

**Factors Influencing Students' English Language Proficiency at Centro de Idiomas de la  
Universidad Nacional**

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### TRIBUNAL EXAMINADOR

Este proyecto titulado: Factors Influencing Students' English Language Proficiency at Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional, por la estudiante: Andrea Mora Mora, fue aprobado por el Tribunal Examinador de la carrera de Enseñanza del Inglés de la Universidad Latina, Sede Pérez Zeledón, como requisito para optar por el grado de Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés:



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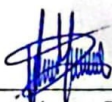
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**Abstract**

Achieving proficiency in the English language require a great deal of discipline and determination. This process may be influenced by some vital factors to determine success or failure in the learning process. Hence, the purpose of this study was to analyze the main factors that influenced language proficiency from students in level five at Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional. The study involved an English teacher and 16 students ages from 13 and above. The prestige this institution has regarding the proficiency of its students is what attracted the interest for this research. The study followed a qualitative approach based on an action research method. As part of the data gathering procedures, three different instruments were applied. These involved classroom observations, student questionnaire, and a teacher interview. Relevant aspects that this study found were that students not only use one learning strategy but a wide range of them; learners have found study habits that adapt to their learning needs and help gain proficiency; teachers involve more open-ended techniques or activities that allow students to practice and support them to become proficient in the target language.

*Keywords:* Language proficiency, methodology, teaching techniques, study habits, learning strategies, STAR framework



## Resumen

Lograr el dominio del idioma inglés requiere mucha disciplina y determinación. Este proceso puede estar influenciado por algunos factores vitales para determinar el éxito o el fracaso en el proceso de aprendizaje. Por lo tanto, el propósito de este estudio fue analizar los principales factores que inciden en el dominio del idioma de los estudiantes del quinto nivel del Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional. El estudio involucró a un profesor de inglés y 16 estudiantes de 13 años en adelante. El prestigio que tiene esta institución en cuanto a la competencia de sus alumnos es lo que atrajo el interés de esta investigación. El estudio siguió un enfoque cualitativo basado en un método de investigación para la acción. Como parte de los procedimientos de recolección de datos, se aplicaron tres instrumentos diferentes. Estos incluyeron observaciones en el aula, un cuestionario para los estudiantes y una entrevista con el profesor. Los aspectos relevantes que encontró este estudio fueron que los estudiantes no solo usan una estrategia de aprendizaje, pero una amplia gama de ellas; los alumnos han encontrado hábitos de estudio que se adaptan a sus necesidades de aprendizaje y ayudan a adquirir competencia; los maestros involucran técnicas o actividades más abiertas que permiten a los estudiantes practicar y apoyarlos para que dominen el segundo idioma.

*Palabras clave:* competencia lingüística, metodología, técnicas de enseñanza, hábitos de estudio, estrategias de aprendizaje, marco teórico STAR

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## Dedicatory

First and foremost, I want to thank God for granting me the opportunity of completing this chapter of my career. I want to express my sincere gratitude to my parents, who were there for me when I needed them the most. Thank you for your encouragement, love, sacrifice, prayers, and patience. You are the pillars that hold my life. I am thankful because you prepared me for the world and never tried to clip my wings. I wish to thank my brothers, who have supported me. I also want to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my special person for loving, understanding, and supporting me during this journey. You have always been there for me. Finally, I want to thank my coworker in this research, Ana Yancy Pérez Fallas, for her company during all the challenging and funny moments during this process. I am sincerely grateful to all of you.

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**CHAPTER ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION**



## 1.1 Introduction

A subject that has gained a relevant role in society is English since it has become a common or universal language around the world for communication purposes. Numerous people around the world have the goal of learning this foreign language for diverse purposes since it is said that in an increasingly globalized society, being able to communicate in more than one language is beneficial, for it opens doors to future work opportunities (Konishi, et al., 2014). Therefore, teachers need to provide the best teaching practices within their classroom so that they can form competent students in English that allow them to grow not only socially but also professionally. The Costa Rican education system has had outcomes that are not as expected in regard to language proficiency. Therefore, people search for alternative ways to learn the foreign language since it offers them more opportunities in society such as in the institute called Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional (CI-UNA). Factors such as teaching techniques, study habits, and learning strategies may positively impact learners' language proficiency who finish the CI-UNA language program. Hence, this study focuses on exploring the aspects previously mentioned to identify how these aspects influence language proficiency.

CI-UNA has an important role on students' language proficiency. It provides pupils with the tools they need to build meaningful language abilities and skills during the process of becoming proficient language users. Because of the positive outcomes that learners have achieved over the years, CI-UNA holds a well-known position when it comes to graduates who have reached language proficiency since it prepares the population to command a second language to obtain favorable future opportunities in society (Jiménez et al., 2012) for people in other provinces and even another country. As a result, the goal of this study is to look into the factors that may influence student' language proficiency.

The development of this chapter examines a general idea of what will be discussed during the research which are the factors that lead to a high proficiency of English at CI-UNA. Therefore, it emphasizes the importance of identifying those factors to improve students' learning. This chapter is divided into the following aspects: rationale, purpose, objectives, research questions, hypothesis, and conclusion. The rationale provides an in-depth explanation on why the research investigation is being developed since it is said that the comprehension of the learning process is crucial to improve students' engagement (Valentin, 2017). Then, the purpose of the research is explained. Also, the general and specific objectives are provided to guide the reader of the line of work to be accomplished along with the research questions which will be responded by the end of the research. The hypothesis and conclusion of the chapter are mentioned at the end as well to summarize all the relevant details.

## **1.2 Rationale**

Learning a foreign language, especially English, is a goal that many people want to achieve at some point of their life. This language has been considered a universal language since people from all around the world are somehow familiar with it and comprehend it in some way. That is why many countries have been forced to include the teaching of a foreign language in the school syllabus like in Costa Rica. However, reaching high proficiency in the target language is a complex task that many learners face. In fact, an estimate of 70% of public high school graduates in Costa Rica only reach the basic knowledge of English despite being exposed to the language throughout 10 years of school (González, 2021). Therefore, the population looks for other means of learning English. One of the institutes that provides this service is Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional, commonly known as CI-UNA. Students who finish their language studies at this institute end with a level of English linguistic skills of B2 from the Common European

Framework of Reference for Languages. This fact provides the interest in determining which factors influence students on obtaining high proficiency at this institute.

To achieve high language proficiency, students need to be able to use all four linguistic skills appropriately, that is writing, listening, reading, and speaking. To accomplish these linguistic skills, students need to go through various general and specific competencies that are understood as the sum of knowledge, skills, and characteristics which permit a person to actively participate in society (Estado de la Nación, 2017). Students need to be active members of the class in order to obtain the necessary skills and practice so that they can feel the confidence to use the target language proficiently in society. CI-UNA forms these proficient language users since it provides “a high-quality conversational focus” (Barrantes, 2013). By identifying what causes that success, it will be beneficial for the entire learning and teaching society.

There are various factors that can influence students’ learning. Other than the factors mentioned earlier, which are teaching techniques, study habits and learning strategies, there are other factors that may play an important role. According to Meisani et al., (2020), “a number of studies also suggest that the age factor affects both the motivation and the ability to acquire a second language” (p. 206). Since students from CI-UNA are from ages 13 and above and have different motivational perspectives, this factor may play a significant role to obtaining proficiency in the language and help teachers in the future.

With the collection of data obtained from the instruments, the researchers will have relevant information regarding the study habits and learning strategies that were implemented that allow students to achieve a proficient use of the target language. After an in-depth analysis of the data, the investigators will unify all the study habits and strategies that were considered the best to aid students through the learning process to obtain a high level of English and be an

individual user of the language. The intention of determining these factors is to provide future students with a manual of the strategies and habits so that they can, as well, achieve language proficiency.

The teaching techniques play a significant role in language proficiency. Using real life context permits students to imagine situations that may occur at some point during their life. These contexts allow learners to have clearer ideas whenever they encounter the situation and have a natural conversation in the target language. They play an important role in CI- UNA classes which provides students with an advantage. Also, since CI-UNA is currently only virtual, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play an important role. The advances in technology have facilitated teachers with tools that grant a successful learning environment. Therefore, by outlining the teaching techniques and method of planning, teachers can take them into consideration for future classes and implement them to enhance students' English level. In brief, this investigation will contribute to the educational field for both teachers and students so that they can increase their study habits, learning strategies, and teaching techniques that lead to remarkable language proficiency.

### **1.3 Purpose**

In today's Costa Rica, learning English is essential. Speaking it fluently offers a world of possibilities for personal, social, and professional success. Thus, English instruction has played an important role in public educational institutions. Yet, the outcomes related to proficiency in the language in graduates vary in each system because each one of them has its own modality and English has different emphasis and time in each. The factors that may influence this proficiency in the short term are the focus of this research that seeks to describe the learning strategies and study habits students from level five at CI-UNA employ to reach high proficiency.

During the learning process, it is essential to remember that student' commitment, attitude, and effort are critical to their ability to learn and expand their knowledge in order to become proficient English language users (Yahaya, et al., 2011). This indicates that personal commitment is critical to achieving proficiency and obtaining positive outcomes in being a proficient language user. To sum up, there are personal and external elements that influence learners during the learning process, which is the primary reason behind the interest in understanding these factors to become aware of students' language proficiency. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate how students from level five become proficient users of English at Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional (CI-UNA).

### ***1.3.1 General Objective***

To identify the factors that allow students to achieve high proficiency in level five at Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional.

### ***1.3.2 Specific Objectives***

- To analyze how the teaching techniques benefit learners to improve their linguistic proficiency.
- To explore the study habits that boost students' language proficiency and allow them to become proficient language users.
- To distinguish the learning strategies that students employ to enhance their language proficiency.
- To design an action plan with interactive activities that allow students to reinforce their language proficiency.

### ***1.3.3 Research Questions***

1. How do the teaching techniques affect students' proficiency in the language?

2. How does the Task-Based Instruction (TBI) influence the teaching techniques used to strengthen language proficiency?
3. How does the STAR method plan influence students' language proficiency and affect their learning experience?
4. How do study habits improve students' proficiency in the language?
5. How is students' proficiency in the language affected by learning strategies?
6. How is the process of becoming a proficient language user affected by students' language motivation?

#### **1.4 Hypothesis**

Concise study habits, clear learning strategies, and well implemented teaching techniques influence students' language proficiency.

#### **1.5 Summary**

The importance of becoming a proficient language user is discussed in this chapter. Researchers investigate how students from level five reach the proficiency that allows them to be proficient users at CI-UNA. Previous studies in the field have some similarities to the current study in terms of demographic, but none of them has explored students' experiences at CI-UNA. As a result, this study focuses on elements that may influence learners' proficiency, such as learning strategies, study habits, and teaching techniques. In addition, a proposal for an action plan to reach language proficiency will be designed. In summary, this study would aid both teachers and students in terms of attaining proficient users of English.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1 Introduction**

The literature review plays a significant role in practically every operational step of the research process and is an essential component of it. A literature review is the first step when scholars are considering a research issue that they might wish to find answers to (Kumar, 2011). It provides a perspective of the knowledge on the topic under study. The goal of this chapter is to examine the variables that may have an impact on the level of proficiency of second language learners. This literature review examines the key theories and concepts that can be considered while analyzing the factors that affect students' outcomes in terms of proficiency. This section's main topics are (a) teaching methodology: Task-Based Instruction, STAR method, and ICTs; (b) study habits: multiple intelligences and effective learning; and (c) learning strategies: motivation and learning environment.

## **2.2 The Influence of Teaching Techniques in Language Proficiency**

Teaching a foreign language takes time and dedication. Teachers need to be creative and foresee students' necessities to prepare a class with the appropriate teaching techniques for a lesson. Richards and Schmidt (2010) stated that a technique is considered a process in which an instructor carries out a teaching activity. Therefore, these techniques can vary from one teacher to another and can emphasize one or more linguistics skills. Teaching techniques play a fundamental role in reaching a high proficiency in the target language.

