satisfy the demands or linguistic gaps.

Some of the intentions when carrying and developing LLS instruction research go from helping students to improve in their learning process to empowering them so that they could take charge without future teachers' assistance. Chamot et al. (1992) present the common characteristics that most of the developed Strategies-based Instruction (SBI) models have included in a sequence of four phases that are:

1. Raising awareness of the strategies learners are already using;

2. Teacher presentation and modeling of strategies so that students become increasingly aware of their own thinking and learning processes;
3. Multiple practice opportunities to help students to move towards autonomous use of the strategies through a gradual withdrawal of the scaffolding; and
4. Self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies used and the transfer of strategies to fresh tasks.

(Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 142)

Likewise, Chamot (2004) states that language learners do not need to memorize nor learn the name of every strategy or the classification they belong to. Instead, language learners require to learn how to use LLS properly depending on the language learning situation that they face or they are demanded to accomplish. This results to be an important aspect since valuable time could be wasted by explaining and asking learners to remember unnecessary categories when time to select, practice, experiment, assess, forget and organize is meaningful. That is, learning to learn. Likewise, it is stated that learning strategy instruction should not be postponed nor procrastinated, neither from students nor teachers' role, until the intermediate or the advanced groups since students of early stages do require strategies development to complete complex tasks and solve a wide variety of emerging issues (a great majority of these issues appear constantly because beginners might find a new whole unknown linguistic system). Then, it is important to foster strategy instruction in learners of all stages so that this process "can make their language learning more successful and increase their motivation for further study" (Chamot, 2004, p. 20).

Oxford (1994) proposes some principles to follow what she denominated "strategy training". Oxford bases her principles on further research in L2 training because she considers that

some of the attempts at that time were still not conclusive, successful or reliable in different areas of study. And but, she claimed that her contribution might be tentative to further study and complementing.

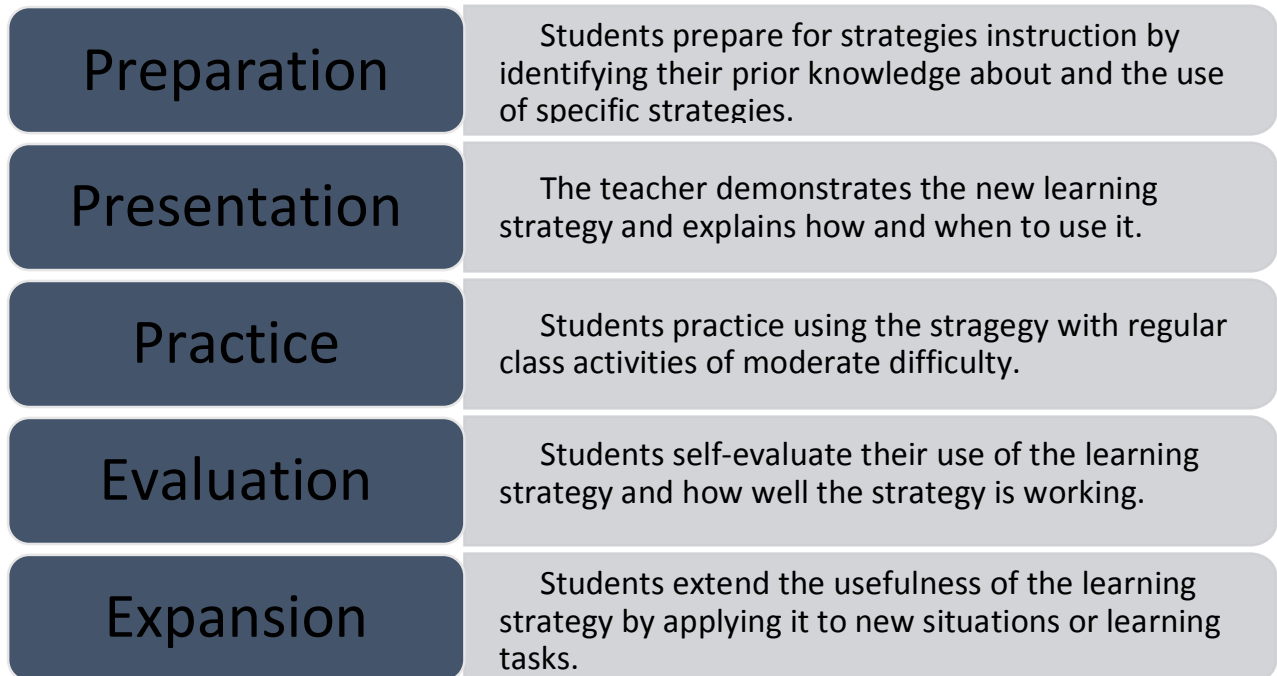
- L2 strategy training should be based clearly on students' attitudes, beliefs, and stated needs.
- Strategies should be chosen so that they mesh with and support each other and so that they fit the requirements of the language task, the learners' goals, and the learners' style of learning.
- Training should, if possible, be integrated into regular L2 activities over a long period of time rather than taught as a separate, short intervention.
- Students should have plenty of opportunities for strategy training during the class
- Strategy training should be explicit, overt, and relevant and should provide plenty of practice with varied L2 tasks involving authentic materials.
- Strategy training should not be solely tied to the class at hand; it should provide strategies that are transferable to future tasks beyond a given class.
- Strategy training should be somewhat individualized; as different students prefer or need certain strategies for particular tasks.
- Strategy training should provide students with a mechanism to evaluate their own progress and to evaluate the success of their training and the value of the strategies in multiple tasks.

(Oxford, 1994, p. 3)

One of the most recognized proposals developed in order to fulfill instruction in LLS instruction in L2 is the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) model.

Differently from Oxford’s principles proposal, this is a structured model defined as “a form of strategies-based instruction for ESL learners that includes explicit strategy instruction, content-area instruction and academic language development” (Chamot and O’Malley, 1996; cited in Oxford, 2003, p. 17). The importance attributed to the implementation of an instructional model such as the CALLA in the language classroom is stated by Chamot et al. claiming that “[it] provides explicit instruction in learning strategies that will assist students in meeting curriculum standards, learning both language and content, and becoming independent learners who can evaluate their own learning” (1999, p. 7). As can be seen, the CALLA model aims for the development of metacognition and at the same time “[it] fosters language and cognitive development by integrating content, language, and SBI” (Chamot, 2004, p. 142). This instruction model is designed in five stages that are:

Figure 14: LLS Instruction Process



(Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999, p.s 43-44)

Different models to CALLA such as Styles and Strategies-based instruction (SSBI) as well as Greenfel & Harris's models have been developed and integrated in institutions all over the world aiming to improve language learning throughout a process of strategies instruction. Chamot (2004) states that these models share characteristics in common as can be illustrated in the following list:

- The models give importance to promote students' metacognitive awareness of using LLS.
- Instruction should be provided and facilitated through teacher demonstration and modeling.
- Students should be provided with multiple practice opportunities so that they can use them autonomously.
- Students should evaluate strategies effectiveness or how well they have worked.
- Students should have plenty of experiences or problems to face so that they can choose and transfer strategies to new tasks.

Additionally, Chamot (2004) says that some of the implications from teachers when teaching a language are related to the identification of the learning strategies that their students use for the different tasks that learners undertake in the classroom.

2.11 LLS Identification and Effective Use

The different benefits of recognizing learning strategies in students to promote their learning process and making it, at the same time, self-directed have been discussed and emphasized in this document. Similarly, identifying the best options of strategies that simultaneously allow the evaluation of effectiveness in task accomplishment and problem-solving is crucial

either for teachers or students in order to promote appropriate LLS implementation whenever it is required. As Chamot (2004) mentions some of the differences that have been found between highly successful and less prominent language learners are evidently related to the number of strategies they use, but at the same time to the process of strategy use (how LLS are applied), the effectiveness for strategies selection towards specific tasks and, more importantly, to the understanding of tasks' requirements and strategy desired outcome or performance. Early assumptions regarding aspects such as LLS effectiveness state that "successful language learners tend to select strategies that work well together in a highly orchestrated way, tailored to the requirements of the language tasks" (Chamot and Kupper, 1989; cited in Oxford, 1994, p. 2).

As Oxford states, one of the main goals of LLS research and instruction is orienting learners to "learn how to use more relevant and more powerful learning strategies" (2003, p. 11) since they are the opportunity to become aware of "how well" a student is doing.

Cohen et al. emphasized that LLS are not perceptible but there are specific tools that can be used when it is intended to identify the strategies that are being chosen and applied by language learners:

"In almost all learning contexts, the only way to find out whether students are using learning strategies while engaged in a language task is to ask them. Verbal report data are used to identify language learning strategies because observation does not capture mental processes" (Cohen, 1998; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Rubin, 1975; Wenden, 1991; cited in Chamot, 2004, p. 15).

Thus, it is necessary for teachers to analyze their students' mental processes through a different variety of mechanisms so that it is possible to provide them with different techniques, suggestions, activities, plans, etc. Oxford (2003) claims that there are different strategies of "assessment tools" developed to identify the actions taken by language learners. Some of these tools are surveys, observations, interviews, learner journals, dialogue or interactive journals, think-aloud techniques, etc. Similarly, Oxford states that each of these tools might have either advantages or disadvantages. Chamot claims that "the most frequent and efficient method for identifying students' learning strategies is through questionnaires" (2004, p. 15).

Chamot et al. mention that even if there are observable LLS, the majority of them would be perceived as mental processes that are not directly visible (Uhl Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, & Robbins, 1999). Similarly, White, Schramm and Chamot claim that "strategies are, for the most part, not directly observable since they refer to internal, mental processes, and researchers must rely on learner accounts as indirect indicators of these mental processes" (cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007, p. 93) that support and confirm the reliability in the use of verbal techniques to collect information about LLS selection and application. Some of the specific oral-based or interactive data collection practices are presented and exemplified by Chamot:

"researchers have asked language learners to describe their learning process and strategies through retrospective interviews, stimulated recall interviews, questionnaires, written diaries and journals, and think-aloud protocols concurrent with a learning task. Each of these methods has limitations, but each provides important insights into unobservable mental learning strategies" (2004, p. 20).

