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## **The explicit teaching of socioaffective language learning strategies to beginner EFL students at the Centro Colombo Americano: an action research study**

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THE EXPLICIT TEACHING OF SOCIOAFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING  
STRATEGIES TO BEGINNER EFL STUDENTS AT THE CENTRO COLOMBO  
AMERICANO: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

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UNIVERSITY OF LA SALLE  
DIVISION OF ADVANCED EDUCATION  
MASTER'S DEGREE IN TEACHING  
BOGOTÁ, D.C.  
OCTOBER, 2007

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MASTER'S THESIS

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OCTOBER, 2007

Note of acceptance

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Signature of the president of the jury

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Signature of the juror

Bogota, D.C. October, 2007

## DEDICATION

I, gratefully, dedicate this master's thesis to my wonderful family, to the EFL field and to God all mighty.

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First of all, my gratitude and affection go to my family. Cecilia, for her infinite patience and profound confidence on me. My thanks also go to my sister, Janeth, and her adorable daughter, Alejandra. Thank you, Aleja, for your hugs that gave me energy to keep working on this project. My great gratitude to my father, José, who has always supported me, no matter what. Finally, my thanks go to my grandmother, Emma, who has always given me the very best of her.

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## ABSTRACT

With the growing popularity of learning English as a foreign language in Colombia, here appears to be a substantial degree of sociocultural pressure for adults to learn or improve their language skills. However, there also appears to be indications that many Colombian EFL learners do not seem to be aware of or familiar with the impact or influence that their beliefs, attitudes, anxieties, motivations and use language learning strategies have on their language learning process. This action research examines this phenomenon by focusing explicitly on affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies among learners in a monolingual EFL classroom at the Centro Colombo Americano in Bogota, Colombia.

Language learning strategies have often been taught to EFL students to help them become more effective learners. However, explicit affective strategy instruction has not been addressed by EFL language teachers properly because as Johnson (1994) argued "the field of second language education lags behind mainstream education research in that it has neglected to focus adequate attention to the affective dimension of second language learning" (pp. 439-452). Horwitz (2001) gave further support and stated that to discuss foreign language learning without considering the emotional reactions of the learner to language learning was and remains a serious oversight.

The overall purpose of this action research was to explicitly teach socioaffective language learning strategies to positively impact the beliefs, attitudes, anxieties and motivations of a group of EFL beginner students. Seventeen beginner EFL students participated in this action research study. An initial semi-structured questionnaire and a rating scale gave first data on factors and strategies that needed to be addressed. Observation and teaching logs provided information about how affective-based instruction was conducted and how students responded to it. A post-questionnaire was used to determine the impact of this type of affect-based instruction on students' learning.

The results of the study suggest that explicit strategy instruction in socioaffective language learning strategies is helpful in heightening learner awareness of the importance of paying attention to their own feelings and social relationships as part of their learning process, which can improve the frequency and the quality of students' participation and interaction in class. Results also indicate that affective factors such as beliefs, attitudes, anxieties, motivations, are important considerations that both teachers and students need to ponder on in order to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of language learning, to develop autonomy and, ultimately, to get to know themselves better.

## KEY WORDS

Affective factors, language learning strategies, socioaffective language learning strategies, strategy instruction, action research, beginner students.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	Page
1.1 Initial remarks.....	1
1.2 Antecedents of Affective Factors in Language Learning.....	3
1.3 Previous Studies on Affective Factors in Language Learning.....	4
1.4 Statement of the problem.....	7
1.5 Research Questions.....	8
1.6 Methodology of the Study.....	9
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	10
1.8 Limitation of the Study.....	11
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Introduction .....	12
2.2 Initial Remarks.....	13
2.3 Educational Psychology .....	14
2.2.1 Approaches of Educational Psychology .....	15
2.2.1.1 Behaviorism .....	16
2.2.1.2 Cognitivism .....	17
2.2.1.3 Constructivism .....	19
2.2.1.4 Humanism .....	21
2.2.1.5 Social Interactionism .....	24
2.3 Approaches of Educational Psychology and Language Learning.....	26
2.3.1 Behaviorism and Language Learning .....	26
2.3.2 Cognitivism and Language Learning .....	26
2.3.3 Constructivism and Language Learning.....	27
2.3.4 Humanism and language learning.....	28
2.3.5 Social Interactionism and Language Learning .....	29
2.3.6 Educational Psychology and Language Learning .....	32
2.4 The Affective domain .....	33
2.4.1 Affective Dimensions of Learning .....	34
2.4.2 Affect .....	35
2.4.3 Affect and Language Learning.....	36
2.4.4 Affective Factors and Language Learning .....	37
2.4.4.1 Beliefs .....	37
2.4.4.2 Attitudes .....	41
2.4.4.3 Anxiety .....	45
2.4.4.4 Motivation .....	49
2.4.5 Affective Factors and Language Learning Strategies .....	54
2.5 Language Learning Strategies.....	55
2.5.1 Inventories of Language Learning Strategies .....	57
2.5.2 Rubin's Inventory of Language Learning Strategies.....	57
2.5.3 O'Malley's Inventory of language learning strategies.....	59
2.5.4 Oxford's Inventory of Language Learning Strategies.....	62



2.6 Strategy Training.....	65
2.7 Socioaffective Language Learning Strategies.....	68
2.8 Beginner students and language learning.....	71
2.8.1 Studies on Strategies Used by Beginner Students.....	71
2.8.2 Instruction and Assessment of Beginner Students.....	71
2.8.3 General Advice for Teaching Beginner Students.....	72
2.9 Summary.....	75

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction.....	76
3.2 Classroom Research.....	78
3.2.1 Approaches in Classroom Research.....	79
3.3 Action Research.....	81
3.3.1 Research paradigm of Action Research.....	82
3.3.2 Types of Action Research.....	82
3.3.3 Stages, Phases and Steps in Action Research.....	85
3.4 Rationale for Action Research in This Study.....	89
3.5 Rationale for AR on Socioaffective Language Learning Strategies.....	90
3.6 Setting of the Study.....	92
3.6.1 The Institution.....	92
3.6.2 The Program.....	93
3.6.3 The Course.....	93
3.6.4 The Book.....	94
3.6.5 Class Setting.....	94
3.6.6 The Students.....	94
3.7 Participants.....	95
3.7.1 Purposive Sampling.....	95
3.7.2 Background Information.....	96
3.8 Research Methodology.....	97
3.9 Data Collection Instruments.....	101
3.9.1 Questionnaires.....	102
3.9.1.1 Initial Questionnaire.....	103
3.9.1.2 Final Questionnaire.....	104
3.9.2 Rating Scale (Checklist).....	105
3.9.3 Observation.....	107
3.9.4 Field Notes.....	110
3.9.5 Student journal.....	110
3.10 Data analysis.....	111
3.10.1 Data coding procedures.....	113
3.10.1.1 Unitizing.....	113
3.10.1.2 Categorizing.....	114
3.11 A Word on Validity and Reliability.....	115
3.12 Trustworthiness.....	117
3.13 Bias.....	118
3.14 Ethical Issues.....	120
3.15 Summary.....	120

## 4. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction.....	121
4.2 Observation and Fieldnotes .....	122
4.2.1 Beliefs.....	123
4.2.2 Attitudes.....	125
4.2.3 Anxiety.....	127
4.2.4 Motivation.....	129
4.2.5 Language learning strategies.....	130
4.2.6 Discussion.....	132
4.3 Beliefs, Attitudes, Anxieties, Motivations and Language Learning Strategies: Students.....	139
4.3.1 Semi-Structured Questionnaire.....	139
4.3.1.1 Students' Beliefs.....	139
4.3.1.2 Students' Attitudes.....	142
4.3.1.3 Students' Anxieties.....	145
4.3.1.4 Students' Motivations.....	148
4.3.1.5 Students' Language Learning Strategies.....	150
4.4 Rating Scale .....	153
4.4.1 Students' Beliefs.....	153
4.4.2 Students' Attitudes.....	154
4.4.3 Students' Anxieties.....	155
4.4.4 Students' Motivations.....	157
4.4.5 Frequency of Students' Language Learning Strategies.....	158
4.4.6 Discussion.....	160
4.5 Colleagues' Opinions about Beginner Students' Affective Factors and Language Learning Strategies.....	162
4.6 Data Triangulation.....	165
4.7 Suggestions, Strategies and Possible Activities from Theory.....	167
4.8 Class Procedures.....	170
4.9 Class Activities.....	175
4.10 Participants' Performance.....	177
4.10.1 Participants' Receptiveness.....	177
4.10.2 Participants' Reactions to Affective Factors and SLLS.....	178
4.10.3 Participants' Performance with Socioaffective-Based Guidelines, Activities and Materials.....	179
4.11 Final Semi-structured Questionnaire.....	180
4.11.1 Usefulness of Class Activities.....	180
4.11.2 Students' Ability and Confidence.....	182
4.11.3 Student's Beliefs and Attitudes.....	184
4.11.4 Students' Anxiety.....	185
4.11.5 Students' Opinions and Suggestions.....	186
4.12 Conclusion.....	188
4.13 Summary.....	189

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction.....	190
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5.2 Major Findings.....	191
5.3 Research Methodology Findings.....	193
5.4 Summarized Findings.....	194
5.5 Research Questions.....	195
5.6 Further discussion: Autonomy.....	197
5.7 Personal Insights: Learning and researching.....	199
5.8 Contributions to EFL Learning and Teaching.....	200
5.8.1 General Contributions to Teachers of Beginner Students.....	200
5.8.2 Specific Contributions to the Use of Affective Training and Socioaffective Activities and Materials.....	202
5.9 Implications and Recommendations for EFL teachers.....	203
5.10 Limitations.....	204
5.11 Recommendations for Further Research.....	204
5.12 Conclusions.....	206
5.13 Summary.....	207
REFERENCES.....	208
APPENDIXES .....	232
Appendix A: Initial questionnaire .....	233
Appendix B: Final questionnaire .....	236
Appendix C: Rating scale .....	238
Appendix D: Teaching log .....	241
Appendix E: Student journal.....	242
Appendix F: Consent form.....	243
Appendix G: Adult English Program.....	245
Appendix H: Interpretation matrix .....	246
Appendix I: Worksheet on anxiety and beliefs .....	260
Appendix J: Worksheet on speaking and oral activities .....	262
Appendix K: Worksheet with recommendations for anxiety and beliefs.....	264
Appendix L: Final assessment format.....	266
Appendix M: Permission Letter .....	268
Appendix N: Participation Letter .....	269
Appendix O: Consent form: validation group.....	270
Appendix P: Validation Group.....	271
Appendix Q: Suggestions, strategies and possible activities.....	274

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Summary of Behaviorism .....	17
2 Summary of Cognitivism .....	19
3 Summary of Constructivism .....	21
4 Summary of Humanism .....	23
5 Summary of Social Constructivism .....	25
6 Educational Psychology Approaches and Language Learning .....	30
7 Summary of the Literature Review of Beliefs .....	40
8 Summary of the Literature Review on Attitudes .....	44
9 Summary of the Literature Review on Anxieties.....	48
10 Summary of the Literature Review on Motivation .....	53
11 Overview of Rubin's Inventory.....	58
12 Overview of O'Malley and Chamot's Inventory.....	60
13 Overview of Oxford's Inventory.....	62
14 Overview of Strategy Training Approaches.....	67
15 Complete List of Socioaffective Learning Strategies.....	69
16 Summary of Literature on Beginner Students.....	73
17 Types of Action Research.....	82
18 Streams in Action Research.....	83
19 Some Models of Action Research.....	86
20 Whitehead's Set of Questions.....	87
21 Problems of AR Relating to Reliability and Validity.....	116

22	Strategies to Establish Trustworthiness.....	117
23	Summary of the Teacher-researcher's Observations.....	134
24	Colleagues' Opinions about Beginner Students' Affective Factors and Language Learning Strategies.....	163
25	Practical and Useful Guidelines to Work on Beginner Students' Beliefs, Attitudes, and Anxieties.....	168
26	Wenden's Principles for Strategies Training and Brown's Approaches to Teaching Strategies.....	173
27	Students' Improved Ability and Confidence.....	183
28	Improved Students' Beliefs and Attitudes.....	184
29	Student's Reduced Anxiety.....	186
30	Students' Main Opinions.....	187