There are diverse techniques that can be incorporated in English lessons and can be utilized differently as well when teaching different language skills. According to Brown & Lee (2015), the taxonomy of teaching techniques is divided into three broad categories which are called controlled, semi-controlled, and open-ended. Controlled techniques are those in which the instructor has complete control over the development of the activity being carried out such as



drills, dictations, recognition, reviews, content explanations, question/ answer, etc. Its focus is more on forms and structures and the teacher is consistently monitoring students' responses. Open-ended techniques are the complete opposite to these. Students have more freedom of expression and may improvise as well such as when developing activities like role plays, interviews, discussions, games, problem solving, etc. These focus more on meaning and communication. That leads to semi-controlled techniques. These techniques are in-between controlled and open-ended procedures such as when brainstorming, storytelling, information exchange, etc. By analyzing these categories, it is noticeable that some techniques may fall into more than one type. It would all depend on the instructor and the way that they would decide on developing the language techniques. Therefore, it is vital to have a clear goal for the class to decide on the adequate techniques to be implemented and skills to be studied.

Learning a foreign language is a meaningful task for students. Hence, teachers need to invest time in providing efficient and fulfilling classes. To accomplish this, instructors need to have a clear main objective(s) that can be developed despite the classroom variables such as age and proficiency (Gheorghiescu, 2013) and need to be innovative and have imagination (Arjona, 2020) to try various teaching techniques. Without an objective, the class would not have any kind of intention. The objective guides the class and students need to reach it by the end of the lesson. Therefore, all the necessary forms and structures are previously taught to students so that they have the necessary knowledge to develop the main activity. Instructors need to explore different techniques in the classroom and be open-minded so students will be able to obtain knowledge effectively and build more language skills and reach high proficiency in the language. To develop the variable teaching techniques, task-based instruction (TBI), STAR framework, and information communication technologies (ICTs) are key elements to examine.

### ***2.2.1 Task-Based Instruction (TBI) and Teaching Techniques***

To reach any type of goal, professors need to have clear the teaching methodology that is applied so students can have an effective learning process. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), a teaching method can be defined as “the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the skills to be taught, the content to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented.” A teaching methodology indicates the manner in which a topic is introduced and developed to the language learners. Therefore, the method applied guides the lesson plan that was previously prepared by the instructor.

There are diverse teaching methodologies that can be incorporated in language classes but a modern one is TBI also known as Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT). Language institutions or schools may decide to use this methodology for their language lessons as in the case of CI-UNA. To comprehend this methodology and its focus, it is relevant to define the term task. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), a task is a meaningful action that permits students to communicate with one another in order to reach a final outcome or objective. It is noticeable that the class objective would be developed through the main task that is prompted for the lesson. Hence, students need to be prepared with the knowledge and skills to develop the significant task that should be related to real-life scenarios since it needs to be centered on communicative language in which the learner focus is on meaning instead of grammatical structures (Nunan, 2004). Students focus on the message, and if errors are committed, they correct themselves and start applying the appropriate grammatical forms unconsciously.

TBI is a methodology that enhances the teaching techniques and enriches students' learning because of its authenticity. It is relevant to mention that Nunan (2004) stated that this

method is composed of seven main principles. First, scaffolding in which the students learn from one another and support each other. Second is task dependency that is considered a chain that builds upon one task to another. Third is recycling. Here students reuse the language in distinct forms. Fourth is active learning in which students use the target language to reach the goal. Fifth, is where integration takes place of the linguistic forms, functions, and semantic meanings so that clear relationships are made and comprehended. Sixth, reproduction to creation is where students use the target language freely. Seventh is reflection where students consciously reflect on what has been learned and what can be improved. Integrating these principles in language classes allows learners to not only internalize the information taught but to also encourage themselves to improve and reflect on their weaknesses and strengths.

### ***2.2.2 STAR Framework and Teaching Techniques***

The framework provides teachers with the basis to construct their lesson plans for every language class. Instructors need to consider factors such as students' characteristics and needs along with the resources and assessments requirements while planning a class so that the communicative real-life goals are met (Brown & Lee, 2015). Teachers need to mediate on these aspects so that they can optimize their lessons. The STAR framework not only takes these factors into account but also the seven principles of TBI previously mentioned. This framework was designed by one of the CI-UNA founders and was first applied in 2010. It is a unique framework used at this institution for teachers to plan their language class. The aim of STAR is to emphasize students' autonomy to develop independent language users that will communicate and interact in the target language effectively (Olivares et al., 2020). With this goal, students achieve proficiency in English since it maximizes the communicative and linguistic purpose of the lesson.

CI-UNA lessons are interactive and proficient thanks to the lesson plans that follow the TBI methodology and its principles. STAR is an acronym for the class stages. The investigators of this study form part of the project and have knowledge of the meaning of the lesson stages. The “S” stands for Starter. In this phase, the teacher initiates the class with a warm-up or attention grabber activity that can review the contents studied from previous classes, introduce the new topics for that class, or just to motivate students. The second letter “T” means Tackle. Here teachers introduce relevant items of the language such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. In other words, structures and linguistic terms are presented. Teachers integrate everything they believe is essential to learn and comprehend before developing the main speaking activity in which students practice the language that was taught. It can be prompted to be the teacher-centered phase of the lesson. Once all the criteria are met, the instructor continues with “A”: Automatization. Students put the language into practice with a speaking activity in which the language functions and terms are employed. Here students support one another and become independent users of the language which can permit them to gain self-confidence. Finally, the letter “R” stands for Recycle. During this period, the teacher gives meaningful feedback to learners. Students can provide each other with the feedback as well and reflect on any mistakes that were made. These lesson stages provide students with the maximum opportunity to dive deep into the language and take advantage of both the teacher and classmates to scaffold and internalize the content that was taught since it “maximizes learners spontaneity in class” (Olivares et al., 2020, p. 27) and provides students with the appropriate environment to build language skills.

### ***2.2.3 Information Communication Technology (ICTs) and Teaching Techniques***

Students have radically changed in their way of learning when comparing them to past generations. New generations have grown up surrounded by technology and it has altered their way of thinking and learning. Hence, the students of today are considered to be digital natives since they are “native speakers” of comprehending the language that technology uses such as computers or the internet (Prensky, 2001). Students need technology to learn, and technology will increase their development of language abilities and skills when applied.

It is significant to comprehend the meaning and definition of Information Communication Technology (ICT). It is defined as the tools or resources that provide the teacher and learners with the transmission of significant information by all means (Çakici, 2016). There are various types of ICTs but only two types are mentioned: Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). The difference between them is practically the technological device. In fact, both CALL and MALL contribute to the collaboration and interaction of the language either in or outside the classroom (Brown & Lee, 2015). Teachers can adapt their methodology with the use of these two devices and enhance students' language internalization and proficiency. By doing this, students will be able to construct and control their own learning process and promote autonomy to build knowledge in the target language (Lee, 2016). The use of ICTs for both face-to-face and online classes will encourage and motivate language learners to take advantage of the opportunity provided and fulfill their goal of learning a foreign language. Therefore, the teaching techniques used by the instructor need to incorporate ICTs since it encourages discussions and allows learners to make deeper connections of the language (Hamilton, 2018). Some resources that teachers can use to educate are Nearpod, Kahoot, Bamboozle, Padlet, Flipgrid, VoiceThread, YouTube, Jamboard,

etc. The list is numerous and can all be developed with either MALL or CALL that are able to be viewed in the pedagogy wheel which provided a wide variety of apps with learning purposes.

### **2.3 The Impact of Study Habits on Students' Language Proficiency**

An essential component of the students' learning process is their study habits. Students' awareness of appropriate study strategies and the ability to manage time and other resources to meet the demands of the academic assignments are examples of what study habits are (Diokno, 2015). Strong study habits help pupils focus their efforts on specific areas, which is beneficial for learning (Nuthana & Yenagi, 2009). This is key for learners, for it provides them with the necessary balance to manage their study duties. In short, the effectiveness of a student's learning process and study habits are closely related.

Study habits are individualized strategies to achieve proficiency in a foreign tongue. Since study habits serve as tools for analyzing and processing linguistic input, they are positively correlated with language proficiency. Every student learns differently, so it is common for learners to have different study habits. Habits are modified according to the students' objectives or needs. Study practices are directly related to learners' academic success, so improving pupils' study habits seems vital to advancing the academic achievement of learners (Sharma, 2017). In short, a crucial aspect of a learner's success in acquiring language proficiency is the significance that study habits play in the learning process. To develop this variable, multiple intelligences and active learning are key elements to study.

#### ***2.3.1 Multiple Intelligences and Study Habits***

Due to the multiple intelligences, students learn differently with diverse study habits. Gardner (1998) defines intelligence as "a psychobiological potential to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in at least one cultural context (p. 20)." Gardner and Hatch

(1989) stated that intelligences are divided into seven categories: logical-mathematic where students use numbers or logic to discern, linguistic with the use of words to understand meaning, musical by means of music to appreciate processes, spatial with the help of pictures to visualize information, bodily-kinesthetic with movement, interpersonal with social experiences, and intrapersonal with activities of self-reflection (Herdon, 2022). Depending on the intelligence, the student adapts the study habit to have successful outcomes. Understanding these intelligences is essential for students to be aware of the context where the study habit is applied (Shearer, 2018). Learners' progress and study habits are directly linked, so the type of intelligence is key when comprehending which habits to employ and which ones to avoid.

### ***2.3.2 Active Learning and Study Habits***

To learn a foreign language effectively, students need to internalize the linguistics forms, structures, and terms. To accomplish this, they need to be active learners. Active learning is where students engage in the learning process not only mentally, but physically, where discussion, reflection, analysis, and synthesis take place so that all the language skills are developed and practiced (Casale-Giannola & Schwartz, 2012; Machemer and Crawford, 2007). In other words, active learning is putting into practice the four linguistics skills which require students to think deeply in order to develop the task assigned. Learners are constantly asking questions to receive a response and ask questions to secure their comprehension. The tasks or activities are more-time consuming since the task itself will require students to analyze and interact with others to complete it. When given the appropriate time to develop an activity, the information has a greater opportunity to be kept in the long-term memory which means that the main goal of the language lesson would be accomplished, and learners would gain more self-

confidence as well (Tong, 2001). Hence, students would be actively engaged in their own learning process and by doing and asking, they will improve their study habits.

#### **2.4 The Role of Learning Strategies in Students' Language Proficiency**

Boudah and O'Neill expressed that a learning strategy is an individual's way for using a certain set of skills to learn information or achieve other tasks more quickly and effectively (1999); similarly, for Ortega (2013) learning strategies are individual actions that learners do to manage their own learning progress. To obtain the greatest outcomes, specific learning strategies are required. The role that they play in the learning process is key, for they are conscious mental and behavioral procedures that people engage in with the objective of gaining control over their learning process (Montaño, 2017). Studies have classified learning techniques into categories for a better analysis since they are known to be significant determinants of how well or poorly learners perform in their foreign language ability.

Learning strategies have played a key role in students' learning processes over time, and scholars have categorized them to study them better. Oxford, which remains in use to the day because of its applicability to the subject, created in 1990 the taxonomy of learning strategies and classified them into six main categories: (1) cognitive strategies are related to how students manage language input through synthesizing, analysis, summarizing, note-taking, outlining, or reasoning; (2) metacognitive strategies have to do with controlling one's learning process with activities like gathering and organizing materials, monitoring mistakes, arranging a study space and a schedule, and evaluating task success; (3) memory-related strategies connect the foreign language with memory process such as acronyms, body movement, rhyming, mental images, etc. (4) compensatory strategies help students when they lack of knowledge; for instance, look at the gestures, deduce meaning through context, use synonyms, or explain to transmit a message; (5)



affective strategies deal with identifying one's mood and anxiety level, rewarding oneself for good performance, talking about feelings, and using deep breathing or positive self-talk; finally (6) social strategies help students share and learn with others about the language with activities like asking questions, asking for clarification or help, talking with native speakers, or exploring social norms (as cited in Oxford, 2003). Although there are diverse strategies that students employ, they are all crucial to the success in achieving language proficiency.

The implementation of learning strategies, whether consciously or unconsciously, as a means of support to achieve their objective of learning a second language will always be a part of the learning journey. Learners will be able to manage their own language learning when they employ a wide range of them, which will strengthen their autonomy in the process (Montaño, 2017), so they can monitor their development. In summary, a student's autonomy is essential to their success when learning a language since growth and proficiency can only be attained if the learner devotes their time, effort, and concentration to the process. To develop the variable learning strategies, motivation and learning environment are essential elements to explore.