As discussed in the previous chapters, there are not good nor bad strategies. LLS are considered neutral until the moment that they have to be applied. Oxford (2003) provides some of the conditions that should be considered to define LLS as effective or useful:

1. The Strategy relates well to the task at hand,
2. The strategy fits the particular student's learning style preferences to one degree or another, and
3. The students employ the strategy effectively and link it with other relevant strategies.

(Oxford, 2003, p. 8)

Moreover, it is assumed that students, who are aware of the best strategies implementation, become autonomous learners who can take charge of their individual learning and do not depend on the teacher's instruction. Thus, learners become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, make plans to solve specific problems and evaluate their progress. Metacognition, as explained before, refers to the ability to recognize aspects that go beyond or beside cognition, aspects that allow learners to be aware of the way he/she best learns. In this case, these strategies go beyond purely cognitive devices and allow students to coordinate their learning process by planning, monitoring, solving tasks and evaluating. Chamot claims that "the goal of learning strategies instruction is to assist students in developing awareness of their own metacognition and thus control of their own learning" (1999, p. 2). Kuhn and Dean explain "metacognition is what enables a student who has been taught a particular strategy in a specific problem context to retrieve and deploy that strategy in a similar but new context" (Lai, 2017). Additionally, Macaro (2001, cited in Cohen & Macaro, 2007) states that, among the categories of strategies proposed, the metacognitive group was commonly the collection of strategies that seemed to be more absent in less

successful learners. Thus, the promotion of self-awareness in students oriented to recognize and reflect on their learning styles as well as the creation of an environment in which students could practice different actions to solve problems result to be important in the development of autonomy and learning to learn criteria.

In summary, it is evident that specialists in the field have proposed different approaches and categories to classify and identify LLS. Some of these proposals might be related or differ, nevertheless, all the theorists agree with the possibilities to be reached by language learners if to constantly reflect, implement, practice and evaluate the actions taken in different situations. It stated that LLS “can enable students to become more independent, autonomous, lifelong learners (Allwright, 1990 and Little, 1991; cited in Oxford, 2017, p. 9).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, specific information about the methodology, setting, subjects, instrument, and research analysis procedures are described.

3.1 Setting

The BA in English Language Teaching (ELT) is an educational program offered at the Faculty of Languages of Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, which combines the principles of language and communication with teaching. This degree in English language and English language teaching explores the application of language alongside developments in teaching. Thus, the curriculum is designed for students to:

- Develop communicative language skills in English at a B2 level according to the CEFR.
- Learn more about the properties of human language and how we acquire, learn and teach it.
- Understand the sound, form and meaning of language and its acquisition (e.g. phonetics, morphology, semantics, pragmatics and sociolinguistics).
- Discover the interplay between how we acquire language, how we teach it, how we organize lessons, and how we deliver them in the classroom.
- Gain the skills and knowledge to design and produce materials for language lessons, and develop analytical and critical thinking skills.

At an advanced level, in order to become practitioners, students are required to register the Professional Practice (PP), as a subject, that is, the *practicum*, related to language teaching.

They must complete at least 70 percent of the institutional credits and they are supposed to master English at a B2 level according to the standards of the CEFR.

Although students complete all their English levels in their third year, with 840 hours of accumulated instruction in English plus 1302 hours of exposure to the language in 19 specialization content subjects taught in English, they are not demanded to have a certification in order to take Professional Practice.

3.2 Subjects

This research was developed at the Faculty of Languages of the "Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla" having as subjects of study, students of the last stages in the Bachelor of Arts in English Language Teaching. Thus, students who were doing Professional Practice (PP), that is, the *practicum*, related to language teaching were selected as subjects of study in order to analyze the perceptions of their own progress at the end of the degree and contrast their achievement with the goals established in the statements of the graduate profile of the BA in ELT. There was one group of professional practice in the period of summer 2017. The target group to study was integrated by students aged from 21 to 25. The total amount of student teachers was 20; however, only 6 out of 20 were selected at random. Four female and two male teaching students accepted to participate in the interview. All of them registered in the BA in ELT program.

3.3 Methodology

A qualitative approach was employed because it enabled the researcher's closeness to reality and proximity to the phenomenon to be studied, that is, the development of learning to learn strategies in students of the BA in ELT as a result of the learners' levels of awareness of

communicative and linguistic weaknesses or strengths, opportunities to use the language, evaluation criteria and the due certification levels to attain. It resulted to be the most effective methodology for the analysis of the students' decision-making in order to understand the strategies that they used with the intention of developing communicative skills and promoting metacognitive structure.

Phenomenology was the method chosen to accomplish the purpose of understanding aspects that could prevent LLS development in students of the BA in ELT by analyzing their experiences in order to derive the meaning they have constructed along their stay in the program regarding language proficiency, communicative skills and certification, and how these experiences influence their interpretation of reality.

“From the social scientific perspective, interviews are a method of data collection that involves two or more people exchanging information through a series of questions and answers. The questions are designed by a researcher to elicit information from the interview participant(s) on a specific topic or set of topics”.

(Blackstone, 2018 p. 108)

The in-depth interview was also considered as a reliable method to gather data about the experiences that practitioners underwent during their formative processes and their understanding of individual learning processes and learning outcomes. Therefore, face-to-face interaction with the student seemed to be the best method to obtain information. A semi-structured interview was developed and implemented as an instrument to obtain information from participants.

3.4 Instrument

The questionnaire was the instrument used in order to collect information about the perception of their own results. The questionnaire was regarded as the most effective and reliable instrument for the collection and interpretation of practitioners' opinions and thoughts about their own language development, self-improvement and LLS use as well as their subjective opinion of the issues occurring during their participation in the program in ELT. The questionnaire included 34 questions, which covered 5 dimensions, intended to allow practitioners to answer openly based on their own experiences. These dimensions included students' background, certification achievement, goal setting, autonomy and self-assessment. Oxford's LLS analysis scheme is included in aspects such as metacognition, social, affective, cognitive, memory and compensatory strategies.

3.5 Procedure

The stages followed during the development of this research are described below. Firstly, it was noticed that some students were successfully involved in their language learning process while others seem to struggle, so the language proficiency level of many learners was low and it resulted in difficulty for them to communicate in English. This process of observation and questioning led to the recognition of an existing problem in the BA in ELT: The absence of effective strategies oriented towards language proficiency. Early research questions arose during this first stage.

Secondly, a brief review of language learning strategies literature allowed the comprehension and delimitation of the research problem. After topic selection, there was an in-depth literature review in the previously mentioned area that made the introduction to the

problem clearer; which made the delimitation, contextualization of the topic and design of the research questions feasible. Then, the theoretical framework was developed by revising the most outstanding models of learning strategies.

Thirdly, the establishment of the methodology, as well as the instrument to collect data from students, was decided. Students' perceptions of their development, their successful actions, and level of awareness led to the adoption of a qualitative approach which allowed close interaction with learners' perceptions and points of view. Then, a questionnaire was designed based on the literature of LLS. This questionnaire was made with the intention of collecting practitioners' information and to subsequently interpret this data in order to understand the development of learning to learn strategies in students of the BA in ELT as a result of the learners' levels of awareness of communicative and linguistic weaknesses or strengths, opportunities to use the language, evaluation criteria and the due certification levels to attain.

Finally, in order to collect information, a request was made and sent to the Coordination of the BA in ELT in order to have information about the existing classes PP. There was an answer regarding the request made to the coordination. One group of PP offered in the summer 2017 period was selected. Then, it was necessary to get in contact with professors and practitioners taking this subject in order to schedule an appointment for an interview. A questionnaire was applied to students who accepted to participate in the interview by signing their respective informed consent. The instrument was applied to 6 students who answered in-depth interviews in approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were all recorded and transcribed for analysis. Data was encoded. Then, the clustered data were analyzed and interpreted under the light of the literature and the interpretive theoretical framework so that conclusions could be formulated.

3.6 Design and Data Analysis

It is a phenomenological study intended to understand the development of learning to learn strategies in students of the BA in ELT as a result of the learners' levels of awareness of communicative and linguistic weaknesses or strengths, opportunities to use the language, evaluation criteria and the due certification levels to attain. This is also a cross-sectional study as it only analyzes the data at one particular point of time. Information is presented based on an analysis of students' experiences collected by means of an interview. Oral-collected information is then transcribed so that it can be examined, classified and turned into data.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is an experiential qualitative method. It is supported by "the philosophies of phenomenology, a focus on what it is like to experience phenomena, and hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation" (Smith et al., 2009; cited in Spiers & Smith, 2017 pp. 2-3). The method is inductive because all interpretation is bottom-up, as it departs from the data instead of relying on external theories for the interpretation, and it is said to be highly interpretative because it utilizes a double hermeneutic, in which the researcher makes sense out of the participants' sense-making (Smith, 2004; cited in Spiers & Smith, 2017). The interpretation of data is, then, developed by means of hermeneutics to give support, strength, and a basic structure to the study of the development of learning to learn strategies.

Then, discourse analysis is used as a technique to classify and make sense of information, based on the assumption that one word may help make sense out of a whole excerpt within a specific setting; likewise, a whole dataset could help with the interpretation of a sentence. Hence, hermeneutics, which is the theory of interpretation, provides the foundations for IPA,

so the method implies a continuous dialogue and interaction between the text and the analyst, that is, the part helps make sense of the whole, and vice versa (Spiers & Smith, 2017).

Basically, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), used for the accomplishment of this research, suggests a specific systematic procedure which includes three steps:

1. Once the transcripts have been analyzed, the researcher needs to read and reread to make initial notes. These notes are expansive and uncensored. Analysts will look for words and phrases of descriptive, linguistic and conceptual relevance.
2. Once the analyst has made initial notes, the next stage is to search for emergent themes, which should pithily encapsulate the experience of the participant. These themes should illuminate the interpretation as well as the data itself.
3. The final stage in IPA involves looking for convergences and divergences across cases.