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Four basic developmental phases of research.....	85

## LIST OF CHARTS

Chart		Page
1	Students' beliefs.....	154
2	Students' attitudes.....	155
3	Students' anxieties.....	156
4	Students' motivations.....	157
5	Students' language learning strategies.....	159
6	Usefulness of activities from the study.....	181

## LIST OF EXCERPTS

Excerpt	Page
1 Excerpt from field notes, No. 1.....	125
2 Excerpt from field notes, No. 2.....	127
3 Excerpt from field notes, No. 3.....	129
4 Excerpt from field notes, No. 4.....	130
5 Excerpt from field notes, No. 5.....	132
6 Excerpt of students' answers, No. 6.....	140
7 Excerpt of students' answers, No. 7.....	143
8 Excerpt of students' answers No. 8.....	145
9 Excerpt of students' answers No. 9.....	148
10 Excerpt of students' answers No. 10.....	151
11 Excerpt of students' answers No. 11.....	182
12 Excerpt of students' answers No. 12.....	184
13 Excerpt of students' answers No. 13.....	185
14 Excerpt of students' answers No. 14.....	187



## INTRODUCTION

“Learning about the classroom  
is an essential part of finding  
out how to teach”  
A. Holliday<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 INITIAL REMARKS

The first time I saw Cristina in the beginners' course, I could see how nervous and insecure she was right from the start. She sat right in the corner of the classroom where she was away from the “hot area”; the area where confident students normally sit ready to answer and participate. She did not look at me and whenever I tried to have eye contact with her, she would turn her head around or pretend she was taking notes on her nice new notebook. When I tried to joke with her in class, her face would let me know she was not in the mood for that. She depended too much on her classmates to know what was going on in class. They translated instructions for her or just told her what to say or do. Even worse, she used Spanish all the time as if it were totally OK. She hardly ever volunteered and whenever I got her to give answers or make comments, she would use content words: No, good; Yes, actor, etc. On top of everything else, she used to panic when doing role-plays or having conversations in class. She went pale and started hesitating. There were times when she just could not remember what she was supposed to say or do. I approached her many times and offered her suggestions to overcome her difficulties: listen to the CD at home, practice textbook conversations, memorize classroom expressions, etc. However, from the very beginning, she let me know how bad and poor her previous experiences had been with English classes and how sure she was that she was bad at learning and speaking English. She insisted a lot that she was in my class just because she needed to fulfill a university requirement. As the course passed, I noticed Cristina's constant lateness and absences from class. When I tried to ask her about what was going on, she gave me study-related excuses: “exams, essays, presentations, etc”. Until one day, she stopped attending my class. I never saw her back again. I could not help wondering: Had I done enough to help her? What else could I have done? Could their classmates have helped her, too?

Claudia was in the same course. She was anxious and a bit uncomfortable on our first day of class because she said that English was not easy for her and that she got really nervous when speaking it. However, she said that she was

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<sup>1</sup> HOLLIDAY, A. Student culture and English language education: An international perspective. In *Language, Culture and Curriculum*. Vol. 7, No. 2 (1994); p. 142.

interested and committed to doing her best to really benefit from this course. Some classes later, she approached me and asked me to give her some advice on how to improve her class performance. I told her that she should just use the PPP method I had explained on our first day of class: “**P**repare before class, **p**articipate in class and **p**practice after class as much as you can so that you can feel calm and ready enough to learn and speak English”. Soon, she bought a leaner English-Spanish dictionary and I noticed her effort to prepare the vocabulary for every lesson. Also, I noticed that she volunteered to give answers and to do role-plays. At first, it was hard for her. She would get very nervous and insecure when speaking English in class. She would even forget expressions and get confused while speaking. But, little by little, she was more in control of herself and began to resort to classroom expressions or gestures to avoid or overcome communication failures. By the end of our second course, she said to me that she was satisfied with her results in class and that she felt comfortable and satisfied in class. I congratulated her on her progress and she thanked me for helping her so much. However, I was not sure if I had done anything at all. Had I? And if so, what had I done? I could not help wondering: Why had Claudia made such good progress whereas Cristina had not been able to make any at all?

Cristina and Claudia are not real students. But, their profiles are descriptions of some of the students that I have had in my English classes for the last 7 years of being an EFL teacher at the Centro Colombo Americano in Bogotá, Colombia\*. Cristina and Claudia represent just two of the many kinds of beginner students I have had in my classes: the participative, the attentive, the funny, the quiet, the absent-minded, etc. Yet, they represent the two basic outcomes all students can get out of attending classes: students who fail and give up and students who succeed and carry on. Somewhere, somehow, beginner students like Cristina and Claudia have the answer to a question that many EFL teachers have asked themselves many times: what makes some beginner students fail while others succeed no matter how well we try to teach them? And, even more importantly, how can we help all our beginner students become successful language learners?

Beginner language learners like Cristina or Claudia decide to learn and speak English because of many different personal interests, social needs, professional goals or academic requirements. They all want or expect to finish their English courses with positive or satisfying results. However, in my experience, I have noticed that some of my beginner language learners do poorly and end up dropping out of their classes no matter how hard I try to make them succeed. This does not happen because they are not intelligent or capable. In fact, “most of the [beginner] students in [our] classes,” pointed out Kimberly Iverson, “have already demonstrated incredible ingenuity, stamina, and determination in previous [life] experiences”<sup>2</sup>. Some beginner students may have even faced

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\* The Centro Colombo Americano is a bicultural institution aimed at strengthening the cultural understanding between the United States and Colombia. It has 3 language programs: the Adult English Program, the Saturday program, and the Special program. For more information, see setting of the study in Chapter 3.

great challenges and adversities in their personal lives and gotten out of them successfully. Undoubtedly, most of beginner language learners have what it takes to excel at learning a foreign language. So, why do so some of them drop out of their classes feeling they are not good at learning a foreign language? Why do some beginner language learners give up on English even when they receive proper language exposure, instruction, support and guidance?

## 1.2 ANTECEDENTS OF AFFECTIVE FACTORS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

In the last 35 years, research has shown that there are many factors at play that language researchers and teachers need to take into account when trying to understand what makes one person a successful or an unsuccessful language learner (See Rubin, 1975, Canale & Swain, 1980, Wenden and Rubin, 1984, Gardner, 1985, Nunan, 1988, Oxford, 1990, Chamot & O'Malley, 1994, Cohen, 1998). However, a variety of research in the area of L2 teaching, humanistic language teaching, that is, has indicated that affective factors, such as attitudes, motivation, anxiety, and self-esteem, have great influence on the success of language learning since "the way we feel about our capacities and ourselves", as Arnold and Brown explained, "can either facilitate or impede our learning"<sup>3</sup>. In this regard, Oxford and Ehrman noted that "many excellent teachers have learned to do some of this [affective work] intuitively, but explicit understanding of individual-difference dimensions can enhance the work of all teachers"<sup>4</sup>. In the same way, Verónica de Andres argued that "if we want our students to develop their inherent potential to learn, the affective variables such as anxiety, motivation, self-esteem and inhibition can no longer be denied, the inner needs of the learners can no longer be neglected"<sup>5</sup>.

The importance of affective factors in influencing language learning is introduced here because Stern's claim that "the affective component contributes at least as much and often more to language learning than the cognitive skills"<sup>6</sup> has been supported by a large body of cross-disciplinary research showing that affective variables have significant influence on language achievement (e.g. Skehan 1989; Spolsky 1989; Gardner & MacIntyre 1992; 1993, Goleman, 1995). Gardner and MacIntyre (1992), for instance, pointed out that affective factors are probably more powerful in influencing strategy use than intelligence and aptitude. Before them, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) concluded that increased

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<sup>2</sup> IVERSON, K. *The instruction of language learning strategies for low-proficiency ESL learners*. Minnesota, 2005, 134 p. Masters of Arts in English as a second language, Hamline University, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> ARNOLD, J. & BROWN, H. D. A map of the terrain. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> OXFORD, R. and EHRMAN, M. Second language research on individual differences. In *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, No. 13 (1993); p.188.

<sup>5</sup> ANDRES, V. The Influence of Affective Variables on EFL/ESL Learning and Teaching. In *The journal of the imagination in language learning and teaching*. Vol. 7 (March 2002 - 2003); p. 97.

<sup>6</sup> STERN, H. H. *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 386.

motivation and self-esteem lead to more effective use of appropriate strategies and vice versa. This interest on the learner's affective factors was also strongly supported by Williams & Burden when they stated that "the learner is an individual with affective needs and reactions that must be considered as an integral part of learning"<sup>7</sup>. More recently, Arnold & Brown<sup>8</sup> provided a contemporary perspective of the affective domain from the view of the language learner as an individual (anxiety, inhibition, extroversion/introversion, self-esteem, motivation [extrinsic/intrinsic], learning styles) and as a participant in a socio-cultural situation (empathy, classroom transactions, cross-cultural processes).

Since affective factors deal with the emotional reactions and motivations of the learner and they signal the arousal of the limbic system and its direct intervention in the task of learning (Scovel, 1991, p. 16), Stevick, Rinvolucri, Moskowitz, Galyean, among others, have searched for ways to incorporate them into language learning. As a result, many of the major developments in language teaching in the past years have, in some way, related to the need to acknowledge affect in language learning. Methods such as Suggestopaedia (anxiety reduction by creating a non-threatening environment), Silent Way (the learner must take responsibility), Community Language Learning (the group must decide what to learn), and Total Physical Response (engaging the learner physically to put him under no pressure allowing to speak when ready) take into account the affective side of the language learning in quite a central manner. Even, the communicative language teaching approach (CLTA\*) has also incorporated affect by adapting and changing some areas (materials, teaching methods and syllabus design) of language teaching.

### 1.3 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON AFFECTIVE FACTORS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

According to Mark Feder<sup>9</sup>, affective factors had not been viewed as essential to the learning process and had generally been neglected in traditional language teaching methodologies. The Grammar-Translation Method, for instance, stressed cognitive input through techniques such as translation, recognition of cognates, and the deductive application of rules. The Audio-Lingual Method, employing repetition, substitution, and transformation drills as well as dialog memorization, treated language learning as a "habit formation process." To Feder, affective considerations had traditionally depended on the teacher's

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<sup>7</sup> WILLIAMS, M. and BURDEN, R. *Psychology for language teachers: A social constructivist approach*. Cambridge : CUP, 1997, p. 28.

\* The CLTA has become the accepted norm in the EFL/ESL field. It strives to probe the nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language. It explores pedagogical means for "real-life" communication in the classroom and it requires a communicatively interactive and cooperative negotiation of meaning. See J. C. Richards & T. S. Rodgers 1986 and H.D Brown 1994 for information on this language teaching approach.

<sup>8</sup> ARNOLD, J. & BROWN, H. D. *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> FEDER, M. A skills building game for the ESL classroom. In *DiscoveryTrailTM*, 2003. Originally submitted to the School for International Training, Brattleboro, VT, 1987.

temperament. That is to say, such considerations had been incidental rather than integral to language teaching methodologies and had not been grounded in a conscious philosophy of pedagogy.

However, the growing realization of the importance of affective factors has brought about a number of debates and studies directed at the “whole person”. These debates and studies have recognized the comfort, enjoyment, and engagement of the students as legitimate and primary concerns of the language teacher. Andrew Finch<sup>10</sup>, for instance, spoke of the need for teachers to pay attention to students’ affective natures and needs, not simply to help them to live more satisfying lives and to be responsible members of society, but also in order to improve language teaching and education in the process. Similarly, Veronica de Andres<sup>11</sup> stated that the interest in affective variables in language learning is reflected in some modern teaching stances aimed at reducing anxiety and inhibitions and enhancing the learner’s motivation and self-esteem within the so-called humanistic education. More recently, Eva Bernat<sup>12</sup> affirmed that rejecting the cognitive-centeredness of previous language learning research, foreign and second language educators are recognizing more openly the importance of the affective domain in the language learning process.