#### ***2.4.1 Students' Motivation and Learning Strategies***

Motivation is linked to the learning strategies students apply. It is linked to the amount of intellectual energy normally spent when learning. Entwistle (1991) mentioned that motivation has an impact on how much and how well students apply learning strategies. Studies described the strategies utilized in learning and the suggestions on how they improve depending on the motivation a learner has. Learners need to be aware of the skills they possess so that the implementation of learning strategies is effective and brings the best outcomes of the process when reaching language proficiency. Learners need the appropriate extrinsic and intrinsic

motivation, and if they do not have it, it can cause superficial retention of information rather than meaningful learning.

#### ***2.4.2 Students' Learning Environment and Learning Strategies***

The learning environment involves learning technologies, teaching methods, the role of the instructors and the students. Also, the hardware, software, and the network are some components of it. As seen before, the learning environment consists of both material and human practices (Warger & Dobbin, 2009). For this research the physical environment is the focus.

Learners who find the appropriate environment are motivated and exploit the resources at hand and, therefore, have proficient outcomes. Raufelder and Kulakow (2021) expressed that learners are constantly looking for more freedom to make their own decisions, which is mostly reflected in their quest for uniqueness in finding their appropriate physical learning environment that fits their needs and personalities and learning strategies to have meaningful results in language proficiency. In the process of learning a language, it is crucial for students to find the best learning environment so that the strategies they implement are useful and help them gain proficiency.

**Table 1**

*Research Schedule*

Activity	Month						
	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
Topic Selection	✓						
Proposal Approval	✓						
Rational		✓					

<b>General and Specific Objectives</b>		✓					
<b>Literature Review</b>			✓				
<b>Methodology</b>				✓			
<b>Action Plan Proposal</b>				✓			
<b>Data Collection</b>				✓			
<b>Findings</b>					✓		
<b>Reflections</b>						✓	
<b>Conclusions</b>							✓
<b>Recommendations</b>							✓

*Note.* Designed by the authors of the paper (2022).

## 2.5 Summary

This chapter discussed the factors that have an impact on students' language proficiency. Some theories and concepts were cited to clarify how these factors are linked and the role that each one plays in gaining language proficiency. The chapter reviews the process in which the learners are involved in so that they can become high proficient language users. Three variables were discussed and then subdivided into other three factors. Each variable indicates its importance and significance in gaining high proficiency. This first variable is regarding teaching techniques, subdivided into TBI, STAR framework, and ICTs. The second variable is about study habits which is divided into multiple intelligences and active learning. The third variable is learning strategies, which is focused on motivation and learning environment. In short, the topics

previously stated serve as the basis to obtain a deeper understanding of how they are connected to affect English language proficiency. Each variable and its indicators play a fundamental role when learning a foreign language. By diving deep into the theory, a clear idea and insight of the importance of this topic is observed.

**CHAPTER THREE  
DESIGN AND METHOD**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter Three seeks to describe the methodology developed to answer the questions in Chapter One. This research is based on a qualitative approach that follows an action research method in which a situation is studied, and a solution is proposed to gather information through different strategies. This chapter is divided into five parts that are the research method, type of approach, context, data collection procedures, and action plan proposal. The research method provides the reasons to why an action research study was chosen. The type of approach describes the qualitative design of the study. In addition to this, it is also significant to describe the context where the investigation took place and the participants with whom the study is developed. A description of the instruments is also included in this chapter because it provides the information that helps answering the research questions. Moreover, a proposal for an action plan to increase students' language proficiency will be designed.

### **3.2 Research Method**

In order to develop an investigation, it is necessary to identify what kind of research method was used to conduct the study. This pedagogical proposal presents an action research method. This method has become popular for investigations in the educational field since it provides a clear comprehension of the topic under study. This is because action research studies a particular issue in a context so that improvements can be developed in the same field (Burns, 2009). In other words, action research is reflecting on the findings or data collected from the instruments to plan actions or processes that will enhance the current situation. This shows that this method is a powerful tool that will allow instructors to develop strategies or techniques that improve the teaching-learning process. For that reason, the objective of the development of this action research is to analyze if the implementation of efficient teaching techniques combined

with the appropriate learning strategies and study habits allow students to obtain a high proficiency level in the language. Action research is less focused on statistical analysis (quantitative) and more focused on reaching a solution for an educational improvement (Tomal, 2010) not only for a specific school or institution, but for the entire educational field to be informed and generate an impact and change. Hence, this study recognized action research as the appropriate method to conduct the investigation.

### **3.3 Type of Approach**

This research follows a qualitative approach with the objective of identifying the factors that allow students to achieve high proficiency in the language. Fossey et al. (2002) expressed that qualitative research depicts and explains people's experiences, behaviors, interactions, and social situations without using statistical techniques or quantification. For Merriam (2018), the idea that meaning is socially constructed by people as they interact with their environment is the key to understanding qualitative research. The present study focuses on the factors that influence students' English proficiency. The researchers sought to recognize those factors by analyzing learners' study habits, learning strategies and the teacher's methodology. By following this strategy, researchers aimed at determining the factors that influence students' English proficiency in level five at Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional.

### **3.4 The Context**

This investigation was carried out at Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional (CI-UNA), located in Sinaí Neighborhood, Pérez Zeledón. This institution is located one kilometer east of Central Park in San Isidro de El General. It has come to be a significant and well-known English language institution in the region. CI-UNA offers two different schedules for the population to choose. The first schedule is attending classes two days a week from Monday to

Friday from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm. The second schedule to choose from is on Saturdays from 8:00 am to 1:30 pm. The main goal of this institute is to contribute to the linguistic abilities of the population in the Brunca Region by implementing a foreign language program that allows for detailed and intense instruction. Thus, since this program now offers online sessions that allow students to attend from anywhere, it has expanded its services throughout Costa Rica.

CI-UNA also offers online classes for children from 5 to 12 years old. There is also a scholarship program called Access. The United States Embassy awards 100 students with these scholarships each year.

### ***3.4.1 Chosen Setting***

This study is conducted at CI-UNA which is located in Pérez Zeledón. This course used to be only face-to-face and was carried out at Universidad Nacional installations. However, due to the pandemic, this language program met the need to change to a virtual setting. In 2020, CI-UNA started to offer their services virtually to the community. Up until this day, it is still only virtual and hopes to open both face-to-face and virtual by 2023. For the development of this study, the course is only virtual, which provides readers with a distinct view than if it were face-to-face.

### ***3.4.2 Participants***

The researchers chose a specific group of students with whom to work for this action research study. The participants in this research are in level five, specifically, learners from Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional who attend Tuesday and Thursday classes from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm. This group is composed of 16 students. Their ages go from 13 to 40, approximately. Most of the pupils who take these virtual lessons are from the surrounding areas of Pérez Zeledón. The group's teacher is a female with one year and nine months of experience.



### **3.5 Data Collection Procedures and Tools of Initial Research**

An instrument is a tool for conducting research. It is used to gather, quantify, and examine data. A research tool may be an interview guide, an exam, a poll, or a checklist. The research tool is often chosen by the researcher and is associated with the research design (Teachers College, Columbia University, n.d). This section of the project involves all tools used to gather information about students' study habits, learning strategies, and the teaching techniques as they progress toward achieving high proficiency. This is with the purpose of understanding the factors that influence students' English language proficiency at Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional. The instruments were an observation scale, a questionnaire, and a teacher interview, all of them applied in that order.

#### ***3.5.1 Procedures of Initial Research***

This methodological proposal is based on the action research approach as previously mentioned. To develop this investigation, data collection is fundamental to acquire since it provides the initial stage to organize and reflect in order to take action (Pelton, 2010). The data obtained works as a guide before, during, and after the research because it will provide results to see the necessity of the study. However, researchers must design and apply the appropriate instruments that backup the research objectives. Researchers need to keep in mind the objectives and research questions so they can analyze carefully and select the tools that best suit the problem and as well as the population to be studied. For this research, an observation scale was applied as a diagnostic test to determine teaching techniques and learning strategies that enhance students' language proficiency. By observing the class, the researchers will be able to determine how students at CI-UNA obtain a high proficiency level.

Observing the class three times helped to determine how students of CI-UNA obtain proficiency in the language. The purpose of the observations was to identify how the teaching activities applied allow students to increase their language proficiency. After monitoring the class, an action plan was designed with various teaching activities, which were based on the literature review, that allowed students to implement a wide range of learning strategies. It also provided teachers with ideas on how to apply different teaching techniques. Once the action plan was applied to the class, relevant feedback was provided from both the teacher and students. It was necessary to cycle through the research in order to make slight changes to some activities.

### ***3.5.2 Instruments***

In order to develop this study, the researchers designed a series of instruments that are going to be used to gather the necessary information and give an answer that can help describe the phenomenon under study. Three instruments were constructed: an observation scale, a student questionnaire, and a teacher interview. These instruments seek to provide different views about the teaching techniques, learning strategies, and study habits that allow students to reach a high proficiency level at CI-UNA. The application of such instruments is vital for this study since it will allow the process of triangulation, which reinforces trustworthiness to the results and analysis.

**3.5.2.1 Instrument 1: Observation Scale.** This instrument's aim is to identify the type of input students receive during the development of the class in level five at CI-UNA regarding learning strategies and teaching techniques. This observation was the key to this qualitative research since it allowed the researchers to witness students in their natural context while acquiring language proficiency. The instrument consists of open-ended and close-ended questions regarding students' reactions towards the teacher's methods to provide input, students'

engagement in the classroom activities, and the way(s) learners show comprehension of the information delivered. The first section is a checklist with 15 questions for researchers to observe the teacher's teaching techniques. The second part consists of 11 questions for researcher to identify, based on learning strategies, how students react to the subject matter under study.

**3.5.2.2 Instrument 2: Student Questionnaire.** The second instrument was a questionnaire for level-five students from CI-UNA. Its main purpose was to collect information related to the learning strategies and study habits implemented by the students to reach high language proficiency. The questionnaire consisted of four open-ended questions and 16 questions where students choose from never, almost never, sometimes, and always depending on the frequency of their actions related to the query, for a total of 20 questions. The questions are based on different learning strategies and study habits.

**3.5.2.3 Instrument 3: Teacher Interview.** This instrument was designed for the CI-UNA teacher. The objective of this interview is to identify the teaching techniques and learning strategies that the professor identifies as essential to obtain high proficiency in the language. It is divided into two sections. The first part consists of 11 open-ended questions that dive into the teaching techniques that are developed during the lesson. These questions will allow the researchers to study the techniques and their efficiency. The second section is toward learning strategies. This part is composed of 18 questions that are subdivided into six learning strategies. These are yes or no questions about the strategies which the teacher is able to observe if students apply the strategy or not during the class.

## **3.6 Action Plan Proposal**

### ***3.6.1 Introduction***

This section provides a clear detailed description of the action plan proposal that was implemented. The proposal is aimed at enhancing the knowledge construction process of learners at CI-UNA. Specifically, this action plan proposal seeks to develop a guide for increasing learners' proficiency skills in the English language. This section starts with a justification explaining the importance of the proposal. It is followed by three different teaching strategies, which are explained in detail with their corresponding steps to develop each activity. Each of these strategies will be sustained based on the level, unit, and the didactic sequence focused on improving language proficiency skills, which are based on the CI-UNA syllabus. The didactic sequence is based upon the STAR framework and divided into four sections: starter (10-20 minutes), tackle (40-50 minutes), automatization (30- 60 minutes), and recycle (5- 15 minutes). It is also relevant to mention that each strategy includes the materials that are used to implement and carry out the activities of the didactic sequence. The images or links are attached for better comprehension. These strategies are created with the aim of aiding not only learners to improve their language skills and proficiency but also to help teachers in developing more interactive and engaging lessons.

### ***3.6.2 Title of the Proposal***

The Implementation of Activities to Enhance Students' Language Proficiency

### ***3.6.3 Justification***

Language is the primary element for everyday communication. It involves interpersonal communication on a cultural and social level. Therefore, mastering a language and everything that it involves is essential since it portrays a person's character and social behavior. The

implementation of an action plan helps pupils develop their communicative abilities so they can utilize language effectively. To improve students' language growth and understanding, which are critical for achieving language proficiency, it is vital to include a variety of activities and materials in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. This action plan outlines the implementation of several activities to improve the learners' language proficiency. In order to motivate students to take on difficulties and act as their own knowledge agents, their integration in the learning process is vital. For students to develop proficiency, it is critical to create environments where they may communicate and express themselves without fear of rejection.