(Spiers & Smith, 2017 pp. 6-8)

Accordingly, the researcher read and reread the transcribed interviews to familiarize with the data and to acquire a sense of each individual, their background and experiences. Then, from the transcripts, the researcher recognized significant statements directly connected to the development of learning to learn strategies in students of the BA in ELT as a result of the learners' levels of awareness of communicative and linguistic weaknesses or strengths, opportunities to use the language, evaluation criteria and the due certification levels to attain. Next, the researcher developed interpretive meanings of each of the significant statements. The researcher reread the research protocols to ensure the original description was evident in the interpretive meanings. Thereafter, the interpretive meanings were arranged into clusters, which allow themes to emerge. The researcher sought validation, trying to avoid repetitive themes and note any discrepancies during this process. After that, the themes were integrated

into an exhaustive description, paying special attention to the production of concise statements of the exhaustive description to provide a fundamental statement of identification also referred to as the overall essence of the experience. Finally, the reduced statement of the exhaustive description was presented as charts for a better presentation of the findings.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The results of this project will be presented, analyzed and discussed in this chapter. They are interpreted under the light of the LLS model proposed by Oxford (1990), previously presented in this paper. The main categories analyzed are formal and informal assessment, washback, feedback, compensatory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies and certification.

4.1 Background

When students started their studies in the BA in ELT, there was no official requirement regarding a minimum level of second language mastery. Therefore, students with any knowledge of English, even those who had no English at all, were accepted. Once they had been admitted to the BA in ELT, before starting their formal instruction, learners were given a placement test, which recognized the new learners' actual level of language development in order to distribute them according to their English level. Then, aspects such as previous studies (either formal or informal), beliefs, goals, achieved level of English and obtained certification might determine and influence the use of LLS, attitudes as well as the quality of subsequent experiences the 6 subjects who collaborated in the development of this research had.

4.1.1 English Previous Studies

Learners commence their studies with different language learning experiences and, apparently with different language knowledge. In some cases, experiences go beyond formal language instruction, but this formal instruction also varies from mandatory courses to

complementary courses in both public and private institutions. The results are presented in Chart 4.1 English previous studies below.

Chart 1: Background

P.	English background
1	“I speak (sic) English since I was 10. Then, I just complemented it with what I studied at school” “When I was 10, I started speaking a little more fluid (sic)”
2	“I took courses at BUAP but in Tehuacan... As I come from Tehuacan, there is a regional school and I took the courses offered there” “I took 6 courses”
3	“Just the classes at high school”
4	“No, I never took English courses until I started studying at the Faculty, that’s when I started... it was my first proper contact with the language”
5	“I had taken English courses at high school and middle school”
6	“Yes, I did” “I previously studied in a private school so I just had to validate the courses I took there”

As can be seen, the quality of the experiences and the amount of formal instruction seem to be heterogeneous among students who enter the BA in ELT program. The process that determines what knowledge, skills, and values students hold may vary depending on the extended curriculum they have experienced along their lives. Whereas participants 3, 4 and 5 just had mandatory formal instruction in middle and junior High School, participants 1, 2 and 6 had extra-curricular formal and informal instruction. For instance, while participant 2 stresses the number of courses she had taken before entering the program, participant 6, emphasizes the quality of her private education, which was validated when she achieved her admission. In addition, participant 1 highlights that she could speak English at a very early stage of her life, so her formal education was just a complement for her informal instruction.

Their previous experiences and studies in learning English, apparently, could have been a condition to determine their level of autonomy, intended learning outcomes, and self-regulation processes, that is, their planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation. Also, it could have been a condition that determined their proficiency levels if we take into consideration that there is a placement test intended to measure their language proficiency and communicative competence.

4.1.2 Levels of English

The six subjects who participated in this research had different English levels when they started their language instruction. However, contrary to what differences in quality of experiences and amount of time could suggest, the levels at which students were placed do not appear to confirm those differences as can be observed in Chart 4.2 Placement Levels of English.

Chart 2: Placement

P.	Placement	Equivalent	Previous studies
1	English 2	A2	Contact with English speakers from different levels since infancy
2	English 2	A2	6 extra-curricular courses at a public institution
3	English 1	A1	High school
4	English 1	A1	First [significant] contact with English at the BA
5	English 1	A1	High school and middle school
6	Revalidated all English levels	at least B2	Private education

Even though participant 1 had contact with English speakers during infancy, that is, she accumulated more practice and experience in the L2 than other participants, she did not manage to be placed at a higher level than other students. The quality of her English was equivalent to the students who did six courses in a Public institution but not as good as the level of that student who did her education at a private school.

Participant 2 stated that she took English courses besides the classes at public school. She had the chance to take 6 extra class courses that the BUAP offers in the “Centro de Idiomas” (Languages School) at her hometown (regional extensions). These courses are extracurricular classes offered at BUAP school extensions in different regions of Puebla. Then, this participant presents similar conditions to the previous student.

Participants 3 and 5 claim that they could only take the English classes offered in public education programs during high school and middle school. These 2 participants were not placed at a higher level. They started their formal studies in English at the Faculty of Languages. That is, they began in English I class as well as English workshops I and II. As discussed before, this should not be considered a disadvantage since these participants were set in the introductory level and they underwent the hours of instruction, practice, exposure and feedback established in the BA in ELT to attain the B2 proficiency level.

Participant 4 states not to have taken any English course before starting his formal studies. It is important to emphasize that all public and private educational programs in Mexico include English as a foreign language class, then, since Participant 4 achieved a college certificate, he must have had any kind of formal instruction in the second language, even basic knowledge of it. Still, he declares not to have had meaningful instruction of the language at

the moment of starting his studies in the BA; he claims that his first contact with the language was just when he started studying at the Faculty of Languages. Then, this student started his courses in the BA in ELT program just as participants 3 and 5.

Furthermore, participant 6 says that she made previous studies in a different school. In fact, she took all the English learning classes in a different institution, a private school, and then she validated the courses that she had completed. Then, she did not have to take English classes but just those of content in the program. At this point, she is expected to have an English level proximate to B2 or above.

The quality of experiences defines the level in which students are placed. Just as there are some students who are dissatisfied with the English courses they took and qualify them as “zero” English learning, there are other students who believe that the time invested in learning English could be translated directly into high-quality standards. Thus, other beliefs derived from such assumptions should also be analyzed.

4.1.3 Beliefs and Proficiency Levels

Derived from the participants’ experiences, some beliefs about proficiency, error-correction, types of school and skill development are analyzed. Such beliefs may define the levels of awareness developed by the students as well as the use of strategies implemented to solve both communicative and linguistic issues. The following extracts illustrate what participants think about themselves, assessment and learning processes.

Chart 3: Experience

P.	Experiences before registering in the BA program
1	<p>“My mother worked in a bilingual school. I had contact with a lot of foreigners and speakers of English”. “When they were not talking in Spanish, I had to speak to them in English”. “They do not normally pay attention to grammar and structures; they are more focused on interacting, communicating and exchanging ideas”.</p> <p>“I think that with the interaction that I have had in a bilingual context, it would be easy for me to apply the knowledge I acquired in a certification test.”</p>
2	<p>“Before, I knew how to talk, but I was afraid. I think it occurs to all the students”. “One is afraid of doing (sic.) mistakes. By talking with foreign speakers, I was told that we want to speak perfectly, but it never happens this way; it is by practicing the way one gets more vocabulary”.</p> <p>“There are teachers that correct you and, then, you become shy... no longer willing to talk or participate so that you don’t expose yourself to the class”</p>
3	<p>“At high school, they always taught the same stuff so I felt like stuck” “Private school students reach a better level but those that receive public education have a lower one”</p> <p>“After the first certification I took I was so frustrated and I told to (sic) myself that I had to double efforts... If I decided to do it again, I would prefer to do it well”</p>
4	<p>“I had never taken English courses until I got enrolled in the degree. That was my first contact with the [English] language ”</p>
5	<p>“Actually, with the courses I took in middle and high school, I don’t think I had progressed a lot because, at that time, I was not that interested in English. Then, my scores were not that good. I did not have a good level”</p> <p>“I think that I had even less than a A1”</p>
6	<p>“I think I was strong at speaking because that was what I first developed, even before learning English at the University. I took a course called COE and there we were asked to speak. Since there I started practicing the speaking skill and then it wasn’t that hard for me”</p>

As previously discussed, students should develop learning to learn the strategies that result relevant to solve specific learning problems for each level and eventually for B2 according to the CEFR. They ought to develop a similar repertoire of strategies independently of the level they were placed at as well as previous exposure to the language. However, beliefs produced before or during the program may influence the development of learning strategies.

It is observed that participant 1 apparently had a favorable contact with the language before she started her studies in the BA in ELT. This participant claims to have developed speaking skill and to have been forced to use the second language with speakers of higher levels in different situations previous to the commencement of her formal studies. She is supposed to have developed more language strategies required to communicate and effectively pass tests. However, as presented in chart 4.2, she believed that the knowledge she possessed would be enough to pass a certification test, but she was actually placed at a level that did not really differ much from students without previous instruction in L2. This participant also states that oral interaction was more important than aspects such as accuracy in structures or using precise forms when having face-to-face interaction. Her unattended mistakes could represent an obstacle to focus on accuracy and the development of strategies to deal with such problems as personal goals. Then, the belief that accuracy is not important in everyday communication seems to be transferred to academic contexts where certification is a requirement and a quality indicator.