In this regard, Isobel Rainey de Díaz<sup>13</sup> found out that, in Colombia, particularly in Bogotá, there are more differences than areas of common interest between the research interests and concerns of EFL secondary school teachers and mainstream TESOL. To her, particularly worrying were the major differences, especially those with respect to socio affective culture (SAC), greatly favored by the teachers and virtually ignored in the journals and second language acquisition (SLA), favored in the journals but virtually ignored by the teachers. She affirmed that mainstream TESOL research needs to be more in touch with the socio-affective and cultural aspects of the EFL classroom. She also stated that, in their determination to address the issues and problems they have with respect to SAC, Colombian teachers have actually undertaken or are currently undertaking the corresponding research. To her, their message to mainstream TESOL is not only that SAC is important but that the findings of their research are invaluable - and available.

While the role of socio-affective strategies in learning and teaching has highly focused on the primary and secondary levels, Ezana Habte-Gabr’s<sup>14</sup> research

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<sup>10</sup> FINCH, A. E. *A formative evaluation of a task-based EFL programme for Korean university students*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Manchester University, U.K, 2000, chapter 3, literature review.

<sup>11</sup> ANDRES, V. Op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>12</sup> BERNAT, E. Assessing EAP learners’ beliefs about language learning in the Australian context. In *Asian EFL Journal*. Vol. 8, Issue 2, article 9 (June 2006); p. 202-227.

<sup>13</sup> RAINEY DE DÍAZ, I. EFL teachers’ research and mainstream TESOL: Ships passing in the night? In *Profile*. Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras. No. 6 (2005); p. 7-21.

<sup>14</sup> HABTE-GABR, E. The importance of socio-affective strategies in using EFL for teaching mainstream subjects. In *Humanising English teaching*. Year 8; Issue 5 (Sept. 2006). Retrieved in August 2006 from <http://www.hltmag.co.uk/sep06/sart02.htm>

showed that they should also be considered central to studying EFL at the university level because, as he noticed in his study, university students in Colombia tend to seek a mentorship relationship with their teachers and tend to learn more when they are able to share aspects of their personal life and form strong bonds. He regarded socio-affective strategies as tactics to stimulate learning through establishing a level of empathy between the instructor and student. According to him, the enhancement of socio-affective strategies permits the student to eventually learn how to learn utilizing the instructor as a resource for acquiring language and content as they are provided with options to obtain humane support.

This brief account of previous studies evidences the increasing interest in researching socioaffective factors in EFL teaching. Different studies, researchers and teachers have confirmed hypotheses that language learning is indeed enhanced by attention to affect both in Colombia and abroad. Unfortunately, the EFL reality in Colombia is still far from really articulating contemporary views in which the learner is regarded effectively as an individual whose affective needs and reactions are considered as integral elements of EFL teaching and learning (See the discussion that Josephina Quintero and Odilia Ramirez<sup>15</sup> made about a new research foundation for pre-service Colombian EFL teachers). In the last decade, the Ministry of education has made attempts to implement the communicative language teaching approach in Colombian schools and universities. Its main purpose has been to get students to develop an average ability to use the forms of language to understand and create appropriate discourse in different socio-cultural contexts\*. However, little has been done to move the emphasis from curricular contents (what and when students learn) to the process of learning (how and why they learn). Undoubtedly, the process of language learning needs to become much more learner-centered in Colombia because, as Madrid<sup>16</sup> stated, not only should students become more responsible about their own learning, but also they should be conscious about their individual attributes and learning preferences. Students need to be informed about the strategies that they could use when they go about learning a foreign language and doing class activities and tasks. With this study, my hope is to start bridging the gap between EFL research, practice and educational policies in Colombia; especially in the area of socioaffective factors and language learning strategies.

#### 1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is very common to have classes filled with beginner students who seem to be unaware of the impact that certain socioaffective and personal factors can play

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<sup>15</sup> QUINTERO, J. and RAMIREZ, O. Fundamentacion investigativa de los futuros profesores de ingles. In *Revista Universidad EAFIT*. Vol. 41. No. 140 (2005); p. 9-24.

<sup>16</sup> MADRID, D. Learning strategies. In *Teaching English as a foreign language*. Barcelona : The Australian Institute, 2000a, p. 1.

\* See National Program of Bilingualism and the implementation of competence standards at <http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/propertyvalue-32266.html>

in their success in learning and speaking a foreign language (Rubin and Thompson, 1994). Most of them have poor or limited language learning strategies such as literal translation, rote memorization, inadequate note-taking, etc or lack the basic skills to start their learning process successfully (familiarity with bilingual dictionaries, storage of basic vocabulary, use of classroom instructions, etc). Many of them tend to have inappropriate or inaccurate beliefs about how classes should be conducted, what teachers should do and how students should respond (Horwitz, 1986). Definitely, the inappropriate or unconscious beliefs, attitudes, motivations, anxieties, stereotypes, and behaviors of beginner students can hinder their language learning process.

It seems reasonable, then, to assume that the package of personal, socio-affective and cultural factors that a person has should be taken into account when learning a foreign language. In this regard, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages\* (Council of Europe, 2001) clearly stated that an individual's learning should be about who he is as a person; a person who brings intellectual, cultural, social, affective, motivational, and emotional factors at play into his classroom. In other words, language learning should not only be about what and when to learn (curricular contents), but also about who learns and why and how he/she does it (pedagogical concerns).

Unfortunately, despite theoretical findings and pedagogical suggestions about the importance of personal, socio-affective and cultural features, the truth is that little has been done in the EFL/ESL teaching reality of language classrooms to attend to the socioaffective area of language learning. Sadly, many EFL/ESL teachers pay little attention to them or disregard them at all. Rightly, Veronica de Andres stated that: "If language is communication, EFL/ESL learning and teaching should be aimed at establishing meaningful communication in the classroom, and the first requirement towards this end is an affective affirmation of the student"<sup>17</sup>. In a similar vein, Mantle-Bromley<sup>18</sup> encouraged language teachers to attend to the students' affective component as well as to develop defendable pedagogical techniques to increase both the length of time students commit to language study and their chances of success in it.

In alignment with Andres and Mantle-Bromley's suggestions, Paola Scimonelli<sup>19</sup> stated that socioaffective language learning strategies (SLLS) are without doubt of paramount importance in language learning because these strategies involve the learner as a whole person who feels and interacts all the time with himself and others around him. To Scimonelli, SLLS as well as communication strategies are the areas on which the teacher's intervention should come first because students are not familiar with paying attention to their own feelings and

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<sup>17</sup> ANDRES, V. Op. cit., p. 97.

\* The Common European Framework has been used worldwide to develop foreign language programs because it provides ESL/EFL authorities with a comprehensive set of principles and standards to refer to when designing and implementing language courses.

<sup>18</sup> MANTLE-BROMLEY, C. Positive attitudes and realistic beliefs: Links to proficiency. In *Modern language journal*. Vol. 79 (1995); p. 383.

<sup>19</sup> SCIMONELLI, P. B. Language Learning strategies: Helping the students find "il metodo". In Norwich institute for language education: Main assignment, 2002, p. 9.

social relationships as part of their learning process. As a result, explained Scimonelli, ESL/EFL teachers need to develop positive frames of mind in the students in order to help them overcome the stress and sense of discomfort that a poor or slow learning of English sometimes causes.

Following Andres, Scimonelli and Mantle-Bromley's standpoints, this study reasonably assumes that ESL/EFL language learning, teaching and research should not just deal with linguistic and discursive matters, but should attend to students' learning strategies and, more importantly, to students' personal and emotional attributes. Language learning strategies and students' personal, emotional and social attributes can and should be approached properly while teaching, learning or researching EFL classrooms. It is important, then, that ESL/EFL teachers and researchers examine affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies thoroughly. If approached properly, these strategies and factors can be used to help language learners not only to acquire a language better, but also to get to know themselves deeper and better (See Oxford & Leaver, 1996; Nunan, 1997; Cohen, 1998; Chamot et al., 1999; Shen, 2003).

## 1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study attempts to answer one main question:

1. How does the explicit teaching of socioaffective language learning strategies impact the beliefs, attitudes, anxieties and motivations of a group of beginner students in an EFL three-month course?

Responses to this question will be used to describe the students' beliefs, attitudes, motivations and anxieties with a course that will use socioaffective-based activities and materials directly related to the course routines. Students' responses and experiences will be collected throughout the course as a means to examine how changes take place and to guide the researchers' actions. This study will include a set of specific questions that will lead to more exploration of the students' experiences. These specific questions are:

1. What are the EFL beginner students' beliefs, attitudes, motivations and anxieties about learning English at the end of a three-month course that implements affective-based strategy instruction?
2. What obstacles and difficulties do EFL students experience when engaging in learning activities as part of their classroom experience?
3. What language learning strategies do EFL beginner students make use of when engaging in such activities as part of their learning experience?
4. What are EFL students' reactions against the effects of activities and materials on affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies?



5. How does students' learning develop over the course, and what impact do the students feel the explicit socioaffective strategy instruction has on them as EFL learners?

6. Judging from beginner EFL students' feedback, how does a socioaffective language learning strategy approach enrich their language learning process?

## 1.6 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Today's teachers are expected to be not just followers of new methodologies, but researchers within their own classrooms and institutions. Different authors (Stenhouse 1975, Nunan 1992, McKernan 1996, Wallace 1997, Madrid 2000, etc) have stated that in order for teachers to truly understand the teaching settings in which they work, they need to systematically and critically observe and question them. These authors have also claimed that teachers' research should not be simply aimed at creating new or improved activities, practices or principles. Instead, teachers' research should be directed at bringing to light the implicit rationale behind what, why, and how things are done in class. In brief, teachers' research should allow teachers to engage in critical reflection and self-examination of the beliefs and values that form or shape their actions in class.

In order to integrate and enhance teaching, researching, reflection and self-examination, this study opts to use action research. Action research can provide a qualitative and analytical picture of the experience of an EFL teacher and a group of beginner EFL students with the explicit teaching of affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies. Concretely, this study will adopt and follow Anne Burn's (1999) model of action research and Jack Whitehead's (1993) set of reflective questions in order to allow for practical, but critical class enquiry which could provide a sound source for pedagogical planning and action. This model and set of questions are chosen to ensure an expanded appreciation of the complexity of learning, teaching and a stronger sense of how external realities affect what teachers-researchers can (want to) really do.

This action research aims at contributing theoretical findings and pedagogical suggestions to the investigation of socioaffective matters in the ESL/EFL field. It will do by first identifying and describing the beliefs, attitudes, anxieties and motivations of a group of beginner students in a three-month course, in which the learning-to-learn and the communicative language teaching approaches are among its primary objectives. Afterwards, it will analyze what affective factors seem to play a greater role in the language learning process of this group of beginner students. Subsequently, it will implement strategy-based instruction on socioaffective language learning strategies through affect-related activities. Then, it will assess the usefulness of affect-based instruction. On the whole, this study will seek to promote a critical consciousness, which exhibits itself in new

educational as well as practical actions for beginner foreign language teachers, students and classrooms.

## 1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Despite the general acceptance among researchers and teachers of the importance of the affective domain in language teaching, it is rare to see this domain approached properly and explicitly in beginner foreign language classrooms. One possible explanation is that research has not provided a clear-cut implementation of this domain. No single study that used qualitative methods, at least to the researcher's knowledge, has focused on the explicit teaching of socioaffective language learning strategies or the nature of the affective domain in EFL contexts, especially when the features of learning-to-learn and strategy-based instruction are emphasized. Most studies have focused on the correlation between affective factors and students' standardized achievement of L2 (See Chamot, 1999, 2004; Oxford, 1996; Madrid, 2000). None of these studies has focused on the students themselves and their experiences of "learning-to-feel" and "feeling-to-learn". Thus, the present study will contribute to previous research by employing qualitative methods to answer a set of questions about students' affective factors, and experiences toward this issue.