### ***3.6.4 Description of First Teaching Strategy***

**Name of the first teaching strategy:** Let's Eat Healthy

**Purpose of the teaching strategy:** To recognize terms related to food with the use of picture stimulus to enhance language proficiency by means of TBI.

**Duration:** 2 hours and 30 minutes

**Instruments for the activity:** Bamboozle, images, audio, PowerPoint Presentation

**Variable:** Teaching Techniques

**Indicator:** Task Based Instruction (TBI)

**Level:** Five

**Unit:** 1A Eating In... and out

**Didactic Sequence:**

- Starter (20 minutes)
- Tackle (40 minutes)
- Automatization (75 minutes)
- Recycle (15 minutes)

### Implementation of the first teaching strategy:

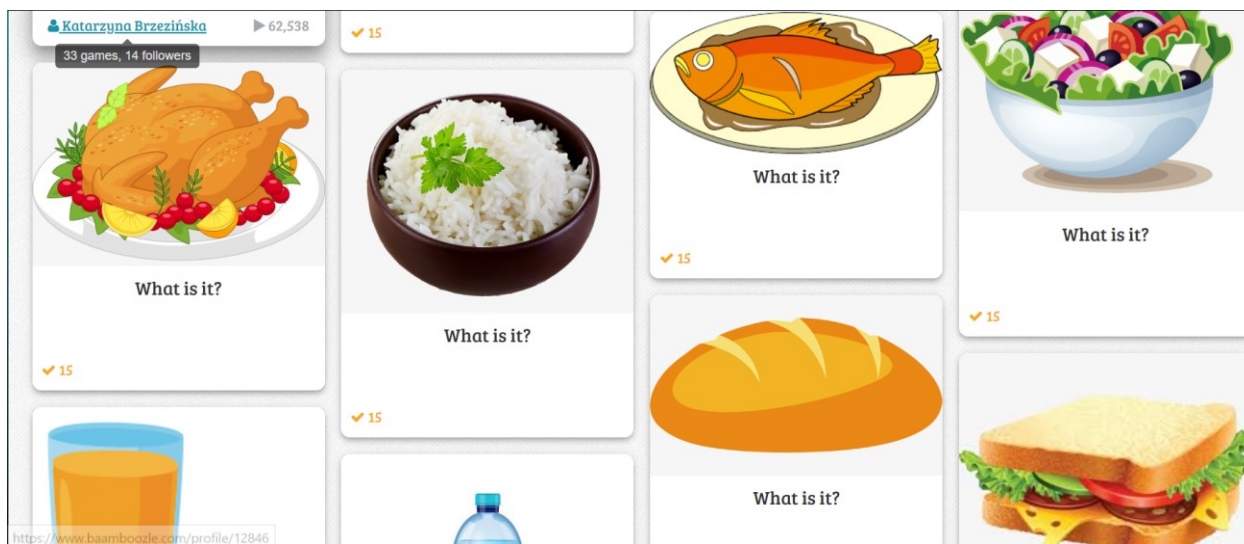
The first teaching strategy of this research is developed according to the book called “Oxford American English File 3rd Edition” with unit 1A Eating In... and out. The purpose of this strategy is to identify and review specific information related to food with the use of TBI to encourage and increase students’ language proficiency. It includes innovative teaching techniques that enhance vocabulary, expressions, and grammatical structures in order to increase their language proficiency. This strategy follows the didactic sequence proposed by CI-UNA with the stages: starter, tackle, automatization, recycle.

#### Starter (20 minutes)

To start the class, the teacher asks students if they like to go grocery shopping. She asks what kind of food they normally but at the supermarket and creates a list for students to review. Then, the instructor reviews some vocabulary with the learners to see how much knowledge they have. To do this, the teacher uses bamboozle to play a short vocabulary game which can be found in the following link <https://www.baamboozle.com/game/16916>.

#### Figure 1

*Food Flashcards*





*Note.* Flashcards about food on Bamboozle.

The teacher asks a student to choose a number from the cards to see which of the previous cards shows. Each student not only has to indicate the vocabulary term, but also indicate if he or she likes it and what dish they can prepare with the item as an ingredient. Students provide various dishes for the same ingredient if possible.

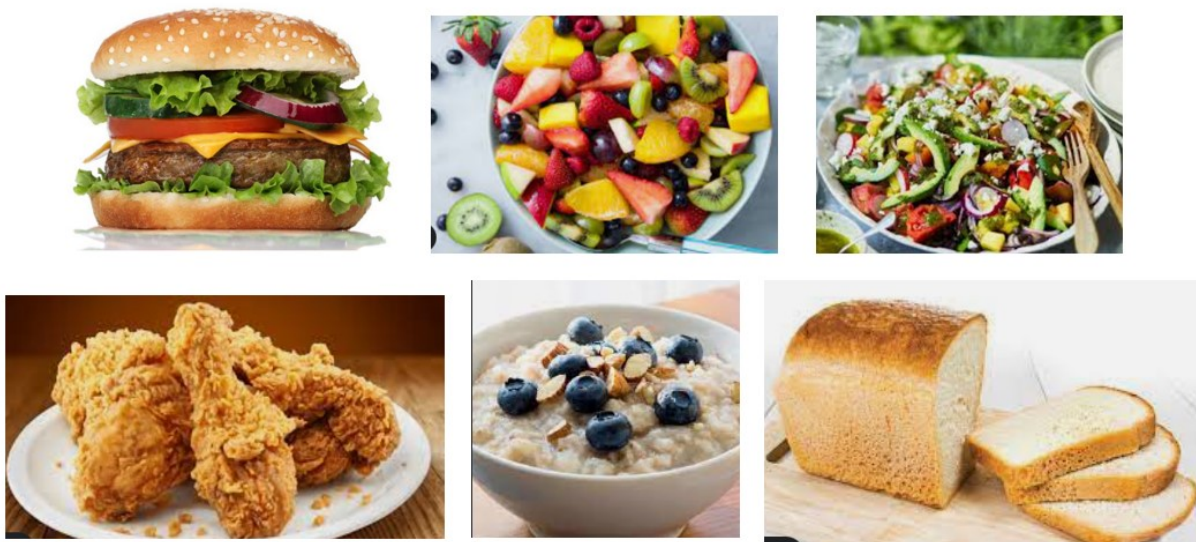
### **Tackle (40 minutes)**

The teacher shows various images of different kinds of foods (see Figure 1). Students need to decide if it is a healthy dish or unhealthy and explaining the reason why they decided that.

The teacher provides a link to a true or false exercise. Students will listen to a nutritionist provide advice to her patients about their eating habits which can be found under the name Listening 2 on the website <https://english-practice.net/practice-listening-english-exercises-for-b1-food-and-nutrition/> . They listen to the audio twice. When students listen for the first time, they will write down of the food vocabulary that they identified. The teacher creates a new list on the virtual board with all those terms. The second time they listen, students answer the true or false question on a google forms found in the following link <https://bit.ly/3RCI0tU>. Once the answers have been provided, the instructor checks the answers and asks volunteer to correct the false statements orally.

## Figure 2

### *Healthy or Unhealthy Food*



*Note.* Different healthy and unhealthy foods.

### **Automatization (75 minutes)**

The teacher divides the class in groups of 3 or 4 students. The instructor will indicate to students that they will create a healthy one-day menu for a person. They need to provide a healthy breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Not only do they provide the dish, but also the ingredients and



recipe to follow to prepare each dish. Students can create a power point presentation or infographic in Canva to create their menu. Once students finish with their presentations, each group presents their one-day menu with the corresponding ingredients and steps to their teacher and classmates.

### **Recycle (15 minutes)**

The teacher writes down any kind of grammar or pronunciation mistake that was heard during the presentation or thought out the class. The teacher asks students if the word is pronounced, spelt, or if it is grammatically correct. Learners identify the error and correct it themselves for the entire class to learn.

### ***3.6.5 Description of Second Teaching Strategy***

**Name of the second teaching strategy:** #SportsLife

**Purpose of the teaching strategy:** To identify specific information related to sports with the use of ICTs to innovate and boost students' language proficiency.

**Duration:** 2 hours and 30 minutes

**Instruments for the activity:** Images, live worksheets, YouTube, audio, Kahoot

**Variable:** Teaching Techniques

**Indicator:** Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)

**Level:** Five

**Unit:** 5A Sporting superstitions

**Didactic Sequence:**

- Starter (20 minutes)
- Tackle (40 minutes)
- Automatization (75 minutes)

- Recycle (15 minutes)

### **Mediation strategy**

The second teaching strategy of this Action Research is developed according to Oxford American English file 3rd edition book with the 5A unit Sporting superstitions. The purpose of this strategy is to identify specific information related to sports with the use of ICTs to innovate and boost students' language proficiency. It includes specific information that emphasizes the value of motivating learners to learn new words, expressions, and grammatical structures in order to increase their language proficiency. This strategy follows the didactic sequence proposed by CI-UNA with the stages: starter, tackle, automatization, recycle.

### **Description of the activities:**

#### **Starter (20 minutes)**

To start the class the teacher projects an image with three questions for students to share their thoughts while the instructor provides them with feedback and new vocabulary. After this, the teacher reviews the vocabulary related to sports with a live worksheet (<https://es.liveworksheets.com/5-xk3462671v>) in which learners match the respective sports with the image. Once learners finish, the instructor calls on some students to check the exercise.

**Figure 3***Sports*

*Note.* Questions about sports

**Tackle (40 minutes)**

The teacher shows a video (<https://bit.ly/3BIXcpO>) with relevant information related to the sport and the tools used in each of them. Pupils write the vocabulary they identified as they watch the clip. After this, the instructor plays an audio (<https://bit.ly/3qojEsc>) that presents two friends talking about sports. Students listen the audio twice to comprehend the content of it. Then, the professor projects a Kahoot for learners to answers some question based on the previously mentioned audio. Once the answers have been provided, the instructor checks new vocabulary.

**Automatization (75 minutes)**

The teacher divides the class in pairs. Then, the instructor projects an image including 20 unusual sports around the world. In pairs, students choose one of the sports and create a presentation that includes information such as origin, rules, tools, clothing, and other necessary information required to understand what the sport is about. Once learners finish creating the presentations, each pair presents their sport with the corresponding information, including a two-minute clip, to their teacher and classmates.

**Figure 4***Unusual Sports*

*Note.* Unusual sports around the world. Information taken from <https://bit.ly/3SkP5Pq>

**Recycle (15 minutes)**

Any grammatical or pronunciation mistakes made during the presentation or while the class was in session are jot down by the teacher. The teacher asks the class on the word's pronunciation, spelling, and grammatical accuracy. For the benefit of the entire class, learners recognize the mistake and make the necessary corrections.

**3.6.6 Description of Third Teaching Strategy**

**Name of the third teaching strategy:** Let's talk about Family

**Purpose of the teaching strategy:** To identify family relationships and narrate personal experiences to motivate students to practice and strengthen language proficiency.

**Duration:** 2 hours and 30 minutes

**Instruments or for the activity:** YouTube, Canva, images, Padlet

**Variable:** Learning Strategies

**Indicator:** Motivation

**Level:** Five

**Unit: 1B Modern Families****Didactic Sequence:**

- Starter (20 minutes)
- Tackle (40 minutes)
- Automatization (75 minutes)
- Recycle (15 minutes)

**Implementation of the third teaching strategy:**

The third teaching strategy of this Action Research is developed according to Oxford American English file 3rd edition book with unit called 1B Modern Families. The objective of this strategy is to identify family relationships and narrate personal experiences to motivate students to practice and strengthen language proficiency. It involves information that highlights the significance of encouraging language learners to learn new vocabulary and grammatical structures to increase their language proficiency. This strategy follows the didactic sequence proposed by CI-UNA with the stages: starter, tackle, automatization, recycle.