Participant 2 stated that she took English courses before registering in the BA. Moreover, she claims to have struggled with issues such as lack of practice, confidence and even anxiety during her previous studies. These aspects probably originated from the way her previous teachers corrected her or gave her feedback. Furthermore, this participant presents the same

conditions as participant 1 as she was placed at English A2. The main belief held by this student is related to vocabulary. Once more, accuracy is not important to communicate. Actually, vocabulary is enough to communicate ideas and teachers' intervention to correct mistakes is perceived as intrusive and unnecessary; so, shyness is conceived to be produced by teachers and not as a personal trait or resulting from a lack of practice, self-reliance and self-confidence. As the problem is misinterpreted, the selection of learning strategies is also misguided.

Moreover, participant 6 also states to have taken courses before enrolling in the BA program at BUAP as well as the program of the private university she studied first. She states that she had the chance to develop speaking because she was formally registered in a specialized course to develop the skill before formally studying her degree. This participant skipped introductory English learning classes since she studied a similar program in a different university. Then, she just had to validate the subjects. Her standpoint differs from other subjects as she developed rational beliefs based on a balance approach towards the development of both fluency and accuracy. It can be seen that the previous participants make reference to affective factors, which accordingly would require affective strategies, this participant seems to be more focused on the use of metacognitive strategies to take more advantage of opportunities regarding the use and instruction of the second language.

Differently, experiences lived by participants 3, 4 and 5 are somehow similar. These subjects declared that their instruction of English before registering in the BA program was elementary and unsatisfactory for them. In fact, participant 4 stated that he had his very first contact with the language only when he started his formal studies in the BA in ELT. This group started from the basics when they registered in the program.

Even if participants' exposure to the language and experience vary, and all of them were placed in different English classes according to their actual status, they ought to achieve the same level at the end of the degree, based on an effective repertoire of affective, compensatory and cognitive strategies. Also, their actual level of English should not differ among them or at least should not be so distant from achieving B2. They are supposed to attain this level and even higher because of the amount of time students are exposed to the language and instructed and the level of specialization teachers have.

4.1.4 Certification & assessment

By following a process of verification, it is possible, either for the instructor or the learner, to gather reliable fulfillment data of the actual status and then, orient efforts and actions to the accomplishment of academic requirements, personal goals and needs as well as for the improvement of each learner lacks.

If students are under a continuous assessment during their formative process, it is likely that they obtain accurate information that allows them to identify weaknesses, strengths, learning styles and preferences. Then, students under formal instruction can have a clear idea of where they are and what they have to do.

Awareness of the attained English level can allow learners to understand the accurate position in which they are at that moment, the linguistic goal to reach and the expected outcomes to obtain at the end of their academic process. Similarly, learners understand the necessary actions to be made to accomplish their own goals and the proposed requirements before expected or proposed in the program.

Then, the washback effect derived from the participants' formal assessment experiences is necessary, bearing in mind that exams and tests can produce both positive and negative effects. Such analysis of learners' assessment experiences allows us to understand those attitudes and beliefs "which may encourage students to study more or may promote a connection between standards and instruction" (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2017).

Now, collected data about their language achievements such as English level and certifications taken before starting formal studies in the BA in ELT are presented in the following chart:

Chart 4: Certification before the BA

P	English Level	
1	"When I finished high school, they made me certificate the TOEFL independent exam and I got, at that time, the score of A1 plus"	TOEFL A1 plus
2	"No, well I only had my certifications of each module but not as an actual certification"	None Unknown level
3	"No, I just had an idea that I had a basic level, but I never took a certification" "In high school, they always taught me the same and I felt deadlocked"	None Basic level
4	Participant 4 stated not to have contact with English until he got enrolled in the BA in ELT. It is assumed that he did not take a certification	None Unknown level
5	"Actually, in the courses I took at middle school and high school, I don't think I had made a progress at all because at that time I was not interested in English then, my scores were not that good"	None Unknown level
6	"I never did an exam to measure my actual level" "It was not necessary when I started studying in this BA. I was firstly studying in an private school and then I began my studies here"	None Unknown level

Just one out of six claims to have had a quasi-certification in the language and, then, have started her formal instruction with an idea of the attained level. The student claimed to have taken the TOEFL and obtained an A1+, which was probably an unofficial test because the scale does not correspond to the CEFR; nevertheless, the diagnosed level was close to that at which the student was placed.

As can be seen, participants claim not to have a precise idea of the level they reached before starting the BA program even though some of them state that they took official courses in the programs of high school and middle school as well as different extracurricular classes. At this point, it can be said that participants started their formal studies under similar conditions and underwent an even amount of courses that provided them with equal practice, experiences and opportunities to use the second language. Only one out of six had developed language mastery, metacognition and awareness of English level. The others claimed that the only indicator they had of their English level was defined by the grades they have obtained to pass from one course to another. Thus, it can be observed that assessment and the feedback it provides started to create a significant washback effect on the way students' perceived proficiency accomplishments

Nevertheless, negative and inappropriate attitudes should be modified as students get enrolled in a specialized program, which would provide every student of the BA in ELT with the hours of instruction and exposure necessary in L2 to reach the level proposed by the official program.

4.2 Students' Awareness of Certification Levels Attainment

Some of the aspects previously discussed in this paper refer to the awareness that students of the BA in ELT should develop during and at the end of their studies. This aspect allows them to recognize the actions that they have to implement on their own in order to achieve either their own goals or the formal requirements such as a certification in the L2. In this section, aspects that demonstrate the students' awareness to achieve standards such as goal setting, linguistic objectives and self-assessment are presented and discussed.

4.2.1 Goals Setting

The establishment of goals based on students' expectations, wishes and motivations that are, at the same time, combined with the institution requirements, is an important characteristic that might orient learners to follow a clear direction regarding necessary actions, efforts and outcomes to be made if international standards are expected to be achieved. These goals could be perceived as declarations that learners aim to fulfill at the end of a formative program regarding the development of specific language skills, the achievement of communication competence at a certain level or the production of certain outcomes with the language. In the following sections, information related to participants' goals, either language or personal-related, is presented.

Firstly, the general goals that participants set when they started their BA in ELT were asked to be described as can be seen in the following chart:

Chart 5: Early goals

P	Goals at the beginning of the degree
1	“I still keep them [goals]” “Certifying all the languages and learning at least 5” “Perform either in teaching or translation”
2	“I didn't have objectives at all at the beginning” “It wasn't teaching, that was not my objective” “I didn't like translation neither but I liked English”
3	“Firstly it was learning the language one hundred percent in order to assist children who do not have the economic possibilities to pay an English course.” “I wanted to participate in an exchange program and, in the future, I would like to be a language assistant or study for Master's Degree in London”.
4	“My main goal was regarding language teaching. Independently of the language, it was teaching” “I wanted to get a good level... complete the degree to achieve a good level and go out of the country”
5	“Actually, my biggest goal was coming here in order to study Japanese” “I think of using it [English] as an extra...it is a plus” “In order to enrich my CV... that would be my goal with English”
6	“I never planned to fail a subject. I wanted to study the major in this school” “I pictured myself teaching English, that was one of my goals” “I wanted to finish the degree with good scores, having everything organized and complete the BA properly”

Participants had different objectives at the beginning of the degree, some of these goals related to the proficiency in English as in subject 3 but, it is possible to observe that in the majority of them, English development was not their main goal. On the one hand 1, 4 and 5 who seem to have much in common regarding the goals they set at the beginning. They state that English was not their priority; then, their efforts might have been oriented to fulfill their own desires, which means proficiency in English was not a primary goal for these participants. Then, their decision-making would be directed to fulfill other needs different

from the ones proposed in the official program of the BA in ELT. Furthermore, participant 2 claims not to have clear objectives when she started her formal instruction. This student also mentions that the career profile was not her main objective. Then, this participant might not have focused her efforts to learn, master and self-assess the L2. On the other hand, participant 6 states to have goals related to the accomplishment of tasks and obtaining good evaluations. This participant also said being interested in teaching English, but language proficiency was not mentioned or prioritized. Furthermore, no participant mentioned specific objectives regarding language achievement in terms of CEFR. Just participant 3 stated to be interested in getting a high level in the language but not specifically as a set goal that motivates them to enroll in the BA in ELT program within the intention of getting a specific product.

4.2.1.1 Language Improvement and Proficiency

Proficiency as a priority is an aspect that could determine the amount of time to spend by studying and practicing in L2, the involvement they could have with other peers to speak in English, the efforts made to improve it, the persistence in students to achieve specific goals and the aspirations to fulfill objectives; along with a positive attitude to receive feedback and corrections. Then, the importance that students give to use and practice the language is closely related to the establishment of current and future objectives. When students recognize the actions that they have to make in order to detect and improve weaknesses or simply promote the strengths that they have in L2, it can be said that they have developed autonomy and they can prioritize their actions to the achievement of higher level. Thus, students' answers regarding language priority are presented in the following chart.