Likewise, I have decided to conduct this research because of my special interest in the areas of learning-to-learn and strategy-based instruction as two interrelated approaches to language learning. I began to develop this topic during my first years of professional life; in particular, since I became a tutor in the Adult English Program of the Centro Colombo Americano almost 4 years ago. Since that year on, I have done two presentations about related topics on this issue (one at the 2004 Symposium on Meaningful Contexts to Evaluate Our Students of English called "How can I help my students learn effectively?" and another one at the 2004 ELT National Conference in Colombia entitled "A pathway to TELL: Internet as a teaching source and tool"); I have taken two online courses for EFL/ESL teachers (one called An Introduction to task-based teaching with THOMSON Publishing house in 2005 and another one called Educational technology for EFL contexts with the University of Maryland) and I have written some papers and reflections (two of them have already been published). But, it was my work at my MA graduate studies at La Salle University in Bogotá, Colombia, that inspired me to pursue this topic in more detail. Since then, this topic has become of great interest to me as an EFL teacher.

Most importantly, I believe that my research will significantly help me and my students have a better grasp of how to go about learning and speaking English from a socio-affective perspective. This research will help my beginner students become more successful English learners and speakers and will help me understand and improve my teaching practices.

## 1.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Like other studies, the present study has certain limitations. The study is exclusively limited to describing the participants' beliefs, attitudes, motivations and anxieties on the issue of learning-to-learn EFL. Therefore, the pedagogical implications of this study are limited to those which can be based on the participants' opinions, reactions, and experiences. Furthermore, this study focuses on the students taking one particular beginner EFL course at the Adult English Program of the Centro Colombo Americano in Bogotá, Colombia. Due to the fact that the participants represent different language backgrounds, the study does not make any attempt to generalize the findings beyond the participants in the course or similar participants in similar courses. Finally, this study does not aim to evaluate socioaffective factors about the learning-to-learn approach to EFL learning, nor does it aim at evaluating either student performance or the teaching methods used by the instructor of the course.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

“At no level, at no state, even in the  
adult, can we find a behavior or a state  
which is purely cognitive without affect  
nor a purely affective state without a  
cognitive element involved”  
Jean Piaget <sup>20</sup>

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

While attention to affect may not provide the solution to all language learning problems, it can be very beneficial for language teachers to choose to focus at times on affective questions/factors. This project assumes that, if approached and implemented properly, affective factors could not only help EFL teachers design and carry out more effective classroom activities and tasks, but also help students understand what to do or try in order to become more successful language learners. This project is an initial attempt to address some affective and emotional factors that Colombian EFL teachers should consider when striving to enhance their students' learning process in their daily classroom practices because “Education, as Williams and Burden stated, must focus on the learner as an individual with affective needs and reactions that must be considered as an integral part of learning”<sup>21</sup>. This project pays attention to affect not only as a desire to examine and adopt ideas from other disciplines (e.g. psychology, sociology and philosophy), but mainly as an awareness of the expanding role of EFL/ESL as a vehicle of education and of "learning" per se.

In order to fulfill its objective, this study needs to review first what research has shown about the reasons and ways EFL teachers can make affective and emotional factors more accessible to students, especially to their beginner EFL students. This chapter explores what educational psychology and EFL methodology have to say in answer to this question. First, educational psychology will be explained, as well as five of its most important approaches that have influenced the EFL learning field. Next, affect will be explained, as well as some affective factors (beliefs, attitudes, motivation and anxiety) that influence the EFL learning and speaking. Then, the nature and benefits of language learning strategy will be explored, and what researchers have said about how strategy training should be carried out by EFL teachers. After that,

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<sup>20</sup> PIAGET, J. As cited in Clark & Fiske, *Affect and cognition*. Hillsdale, NJ : Erlbaum, 1982, p. 130.

<sup>21</sup> WILLIAMS, M. and BURDEN, R. Op. cit., p. 28.

socioaffective strategies will be described in more detail as a practical way to make affective and emotional factors accessible to students. Finally, this chapter will look at specific characteristics of beginner students that EFL teachers should take into account for effective strategy instruction and assessment.

## 2.2 INITIAL REMARKS

While cognition and the theory of knowledge has been the interest of educationists and researchers since Plato provided the basis for what is referred to as 'epistemology', the interest in affective factors in learning came much later (Eva Bernat, 2006). It was first reflected in the writing of Dewey, Montessori, and Vygotsky in the first part of the century, and gained importance with the growth of humanistic psychology in the 1960's. As a result, recognition has been given to the importance of the productive synthesis of affect and reason and to the study of their mutually reinforcing roles in a variety of disciplines.

The mounting interest in exploring the affective domain appears to be prompted by the conviction that cognitive factors, which seem to continue dominating education, are not the only ones that account for the learning process. In his book, *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman noted that the Western civilization had overemphasized the importance of the rational functions of the mind to the detriment of emotions and feelings. In support of the affective domain, Damasio (1994) articulated that even on the neurobiological level emotions are part of reason and LeDoux (1996) saw emotion and cognition as partners: "Minds without emotions are not really minds at all"<sup>22</sup>. In similar vein, E. Jensen's intensive review of brain-based research showed the critical links between emotions and cognition concluding that, in a positive state of mind, the student is able to learn and recall better.

Due to the rejection of the cognitive-centeredness of previous language learning research, there has been a greater understanding and appreciation of affective variables and, as a result, the affective and emotional side of language learning has received plenty of attention. Different authors have made it their main focus of attention (See Scovel, 1978, 1991; Schumann, 1978, 1997; Horwitz, 1986, 1988, 1991; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1989, 1991, 1994; Young, 1986, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994, 2001). The results from those studies have indicated "substantial links among affective measures and achievement"<sup>23</sup> and have highlighted "the interdependent role that linguistics, cognition and affect play in EFL and ESL learning"<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> LEDOUX, J. *The emotional brain*. New York : Simon & Schuster, 1996, p. 25.

<sup>23</sup> GARDNER, R. C., TREMBLAY, P. F., and MASGORET, A-M. Towards a full model of second language learning: An empirical investigation. In *Modern language journal*. No. 81 (1997); p. 344.

<sup>24</sup> YANG, D. The relationship between EFL learners' beliefs and learning strategy [Special Issue]. In *System*. No. 27 (1999); p. 246.

However, despite all this attention to affect in research, Horwitz (2001) stated that disregarding the emotional reactions of the learner to foreign language learning was and remains a serious oversight in terms of practical everyday pedagogical implications. Previously, Oxford and Ehrman had argued that ESL/EFL teachers needed to better learn to identify and comprehend significant individual affective differences in their students; and pointed out, "many excellent teachers have learned to do some of this intuitively, but explicit understanding of individual-difference dimensions can enhance the work of all teachers"<sup>25</sup>. More recently, Veronica de Andres (2002) reminded ESL/EFL teachers that if they wanted their students to develop their inherent potential to learn, the affective variables such as anxiety, motivation, self-esteem and inhibition could no longer be denied, the inner needs of the learners could no longer be neglected.

Unfortunately, the ESL/EFL reality in Colombia is still far from really articulating contemporary views in which the learner is an individual with affective needs and reactions that should be considered as an integral part of learning. Many attempts have been made to implement the communicative language teaching approach so that students can have the ability to use the forms of language to understand and create appropriate discourse in different socio-cultural contexts. Unfortunately, little has been done in Colombia to move the emphasis from curricular contents (what students learn) to the process of learning (how and why they learn). As Madrid stated:

The process of language learning needs to become much more learner-centered and students should become more responsible about their own learning. Not only should they have to be conscious about their individual attributes and learning preferences, but also they should be aware of the strategies that they could use when they go about learning a foreign language and doing class activities and tasks<sup>26</sup>.

## 2.3 EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Educational psychology has been defined in many different ways. One such definition offered by Kaplan (1990) and recognized by the American Psychological Association describes it as the application of psychology to education by focusing on the development, evaluation and application of theories and principles of learning and instruction to enhance lifelong learning. This definition, however, lacks a fundamental difference between learning and education because, as Marion Williams and Robert Burden noted, "learning is certainly part of the process of education, but to be truly educative it must give a broader value and meaning to the learner's life. It must be concerned with

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<sup>25</sup> OXFORD, R. and EHRMAN, M. Second language research on individual differences. In *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. No. 13 (1993); p. 188.

<sup>26</sup> MADRID, D. Op. cit., p. 1.

educating the whole person”<sup>27</sup>. Unfortunately, many learning activities suggested by traditional educational psychology are not necessarily educative simply because they lack a real value to the life of the learner. Too often, learning activities have little personal interest or relevance to the learners and have limited educational significance beyond the task itself.

In order to be truly educative, educational psychology should help teachers not just develop and apply theories and principles, but more importantly understand why and how their teaching may or may not lead to worthwhile learning. In other words, educational psychology should allow teachers to maintain a continuous process of personal reflection, within which they could become aware of the personal and cultural values, and beliefs that underpin their own and other people’s actions. Williams and Burden<sup>28</sup> stressed this view of educational psychology by stating that it should basically help raise teachers’ awareness so that they could come to understand fully their own implicit educational theories and the ways in which such theories influence their professional practice and, ultimately, their students’ learning process within and beyond the classroom situation.

Educational psychology should, therefore, be concerned not just with theories of instruction and principles of teaching, but with learning to learn, with making learning experiences meaningful and relevant to the individual, with developing and growing as a whole person. If educational psychology is to have anything really meaningful to say to teachers, language teachers, that is, it is about language education as opposed to mere language instruction, and how to transform a language learning experience into a truly educational one. This is the kind of educational psychology that Williams and Burden proposed in their *Psychology for Language Teachers* and it is the kind of educational psychology that this study strives to use since one of its main goals is to elaborate an educational psychological framework that can provide EFL teachers with a comprehensive understanding of what is involved in the process of language learning so that they can better inform and underpin their teaching of the language.

### 2.2.1 Approaches of educational psychology.

In order for EFL teachers to be able to put together a comprehensive educational psychology framework, they need to identify and comprehend the number of changes and fashions that educational psychology has passed through in its comparatively brief history. The identification and comprehension of how these changes emerged and connected or conflicted with each other can enable language teachers and researchers to understand the inherently complex process of language learning, evaluate their respective contributions to language teaching and make critical decisions about what principles and

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<sup>27</sup> WILLIAMS, M. and BURDEN, R. Op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

activities to choose and implement in class. Yet, this is not an easy task because, due to the great diversity of study fields, theoretical backgrounds, and theoretical interests, educational psychology has not proposed just one comprehensive theory, model, or approach about the educational phenomena, but has made broad attempts to describe and explain why and how people learn. However, there have been, as Williams and Burden explained, five main learning theories or approaches in educational psychology: behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, humanism and social interactionism. The sections below will briefly explain and discuss each theory.

### 2.2.1.1 Behaviorism.

Behaviorism is an approach to psychology that, explained Williams and Burden<sup>29</sup>, has its roots within positivism –knowledge and facts exist within the real word and can be discovered by setting up an experiment. The most well-known behaviorist theorist is the Russian Pavlov who demonstrated with dogs that a response (e.g. salivation) generated by one stimulus (e.g. food) could be produced by introducing a second stimulus (e.g. a bell) at the same time. This came to be known as *S-R (Stimulus-Response) theory or classical conditioning*.

In the S-R theory, the environment is seen as providing stimuli to which individuals develop responses. According to M. K. Smith<sup>30</sup>, three key assumptions underpin this view: observable behaviour rather than internal thought processes are the focus of study. In particular, learning is manifested by a change in behaviour; the environment shapes one's behavior; what one learns is determined by the elements in the environment, not by the individual learner and the principles of contiguity (how close in time two events must be for a bond to be formed) and reinforcement (any means of increasing the likelihood that an event will be repeated) are central to explaining the learning process.

Different researchers built upon these foundations. Burrhus Frederic Skinner, for instance, developed a theory of learning in terms of *operant conditioning*. Skinner introduced the notion of operants, (i.e. the range of behaviors that organisms perform or were capable of performing) and emphasized the importance of reinforcement (responses or behaviors were strengthened or weakened by the consequences of behavior). Thus, learning was thought to be about the increased probability of a behavior based on reinforcement which has taken place in the past, so that the antecedents of the new behavior include the consequences of previous behaviour.