**Description of the activities:****Starter (20 minutes)**

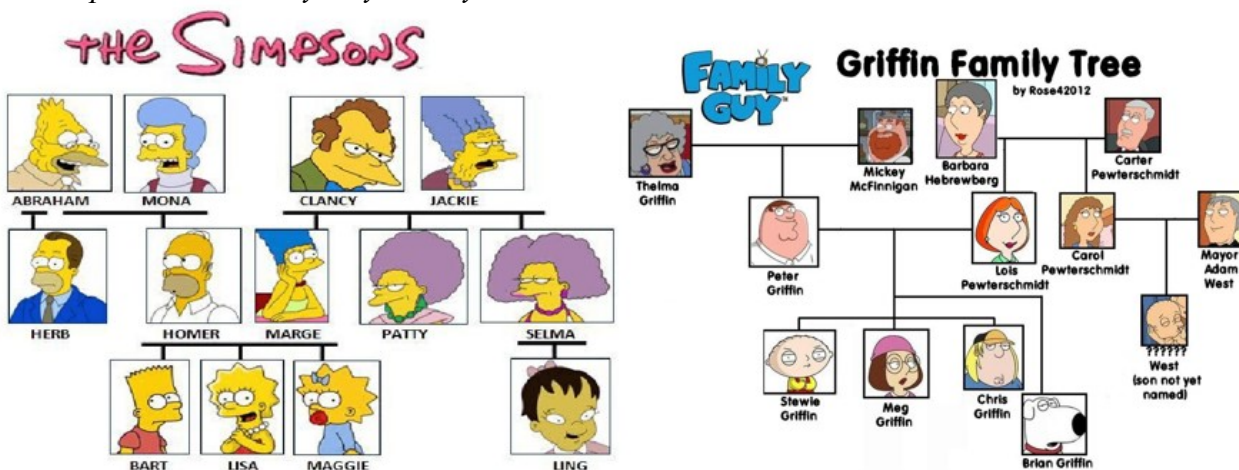
To start the class the teacher plays a video (<https://bit.ly/3BtL328>) for pupils to identify new vocabulary related to family. Then, the instructor reviews the new terms orally so that students clarify any doubts they may have. Using Canva (<https://bit.ly/3L0gR1X>), students create a family tree of their family (just nuclear family members). Once they finish, the teacher calls on some learners to share their work with the class.

**Tackle (40 minutes)**

The teacher shows two images of famous cartoon family trees like The Simpson's and The Griffin's family. Pupils identify which family member is who. For example, she is the mother, He is her brother, she is the grandmother, etc.

**Figure 5**

*The Simpsons and Family Guy Family Tree*



*Note.* Pictures of The Simpsons and Family Guy detailing their family tree information.

Once they have identified the main family terms, the teacher also introduces the stepfamily vocabulary and the in-laws so that students have broader vocabulary knowledge. After this is explained, the teacher chooses some of the characters from each family and learners need to describe that character's personality for everyone to hear. For example, Lisa is self-confident. Students can converse to see if they agree or disagree with the personality traits that are being mentioned.

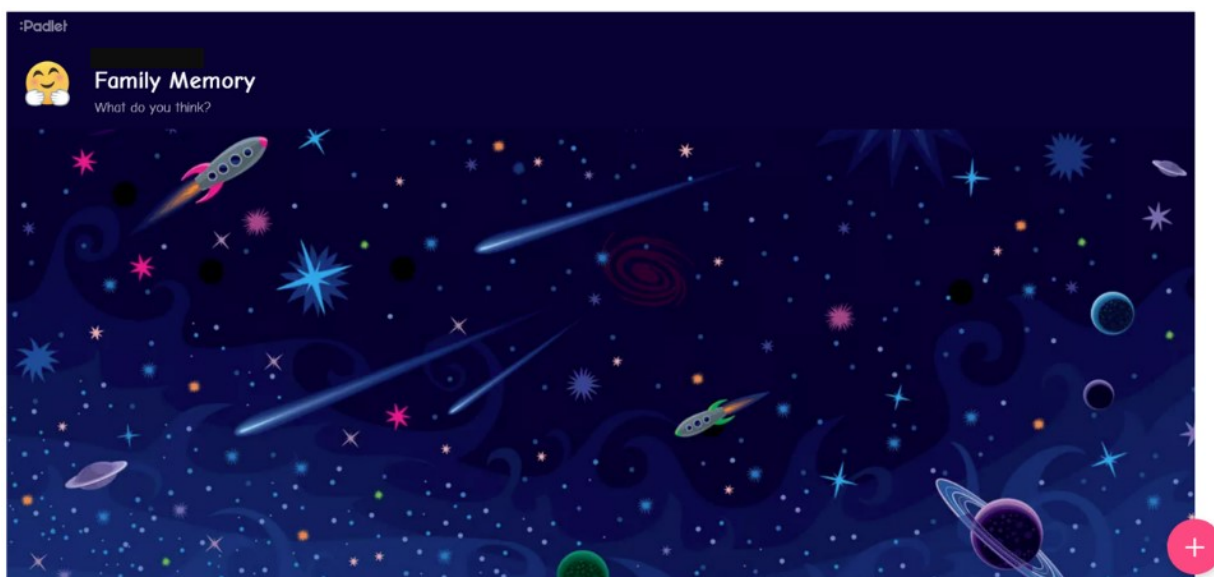
### **Automatization (75 minutes)**

The instructor tells learners that they will write a short 8-line paragraph about a family memory they experienced on Padlet (<https://bit.ly/3d13u4P>). Student should mention the location, family members involved, the reason why it made them feel happy, and any other detail that is relevant to the story. The teacher informs pupils that he or she will create breakout room where they can

read their paragraph to a classmate and share their experience. Learners should as well describe their family member's personality after reading their paragraph This last section of done spontaneously and orally. Once The teacher moves from one breakout room to another hearing students and jotting down any grammar or pronunciation error. After 15 minutes, the class is brought back to the main session and the instructor calls on some of them to read their experience to the entire class.

## Figure 6

### *Family Memory*



*Note.* Interface of the wallpaper of the activity Family Memory.

### **Recycle (15 minutes)**

The teacher takes note of any grammar or pronunciation mistakes made during the presentation or while the class is in session. The instructor quizzes the class on the word's correct grammatical use, pronunciation, and spelling. Learners identify the mistake and make the necessary corrections for the benefit of the entire class.

### 3.7 Summary

This chapter discussed the methodological framework of the investigation. It is significant to mention that this study is a qualitative approach based on an action research method. The first section of the chapter discussed why an action research method was chosen for the study along with its definition. The second title is a description of what a qualitative study approach is and how it adapts to the study. It is also crucial to include a clear description of the context where the study took place with a detailed explanation of the setting and participants that form part of the investigation. This allows the reader to comprehend from where the development of the study was enacted. Furthermore, an illustration of the three instruments that are used to gather relevant data is presented. The instruments utilized were an observation scale, a student questionnaire, and a teacher interview. Each of them is carefully portrayed. By the end of the chapter, an action plan is proposed and included with the steps to follow so learners obtain a high language proficiency when applied.



## **CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS**

## **4.1 Introduction**

Chapter Four reviews the findings of the data in level five at CI-UNA. The information was gathered through observations, teacher interview, and student questionnaire. This information plays a fundamental role and highlights relevant statements that help to compile reliable findings. The information collected was divided into three headings which are based on the teaching techniques applied by the instructor, study habits associated with students' language proficiency, and learning strategies used by students to increase language proficiency. The data is roughly organized to answer the research questions prompted and provide a detailed explanation of the finding gathered for each one of the topics and how they influence language proficiency.

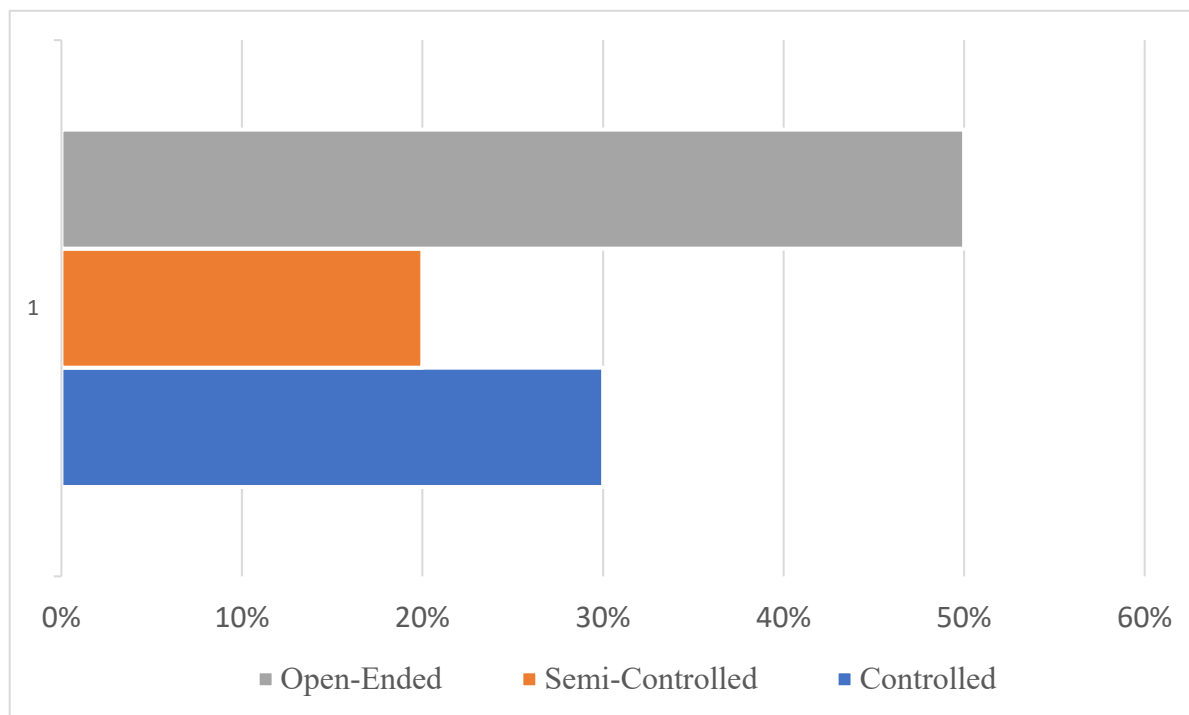
## **4.2 Teaching Techniques to Enhance Language Proficiency**

The teaching techniques implemented in a language class influence students' language proficiency. Teachers need to innovate and apply a variety of techniques that would allow students to develop their language skills, and hence, improve their proficiency in the target language. As a brief reminder, Brown & Lee (2015) mentioned that the taxonomy of teaching techniques is divided into three categories: controlled, semi-controlled, and open-ended. After carefully observing the class and identifying the teaching techniques employed, the lesson mainly consisted of open-ended techniques, as can be observed in Figure 7, activities in which students were able to improvise and interact in the target language were the focus, in other words, speaking. Students would provide an explanation of a topic either individually or in groups where they practice and contribute with critical ideas of the topic in development. For example, the description of the texture of their favorite dish or explanation of what they spend money on for an individual task and the recommendation of safety tips to follow before, after, or

during an accident as a group activity. Speaking was not only applied in the main task, but also as a warm-up activity. Throughout the class, students were asked questions related to the topic so that they could give their own point of view. They would provide the answers to questions from

### Figure 7

*Percentage of the types of Teaching Techniques Developed in the Class*



*Note.* Implementation of teaching techniques during an English class at CI-UNA. Information taken from the class observation.

listening exercises where speaking and reading skills were put into practice. Allowing students to use the target language permits learners to gain confidence and gain feedback from the teacher so that they can improve their language skills and proficiency. Through the questionnaire applied, learners indicated that they enjoyed carrying out speaking tasks since the activities allowed them to interact not only with the instructor but with their classmates and provided them a chance to put into practice what was explained and comprehend the topic in a clear manner.

Controlled and semi-controlled techniques play a significant role in the development of the lesson. Figure 7 demonstrates that the class is focused 30% on controlled teaching techniques. In these techniques, the teacher has complete control of the class and students are somehow more limited to interaction (Brown & Lee, 2015). Grammar and vocabulary explanations were developed with the help of PowerPoint presentations as visual aids. These techniques are mixed with semi-controlled techniques since students are constantly asking questions and brainstorming ideas and providing examples to make sure they comprehend the topic being covered. Students consider this part of the class as a necessity since they first need to comprehend grammar rules and generate vocabulary related to the topic so that they can confidently complete the main speaking task and put into practice what was learned. With the explanation of the instructor, students hear the correct pronunciation of significant vocabulary so that they can practice in the main speaking task. All three types of teaching techniques play a significant part during the development of the language class.