Chart 6: Actions taken

P	Language priority	How? What did you do?
1	<p>“I want to work, certify all the languages I study, study others, certify them too and I want to study a masters related to the area”</p>	<p>“Applying myself, searching all the time native teachers, taking extra courses, trying to be autodidactic and researching” “Now I work teaching English, I also teach in social service and I have been working in tourism... that allowed me to continue developing oral skills and also learn slangs”</p>
2	<p>“I’d like to study a Master’s degree, well... I’m still not sure which one because I adore pedagogy but linguistics, too. So, I would decide for one of these two options. I would also like to teach”</p>	<p>“Once college is over, I will continue practicing” “[I] practice by reading because that’s the way I have learned a lot of vocabulary, writing, too and employing the words I learn” “I’m going to continue practicing in order to take the C1 certification”</p>
3	<p>“I want to be a language assistant in another city such as London... then I want to study a Masters in special education” “I am about to participate in an exchange program in Korea for a period. I am going to study Business English and Teaching Aids”</p>	<p>“I had contact with people of different nationalities in English” “I am teaching now” “I work... and I continue preparing myself” “I would like to travel and live one year in an English speaking country” “I am going to practice academic vocabulary... reading research and academic articles”</p>
4	<p>“I want to go to Germany as soon as I finish the degree, basically that’s why I am studying this BA” “I am going to try to certify the language [English]... actually the only thing I like about coming here is studying German”</p>	<p>“Taking extra courses at CELE” “I have an active role in classes and courses, either English or German” “I answer the textbook on my own” “At the beginning of the degree I was pretty interested in English but I got bored. I started being interested in German every time more and more... basically I left English for German”</p>
5	<p>“I would like to work for a Japanese company but, if that was not possible due to my English level, I would have to work in a job related to English” “It would be good if I work in a place where I can practice English, this way I could improve more”</p>	<p>“At the beginning, I tried to practice more with my classmates in English, we attempted to speak in the language” “I don’t dedicate a lot of time to practice English like studying grammar and stuff” “I prefer checking my notes and watching videos”</p>
6	<p>“I want to travel to the USA” “I didn’t have a clear objective for the language, just in the administration of my time and finish the degree... but not in the language” “I have different activities and chores so I cannot dedicate full time just to study English”</p>	<p>“I watch movies, keep in contact with people on the internet and I am now teaching. Then, I have to read and prepare more” “I always participate in English during the class, asks questions, etc.” “I am focused on my weaknesses such as in listening, now I listen to recordings so that I can improve”</p>

In the previous chart, it can be observed that, regarding actions taken by participants, not all students prioritize English. Some participants do not consider English as their main goal or even as the main purpose for them to enroll in the degree in English. Apparently, these learners choose the degree just as a means to fulfill their personal goals which are somehow related to learning foreign languages, but not in being specialists in English Teaching. Participants 4, 5 and 6 state to have had other motivations different from becoming professionals in English when they selected the BA in ELT program, or they considered the instruction in the language for different purposes to the ones established in the formal curriculum. Participant 2 mentions to be more interested in getting a high level of English but she also states that she did not have clear objectives since the beginning; in fact, she says that she became interested in the professional profile during the degree. This participant considers now the possibility to enroll in a master program related to the area even though she does not mention to be motivated in pursuing English as her main objective, differently, she aimed to prepare herself in order to fulfill school requirements. As a consequence, these participants might have dedicated most of their efforts to different activities rather than focusing on developing their English skills oriented to a certification. Differently, participants 4, 5 and 6, who stated not to be interested nor motivated in studying English, or at least not having it as their priority, could have fewer possibilities to develop effective LLS since they reject opportunities of practice, use and interaction in the second language. Moreover, participants 1 and 3 seem to have had clearer objectives either during or at the end of the degree. These two participants even describe the specific actions that they employ in order to continue in constant practice and interaction in L2.

Students in a class are not homogenous (Macaro, 2001) and the chart above is an example of differences among participants. Goals setting and levels of motivation to practice English are language variables that can be observed among the participants. Such variables have necessarily been defined by the assessment criteria, if a certification, the standards it represents and the rigourousity of the tests are clearly understood, students should be focused on the use of reflective procedures which allow them to detect possible areas for improvement so that they prioritize English when they attend classes and increase their efforts, persistence as well as the time they dedicate to study/practice the L2.

Once more, the washback effect is playing a very important role as students claim to pursue language improvement without detecting their weaknesses; the only indicator they have is interaction and grades they have obtained. Consequently, this lack of specific goals to reach linguistic requirements combined with confused actions to fulfill goals could affect their performance and language proficiency during their studies which is also reflected at the end of the degree when they are required to present a formal certification.

4.2.1.2 Awareness of Proficiency Requirements

Participants were asked specifically about the English level they would desire to achieve or the language level they would like to have. Their answers are gathered in the following chart:

Chart 7: Expected L2 level

P.	Level aimed to achieve	Reason
1	“All levels, a C1 or C2”	“Because I am passionate about languages. I consider that if I like them that much, I must have a complete instruction in the language”.
2	“C1”	“Because it seems to be a challenge for me. Perhaps I have a B2 level but achieving C1 would be a challenge”.
3	“I think that 100 percent” “C1, almost native”	“All languages are updating all the time” “Then, we have to see everything related to idioms, new vocabulary, etc.”
4	“B2”	“At this moment I am doing a lot of efforts in English... to certificate the requirement asked in the degree”
5	“Native, if possible” “C2”	“I know it would be hard for me” “Anyway I would like to have the level of a native speaker”
6	“B2”	“Well, I would like to achieve a high level but I think I have an intermediate”

It can be observed that participants seem to be aware of the English proficiency level proposed in the official program of the BA in ELT. In fact, some participants would like to reach even higher levels of English. Then, independently of their personal motivations to study the BA in ELT, their actions should be oriented towards English mastery since goals are alike among them and accordingly to the program. The majority of participants based their answers on their own wishes and expectations. They declare to aim for a higher intermediate or a proficient level, some of them even similar to an English native speaker. Participant 4, for instance, mentions the possibility of certification in order to fulfill academic requirements.

4.2.1.3 Action-oriented Goals and Assessment

It is also important to analyze the specific actions that learners take to satisfy their goals and desires as well as the criteria they use in order to assess their English level. These actions might indicate how well students know themselves, if they have a clear understanding of the demands to accomplish, the steps they take to solve problems as well as the necessary efforts to be done in order to face international standards such as a certification. Participants were questioned about the actions they follow with regard to their desires in L2 proficiency.

Chart 8: Actions to accomplish the desired level

P	Actions you make to accomplish the desired level
1	“I get in contact with people” “At this moment I am working... I teach” “I worked in tourism and that allowed me to have a lot of practice ... I am also working in research projects”
2	“Practicing in the language, observing my grammar mistakes and, in writing, I sometimes make spelling mistakes, then, I have to check why and learn it... I used to make a lot of repetitions”
3	“I have been working for 2 years in a Spanish institute for foreigners in which I am a conversational guide and I normally work with beginners” “They talk to me in English, that’s why I have developed it [the language] more” “I signed in free online courses” “I read a lot books in English”
4	“I consider myself an autodidactic person, but English grammar annoys me” “What has been useful for me is the use of music... I listen a lot to music in English and if I do not understand it, I go and check the lyrics and I listen to it over and over again until I learn it and I get vocabulary and fluency in that aspect”
5	“I have really remained with the instruction I received in this school... sometimes I watch videos on internet and I tend to watch them in English, so that could be my only contact”
6	“I practice with native speakers... I try to develop my listening skill” “Watching movies, get in contact with people on the net, I teach so I have to read little bit more and prepare, also practicing the language” “I took extra courses”

Some participants make efforts in order to reach proficiency as well as the actions they need to follow in order to achieve the stated B2 and upper levels. However, although they are already putting into practice meaningful actions just like searching for spaces to have interaction with native speakers, using electronic devices to practice the four language skills, taking time extra class to watch videos in English and, even teaching the language, the belief they had at the beginning of the program prevails as no teacher intervention is mentioned or other sort of intervention which could help detect problems to orient the adoption of congruent learning strategies. The idea of prioritizing vocabulary learning, reading and interaction with native speakers prevails with little or no formal assessment.

4.2.2 Certification in L2

In the BA in ELT program, students are required to attain a B2 level that is 550 points in TOEFL ITP, 87 in TOEFL IBT, First Certificate Cambridge exam, and over 5 in IELTS exam. Undergraduates are allowed to take the certification that they prefer but the stated level becomes the goal that learners need to accomplish, especially those who aim to graduate by high Academic Score and avoid doing thesis. By holding a certification, students are able to demonstrate the communicative competence developed during the degree and what they could do by using a second language in different contexts as well as in all the different skills to be assessed.

It has been observed that the relation of both personal goals and academic requirements determines the actions that students make as well as the intensity and the persistence they might be dedicated to achieve. When students have a clear understanding of the complexity of certain tasks and the requirements they must cover, they are more likely to orient either

their own goals or their everyday activities to the accomplishment of a continuous improvement and self-assessment.

4.2.2.1 Appropriacy of Learning Strategies

Participants in this research have finished all the subjects of the program and, at the moment of the interview, they are just taking their Professional Practices. Then, the first important aspect in the certification process is the diagnosis as it reflects awareness of the departure point towards the accomplishment of certification as a goal. The level that they consider to have reached at that point is essential information for the analysis. This information is presented in the next chart:

Chart 9: Belief of L2 level

P	Level thought to be achieved	Method used to demonstrate a level
1	Finished all subjects in the program “Now I think I have a B1” “When I finished target language, I took institutional TOEFL and I got B1”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TOEFL certification presented ITP. ● B1 level scored
2	“I have finished all the English subjects” “B2”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online tests only ● Around 550 points scored
3	Finished all English learning subjects “B2”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2 TOEFL certifications presented ● TOEFL ITP and TOEFL IBT
4	“I believe a B1”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complexity of grammar ● No certification ● Level of the current book/method
5	Finished all subjects in the program “I would like to think that at least I have a C1 but maybe I have a B2”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TOEFL trainer ● Few corrections received when presenting written tasks ● No certification
6	“I think that I have a B1 at this moment”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consulted information ● Understanding in readings ● Experiences abroad ● Good interaction with native speakers ● No certification

In the chart above, it is possible to observe the idea that students have regarding the English level reached is variable and inconsistent with the levels they have completed at the moment of the interview. As can be seen, just two of them seem to have an indicator of the level they could have achieved. Participants 1 and 3 are the only students who have taken what can be called a certification in the language and, therefore, who have received further feedback of their improvements as well as their lacks.