In terms of learning, according to James Hartley<sup>31</sup>, these key principles come to the fore:

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> SMITH, M. K. (1999). Learning theory. In *The encyclopedia of informal education*. (1999), last update: January 30, 2005.

<sup>31</sup> HARTLEY, J. *Learning and studying: A Research perspective*. London : Routledge, 1998.



- Repetition, generalization and discrimination are important notions.
- Frequent practice - and practice in varied contexts - is necessary for learning to take place. Skills are not acquired without frequent practice.
- Reinforcement is the cardinal motivator. Positive reinforcers like rewards and successes are preferable to negative events like punishments and failures.
- Learning is helped when objectives are clear. Those who look to behaviourism in teaching will generally frame their activities by behavioural objectives e.g. 'By the end of this session participants will be able to...'.

Table 1

*Summary of Behaviorism*

Theorists	Principles
<p><b>Pavlov:</b> a response generated by one stimulus could be produced by introducing a second stimulus at the same time.</p> <p><b>Skinner:</b> he introduced the notion of operants, (i.e. the range of behaviors that organisms can or could perform) and emphasized the importance of reinforcement (responses or behaviors are strengthened or weakened by the consequences of behavior).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetition, generalization and discrimination are important notions.</li> <li>• Reinforcement is the cardinal motivator.</li> <li>• Learning is helped when objectives are clear.</li> </ul>

#### 2.2.1.2 Cognitivism.

Many psychologists were not happy with behaviorism because, as M. K. Smith explained, they believed that there was too much of a focus on single events, stimuli and overt behaviour. Such criticism was especially strong from those who saw themselves as *Gestalt psychologists* (Gestalt meaning configuration or pattern in German). For them, perceptions or images should be approached as a pattern or a whole rather than as a sum of the component parts. Such thinking found its way into psychoanalysis and into the development of thinking about group functioning. It also had a profound effect on the way that many psychologists thought of learning. Where behaviorists looked to the environment, those drawing on Gestalt turned to the individual's mental processes; they were concerned with cognition - the act or process of knowing.

In contrast to behaviorism, cognitive psychology is concerned with the way in which the human mind thinks and learns. Cognitive psychologists are interested, as Williams and Burden<sup>32</sup> stated, in the mental processes that are involved in learning. This includes such aspects as how people build up and draw upon their memories and the ways in which they become involved in the process of learning. However, the ways in which human thought has been investigated have themselves varied considerably. At one extreme are *information theorists* who have drawn upon the analogy of the brain as a highly complex computer and who seek to explain its working in terms of rules and models of how different aspects of learning take place. Examples of this approach can be seen in work on artificial intelligence and in models of memory processes. At the other extreme is *the so-called constructivist movement*, growing mainly out of the work of the Swiss developmental psychologist, Jean Piaget, but also encompassing George Kelly's personal construct psychology. Psychologists taking this approach have been mainly interested in ways in which individuals come to make their own sense of the world. (Due to its variety and importance, I will return to this approach in greater detail later). Yet, another aspect of cognitive psychology is the rich and varied literature on *human intelligence*. Here a distinction can be drawn between theories which seek to describe and explain what we mean by intelligence or, more hopefully, intelligent behavior, and attempts to measure it by such methods as IQ testing.

Some of the key principles of learning associated with cognitive psychology have been drawn by James Hartley. As he put it: "Learning results from inferences, expectations and making connections. Instead of acquiring habits, learners acquire plans and strategies, and prior knowledge is important"<sup>33</sup>. The principles he identified are:

- Instruction should be well-organized. Well-organized materials are easier to learn and to remember.
- Instruction should be clearly structured. Subject matters are said to have inherent structures –logical relationships between key ideas and concepts– which link the parts together.
- The perceptual features of the task are important. Learners attend selectively to different aspects of the environment. Thus, the way a problem is displayed is important if learners are to understand it.
- Prior knowledge is important. Things must fit with what is already known if it is to be learnt.
- Differences between individuals are important as they will affect learning. Differences in 'cognitive style' or methods of approach influence learning.
- Cognitive feedback gives information to learners about their success or failure concerning the task at hand. Reinforcement can come through giving information - a 'knowledge of results' - rather than simply a reward.

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<sup>32</sup> WILLIAMS, M. and BURDEN, R. Op. cit., p. 13-14.

<sup>33</sup> HARTLEY, J. Op. cit., p. 18.

Table 2

*Summary of Cognitivism*

Positions	Principles
<p><b>Information theorists:</b> the analogy of the brain as a highly complex computer and who seek to explain its working in terms of rules.</p> <p><b>The so-called constructivists:</b> concerned with ways in which individuals come to make their own sense of the world.</p> <p><b>Human intelligence:</b> an attempt to describe and explain what we mean by intelligent behavior, and ways to measure it.</p>	<p>Hartley (1998)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruction should be well-organized.</li> <li>• Instruction should be clearly structured.</li> <li>• The perceptual features of the task are important.</li> <li>• Prior knowledge is important.</li> <li>• Differences between individuals are important as they will affect learning.</li> <li>• Cognitive feedback gives information to learners about their success or failure concerning the task at hand.</li> </ul>

### 2.2.1.3 Constructivism.

Constructivism comprises a broad body of viewpoints which has in common the concept that people, individually and collectively, “construct” their own meaning of their physical, social and cultural contexts based on their current knowledge, previous experience, and social environment (Bloom, Perlmutter and Burrell, 1999). It can be considered constructivist, therefore, any theory that considers *knowledge* as the result of a dynamic process of construction or reconstruction of reality that has its origin in the interaction between people and the world. Within the constructivist approach, *learning* is an active process of meaning construction from personal and social experiences, whereby the learner learns by matching new information against given information and establishing meaningful connections.

Behind constructivism, there is a great variety of shapes and interpretations. In fact, some authors have spoken about “constructivisms” (André Giordan, Peter E. Doolittle), since the assumptions that underlie this theoretical position vary along several dimensions. Peter Doolittle<sup>34</sup>, for example, stated that there are three broad categories: cognitive constructivism, social constructivism and radical constructivism. *Cognitive constructivism* is typically associated with information processing and its reliance on the component processes of cognition. *Social constructivism* is typically associated with the concept of social cognition (perceptions and beliefs within a socio-cultural context) and the belief

<sup>34</sup> DOOLITTLE, P. E. *Constructivism and online education*. In Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1999.

that knowledge is the result of social interaction and language use. *Radical constructivism* maintain the idea that while an external reality may exist, it is unknowable to the individual since our experience with external forms (e.g. objects, social interactions) is mediated by our senses and they are not adept at rendering an accurate representation of these external forms.

One of the most well-known constructivists is Jean Piaget who explored changes in internal cognitive structures (patterns of physical or mental action that underlie specific acts of intelligence and correspond to stages of child development). He identified four stages of mental growth (sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational) and characterized many detailed structural forms in each stage. Williams and Burden<sup>35</sup> maintained that Piaget argued that cognitive structures changed through the processes of adaptation: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation involves the interpretation of events in terms of existing cognitive structure whereas accommodation refers to changing the cognitive structure to make sense of the environment. Cognitive development consists, then, of a constant effort to adapt to the environment in terms of assimilation and accommodation.

Jerome Bruner was an important advocate of Piaget's ideas. A major theme in the theoretical framework of Bruner is, according to Williams and Burden<sup>36</sup>, that *learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current/past knowledge*. The learner selects and transforms information, constructs hypotheses, and makes decisions, relying on a cognitive structure to do so. For Bruner, the development of conceptual understanding and of cognitive skills and strategies is a central aim of education, rather than the acquisition of factual information.

Another constructivist theory is *George Kelly's personal-construct theory*. Kelly established *the premise of "man-as-scientist"* constantly seeking to make sense of his world. According to Williams and Burden<sup>37</sup>, to Kelly, people carry out their own personal experiments, construct hypothesis, confirm them and, ultimately, build up theories about the kind of place the world is and the kind of people that live in it. Learning, then, involves learners in making their own sense of information and events by constructing their own personal understanding of things according to their previous experiences.

The general theoretical and practical constructivism consensus indicates, stated Peter Doolittle<sup>38</sup>, that eight factors are essential within the constructivist approach to learning:

- learning should take place in authentic and real-world environments;
- learning should involve social negotiation and mediation;
- content and skills should be made relevant to the learner;;

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<sup>35</sup> WILLIAMS, M. and BURDEN, R. Op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> DOOLITTLE, P. E. Op. cit.

- content and skills should be understood within the framework of the learner's prior knowledge;
- students should be assessed formatively, serving to inform future learning experiences;
- students should be encouraged to become self-regulatory, self-mediated, and self-aware;
- teachers serve primarily as guides and facilitators of learning, not as instructors; and
- teachers should provide for and encourage multiple perspectives and representations of content.

Table 3

*Summary of Constructivism*

Theorists	Principles
<p><b>Jean Piaget:</b> He identified four stages of mental growth and argued that cognitive structures changed through the processes of adaptation: assimilation and accommodation.</p> <p><b>Jerome Bruner:</b> learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current/past knowledge.</p> <p><b>George Kelly:</b> Learning involves making our own sense of information and events by constructing our own personal understanding of things according to our previous experiences.</p>	<p>Doolittle (1999)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning should take place in authentic and real-world environments;</li> <li>• learning should involve social negotiation and mediation;</li> <li>• content and skills should be made relevant to the learner;</li> <li>• content and skills should be understood within the framework of the learner's prior knowledge;</li> <li>• students should be assessed formatively, serving to inform future learning experiences;</li> <li>• students should be encouraged to become self-regulatory, self-mediated, and self-aware;</li> <li>• teachers serve primarily as guides and facilitators of learning, not as instructors; and</li> <li>• teachers should provide for and encourage multiple perspectives and representations of content.</li> </ul>

#### 2.2.1.4 Humanism.

A great deal of the theoretical writing about adult education in the 1970s and 1980s drew on humanistic psychology since there was a reaction against 'scientific' reductionism – people being treated as objects and rationalism – the

central role of reason in the acquisition of knowledge (Smith, 1999). Instead, the affective and subjective world was to be reaffirmed. Personal freedom, choice, motivations and feelings had to have their place. In humanism, the basic concern is for the human potential for growth. Humanistic education aimed at guiding students toward growth as a "whole" person. This growth included physical, mental, emotional, and even moral development and its goal was the learner's self-actualization. Students should be able to discover their personal interests and unfold their potential as individuals. The objective is not to merely produce good students, or employees. The end result is hoped to be contented, functional human beings who contribute positively to their environment (Briner, 1999).

Erik Erikson was one renowned proponent of the humanistic viewpoint. Erikson made an outstanding attempt to draw together Freud's views on human psycho-sexual development into a theory based on predetermined maturational stages of development throughout a human's life with important implications for personal, social, and emotional development (Williams and Burden, 1997, p. 31–32). Erikson suggested that every individual proceeds through eight stages from birth to old age, each of which posed a particular kind of challenge or crisis (early infancy – trust; 2 or 3 – autonomy; 4 – initiative; early school years – a sense of industry; adolescence – search for identity; young adult – attaining intimacy; middle age – sense of generativity; old age – self-fulfillment). To Erikson, if the individual handles the challenge of each stage properly with the help of significant others, then he/she can move onto the next stage smoothly.

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of motivation is another well-known proponent of humanism. At the lowest level are physiological needs, at the highest self actualization. Only when the lower needs are met is it possible to fully move on to the next level. A motive at the lower level is always stronger than those at higher levels. M. Tennant<sup>39</sup> summarized these levels as follows:

- *Physiological needs* such as hunger, thirst, sex, sleep, relaxation and bodily integrity must be satisfied before the next level comes into play;
- *Safety needs* call for a predictable and orderly world. In brief, people will look to organize their worlds to provide for the greatest degree of safety and security;
- *Love and belongingness needs* cause people to seek warm and friendly relationships;
- *Self-esteem needs* involve the desire for confidence, strength, adequacy, achievement, mastery, competence, prestige and independence;
- *Self-actualization* is the full use and expression of an individual's talents, capacities and potentialities.