Language proficiency plays a fundamental role in language learning. All four language skills are needed to gain this proficiency. However, the skills that are highly developed during the class are speaking and listening. This language course is focused on conversational skills, hence, listening and speaking have a high impact on students' performance which was confirmed through the observations and the teacher interview. These fall into semi-controlled and open-ended techniques since students answer certain questions from the audio and provide their point of view of the topic. That does not mean that writing and reading are less relevant. These skills are practiced but mixed with other speaking activities as informed in the interview. For example, students may need to create a PowerPoint presentation where they write down their ideas and

then read it to the entire class. Hence, they are practiced during the class but not as much as listening and speaking.

The teaching techniques developed in the class are based on the methodology TBI. It focuses on a main task that students need to develop. In this case, the teacher prepares the students by providing grammar and vocabulary explanations along with listening exercises at the beginning of the lesson so that they can develop the task which is the objective. The material used to carry out the lesson simulates real life scenarios in the case of listening practice observed and confirmed by the instructor. The situations were related to people talking about their favorite food, an interview with a chef, conversation between family members about various topics, scams, charity events, etc. This encourages students to use the language and grammar being taught since they are witnessing possible scenarios that can be encountered and that they can use to carry out the task. The teacher used app such as Kahoot, Jamboard, videos, pictures, audios, PowerPoint presentations, etc., which motivated students and allowed them to be active learners since their attention was captured and started to ask questions to make sure they are comprehending clearly. Therefore, these two go by hand so that teachers innovate and include ICTs so that students can develop the task assigned to them in a creative a moderate manner and increase their proficiency in the language.

The STAR framework lesson plan influences the teaching techniques developed within the class. The framework follows a process that guides the techniques since certain phases need to be carried out prior to the main speaking task. It plays a vital role in obtaining proficiency in the target language. STAR goes along with TBI and its principals, which are scaffolding, task dependency, recycling, active learning, integration, reproduction, and reflection. CI-UNA classes are composed of the starter, tackle, automatization, and recycle sections. Which was observed

and confirmed by the teacher. If compared with the seven TBI principles, it is identified that these four class sections fall into at least one or more of the principles. Each section allows students to prepare and gain new knowledge to face the task or objective of the lesson.

#### **4.3 Study Habits to Strengthen Language Proficiency**

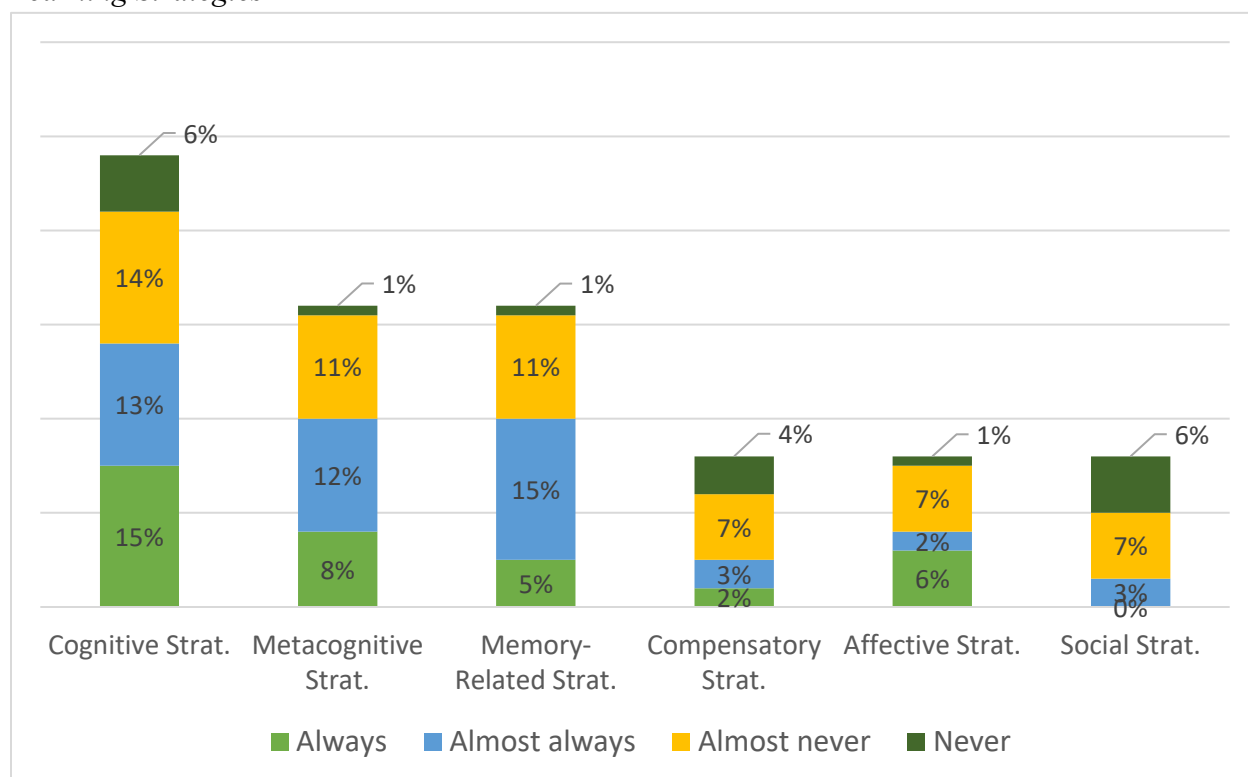
Learning a language is a process that needs to be supported by students' study habits. Applying study habits that suit students learning is a necessity. Everyone learns in different ways and every student should know what study habit best helps them retain the information studied. There are seven distinct multiple intelligences as stated previously by Gardner and Hatch (1989). Through the means of the questionnaire, students indicated that they would look for extra material to aid them through their language learning process. Hence, the material they search for is appropriate regarding their multiple intelligence. If students are spatial learners, they may try to look for online practice that includes images. If students have a bodily-kinesthetic way of learning, they may find a way to be physically active while they student and so on with the other multiple intelligences. The questionnaire demonstrated that most learners apply musical intelligence since they listen to music to help them study. Finding the appropriate music can relax learners and allow them to concentrate when studying. If students had to be absent for some reason to one of the lessons, the questionnaire indicated that they would look for a way to make up the topics the teacher explained by either asking the teacher or a classmate for help. This reveals that learners use their interpersonal intelligence when studying. Therefore, multiple intelligences play a relevant role when studying a language since it allows students to feel comfortable when studying and help increase their proficiency skills.

Students' language competence is increased by implementing study habits. Based on the answers provided in the student's questionnaire, it showed that there are habits learners put into

practice to enhance their language proficiency. Concerning students' active learning, some of the most important habits for pupils to develop themselves as proficient language users are classifying the degree of difficulty of the information they need to study because it makes them aware of the skill they need to focus on and doing assignments well in advance of the due date, which provides them with the opportunity of keeping the information in their long-term memory as Tong (2001) stated. The data revealed a pattern with a frequency of sometimes, which gives a general idea of the time spent on the habits previously mentioned. As a result, students enhance their language proficiency and become mindful of the value of their study habits.

#### **4.4 Learning Strategies to Increase Language Proficiency**

Every student's learning process revolves around learning strategies since they help to make the journey easier and more efficient. Based on the answers provided in the student's questionnaire, 42% of the students (see Figure 8) implement cognitive learning strategies, which were presented in 1990 by Oxford, as the most common type of learning strategy, which has to do with how they manage their own learning through activities such as synthesizing, analysis, summarizing, note-taking, outlining, or reasoning. After cognitive strategies, 31% of learners implement metacognitive strategies and memory-related strategies that help control their learning process by activities such as gathering and organizing materials, monitoring mistakes, arranging a study space and a schedule when studying or with memory processes that include acronyms, body movement, rhyming, and mental images. Followed by affective strategies with 15% by actions such as identifying their mood and anxiety level, rewarding themselves for good

**Figure 8***Learning Strategies*

*Note.* Most common used learning strategies. Information taken from instruments the students' questionnaire.

performance, talking about feelings, and positive self-talk. Then, the compensatory strategies with a 12% of students where they implement actions like looking at the gestures, deducing meaning through context, using synonyms, or explaining how to transmit a message. Social strategies are the least used by students with a 10%. All students use these six techniques regularly because they claim that they work effectively for them.

To analyze language proficiency, it was crucial to question students about how they practice the four language macro-skills. Students reported how they practice the four linguistic skills; for listening, students use affective learning strategies that help them internalize and understand the information by watching videos and tv series; for speaking, a few of them use



social strategies with actions such as speaking with relatives in English, explaining to others the information learned, and practicing with classmates. For reading, students implement metacognitive strategies such as reading about topics of interest to boost comprehension skills; finally, for writing, cognitive strategies are primarily used by writing their own summaries and completing worksheet exercises online. Students mostly employ cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social learning strategies to practice their language skills and increase their proficiency rather than memory-related or compensatory learning strategies.

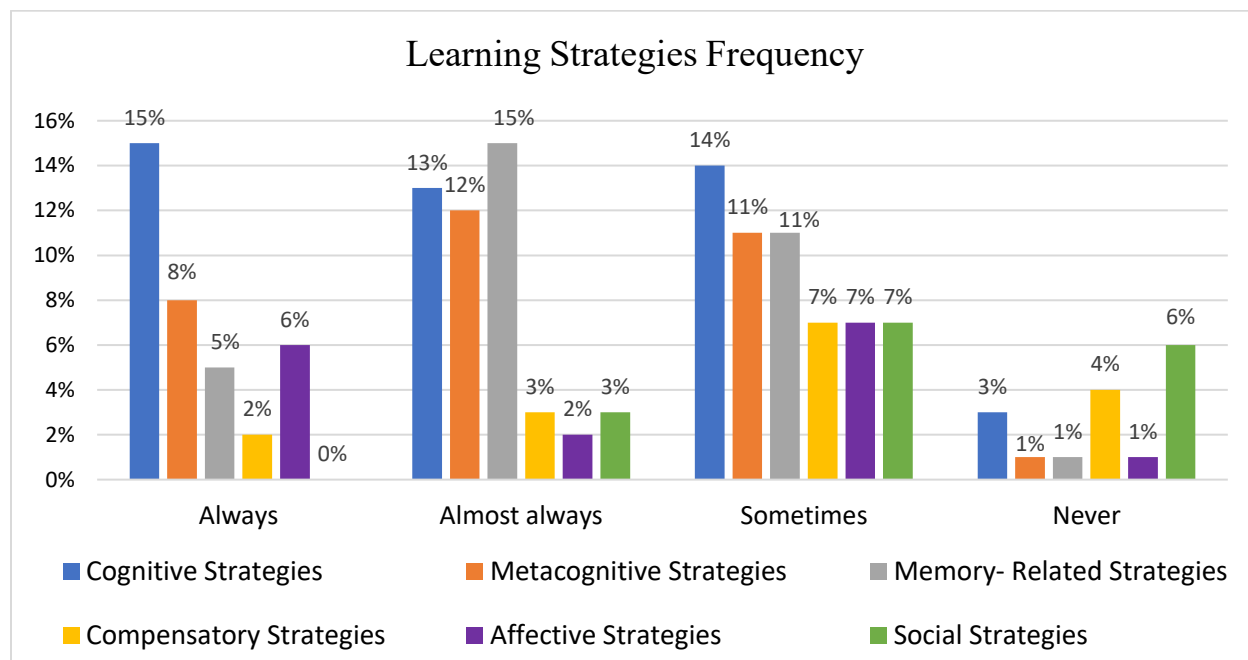
Students affirmed that they resorted to affective and social strategies in their learning process. Students reported that they use media as their primary source of English practice while still having fun and enjoying themselves, which are affective learning strategies. According to the information they provided in the questionnaire, the most frequent activities they engage in to practice and be in contact with the language outside of the classroom include watching T.V series and videos while having a good time and still having a way to avoid stress and be motivated in their learning process, which is in line with what Entwistle (1991) stated. A social strategy for students to maintain language proficiency and motivation up is speaking in English with classmates. All in all, learners apply affective and social strategies to help them feel motivated and, consequently, develop language proficiency.