Contrarily, the rest of the participants stated not to have presented any of the different offered certifications. Subjects 2 and 5 approximate their level of proficiency based on certification simulators such as TOEFL trainer or online tests which might be unreliable tools. Additionally, participants 4 and 6 seem to fundamentally misunderstand their perception of language proficiency based merely on beliefs. It is essential to notice that an important number of students claimed that they have not sat a real certification test. It is just the third part of the subjects who state to have taken a certification exam. And regarding this group, just one has the concrete result of having obtained B2 level based on a standard exam, level specified in the BA in ELT graduated profile. Some subjects stated not to recognize a concrete level of mastery now that they have completed much of the formal instruction and, in some cases, have finished all the subjects of the program. Five out of six participants state to have a level that is inferior to the one required in the program and it is only one that could justify her answer with a standard exam as TOEFL. The rest of the participants based their answers on inconsistent and unreliable methods of language measurement such as opinions, internet exam simulators, method level (textbook) or approval by other agents. Just to start, this lack of self-assessment criteria could be interpreted as poor self-assessment existent in undergraduates of the BA regarding personal and curricular objectives.

Apparently, students still need to use affective strategies so that they can cope with situations where teachers assess and provide feedback for improvement. The participants prefer using strategies which include individual work such as simulators, consultation of books or other resources which do not represent any risk of being exhibited. Such strategies cannot be labeled as effective if the results and level of proficiency they display does not change.

4.2.2.2 Goals and Satisfaction

Additionally, participants were asked to talk about the level of satisfaction that they have regarding their personal achievements, their own goals, the academic requirements, and their English level at that point of the degree.

Chart 10: Goal satisfaction

P	Goals satisfaction	Why?
1	Personal “Yes” Program “Yes but not convinced at all”	“Because I have clear objectives since I was a child and little by little I have been reaching them” “I think it is important being autodidactic... not depending on the program in the university nor the professors” “If to remain with the instruction given by the professor, one might feel unsatisfied”
2	“Yes, I do”	“I have made a lot of efforts on my own and there are teachers who have supported me” “I think I have achieved more, since I did not have a clear objective when I came here, it was developed during the classes and by practicing” “I realized that I wanted to become a teacher”
3	Personal “Yes” Program “Yes... but is not enough”	“I am about to participate in an exchange program in Korea for a school period. I am going to study Business English and Teaching Aids” “I am satisfied but I think there is always something else to do... I consider that we have to continue preparing us every day” “I am satisfied but I think there is always something else to do... I consider that we have to continue preparing us every day”
4	“No”	“I think I have lacks in the language and I am not satisfied with the level I have” “I am guilty of it. There are certain deficiencies in the curricula but generally, I think the degree is good, the subjects were good too... it is mainly my fault”.
5	“Not really”	“The degree has certain lacks such as in pronunciation, there is not incentive to improve it” “I think that my level of English is good but, if to consider my pronunciation or my fluency, those things would really make my level low”.
6	“No”	“I think that much of it depends on my attitude” “Currently, I do things just because I have to... because I have to finish” “I was never asked to have it, so it is not a priority at this moment”

As can be seen, some participants claimed to be satisfied with their achievements and results at that point. However, of this group of fulfilled participants, 2 of them also claim not to be convinced at all regarding the program. Subjects 1 and 3 said that there are extra efforts that should be made in order to accomplish personal expectations and requirements that, otherwise, would leave gaps. Moreover, participants 4, 5 and 6 state not to be satisfied at all. They relate much of their frustration to the level of English they got, their behaviors as well as certain lacks in the instruction process such as pronunciation and motivation. Even if participant 2 expresses satisfaction of the reached level, he also acknowledges the lack of clear goals at the beginning and during his studies in the BA.

Differently, participant 1 hesitantly declared to be satisfied with her level of English. This participant also announced that instruction received during the BA courses is not enough to fulfill academic requirements. In previous chapters, information regarding the number of hours required to accomplish B2 level and the hours of instruction in the degree was provided. It has been shown that this latter outnumbers almost 3 times more the actual amount of required hours. Therefore, students should be more than capable of achieving the required level if they consider that all of them started the bachelor under similar conditions and they were exposed to a similar amount of hours of L2 instruction. Then, the quality of instruction should be a topic to discuss if to take into account the dissatisfaction declared by these participants.

Participant 3 is the only interviewed who states determined satisfaction regarding the achievement of requirements as well as her English level although she also declares “it is not enough” and she also recognizes there are some more actions that can be done to improve and a superior level to reach.

Although most participants seem to be satisfied with their accomplishments, it is true that the proficiency level stated in the professional profile has not been reached. Therefore, there is no indicator of accomplishment and students substantiate their satisfaction with opinions and optimism. External incentives such as participating in exchange programs where a real certification is required make a difference in the reorientation of goals and actions students create

4.2.2.3 Curriculum Deficiencies

Finally, learners were asked about the certification that they have and the possible aspects that affected them towards the achievement of the BA requirements or even their own linguistic goals. Their ideas of what they missed in the program as well as reflections of what they should have done are stated in the following chart.

Chart 11: Certification accomplishment

P	Certification	What is it required?
1	Yes B1 Inferior to the requirement	<p>“I think that teachers should implement working under pressure, determine a certain limit to work with similar to the certification exams”</p> <p>“There should be more interaction outside the classroom”</p> <p>“Conversation clubs, cultural activities in L2”</p>
2	No	<p>“More workshops” “Teachers should be stricter”</p> <p>“I think they should apply an exam in the of the degree... a test to check the things in which students are falling”</p> <p>“A pilot exam of the level”</p>
3	Yes B2	<p>“More courses for certification and some that teach technical vocabulary... more specific to different areas I think”</p> <p>“Teachers and students should take learning a language seriously... there has to be more commitment and teachers should have more availability”</p> <p>“The vocabulary we learn in class is different form the vocabulary in a certification, I heard some friends before saying this but it was until my first experience that I noticed they were right”</p>
4	No	<p>“students need to be exposed to the language, talk and don’t be afraid of speaking” “I had to be more autodidactic, I started good but I missed the track...I lost my motivation in studying English”</p>
5	No	<p>“We need to get out of the comfort zone and speak more English, otherwise we will never improve”</p> <p>“The school needs to implement something that can have repercussions on students grades if they don’t speak English”</p>
6	No	<p>“I think I need to take responsibility”</p> <p>“I didn’t have a lot of teachers who were strict with me, so I didn’t have to be responsible at all”</p>

In the previous chart, participants express their thoughts regarding aspects that need to be modified or added in the program, what should be changed and what they need to do in order

to accomplish expectations. As discussed before, just one participant out of six has covered the graduation requirement at the moment of the interview with a formal test and 5 participants still need to fulfill this requirement.

When participants were asked about possible actions to take in order to accomplish B2 level, they mentioned requiring more instruction in the second language such as courses oriented to certification and more English learning subjects. Some of the participants proposed the implementation of workshops and courses oriented to the development of academic vocabulary and to the application of formal certifications (which shows the demand for external support rather than personal planning and selection of the actions that can improve their situation).

Students recognize the necessity to overcome a certification exam as well as the weaknesses that they could struggle with at the moment of taking it such as technical vocabulary, academic English and timing; as participants 1, 2, and 3 stated. In fact, subjects 2 and 3 identify the absence of an exam, which could provide them with information of how well they are doing at a specific stage of the degree, as a weakness. Indeed, without a standard exam at a specific point of the degree, learners of the BA in ELT lose a valuable opportunity to recognize the points in which they need to improve as well as the aspects that they are required to implement or modify towards the accomplishment of curricular goals.

As can be observed, some participants recognize the low seriousness in the activities to be carried during the degree and they even claim dissatisfaction with their results at the point when the interview was held. A huge number of them blame the lack of responsibility, either from teachers or from them, as one of the main factors to affect their results and discontent.

In order to develop LLS, Macaro claimed that learners should continuously be exposed to linguistic gaps which would lead them to create their own plans and make efforts to resolve emerging problems that they face in different situations. The results point that, during their formal studies in the BA in ELT, participants might not have experienced the necessary number of linguistic problems that would allow them to select steps, prioritize, organize and effectively apply these actions in order to face and overcome these emerging situations.

The majority of participants, when they were asked about the necessary actions to fulfill academic requirements at that stage of the degree, agreed on the implementation of more courses. They also state that they were urged to get more hours of instruction (besides all the classes and official instruction in L2 they are provided with). As previously discussed, the actual amount of hours overpasses the number of hours required to obtain a B2 level in English. Indeed, that number should prepare students of the BA in ELT for a C2 level. Then, it can be inferred that the intensive amount of hours of formal instruction did not provide students with the necessary learning situations, linguistic gaps and tasks as well as the problems required by a learner in order to develop effective LLS at a B2 level.

As previously discussed, LLS are an opportunity for learners to recognize “how and how well” they are doing during their learning process (Oxford, 2003) and at the same time facilitate the information processing by selecting, organizing and regulating both, cognitive and metacognitive processes (García-Ros, Pérez Gonzales, Martínez, & Alfonso, 1998). However, it is evident that a huge number of the participants are somehow dependent on teachers' guide and instruction as a result of the low recognition of their linguistic weaknesses and strengths, poor evaluation criteria and ineffective practice of self-assessment activities. The program also has responsibility in this issue since neither a certification exam nor a

standard test exists as formal requirements to promote awareness in students as soon as they complete the English learning classes. At this point, it can be said that students continue the bachelor with low criteria to understand the progress they have achieved and it is until the end of the degree, when the attainment of a level becomes a necessity, when learners realize their opportunities to improve and linguistic lacks.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research aimed to understand the development of learning to learn strategies in students of the BA in ELT as a result of the learners' levels of awareness of communicative and linguistic weaknesses or strengths, opportunities to use the language, evaluation criteria and the due certification levels to attain. Consequently, in this chapter, the main conclusions drawn after the analysis of data will be offered, based on the findings of the information collected. Then, some possible solutions to the limitations to the research are discussed as well as directions for further research in the area.

5.1 Findings

According to the research questions presented in chapter I, the information is divided into three categories: awareness to attain certification, obstacles that learners face to promote LLS and opportunities to use L2.