But, perhaps the most persuasive exploration of a humanistic orientation to learning came from Carl Rogers. His passion for education that engaged with

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<sup>39</sup> TENNANT, M. *Psychology and adult learning* (2nd Ed.) London : Routledge, 1997, p. 13.

the whole person and with their experiences and for learning that combines the logical and intuitive, the intellect and feelings found a ready audience. Rogers emphasized the importance of learning to learn and an openness to change. Rogers distinguished two types of learning: cognitive (meaningless academic knowledge) and experiential (significant applicable knowledge). The key to the distinction is that *experiential learning* addresses the needs and wants of the learner and is equivalent to personal change and growth. Rogers<sup>40</sup> listed these qualities of experiential learning:

- personal involvement;
- learner-initiated;
- evaluated by learner;
- pervasive effects on learner; and
- its essence is meaning.

To Rogers, all human beings have a natural propensity to learn. Thus, the role of the teacher is to facilitate such learning through active student participation; self-evaluation of progress and success and the direct confrontation with practical, social, personal or research problems. Roger also recommended:

- setting a positive climate for learning;
- clarifying the purposes of the learner(s);
- organizing and making available learning resources;
- balancing intellectual and emotional components of learning; and,
- sharing feelings and thoughts with learners.

Table 4

*Summary of Humanism*

Theorists	Principles
<p><b>Erik Erikson:</b> every individual proceeds through eight stages from birth to old age, each of which posed a particular kind of challenge or crisis that the individual can handle properly with the help of significant others.</p> <p><b>Abraham Maslow:</b> his hierarchy of motivation has at the lowest level the physiological needs and at the highest self actualization and only when the lower needs are met, it is possible to fully move on to the next level.</p>	<p>Erikson, Maslow, Rogers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• active student participation;</li> <li>• self-evaluation of progress and success;</li> <li>• direct confrontation with practical, social, personal or research problems;</li> <li>• a positive climate for learning;</li> <li>• clarification of the purposes of the learner(s);</li> <li>• organization and availability of learning resources;</li> <li>• balance between intellectual and</li> </ul>

<sup>40</sup> ROGERS, C. R. *Freedom to learn*. New York : Merrill, 1983, p. 20.

<p><b>Carl Rogers:</b> he emphasized the importance of learning to learn and an openness to change and proposed the <i>experiential learning</i> to address the needs and wants of the learner for personal change and growth.</p>	<p>emotional components of learning; and,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing feelings and thoughts with learners.</li> </ul>
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### 2.2.1. 5 Social Interactionism.

Social interactionism emphasizes the interactive nature of much learning. Based on Vygotsky's theory, social interactionism maintains that all cognitive functions originate in, and must therefore be explained as products of, social interactions and that learning is not simply the assimilation and accommodation of new knowledge by learners; it is the process by which learners are integrated into a knowledge community (Smith, 1999). According to this approach, language and culture play essential roles both in human intellectual development and in how humans perceive the worlds. Language and culture are the frameworks through which humans experience, communicate, and understand reality. As a result, human cognitive structures are essentially socially constructed. Knowledge is not simply constructed, it is socially co-constructed.

Social interactionism is presented by Williams and Burden<sup>41</sup> as a framework which encompasses the insights provided by cognitive and humanistic perspectives. They described the main ideas of two of the most well-known psychologists of this school of thought, the Russian, Vygotsky, and the Israeli, Feuerstein, and consider the application of their views to language learning. For social interactionists, we are born into a social world, and we make sense of the world through interaction with other people. Based on this characteristic of social interactionism, Williams and Burden saw a theoretical underpinning to a communicative approach to language teaching, where it is maintained that we learn a language through using the language to interact meaningfully with other people (I will expand on this issue later).

The most significant bases of social interactionism were laid down by Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky emphasized the importance of language in interacting with people; not just speech, but signs and symbols as well. It is by this means of language that culture is transmitted, thinking develops and learning occurs. According to Williams and Burden<sup>42</sup>, Vygotsky argued that meaning should constitute the central aspect of any unit of study and that any unit of study should be presented in all its complexity, rather than skills and knowledge being presented in isolation. Central to Vygotsky's approach is the concept of mediation which is understood as the part played by other significant people in

<sup>41</sup> WILLIAMS, M. and BURDEN, R. Op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 40.



the learner's lives, who enhance their learning by selecting and shaping the learning experiences presented to them. This mediation involves helping learners to move into and through the next layer of knowledge or understanding. In his concept of "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), Vygotsky observed that working together with another person, either an adult or a more competent peer at a level that is just above a learner's present capabilities, is the best way for the learner to move into the next layer.

The work of Reuven Feuerstein has some central components. First, there is the firm belief that *anyone can become a fully effective learner* when provided with the necessary skills and strategies to overcome difficulties. Second, there is the notion of *structural cognitive modifiability*, which is the belief that people's cognitive structure is infinitely modifiable; e.g. no one ever achieves the full extent of their learning potential. Third, there is the concept of a *cognitive map*, which is a representation of the key factors involved in performing any mental act. Another notable aspect of Feuerstein's work, according to Williams and Burden<sup>43</sup>, is his introduction of *dynamic assessment*, which is a two-way process involving interaction between the assessor and the assessoree to find out the learner's current level of performance on any task to think up possible ways to improve it.

Table 5

*Summary of Social Interactionism*

Theorists	Principles
<p><b>Vygotsky:</b> He emphasized the importance of language in interacting with people; not just speech, but signs and symbols as well. It is by this means of language that culture is transmitted, thinking develops and learning occurs. In his concept of "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), he observed that working together with another person, either an adult or a more competent peer at a level that is just above a learner's present capabilities, is the best way for the learner to move into the next layer.</p> <p><b>Feuerstein:</b> anyone can become a fully effective learner when provided with the necessary skills and</p>	<p>Vygotsky and Feuerstein</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning is the process by which learners are integrated into a knowledge community;</li> <li>• language and culture play essential roles both in human intellectual development and in how humans perceive the worlds;</li> <li>• knowledge is not simply constructed, it is socially co-constructed; and</li> <li>• we make sense of our world through using the language to interact meaningfully with other people.</li> </ul>

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

strategies to overcome difficulties and his/her structural cognitive is infinitely modifiable.	
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## 2.3 APPROACHES OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

All the different approaches of educational psychology have had a different influence and impact on language learning. Methods, materials, instruction models, teacher roles, learner roles, and educational principles and aims have been designed and implemented taking into account the premises of each approach. The following sections will briefly describe the influence of the five basic approaches on language learning based on William and Burden's work.

### 2.3.1 Behaviorism and language learning.

Behaviorist views of learning were embraced by language teachers, and had a powerful influence on the development of *the audiolingual approach* to language teaching. When this theory is applied to language learning, noted Williams and Burden<sup>44</sup>, language is seen as a behavior to be taught. Learners are given language tasks in small, sequential steps. A small part of the foreign language, such as a structural pattern, is presented as a stimulus, to which the learner responds, for example, by repetition or substitution. This is followed by reinforcement by the teacher. Thus, learning a language is simply seen as acquiring a set of proper mechanical habits, and errors are regarded as "bad habits". The role of the teacher is to shape in learners good language habits, which is done largely by pattern drills, memorization of dialogues or choral repetition of structural patterns. Explanation of rules is generally given when the language item has been well practiced and the appropriate habit acquired.

Williams and Burden argued that audiolingualism has five main limitations:

- First, *the role of the learner is a fairly passive one*; they are merely directed to respond correctly to stimuli.
- Second, *there is little concern for what goes on inside the learner's heads*, or the cognitive processes involved in learning something.
- Third, *audiolingual drills are carried out with little attention to the meaning that the language conveys*.
- Fourth, *there is no room for the actual process of interaction and negotiation of meaning*.
- Fifth, *audiolingualism*, with its emphasis on correct response, *does not allow for the making of mistakes or the learning from them*.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

### 2.3.2 Cognitivism and language learning.

It is clear to any experienced teacher that some learners have considerable difficulty in paying attention to their work and that invariably this will have a negative effect on their learning since they will regard learning a foreign language as a very confusing experience, especially in the early stages. Therefore, care must be taken to help learners to focus their attention on certain key aspects of what they are hearing or trying to communicate rather than attempting to cope with everything at once. According to Williams and Burden<sup>45</sup>, language teacher should focus on *attention* when a learning task is new or when it is just beyond the present capabilities of the learner.

Another area to which language teaching needs to pay close attention is that of *memory* since one of the main problems language learners face is memorizing vocabulary items. The teaching of ways of remembering things including mnemonics strategies and involving more than one of the senses is, therefore, likely to more than justify the time involved. Williams and Burden proposed the use of the linkword method and advance organizers as examples of successful applications of memory research to foreign language learning.

The main emphasis of theories about *intelligence* (Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences; Philip Vernon's A-B-C intelligences and Sternberg's triarchic theory of intelligence) is placed upon the conception of intelligent behavior as the dynamic use of cognitive skills and strategies within specific contexts. In Williams and Burden's opinion, this emphasis has powerful implications for language teachers because when teachers hold a dynamic view of intelligence, they then believe they can help all learners become better at language learning. One of the challenges for language teachers should, then, be to help learners develop the strategies needed to learn a language more effectively.

### 2.3.3 Constructivism and language learning.

Four aspects of Piaget's cognitive development are of particular importance to the language teacher according to Williams and Burden. *First*, it is important to take account of learners as individuals, actively involved in making their own sense of the language input that surrounds them as well as the tasks presented to them. *Second*, the development of thinking and its relationship to language and experience should become a central focus of learning. *Third*, care should be taken to match the requirements of any task to the cognitive level of which the learner is capable. *Fourth*, interlanguage (the gradual re-shapement of a learner's knowledge of the language as it approximates the target language) can be understood as the modification of the information learners already know about the language (accommodation) to "fit" the new information into their existing knowledge (assimilation) in order to understand how the system of the new language operates.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

Three aspects of Bruner's constructivist proposal are emphasized by Williams and Burden. First, language syllabuses should follow the notion of *spiral curriculum* by introducing first the basic elements of the language, and then revisit and build upon these repeatedly. Second, *Bruner's notion of purposefulness* (how worthy or relevant a subject or activity really is for an individual's education) has a message for language teachers regarding the designing of tasks. Third, *Bruner's notion of achieving a balance between a solid structure and flexibility for discovery* invites language teachers to seek a balance between the teaching of the target language and the developing of the learners' ability to make guesses as to how rules operate, to take risks in trying out the language and to learn from their mistakes.

Some important implications of taking a constructivist approach to language learning can be set out:

- First, language is not learned by the mere memorization of discrete items (grammar, discourse, functions). Rather, learners should be involved in meaningful activities to make sense and create their own understanding of the world of language that surrounds them.
- Second, teachers and learners should find ways of reaching a shared understanding of what is happening in their classrooms.
- Third, teachers and learners need to shape and interpret the syllabus or curriculum, so that the whole learning experience becomes a shared enterprise.
- Emotions and beliefs must, therefore, be considered as an integral part of learning, as also must the particular context of those who are involved in the teaching-learning process.

#### 2.3.4 Humanism and language learning

Erikson's theory is important to language educators because it provides a "life-span" view of psychology which helps them recognise learning and development as lifelong, rather than restricted to a particular phase of one's life. At the same time, by focusing on important tasks at different stages of a person's life, it enables teachers to see that real-life learning involves challenges which often require a particular kind of help from others. Erikson's theory also presents, as Williams and Burden<sup>46</sup> stated, learning as a cumulative process influence upon how we deal with subsequent tasks and education is viewed as involving the whole person, the emotions and feelings, not only pieces of knowledge.

Maslow's ideas about human need fulfillment also have significant things to say to language teachers. They help them recognise that learners may have difficulties with learning because their learning needs are not met in the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

classroom. In this regard, Williams and Burden<sup>47</sup> stated that Maslow's hierarchy points to the importance of establishing a secure environment where learners feel that they belong and where they can build up self-respect by receiving respect from others.