Even though there are many different learning strategies, some are used by students more frequently than others. To determine how frequently language learners employ these strategies and whether they were significant to the students who participated the six most popular strategies are included in the questionnaire. It was discovered that cognitive and metacognitive strategies, which all students utilize (see Figure 9) more frequently than the other types of strategies, play

crucial roles in the learning process. Cognitive techniques are primarily used because it is the way they use to process the linguistic

**Figure 9**

*Learning Strategies Frequency*



*Note.* Frequency use of most common learning strategies. Information taken from instruments the students' questionnaire.

input. To deal with it, some practices include highlighting information when studying and looking for additional information. Metacognitive strategies are commonly used because they help learners monitor mistakes, arrange a study space and a schedule, and evaluate task success during the learning process. Although students employ most of the six learning techniques, according to the data gathered, cognitive and metacognitive are the two that they use most frequently. In a nutshell, students use a limited number of learning strategies, but those that they implement are successful in helping them acquire language proficiency.

#### **4.5 Action Plan**

After the implementation of the activities from the action plan, it was necessary to review some aspects and make slight changes based on the feedback received from the teacher and students. In the First Teaching Strategy there was a change in the time proposed for the automatization stage. It lasted 40 minutes, and it was updated to last 75 minutes because students needed more time. For the Second Teaching Strategy the level of difficulty in the automatization phase needed to be increased. Therefore, the task was edited for learners to exploit their skills. Finally, in the Third Teaching Strategy the starter and automatization phases were modified to increase creativity so that the activities were not dull, and therefore, boost students' motivation.

#### **4.6 Summary**

This chapter analyzes the data gathered from the instruments applied to the participants from level five at CIUNA. By dividing the information into three main categories depending on the research questions, it provides a thorough examination of the conclusions drawn from the data collected. The chapter presents the results of how teaching techniques, study habits, and learning strategies affect the students' learning process and language proficiency. Also, it mentions some changes that were made to the action plan presented in Chapter Three. To answer the research questions stated in Chapter One, it is crucial to analyze and identify the elements that enhance students' language proficiency, which are discussed in this section.

## **CHAPTER FIVE REFLECTIONS**

## **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter Five seeks to reflect on the process of obtaining data regarding teaching techniques, study habits, and learning strategies associated to students' language proficiency in learners from level five at CI-UNA during their learning process. In the process of conducting the investigation elements such as the STAR framework, instruments, students' level, and the consideration for a wider range of population are evaluated, and suggestions for improvement, revision, and additional research are considered in this section.

## **5.2 Reflections**

The current investigation could have been carried out with a lower level at CI-UNA. The students that formed part of this investigation were from level five. They were fluent in the language and actively participated in the class whenever the teacher asked for volunteers to check answers or for any other class activity. Their English language skills were developed since the answers were grammatically correct and pronounced appropriately with few errors. For these reasons, it was analyzed that a lower level would provide more data on the topic being studied since students have to give more effort to internalize the language. Students from level one to level three are just starting to receive the basics of the language regarding grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. Hence, the study habits that students use in these beginning levels may vary since the effort they have to make to internalize and learn the language is greater. The learning strategies may also vary since they may need to use different strategies to develop their language skills. Since students are in a lower level, teachers may need to develop different teaching strategies that allow students to use the target language. Hence, the results that can be obtained from observing a lower level at CI-UNA can vary drastically and provide a deeper understanding

and intel on how study habits, learning strategies, and teaching techniques play a meaningful role in language proficiency.

The results that were obtained could have varied if a wider population had been considered. This investigation took into account one single level five group that was composed of 16 students and one English teacher. The observations were also only carried out with that specific group. After analyzing the data, it was thought that if a wider population had collaborated with filling out the instruments, the results could have been different. CI-UNA opens a minimum of two groups for each level and even more groups depending on the number of students that registered for the course. Therefore, the investigation could have included two or three distinct groups to collect more data for analysis. The information collected may have delivered similar or distinct results regarding study habits, learning strategies, and teaching techniques that enhance language proficiency.

At the time to apply the teaching strategies, time and STAR framework are aspects to consider. It is important to keep in mind that the strategies described in Chapter Three as part of the action plan proposal need to be adapted if they are applied in a different setting considering time slots and number of students, for they were designed to be applied in a two-hour-and-a-half class with 16 students. Also, they were applied following the STAR framework, which was created by CI-UNA founders, and if the strategies were to be applied in another institution with a different framework, the stages need to be organized and adapted to the new one in use.

After the instruments were applied, some changes can be made. Due to time, it was difficult to go back and revisit certain elements in the instruments. Some of the questions could be rephrased so that learners could have a better understanding. Also, to make the process more organized and efficient when collecting and analyzing the data, there is a need for the same

number of questions per strategy. To triangulate, it was important to have the same number of queries, which provided the opportunity to better collect data to avoid a lack of balance in the amount of information.

### **5.3 Summary**

This chapter reflected toward change, future research, and improvement in the current investigation. These considerations seek to benefit any future research that could be done at this institution. The first reflection indicated that a lower level should be considered for this topic. Second, future researchers should expand the population under study to see if similar or distinct results are obtained. Third, it was analyzed that the strategies designed applied only to the STAR framework, and therefore, would have to be adapted if developed in another institution. The fourth reflection described a possible change in the instrument used to collect data. Each of these were appropriately justified as to why the change would have been made for future improvements and investigations.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS**



## **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter six seeks to provide the conclusions derived from the findings obtained from the instruments applied at level five at C-UNA. It is relevant to state that the conclusions allow readers and investigators to deeply analyze data and provide insights on how language proficiency can be obtained in an effective way. The conclusions are divided into three separate sections that roughly conclude regarding teaching techniques, study habits, and learning strategies. Each section includes a detailed description of the conclusions obtained and its importance to English Teaching and learning process.

## **6.2 Teaching Techniques**

The teaching techniques that are elaborated by the teacher influence student's language proficiency. Teaching techniques need to be varied throughout the development of the class so that students are involved and internalize the information being taught. These techniques are categorized as controlled, semi-controlled, and open-ended (Brown & Lee, 2015). Language classes should focus on open-ended techniques where students can feel free to use the language and afterward, receive reliable feedback from the instructor. Hence, teachers need to include various speaking activities within their classes so that students can learn and practice as much as possible. Practice is key to internalizing new vocabulary, grammatical rules, and pronunciation. By encouraging students to speak in English and receive feedback, their language proficiency will grow and improve in a significant way.

Controlled and semi-controlled teaching techniques should not be left behind in the language class. These techniques also play a significant role in the classroom. The class should start with one of the two, either controlled or semi-controlled techniques in which the instructor presents and explains relevant information such as grammar or vocabulary. Here the teacher

needs to provide a detailed explanation of the topic that is going to be developed and make sure that students comprehend so that the open-ended technique activity is carried out successfully and smoothly. Therefore, instructors need to find a balance and try to include as many open-ended teaching techniques as possible to increase language proficiency without putting aside controlled and semi-controlled techniques.

The TBI methodology plays a fundamental role in the way the teaching techniques are developed through the class. It is relevant to recall that this methodology revolves around a main task in which students communicate with each other to reach the class objective (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). CI-UNA teachers plan their class with the outcome for students to develop the main task and internalize significant information that was previously explained in detail through PowerPoint presentations, such as grammar and vocabulary. Not only are PowerPoint presentations used for these explanations, but also diverse online applications play a fundamental role to practice the topic. Kahoot, Padlet, Jamboard, Nearpod, Bamboozle, YouTube videos, and more are some of the many applications that instructors should try to include on their class so that students can practice before carrying out the main task. Hence, teachers need to include ICTs to reinforce students' learning and make sure they comprehend the topic before developing the class task.

The STAR framework organizes the teaching techniques developed throughout the English class. This framework consists of four phases that aid students through their learning process and allows them to acquire knowledge effectively since they put it into practice by means of the task. The starter activity prepares and motivates students for the lesson while the tackle section prepares students with all the necessary terms, grammatical structures, and listening exercises so that students receive all the knowledge required before the automatization

activity or in other words the main task. STAR is based on the TBI methodology and focuses on the task. It allows students to be active learners in a beneficial learning environment so that their language proficiency in the foreign language is improved in maximum since they will as well receive reliable feedback from the instructor in the last phase of the lesson. STAR is a consistent and trustworthy lesson plan that teachers should implement in their classes to ensure successful language learning and practice.

### **6.3 Study Habits**

This research found that the study habits that students have enhance their language competence. Being disciplined is a key element that learners have to succeed in the language learning process. Their study habits are consistent and efficient since students organize their time to study in advance for due projects and classify the degree of difficulty of the information they need to study. They frequently do this since it gives them the advantage of retaining the information in their long-term memory and being aware of the focus skill they need. These habits are shared by the majority of learners, which indicates that they are very effective because they contribute to developing language proficiency.

Study habits that adapt to students' multiple intelligence allow an improvement in language proficiency. A study habit that aids students through their learning process is looking for extra material. This habit allows learners to blend their multiple intelligence with the language, and therefore, internalize the information in the way they feel more comfortable. Students searched for online practice that suited their needs. When a topic is not understood clearly, learners can review the topic by doing their own research and then verify with the teacher or classmate. Also, music was also helpful with their learning. Music can allow learners to concentrate at times. Finding the appropriate music to listen to while studying can increase

learning and allow learners to be fluent through their study time. Hence, they need to adapt their study habits with the multiple intelligences that best suits their language learning so that their language proficiency is enhanced.

#### **6.4 Learning Strategies**

This research found that CI-UNA students employ a wide range of learning techniques to overcome the challenges associated with learning a language. All of the six main learning strategies are implemented by learners but at different degree. Cognitive strategies were the ones that students used the most to find ways to manage the language input that they receive in class each week. Metacognitive and memory-related strategies are frequently used strategies because they need to take control over their learning and implement memory processes. Students frequently utilized affective strategies to distract themselves to relax when they are under demand from their academic load and to practice at the same time. These learning strategies proved to contribute in a positive manner to students' learning success.

#### **6.5 Summary**

The final conclusions from the data analysis based on the information collected from the instruments used on the participants were reported in this chapter. Regarding teaching methodology, it was shown how the teacher's teaching techniques affect the students' language proficiency and how crucial controlled and semi-controlled teaching techniques are in an EFL class. In relation to the research, CI-UNA students use a wide variety of learning strategies to overcome the challenges of learning a foreign language. According to this study's findings about study habits, students' study habits improve their language proficiency through the learning process.

**CHAPTER SEVEN**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **7.1 Introduction**

Following the exposure of the corresponding conclusions, some recommendations are given in Chapter Seven based on the opinions formed throughout the experience and data gathered during the development of the research. These recommendations are also written taking into consideration the research questions stated in Chapter One, which were drawn from the objectives. Important information such as teaching techniques, study habits, and learning strategies are the foundation to make these recommendations.

## **7.2 Recommendations**

The first recommendation is to share with students the knowledge acquired from past experiences of students who have completed level five to help them improve their use of learning strategies, therefore, improve their language proficiency. The founders of CI-UNA should arrange informal gatherings of students from higher grades so that students in advanced levels can share their expertise with pupils in lower levels and respond to any inquiries about the application of learning strategies. By this, the new learners will learn what to do to succeed and will not be as surprised by unforeseen situations. They will be ready to meet the standards set by CI-UNA.

A second recommendation is for teachers to keep in mind their students' motivation. It's necessary to pay close attention to support students who have little language proficiency. All of the learners in the classroom have different levels of proficiency, for some of them might not have had any prior English instruction, which places them at a disadvantage compared to others who have a higher level. Instructors have a vital role in the learning process of the students, so they should guide and assist learners in identifying their areas of weakness to develop strategies to improve those areas. They should aid students in dealing with their disadvantages in the most

effective way for them to catch up to other students' proficiency levels. As a result, students will keep a high level of motivation and achieve proficiency while the teacher promotes a positive learning atmosphere.

A third consideration is for teachers to keep investigating and be aware of new tendencies or ICTs that catch students' attention. Instructors always need to innovate when it comes to teaching. Technology advances day by day and new apps and platforms can be utilized in language teaching. Even platforms that are not destined for a teaching purpose, such as TikTok, can be adapted for teaching and provide an interactive and trendy environment. This app can also be used by students to study in an interactive way. They can follow TikTokers that upload beneficial language videos that will help increase their proficiency. Furthermore, there are other websites and applications that can be very helpful and entertaining for learning and used within the classroom that might not be as popular as other platforms such as Kahoot, Nearpod and Bamboozle are some examples. Hence, teachers should investigate new platforms and applications so that students do not get bored using the same websites as always, and hence, motivate their learning and language proficiency.