5.1.1 Students' Awareness of What Attaining Certification Levels Takes

Firstly, collected data show that participants in this study seem to go unaware of their actual proficiency level. They only have an uncertain idea of their progress as they stated not to have taken a formal certification exam during their stay in the program. In fact, the participants believe they have reached B2 based on their comparison to other speakers' informal results, who do not hold any certifications either, or reliable assessment. It is impossible to determine whether students have accomplished or not the BA language goals; there is no evidence of the level of proficiency attained by advanced students beyond grades which allow them to pass from one course to another. Since they skip the certification process

during the program, and they do not have a clear idea of their language weaknesses or communicative lacks at the end of the degree.

The number of participants who decided to take a certification, meaning, those who have reached awareness of strengths and weaknesses in the second language, is reduced or nonexistent. Among the interviewed learners in this research, only 1 out of 6 stated to have achieved a B2 level which corresponds to the minimum requirement of the BA program in order to graduate. Another participant claimed to have had a meaningful exposure and practice in the language; however, she revealed that she had already achieved a B1 level when she presented a quasi-certification exam.

The lack of certification among the future English teachers is a weakness and gap of the curriculum as the level of English is only stated in the program, but there is no policy established to evaluate the accomplishment of such a level. Then, the need to accomplish certification standards either in early or late stages might be conceived as unnecessary when students are undergoing formal instruction in the second language and content classes. In summary, learners seem to be unaware of the levels of the abilities and skills required to attain a real certification.

5.1.2 Obstacles Learners face to Develop Learning to Learn Strategies

Apparently, although it may seem contradictory, the main obstacle students have in developing learning to learn strategies is the lack of rigorousness teachers have when assessing language proficiency. The results show that some students enter the BA in ELT with inaccurate beliefs about their communicative abilities and proficiency levels they have developed. Then, assessment does not produce enough mediation through feedback, which

emphasizes recognizing weaknesses in order to set them as goals to accomplish. Also, the lack of a certification as a requirement apparently affects the assessment procedure as well as the learners' outcomes. The feedback provided by teachers does not always seem to orient nor encourage students to pursue quality criteria (CEFR) by fulfilling international standards to pass from one course to another or by fostering students to take a certification. Teachers' decision-making is not always focused on making students recognize aspects that allow them to take responsibility for their own learning process and prioritize what and how to learn.

Students in the BA in ELT do not seem to recognize the program requirements and the graduated profile. In fact, they display a low sense of awareness, metacognition and autonomy. Only one out of six participants in this research fulfilled the established standards and the expectations for an upper intermediate English speaker. The rest expressed not to have a clear idea of what their language achievement was nor the accurate parameters that could indicate what they are required to do or stop doing to reach communicative competence. Their actions are likely to be oriented only to satisfying short-term demands just like class tasks, assignments or a final score rather than fulfilling international standards.

Learners conclude their studies completely unaware of their English level and with low possibilities to attain international certification standards since they have fewer options to complement their instruction with other courses or subjects offered in the BA program before taking a certification. As discussed in chapter 4, learners do not seem to prioritize the achievement of international standards. In fact, they hardly connect their personal goals and expectations to language policies attainment and, therefore, learning to learn strategies.

5.1.3 Opportunities to use the Language

Finally, the lack of involvement in the second language by students as well as a context that does not promote just the use of English considerably prevents the ideal development of communicative competence and LLS which fulfill international standards. In the BA in ELT program, language learners are expected to have enough opportunities and spaces to develop a wide number of strategies in different situations and under different levels of difficulty.

As presented in previous chapters, students have 2000 hours circa of target language training, exposure, practice and mentoring. Although the amount of hours to practice and be exposed to the language in the BA in ELT program is undoubtedly superior according to the standards proposed in the Cambridge Scale, necessary to achieve a B2 level, the proposed aim to achieve is not satisfied. In fact, participants in this research claimed to have had limited chances to practice English. This lack of involvement is notorious when learners have completed the credits of the program and they are not aware of their actual proficiency level in L2.

The interaction in L2 should be the main goal to support and maintain in LLS use. However, learners tend to adopt a passive role during the class and try to avoid interaction in English with other students or their teachers inside and outside the classroom. Actually, the learners' mother tongue seems to be the common system of interaction. As seen in chapter 4, many participants state that the chances to use the language either inside or outside the classroom are low and accepted by both teachers and students.

When participants were asked about necessary actions to take in order to reach B2 level in English and fulfill the requirement in the program, they claimed not to feel ready and

prepared to take it. In fact, they pointed to the need for more classes or courses. This aspect emphasizes the dependency that students create to the teachers' instruction, influence and encouragement.

In summary, the results show that current educational conditions within the program scarcely promote learning to learn criteria focused on the development of interaction in the second language. The strategies that students follow are not oriented to develop communicative competence and self-directed learning, so learners do not really understand what the development of communicative competence involves and the rigorousness a certification test implies. In short, the program does not provide learners opportunities to develop learning to learn strategies, differently, it makes students become dependent on a teachers' instruction.

5.2 Conclusions

Even though some participants claimed to have objectives even higher to the ones stated in the official program at the beginning or during the degree, they expressed dissatisfaction in the interview when they were asked about their personal accomplishment. At that level, students of the BA in ELT are expected to recognize, without dependence on external incentives or advice, the necessary actions to be taken in order to fulfill international criteria, curriculum standards as well as professional requirements. However, low students' awareness to recognize curricular goals and then implement actions to fulfill demands, few chances to either use or practice the language as well as inconstant and ineffective assessment tools do not allow learners to recognize linguistic lacks and weaknesses.

Aspects such as unawareness of the language level as well as the inexistent evaluation criteria have direct results in students' absence of effective selections and use of strategies. Then,

poor sense of self-assessment and autonomy significantly contribute to the unsatisfactory development of English at the end of the BA in ELT. These issues are perceptible in those participants who state not to be aware of their English after approximately 2000 hours of language instruction and who similarly proposed more English courses in order to reach the required certification. When students sensibly know what they are doing, focus their attention on it and reflectively understand why they are doing it, it is assumed that there is a developed level of awareness (Lier, 1996). Furthermore, the following points aim to answer the previously presented research questions as they describe aspects that might greatly contribute to the absence of effective strategies oriented towards language proficiency:

- Students point out that there are no standardized evaluation criteria. A clear process that helps learners realize their communicative and linguistic weaknesses or strengths does not exist, so they usually continue their studies in the BA in ELT without actually being aware of how well they are doing.
- Students express that one of the main issues to face at Facultad de Lenguas BUAP, is the lack of voluntary participation in the L2 and passive role that learners could adopt. Participants mention that their classmates rarely participate or express spontaneously during the class. Interaction commonly takes place only when the teacher asks students to do it. They tend to avoid interaction in English with other students or their teachers inside and outside the classroom. Actually, the learners' mother tongue seems to be the regular system of interaction.
- Participants in this research seem not to be aware of what it takes to attain certification levels. They describe not to have established goals related to the accomplishment of a certification at the beginning of the degree and even when they were about to fulfill

the academic program. Many of them do not prioritize English so their actions were low or not directed to reach academic goals.

In summary, it can be assumed that as long as a standard certification is not required as a formal delivery process, students' actions will not be directed to achieve international demands and their perception would not be oriented to learning to learn strategies. As previously seen, these aspects prevent learners from developing learning to learn strategies making them, at the same time, dependent on teachers' instruction.

5.3 Limitations

Some of the aspects that represent limitations for this study are related to generalizations of the obtained data as well as the conclusions. Due to the reduced amount of participants selected for this research and the complex process of analysis required in a qualitative approach, further research would be necessary as well as an extension to diverse methodologies and approaches.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALTE. (2002). The ALTE can do project. Retrieved from <http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/28906-alte-can-do-document.pdf>: 2017
- Arndt, V., Harvey, P., & Nuttall, J. (2000). *Alive to Language: Perspectives on language awareness for English language teachers*. Cambridge University Press.
- B. Merriam, S., & Baumgartner, L. (2020) *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*. Hoboken: Jossey-Bass
- Bagaric, V., & Mihaljevic, J. (2007). Defining Communicative Competence. *Metodika*, 94 - 103.
- Barra, E. (1987). El desarrollo Moral: Una introducción a la teoría de Kohlberg. *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología*, 7 - 18.
- Baught, A., & Cable, T. (2002). *A History of the English Language*. London: Routledge.
- Benson, P. (2012). Autonomy in Language Learning, Learning and Life. *Synergies France* N.9, 29-39.
- Blackstone, A. (2018). *Principles of sociological inquiry: Qualitative and quantitative methods*. Saylor Academy
- Braslavsky, C. (2005). *The Curriculum*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248033989_Cecilia_Braslavsky_and_the_Curriculum
- Brown, G., Bull, J., & Pendlebury, M. (1997). *Assessing Students Learning in Higher Education*. New York: Routledge.
- BUAP. (2009). *Estructura Curricular*. Puebla: BUAP.
- Chamot, A. (2004). Issues in Language Learning Strategy Research and Teaching. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 14 - 26. Retrieved from <http://e-flt.nus.edu.sg/v1n12004/chamot.pdf>
- Chamot, A., Barnhardt, S., Beard, P., & Robbins, J. (1999). *The Learning Strategies Handbook*. New York: Longman.
- Cinto, J., Cordero, Y., & Calixto, J. (2016). Collaborative Learning in the LEI Curriculum. *Experiencias en lenguas e investigación del siglo XXI*, 426-434.
- Cinto, J., Valdez, M., & Gutiérrez, B. (2016). Speaking Assessment in a BA in ELT Program. *La Formación Docente y Aprendizaje de Lenguas: Investigación de la Facultad de Lenguas BUAP*, 121 - 147.
- Cohen, A., & Macaro, E. (2007). *Language Learner Strategies*. New York: Oxford.