Roger's experiential learning has a number of helpful suggestions in language learning. It is important, noted William and Burden, to provide optimum conditions for individualized and group learning of an authentic nature to take place. Within this type of learning, there is a need to foster both a sense of freedom and a counterbalancing sense of responsibility. Thus, every learning experience should be seen within the context of helping learners to develop a sense of personal commitment to make choices for themselves in what and how they learn.

Humanistic approaches have had a considerable influence on English language teaching methodology. Perhaps the most well-known applications of humanism in ELT are those of Gattegno (1972), Curran (1976) and Lozanov (1979):

- The former advocated the Silent Way approach. In this, he presented challenges for learners. These challenges developed the students' awareness and encouraged their independence.
- Meanwhile, Curran advocated the use of 'Counseling-Learning'. In this practice, teachers sit outside a circle of learners and help them to talk about their personal and linguistic problems. The students decide the 'curriculum', while the teacher is more of a facilitator, who fosters an emotionally secure environment.
- The latter advocated Suggestopaedia on the principle that people are capable of learning more if their minds are clear of things. It is based on relaxation at a deep level and on the use of classical music to help learning.

### 2.3.5 Social interactionism and language learning.

Feuerstein and Vygotsky broke new ground in emphasizing the social context in which learning takes place, and in providing teachers with the concept of mediation as a key element in this process. To Williams and Burden<sup>48</sup>, both psychologists provide teachers with ways of helping learners to learn how to learn and focus on the use of language as a tool in both bringing meaning to and obtaining meaning from learning activities.

Social interactionism emphasizes the dynamic nature of the interplay between teachers, learners, and tasks, and provides a view of learning as arising from collaborations and interactions with others. Because learning is essentially a social phenomenon, learners are partially motivated by rewards provided by the

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

knowledge community. However, because knowledge is actively constructed by the learner, learning also depends to a significant extent on the learner's internal drive to understand and promote the learning process. Thus, interactionism requires learners to develop teamwork skills and to see individual learning as essentially related to the success of group learning.

Social interactionism encompasses, as Williams and Burden established, various principles and characteristics of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLTA); an approach that has become the accepted norm in the EFL field. Perhaps the most well-known description of CLTA is that of Brown (1994, p. 77):

Beyond grammatical discourse elements in communication, we are probing the nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language. We are exploring pedagogical means for “real-life” communication in the classroom... We are concerned with how to facilitate lifelong language learning among our students, not just with the immediate classroom task. We are looking at learners as partners in a cooperative venture. And our classroom practices seek to draw on whatever intrinsically sparks learners to reach their fullest potential.<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, Jason Beale's summary of the principles of CLTA (2002) resembles some of the tenets of social interactionism: “language acquisition is an unpredictable developmental process requiring a communicatively interactive and cooperative negotiation of meaning on the parts of learners to influence [their own] developing language system”<sup>50</sup>. These extracts confirm Williams and Burden's connection between social interactionism and the CLTA since they both maintain that we learn a language through using the language to interact meaningfully with other people.

Table 6

*Summary of educational psychology approaches and language learning*

Approach	Contributions to language learning
Behaviorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language is seen as a behavior to be taught.</li> <li>• Learners are given language tasks in small, sequential steps.</li> <li>• A small part of the foreign language, such as a structural pattern, is presented as a stimulus, to which the learner responds, for example, by repetition or substitution.</li> </ul>

<sup>49</sup> BROWN, H. D. *Principles of language learning and teaching*. New Jersey : Prentice Hall Regents, 1994a, p. 77.

<sup>50</sup> BEALE, J. Is communicative language teaching a thing of the past? In *Babel*. Vol. 37, No. 1 (2002); p. 12-16.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pattern drills, memorization of dialogues or choral repetition of structural patterns are used to shape learners' language behaviors.</li> </ul>
Cognitivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on <i>attention</i> when a learning task is new or when it is just beyond the present capabilities of the learner.</li> <li>• The teaching of ways of remembering things including mnemonics strategies and involving more than one of the senses is an example of successful applications of <i>memory</i> research to foreign language learning.</li> <li>• When teachers hold a dynamic view of <i>intelligence</i>, they then believe they can help all learners become better at language learning by giving instruction on language learning strategies needed to learn a language more effectively.</li> </ul>
Constructivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take account of learners as individuals, actively involved in making their own sense of the language input that surrounds them as well as the tasks presented to them.</li> <li>• The development of thinking and its relationship to language and experience as a central focus of learning.</li> <li>• A match between the requirements of any task and the cognitive level of which the learner is capable.</li> <li>• Interlanguage understood as the changes of cognitive structures through the processes of adaptation: assimilation and accommodation of the target language.</li> <li>• Language syllabuses should follow the notion of <i>spiral curriculum</i> by introducing first the basic elements of the language, and then revisit and build upon these repeatedly.</li> <li>• Attention to the worthiness or relevance of a subject or activity in the designing of tasks.</li> <li>• A balance between the teaching of the target language and the developing of the learners' ability to make guesses, to take risks and to learn from their mistakes.</li> </ul>
Humanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise learning and development as lifelong, rather than restricted to a particular phase of one's life.</li> <li>• View of learning as a cumulative process in which learners deal with subsequent tasks and education as the involvement of the whole person, the emotions and feelings, not only pieces of knowledge.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of establishing a secure environment where learners feel that they belong and where they can build up self-respect by receiving respect from others.</li> <li>• A need to provide optimum conditions for individualized and group learning of an authentic nature to take place.</li> <li>• A need to foster both a sense of freedom and a counterbalancing sense of responsibility.</li> <li>• Viewing every learning experience within the context of helping learners to develop a sense of personal commitment to make choices for themselves in what and how they learn.</li> </ul>
Social interactionism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept of mediation as a key element in this process.</li> <li>• A need to help learners to learn how to learn and focus on the use of language as a tool in both bringing meaning to and obtaining meaning from learning activities.</li> <li>• The dynamic nature of the interplay between teachers, learners, and tasks, and a view of learning as arising from collaborations and interactions with others.</li> <li>• A requirement to develop teamwork skills and to see individual learning as essentially related to the success of group learning.</li> <li>• Language acquisition as an unpredictable developmental process requiring a communicatively interactive and cooperative negotiation of meaning on the parts of learners to influence their own developing language system.</li> </ul>

### 2.3.6 Educational Psychology and Language Learning

In order for EFL teachers to be able to transform a language learning experience into a truly educational one, they should not be concerned just with theories of instruction, but with theories of learning to learn, theories of making learning experiences meaningful and relevant to the learner, theories of individuals developing and growing as a whole person. By identifying and comprehending, at least, the five main approaches of educational psychology, language teachers can reach an enhanced view of the interplay of the different aspects and factors (behavioral, cognitive, social, human, interactive) involved in the process of learning which, ultimately, would help them construct their own educational psychological framework to guide their decisions and practices.



Language teachers and teachers in general, therefore, need to elaborate an educational psychological framework that can provide them with a comprehensive understanding of what is involved in the process of learning so that they can better inform and underpin their teaching. By doing so, language teachers could help learners move along the learning process successfully by including meaningful tasks to assist them in making sense of the learning experience. Likewise, language teachers could critically evaluate learning theories, teaching methods, instructional materials, and class activities to approach learning not just as mere instruction but as a social process of interpersonal interactions in which individuals work together to construct shared understandings and knowledge.

This study strives to integrate the most important premises of humanism and social Interactionism to help an EFL teacher center his planning, his teaching and his assessment around the needs, interests and affective attributes of a group of beginner students in an attempt to actively engage them in creating, understanding, and connecting to knowledge through truly educational experiences. The next section discusses what the EFL field has said about the affective domain.

## 2.4 THE AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

Until recently, the affective domain or dimension of learning has been neglected by traditional methodologies. According to Mark Feder (1987), affective considerations have habitually depended on the teacher's temperament. That is to say, such considerations have been incidental rather than integral to the teaching methodology and were not grounded in a conscious philosophy of pedagogy. With the growing realization of the importance of affective factors has come a number of new approaches to teaching directed at the "whole person", which focused on the condition of the learner. Such holistic approaches have attempted to enhance the students' readiness to learn and recognize the comfort, enjoyment, and engagement of the students as legitimate and primary concerns of teachers. As Brown (1994) observed:

The importance of the affective domain has been recently stressed in most of the literature on language teaching methods and techniques. A number of methods have been devised in the last decade –and some used successfully– which claim to capitalize on humanistic factors in language learning<sup>51</sup>.

Krathwohl's taxonomy is perhaps the best known of any of the affective taxonomies. This taxonomy is ordered according to the principle of internalization. Internalization refers to the process whereby a person's affect toward an object passes from a general awareness level to a point where the affect is 'internalized' and consistently guides or controls the person's behavior.

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<sup>51</sup> BROWN, H. D. Op. cit., p. 22.

This affective taxonomy has 5 specific levels of commitment to the desired affective changes in the learners' value system (Karthwohl, D., Bloom, B. and Masia, B. 1964):

1. *Receiving*: willingness to receive or to attend to particular phenomena or stimuli (classroom activities, textbook, assignment, etc.). From the teaching standpoint, receiving is concerned with getting, holding, and directing the student's attention.
2. *Responding*: refers to active participation on the part of the student. Responding indicates the desire that a student has become sufficiently involved in or committed to a subject, activity, etc., so as to seek it out and gain satisfaction from working with it or engaging in it.
3. *Valuing*: the student sees worth or value in the subject, activity, assignment, etc. An important element of behavior characterized by valuing is that it is motivated, not by the desire to comply or obey, but by the individual's commitment to the underlying value guiding the behavior.
4. *Organization*: bringing together a complex of values, possible disparate values, resolving conflicts between them, and beginning to build an internally consistent value system. The individual sees how the value relates to those already held or to new ones that are coming to be held.
5. *Characterization by a Value or Value Complex*: internalization of values has a place in the individual's value hierarchy. The values have controlled one's behavior for a sufficiently long period of time to have developed a characteristic "life style."

Elaborating a comprehensive educational framework for language learning would primordially entail aiming at involving learners in an active process of meaning construction which would mainly call for new or improved methods, materials and tasks to design, instruct and assess truly educational experiences, but, more importantly, it would require an effective integration of the two basic domains or dimensions of learning: the cognitive domain (knowledge or mind based) and the affective domain (psychological and sociological based). Noted learning and cognition specialist R. Gross also recognized the need for this integrative approach to learning: "It is now apparent that learning can be enlivened and strengthened by activating more of the brain's potential. We can accelerate and enrich our learning, by engaging the senses, emotions, and imagination"<sup>52</sup>.

#### 2.4.1 Affective dimensions of learning.

The affective domain addresses interests, attitudes, opinions, appreciations, values, and emotional sets. Caine and Caine noted:

We do not simply learn. What we learn is influenced and organized by emotions and mind sets based on expectancy, personal biases and

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<sup>52</sup> GROSS, R. As cited by ARNOLD, J (ED). *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge : CUP, 1992, p. 8.

prejudices, degree of self-esteem, and the need for social interaction. ... [The affective dimensions] operate on many levels, somewhat like the weather. They are ongoing, and the emotional impact of any lesson or life experience may continue to reverberate long after the specific event<sup>53</sup>.

Emotions, then, should not continue being considered the Cinderella of mental functions, since they “link what is important for us to the world of people, things, and happenings.” (Oatley and Jenkins, 1996, p. 122 cited in Arnold, 1999, p. 2). There is a growing body of evidence, according to Jane Arnold (1999), that points to the significance of our emotions in maintaining our physical well-being and in helping us store information and also trigger its recall. How students feel about themselves as learners and how schools help students develop self-confidence are related to the affective domain since they are important components in achievement. Caine and Caine (1991) remarked on the importance of the school's "emotional climate" in having an effect on student learning:

Teachers need to understand that students' feelings and attitudes will be involved and will determine future learning. Because it is impossible to isolate the cognitive from the affective domain, the emotional climate in the school and classroom must be monitored on a consistent basis, using effective communication strategies and allowing for student and teacher reflection and metacognitive processes. In general, the entire environment needs to be supportive and marked by mutual respect and acceptance both within and beyond the classroom<sup>54</sup>.