A fourth recommendation for teachers is to develop more activities that allow students to scaffold. Exercises or activities need to start from an easy level and progressively increase their complexity. Scaffolding helps students with their knowledge construction process. Learners need to begin with something simple that they can manage, and gradually increase the difficulty until they achieve the class objective. This will provide them with an opportunity to apply the knowledge they know, and afterward apply the grammar and vocabulary recently taught. Scaffolding should not only be with the instructor but also with their classmates. Therefore, activities where students share with classmates and converse are suggested.

The last suggestion is for students to take responsibility of their own learning process to fulfill a role as independent learners. CI-UNA classes last five hours a week leaving the rest of the week without live English practice with the instructor. It is vital for learners to be actively learning not only during classes but also outside of classes. Students should find a way to practice the language orally and grammatically whenever they have the chance and find study habits that allow them to progress fluently. There are various platforms that allow people to converse with native speakers or try to practice with a friend or family member that has knowledge in the language. Also, students can watch short videos and repeat what they hear as a repetition drill. Diverse online websites offer free grammar exercises along with the corresponding answers. Therefore, students need to be independent learners and use study habits that suit their needs so that their language proficiency increases even more.

### **7. 3 Summary**

This chapter focuses on recommendations toward students and teachers at CI-UNA to the teaching-learning process is enhanced. The first recommendation stated that insights from higher levels will provide students with more knowledge on learning strategies that can help them through the level. The second suggestion mentions students' motivation and different proficiency levels. The third recommendation is to encourage teachers to find new websites and applications so that their classes can be innovative and trendy. The fourth one aims at using a greater quantity of scaffolding activities where students can learn from their classmates. The last recommendation is directed to students indicating that they need to be independent learners both inside and outside the classroom. These recommendations intend to enhance the teaching and learning process so that students' language skills and proficiency are successful and effective.



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## Annexes

**Instrument # 1: Observation Scale**  
**Appendix A**

**UNIVERSIDAD LATINA DE COSTA RICA**

**English Teaching Major**

**Course:** Seminar I

**Course Professors:** Roberto Arguedas Zuñiga

**RESEARCH STUDY:** Factors Influencing Students' English Language Proficiency at CI-UNA

**Researchers:** Andrea Mora Mora and Ana Yancy Pérez Fallas

**Objective:** The following observation scale is aimed at gathering data to analyze the teaching techniques and learning strategies to develop language proficiency.

**Note:** All the information will be used for academic purposes only.

**Level: 5**

**Date of administration:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Instrument #1: Observation Scale**

**Part I. Checklist**

**Instructions:** Write a check mark (✓) to choose the option that answers each statement. Then, provide comments for each of the questions if necessary.

Teaching Techniques	YES	NO	COMMENTS
1. The teacher uses a variety of speaking activities.			
2. The teacher uses a variety of reading activities.			
3. The teacher uses a variety of listening activities.			
4. The teacher uses a variety of writing activities.			

5. The teacher encourages students to speak in the target language.			
6. The teacher creates the groups for students to work.			
7. The teacher asks students to prepare an oral activity individually			
8. The teacher prompts innovative activities to enhance speaking.			
9. The material used promotes speaking opportunities.			
10. The teacher asks students to participate voluntarily.			
11. The teachers calls on specific students to participate.			
12. The teacher asks students to prepare an oral activity in pairs.			
13. The teacher asks students to prepare an oral activity in triads or more.			
14. The teacher motivate students to think critically about the topic being taught.			
15. The teacher implements activities in which students participate actively.			
15. Other techniques observed			

## Part II. Learning Strategies Used in Class

**Instructions:** Write a check mark (✓) to choose the option that answers each statement. Then, provide comments for each of the questions if necessary.

<i><b>LEARNING STRATEGIES</b></i>	<i><b>YES</b></i>	<i><b>NO</b></i>	<i><b>COMMENTS</b></i>
<b>Cognitive</b>			
1. Do students provide relevant information from long-term memory by recognizing or recalling information?			
2. Do students react to the meaning of oral communication by interpreting and inferring material.			
3. Do students repeat the information to have a better understanding of the information?			
<b>Metacognitive</b>			
4. Do students correct themselves or their classmate when a mistake is committed?			
5. Do students self-evaluate their learning at the end of a task?			
<b>Memory-Related</b>			
6. Do students ask on how something looks to build a mental image of it and comprehended better?			
7. Do students every try to use acronyms when learning new concepts?			
Do students rhyme word to compare and learn a concepts?			
<b>Compensatory</b>			
8. Do students overcome their limitation ad try to carry out a task that is requested?			
9. Do students try to look up a synonym of a word to have a clearer idea of the meaning?			
<b>Social</b>			
10. Do students ask questions to clarify information?			
11. Do students produce coherent points of view on a given topic by generating their own ideas.			



## Instrument #2: Students Questionnaire

### Appendix B

**UNIVERSIDAD LATINA DE COSTA RICA**

**English Teaching Major**

**Course:** Seminar I

**Course Professors:** Roberto Arguedas Zuñiga



**RESEARCH STUDY:** Factors Influencing Students' English Language Proficiency at CI-UNA

**Researchers:** Andrea Mora Mora and Ana Yancy Pérez Fallas

**Objective:** The following observation is aimed at gathering data to analyze students' perception toward learning strategies and teaching techniques to develop language proficiency.

**Note:** All the information will be used for academic purposes only.

**Level:** 5

**Date of administration:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Instrumento: Cuestionario para los Estudiantes

**Instrucciones:** Responda las siguientes preguntas de manera honesta. Sus identidades no serán reconocidas en el siguiente cuestionario. Enlace para Google forms: <https://bit.ly/3aZcg2d>

<b>4</b>	<b>Siempre</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Casi siempre</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Algunas veces</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Nunca</b>

1. ¿Qué parte de la clase me gusta más? ¿Por qué?
2. ¿Qué actividades le gusta practicar más en clases? ¿Por qué?
3. ¿Suelo resaltar la información del material utilizado en la clase de inglés que considero más importante?
4. ¿Tomo muchas notas de lo que el profesor explica para un mejor entendimiento?
5. ¿Observo vídeos para tener una mejor noción de la información que debo aprender?
6. ¿Memorizo la información que debo estudiar?
7. ¿Organizo la información antes de empezar a estudiar?

8. ¿Busco material extra para ayudarme en el aprendizaje del inglés?
9. ¿Me automotivo antes de empezar a estudiar?
10. ¿Tengo contacto con nativo hablantes?
11. ¿Duermo menos de 8 horas antes de un examen?
12. ¿Clasifico el grado de dificultad de la información que debo estudiar?
13. ¿Consumo snacks mientras estudio?
14. ¿Si me ausento a clases, trato de reponer la materia impartida con el profesor o un compañero?
15. ¿Realizo mis asignaciones (tareas, presentaciones, extra-clases) con mucho tiempo de anticipación a la fecha de entrega?
16. ¿Redacto la información de la clase con mis propias palabras para un mejor entendimiento?
17. ¿Discuto la información de la clase con otros para entenderla mejor?
18. ¿Escucho música para ayudarme a estudiar?
19. ¿Qué otra estrategia de aprendizaje aplico cuando recibo información?
20. ¿Qué otro habito de estudio tengo cuando estudio la información obtenida?

*¡Gracias por su colaboración!*

### Instrument #3: Teacher Interview

#### Appendix C

**UNIVERSIDAD LATINA DE COSTA RICA**

**English Teaching Major**

**Course:** Seminar I

**Course Professors:** Roberto Arguedas Zuñiga

**RESEARCH STUDY:** Factors Influencing Students' English Language Proficiency at CI-UNA

**Researchers:** Andrea Mora Mora and Ana Yancy Pérez Fallas

**Objective:** The following questionnaire aims at identifying the teaching techniques and learning strategies used to provide a high proficiency level.

**Note:** All the information will be used for academic purposes only.

**Level:** 5

**Date of administration:** \_\_\_\_\_



### Instrument #3: Teacher Interview

#### Part I – Teaching Techniques

*Instructions:* Answer the following questions according to your experience as a teacher.

1. Do you use various teaching techniques during the development of the class?
2. Which techniques do you use to teach speaking?
3. Which techniques do you use to teach reading?
4. Which techniques do you use to teach listening?
5. Which techniques do you use to teach writing?
6. Which teaching techniques do you consider are the most effective? Why?
7. Considering your experience as a teacher, which teaching techniques do you notice students prefer the most? Explain?
8. Which techniques do you use where students work in groups of 3 or more? In pairs? And individually?
9. Do you call on students to participate or do they individually volunteer?
10. Which teaching techniques do you apply that allow students to think critically?

11. Which teaching techniques do you apply that allow students to be active learners?

## **Part II.**

### **Cognitive**

1. Do students summarize the information that was taught?
2. Do students analyze and reason their answers when asked to participate?
3. Do you ever see students taking notes or highlighting on their books?

### **Metacognitive**

4. Do students organize and gather all the materials needed for the class?
5. Do students correct themselves or their classmate when a mistake is committed?
6. Do students self-evaluate their learning at the end of a task?

### **Memory- Related**

7. Do students every try to use acronyms when learning new concepts?
8. Do students try to comprehend a term by using body movements?
9. Do students rhyme word to compare and learn a concepts?
10. Do students ask on how something looks to build a mental image of it and comprehended better?

### **Compensatory**

11. Do students try to deduce the meaning of a concept through context?
12. Do students try to look up a synonym of a word to have a clearer idea of the meaning?
13. Do students overcome their limitation ad try to carry out a task that is requested?

### **Affective**

14. Do students motivate and compensate themselves in some kind of way for good performance?
15. Are students open to talk about their feelings?
16. Are students able to control their mood and anxiety during the development of the class and main task?

### **Social**

17. Do students ask lots of questions to you or their classmates when they have doubts?
18. Do students get along with their classmates?
19. Do students get along with their teacher?

## Appendix D



### CARTA DE APROBACIÓN POR PARTE DEL TUTOR DEL TRABAJO FINAL DE GRADUACIÓN

San Isidro del General, 08 de diciembre del 2022

Señores

Miembros del Comité de Trabajos Finales de Graduación

SD

Estimados señores:

He revisado y corregido el Trabajo Final de Graduación, denominado: *Factors Influencing Students' English Language Proficiency at Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional*, elaborado por los estudiantes: Ana Yancy Pérez Fallas y Andrea Mora Mora como requisito para que los citados estudiantes puedan optar por la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés.

Considero que dicho trabajo cumple con los requisitos formales y de contenido exigidos por la Universidad, y por tanto lo recomiendo para su defensa oral ante el Consejo Asesor.

Suscribe cordialmente,



M. Ed. Roberto Arguedas Zuñiga  
Cédula: 114760580

## Appendix E



### CARTA DE APROBACIÓN POR PARTE DEL LECTOR DEL TRABAJO FINAL DE GRADUACIÓN

San Isidro del General, 08 de diciembre del 2022

Señores

Miembros del Comité de Trabajos Finales de Graduación

SD

Estimados señores:

He revisado y corregido el Trabajo Final de Graduación, denominado: Factors Influencing Students' English Language Proficiency at Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional, elaborado por los estudiantes: Ana Yancy Pérez Fallas y Andrea Mora Mora como requisito para que los citados estudiantes puedan optar por la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés.

Considero que dicho trabajo cumple con los requisitos formales y de contenido exigidos por la Universidad, y por tanto lo recomiendo para su defensa oral ante el Consejo Asesor.

Suscribe cordialmente,



MSc. Mainor Quesada Mora  
Cédula: 112720369

## Appendix F



### CARTA DE APROBACIÓN POR PARTE DEL LECTOR DEL TRABAJO FINAL DE GRADUACIÓN

San Isidro del General, 08 de diciembre del 2022

Señores

Miembros del Comité de Trabajos Finales de Graduación

SD

Estimados señores:

He revisado y corregido el Trabajo Final de Graduación, denominado: Factors Influencing Students' English Language Proficiency at Centro de Idiomas de la Universidad Nacional, elaborado por los estudiantes: Ana Yancy Pérez Fallas y Andrea Mora Mora como requisito para que los citados estudiantes puedan optar por la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés.

Considero que dicho trabajo cumple con los requisitos formales y de contenido exigidos por la Universidad, y por tanto lo recomiendo para su defensa oral ante el Consejo Asesor.

Suscribe cordialmente,



MSc. Jerry Mora Elizondo  
Cédula: 112810243