- Cockey, S. (2014). *Teaching World Language: A Practical Guide*. National Capital Language Resource Center.
- Davis, L. (2014) *Communicative Competence: Its Definition, Connection to Teaching, and Relationship with Interactional Competence*. University of Missouri retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283711223_Communicative_Competence_Its_Definition_Connection_to_Teaching_and_Relationship_with_Interactional_Competence
- Delors, J. (1996). *The Treasure Within*. Paris: Unesco.
- Desveaux, S. (2017). Cambridge English Support Site. Retrieved from <https://support.cambridgeenglish.org/hc/en-gb/articles/202838506-Guided-learning-hours>
- Dominguez Gonzales, P. (2008). *Destrezas receptivas y productivas en la enseñanza del Español como lengua extranjera*. Tenerife: Universidad de la Laguna.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. Harlow: Longman.
- Ek Uicab, M. (2016). Literacidad digital académica de los estudiantes universitarios: Un estudio de caso. *Experiencias en lenguas e investigación del siglo XXI*, 37 - 48.
- Ennis, R. (1985). *A logical basis for measuring critical thinking skills*. Educational Leadership.
- European Council. (2017). Centro Virtual Cervantes. Retrieved from http://cvc.cervantes.es/ENSENANZA/biblioteca_ele/marco/
- García-Ros, R., Pérez Gonzales, F., Martínez, T., & Alfonso, V. (1998). Estrategias de Aprendizaje y Enseñanza del Inglés como Segunda Lengua en Contextos Formales. *Revista de Educación* núm. 316, 257-269.
- Ghannam, J. (2019) *Enhancing Independent Learning Competence and Grammar Language Learning Strategies*. Professional competencies in language learning and teaching (pp. 31 - 41). Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED595332.pdf>
- Good, T., & Brophy, J. (1994). *Looking in Classrooms*. New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.
- Griffiths, C. (2004) *Language Learning Strategies: Theory and Research*. Occasional Paper No. 1. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268413776_Language_Learning_Strategies_Theory_and_Research
- Howard, J. (2007). Curriculum Development. Elon University retrieved from https://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.cae/files/media_assets/Howard.pdf
- Lai, E. (2011). Metacognition, a literature review. Retrieved from Pearson retrieved from http://images.pearsonassessments.com/images/tmrs/metacognition_literature_review_final.pdf

- Lee, C.K. (2010) An Overview of Language Learning Strategies. ARECLS retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/25889647.pdf>
- Lier, L. (1996). Interaction in the Language Curriculum: Awareness, Autonomy and Authenticity. England: Longman.
- Little, D. (2017). Learner Autonomy: drawing together the threads of self-assessment, goal-setting and reflection. Retrieved from http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Elp_tt/Results/DM_layout/00_10/06/06%20Supplementary%20text.pdf
- Macaro, E. (2001). Learning Strategies in Foreign and Second Language Classroom. London: Continuum.
- Macaro, E. (2003). Teaching and Learning a Second Language. London: Continuum.
- Marcos García, M. J. (2015). Estrategias de aprendizaje para la adquisición de la competencia lingüística en alumnos de FLE. Anales de Filología Francesa, n. 23, 125 - 143.
- Martínez, V. L. (2013). Paradigmas de investigación: manual multimedia para el desarrollo de trabajos de investigación. Una visión desde la epistemología dialéctico crítica.
- McMullin, K. J. (2016). Cooperation and Autonomy in Language Learning: An Application of the Collage Method. Porta Linguarum 25, 93-103.
- Medel-Anonuevo, C., Ohsako, T., & Mauch, W. (2001). ERIC.ed. Retrieved from Revisiting Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century: <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED469790>
- Meng, W., Kumar, S., Nagami, M., & Walker, I. (2015). Culture and Foreign Language Education: Insight for Research and Implications for the Practice. Berlin: De Gruyten Mounon.
- Mussawy, S. (2009). Assessment Practices: Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Assessment. Massachusetts: Master's Capstone Projects. 9.
- O. Malley & Chamot, A. (1995). Learning Strategy in second Language Acquisition. New York – USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford, R. (1990). Language learning strategies: what every teacher should know. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Oxford, R. (1994). Language Learning Strategies: An update. CAL online resources: Digests, 1 - 5.
- Oxford, R. (2003). Language Learning Styles and Strategies: An Overview. GALA, 1-25. Retrieved from GALA: <http://web.ntpu.edu.tw/~language/workshop/read2.pdf>
- Oxford, R. (2017). Teaching and Researching Language Learning Strategies: Self-regulation in Context. London: Routledge

- Richards, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J.C., & Rodgers, T.S. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reiser, B. J. (2004). Scaffolding Complex Learning: The Mechanisms of Structuring and Problematizing Student Work. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, Vol 13, No. 3, 273 - 304.
- Romo Martínez, A. (1984). *Etimologías Grecolatinas*. Guadalajara: EDUG Departamento Editorial Universidad de Guadalajara.
- S. Taber, K. (2011). *Constructivism as Educational Theory: Contingency in Learning, and optimally guided instruction*. Hauppauge, N.Y.: Nova Science Publishers.
- Sacristán, G. (1988). *El currículum: una reflexión sobre la práctica*. Madrid: Morata.
- Sartika, D. H. M., Santihastuti, A., Wahjuningsih, E. (2019). The Learning Strategies Used by EFL Students in Learning English. *Indonesian Journal of English Education* Retrieved from <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/ijee/article/view/12111/pdf>
- Spiers J. & Smith, J. (2017). *An interpretative phenomenological analysis of interview data: people on the renal waiting list consider deceased versus living donors*. London: SAGE Publications, Ltd
- Tyler, R. (1949). *Basic principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Wery, J., & Thomson, M. M. (2013). Motivational strategies to enhance effective learning in teaching struggling students. *Support for learning*, 103-108.
- Yang, J., Schneller, C. & Roche, S. (2015) *The Role of Higher Education in Promoting Lifelong Learning*. UNESCO retrieved from http://www.sel-gipes.com/uploads/1/2/3/3/12332890/unesco_-_2015-the_role_of_higher_education_in_promoting_lifelong_learning.pdf

APPENDIX

INSTRUMENT

Me encuentro con _____ quien es estudiante de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés, en la Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Agradezco su amabilidad por aceptar esta entrevista. _____

1. ¿Estás tomando o has tomado clases de inglés?
2. ¿Qué nivel lograste? ¿Cómo lo sabes?
3. ¿Qué habilidad consideras haber desarrollado más?
4. ¿Qué te hace creer que es ésta sea la habilidad más desarrollada? ¿Y con respecto a la habilidad oral?
5. ¿Qué nivel de dominio del idioma Inglés te gustaría tener? ¿Por qué? ¿Y según el CEFR?
6. ¿Qué has hecho / haces para lograrlo?
7. ¿Estudias otra lengua además de inglés? Sí sí ¿Qué nivel? ¿Cuántas horas por semana?
8. Dentro del salón de clase de inglés ¿Con qué frecuencias participas?
9. Y en esta participación ¿cuál es tu rol es decir qué es lo que haces? ¿plantear preguntas cuando es necesario? ¿explicar argumentos? (Desempeño)
10. Tus compañeros en clase ¿están dispuestos a practicar en el Idioma? ¿La participación en clase obligada/invitada?
11. ¿Conoces los objetivos que tenías que alcanzar al concluir las materias de LM?
12. ¿Qué hiciste para intentar alcanzarlos? ¿consideras que tus acciones fueron satisfactorias?
13. Ahora que las has concluido LM ¿Qué tan lejos o cerca te encuentras de lograr esos objetivos? ¿Hubo algo que te falta hacer o dejaste de hacer?
14. ¿Qué tanto contribuyen las clases al logro del nivel deseado? ¿Qué debería haber más?
15. ¿El método de enseñanza responde a tu estilo de aprendizaje?
16. Si/no ¿Qué haces?
17. ¿Has hecho algún examen de certificación? Si ¿qué nivel? no ¿por qué?
18. ¿Qué crees te hace falta hacer para poder tomar la certificación?
19. ¿Qué acciones sigues para obtener los resultados esperados al concluir la carrera, es decir llegar a un nivel B2? (12)
20. ¿Consideras que la evaluación hecha durante las clases de LM o taller Inglés corresponden a las evaluaciones que se presentan en una certificación? ¿Por qué?
21. En las evaluaciones tenidas ¿pudiste tener resultados que te permitieran saber tus fortalezas y debilidades en cada habilidad?
22. ¿Qué importancia tiene usar expresiones y vocabulario más complejo para lograr niveles altos de dominio de la lengua? ¿Intentas hacerlo? ¿cómo?
23. ¿Con qué frecuencia intentas utilizar formas más sofisticadas de estructuración de tus ideas? ¿por qué?
24. ¿Es fácil/ difícil? ¿Lo disfrutas?

25. ¿Sabes cómo aprendes mejor?
26. ¿Esa forma de aprender te permite desarrollar las cuatro habilidades?
27. ¿Cómo sabes que has aprendido/entendido?
28. ¿Qué acciones te permiten mejorar tu capacidad de hablar en el idioma Inglés?
¿Qué haces cuando estás interactuando y olvidas una palabra o concepto al instante?
29. Cuando te enfrentas con vocabulario el cual desconoces (lectura, audio u oral)
¿Qué técnicas o estrategias utilizas para entender significado?
30. ¿Qué objetivos tenías al comenzar la carrera? ¿Te sientes preparado y satisfecho con tus resultados? ¿De qué depende?
31. ¿Cuáles son los principales problemas que enfrentas? ¿crees poder resolverlos o deberías la institución ofrecer más cursos o diplomados para que los superes?
32. ¿Qué acciones o técnicas has utilizado para resolver aquellos problemas que enfrentas?
33. ¿Utilizas alguna estrategia digital extra clase para practicar o mejorar tus habilidades en el idioma?
34. Una vez terminada licenciatura ¿Qué piensas hacer? ¿Por qué? Y ¿respecto al idioma?

Agradecemos mucho tu participación y aportes en esta investigación, te recordamos que los datos que has proporcionado son con fines investigativos, son confidenciales y nuevamente te reiteramos un agradecimiento.