When students' interests, attitudes, beliefs, and emotional sets are considered and when they feel good about themselves as learners, they are more likely to take the risks and focus the attention necessary for further learning. Students are more willing to tackle tasks if they believe they can be successful. When students feel defeated or unable to learn, the problems of teaching them become very difficult. That is why affective and emotional factors should be considered from the very beginning of their studies, so that they do not develop negative feelings about their own abilities and about their willingness to participate and take risks in language learning. The next section discusses in greater detail the elusive concept of affect.

#### 2.4.2 Affect.

It is noticeable that most educational systems assess students' performances by their mastery of cognitive objectives instead of the affective goals. This type of goals is neglected in education because of two main reasons. First, affective

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<sup>53</sup> CAINE, R.N. and CAINE, G. *Making Connections: Teaching and the human brain*. Menlo Park, CA : Addison Wesley, 1991, p. 82.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

goals are elusive; they are not easily expressed; they are difficult to observe and measure and they develop slowly. Second, it is difficult to clearly articulate what is meant by affect as the definitions of some psychological terms associated with the affective system demonstrate:

- Affect: a feeling or emotion as distinguished from cognition, thought, or action;
- Emotion: an affective state of consciousness in which joy, sorrow, fear, hate, or the like, is experienced usually accompanied by certain physiological changes, as distinguished from cognitive and volitional states of consciousness;
- Feeling: a state of mind; an affective state of consciousness, such as that resulting from emotions, sentiments, or desires; an emotional state or disposition; nonintellectual or subjective human response;
- Mood: a state or quality of feeling at a particular time, a distinctive or prevailing emotional quality or general attitude;
- Subjective: proceeding from or taking place within an individual's mind.

According to Jane Arnold, the term *affect* has to do with aspects of our emotional being. She considered *affect as aspects of emotions, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behavior*. Arnold argued that the affective side of learning is not in opposition to the cognitive side. When both are used together, the learning process can be constructed on a firmer foundation. Neither the cognitive nor the affective has the last word, and neither can be separated from the other (Arnold, 1999, p. 1). In this regard, LeDoux saw emotion and cognition as partners in the mind and who insisted that now it is time “to reunite cognition and emotion in the mind”<sup>55</sup>. The next section deals with affect specifically in language learning.

#### 2.4.3 Affect and language learning.

A broad understanding of affect in language learning is important for, at least, two reasons. First, attention to affective aspects can lead to more effective language learning because it is necessary to focus on how language teachers can overcome problems created by negative emotions and how they can create and use more positive, facilitative emotions. A second reason for focusing attention on affect in language classroom reaches beyond language teaching and beyond what has traditionally been considered the academic realm (Arnold, 1999, pp. 2–3). According to Arnold, as we teach language, we can also educate learners to live more satisfying lives and to be responsible members of society. Thus, the relationship between affect and language learning is a bidirectional one. Attention to affect can enhance language learning and language learning can, in turn, contribute in a very significant way to educating learners affectively.

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<sup>55</sup> LEDOUX, J. Op. cit., p. 39.

More and more EFL and ESL language educators are recognizing the value of the affective domain in the language learning process. As a result, many of the main advances in language teaching have, in some way, related to the need to acknowledge affect in language learning. This acknowledgement of affective variables has been reflected in some modern teaching methods aimed at reducing anxiety and inhibitions and enhancing the learner's motivation and self-esteem: Silent way, Community Language Learning, Natural Approach, and Suggestopaedia. Similarly, some hypotheses regarding the important role of affect in learning have resonated strongly with the intuitions of many second and foreign language teachers. Perhaps one of the best known theoretical proposals has been Krashen's affective filter (1982). He posed the existence of an internal or mental barrier that interfered with or blocked second language acquisition. According to him, this affective filter is caused by affective factors: high anxiety, low self-esteem, and low motivation and it needs to be low if language acquisition is to take place. In 1997, Schumann posed that affect must be seen as central to the understanding of L2 attainment/achievement and argued that second language acquisition is emotionally driven and emotion underlies most, if not all, cognition.

#### 2.4.4 Affective factors and language learning.

As shown previously, research has shown that, as well as being an effort of the intellect, learning a language involves the emotions and the identity of the learner in a way that other subjects do not. Citing the studies of Gardner (1985, 1990), Kimberly Noels et. al stated, "In fact, affective variables, such as attitude, orientations, anxiety, and motivation, have been shown to be at least as important as language aptitude for predicting L2 achievement"<sup>56</sup>. As Laura Yokochi<sup>57</sup> noted, it is difficult to separate the elements of the affective domain because they inevitably overlap. However, for the purposes of this study, only four affective factors, common in the research, will be addressed. They are: beliefs, attitudes, anxiety and motivation. Following each term, there is an explanation and some discussion based on the literature.

##### 2.4.4.1 Beliefs

Language learners bring, maintained Nami Iwaki<sup>58</sup>, a complex set of attitudes, experiences, expectations, and learning strategies into the classroom when

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<sup>56</sup> NOELS, K. A., LUC, P., CLEMENT, R. and VALLERAND, R. J. Why are you learning a second language? Motivational orientations and self-determination theory. In *Language Learning*. Vol. 50, No. 1 (2000); p. 58.

<sup>57</sup> YOKOCHI, L. *Affective factors in second language acquisition: A critical review of the literature*. Morgantown, Virginia. Thesis, Masters of Arts in language teaching. Eberly College of Arts and Sciences at West Virginia University, 2003. p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> IWAKI, N. Exploring relationships between anxiety and achievement in the language laboratory class. In *LET journal of central Japan*. Vol. 16 (2005a); p. 2.

learning a foreign language. One of the most significant variables that they bring to the classroom is beliefs about language learning. According to Horwitz, this variable refers to learners' beliefs or opinions regarding various aspects of language learning, including "foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, the use of learning and communication strategies and the effect of motivation"<sup>59</sup>. Young<sup>60</sup>, similarly, cited learner beliefs about language learning as a major contributor to language success insisting that when unrealistic beliefs and the reality of language learning clash, students experience frustration that could lead to anxiety. Studying learners' beliefs about language learning is, then, important not only because they influence learners' behaviors, use of strategies, motivation and their affective states such as anxiety and confidence but also because they may be the basis of students' expectations for and commitments to successful language learning.

How beliefs come into being is viewed differently by different scholars. According to Zehra Gabillon<sup>61</sup>, to what extent beliefs are social and cultural but also mental and individual has been the major debate in the social and cognitive psychological literature. She claimed that the scholars taking social psychological and sociocultural standpoints maintain that beliefs are constructed in a social context. They, therefore, consider it to be inexact to talk about beliefs without referring to the context in which they are shaped. The scholars defending cognitivist viewpoints, on the other hand, have paid little or no attention to the context where beliefs are constructed. To Gabillon, these scholars have considered beliefs as *well-organized schema* (networks of connected ideas) and claimed that belief formation is an individual autonomous act and each belief bears the mark of the individual. However, Gabillon acknowledged that both a cognitive perspective on the individuality of beliefs and a social psychological perspective on the social nature of beliefs are both considered to be justifiable and complementary.

According to Eva Bernat and Inna Gvozdenko<sup>62</sup>, other definitions of beliefs have identified them as: learner assumptions (Riley, 1980); implicit theories (Clark, 1988); self-constructed representational systems (Rust, 1994); culture of learning (Contazzi & Jin, 1996); conceptions of learning (Benson & Lor, 1999), and "very strong filters of reality" (Arnold, 1999, p. 256). Bernat and Gvozdenko noted that research has shown that beliefs about learning are a fairly stable body of knowledge, which develops early in elementary and secondary school children, and mid-to-late adolescence, or by the time a student gets to college.

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<sup>59</sup> HORWITZ, E. Surveying student beliefs about language learning. In A. Wenden and J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning*. Englewood, NJ : Prentice-Hall, 1987, p. 121.

<sup>60</sup> YOUNG, D. Creating a low anxiety classroom environment: What does language anxiety research suggest?. In *Modern language journal*. Vol. 75 (1991); p. 426.

<sup>61</sup> GABILLON, Z. L2 learner's beliefs: An overview. In *Journal of Language and Learning*. Vol. 3, No. 2 (2005), p. 234.

<sup>62</sup> BERNAT, E. and GVOZDENKO, I. Beliefs about language learning: Current knowledge, pedagogical implications and new research directions. *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. Vol. 9, No 1 (2005); p. 3

Bernat and Gvozdenko claimed that preconceived beliefs may directly influence or even determine a learner's attitude or motivation, and precondition the learner's success or lack of success. To them, supportive and positive beliefs help to overcome problems and thus sustain motivation, while negative or unrealistic beliefs can lead to decreased motivation, frustration and anxiety. Many successful learners develop insightful beliefs about language learning processes, their own abilities, and the use of effective learning strategies, which have a facilitative effect on learning. On the other hand, students can have "mistaken," uninformed, or negative beliefs that may lead to a reliance on less effective strategies, resulting in a negative attitude towards learning and autonomy. Such beliefs can also inhibit learners' perceptiveness to the ideas and activities presented in the language classroom, "particularly when the approach is not consonant with the learners' experience"<sup>63</sup>.

Bernat and Gvozdenko as well as other researchers have suggested possible measures language teachers might take to promote positive beliefs in the classroom and eliminate the negative ones since language learners are capable of bringing this knowledge to consciousness and articulating it. In 1986, Bassano, for instance, offered teachers six steps towards dealing with student beliefs:

- become aware of students' past classroom experiences and their assumptions about language learning;
- build students' confidence;
- begin where the students are and move slowly;
- show them achievement;
- allow for free choice as much as possible; and
- become aware of the students' interests and concerns, their goals and objectives.

More recently, Dörnyei (2001) suggested that in order to rectify students' erroneous assumptions they:

- need to develop an informed understanding of the nature of second language acquisition and reasonable criteria for progress;
- should be made aware of the fact that the mastery of a second or foreign language can be achieved in a number of different ways, using diverse strategies; and
- should discover for themselves the methods and techniques by which they learn best.

With English being the international language and schools stressing the importance of English more than ever, knowledge of the relationship between learners' beliefs about language learning (in this case, English) can provide teachers with a better understanding of their students' expectations, commitments, and all other beliefs related to English achievement. This

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

research will examine some of the beliefs held by beginner EFL students at the CCA. Beliefs will be understood as the constructed assumptions, opinions, conceptions and expectations that EFL learners have about themselves as learners, the language, their classroom and the learning process. The table below summarizes the main ideas of this section:

Table 7

*Summary of the Literature Review of Beliefs*

BELIEFS	
DEFINITIONS	SUGGESTIONS
<p><b>Horwitz</b> (1986): this variable refers to learners' beliefs or opinions regarding various aspects of language learning, including foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, the use of learning and communication strategies and the effect of motivation.</p> <p><b>Gabillon</b> (2005): both a cognitive perspective on the individuality of beliefs and a social psychological perspective on the social nature of beliefs are both considered to be justifiable and complementary.</p> <p><b>Eva Bernat and Inna Gvozdenko</b> (2005): a fairly stable body of knowledge acquired consciously as well as unconsciously and derived from a number of origins at various stages of one's life.</p> <p><b>Riley</b> (1980): learner assumptions.</p> <p><b>Clark</b> (1988): implicit theories.</p> <p><b>Rust</b> (1994): self-constructed representational systems</p> <p><b>Contazzi &amp; Jin</b> (1996): culture of learning</p>	<p>Bassano's (1986) six steps towards dealing with student beliefs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• become aware of students' past classroom experiences and their assumptions about language learning;</li> <li>• build students' confidence;</li> <li>• begin where the students are and move slowly;</li> <li>• show them achievement;</li> <li>• allow for free choice as much as possible; and</li> <li>• become aware of the students' interests and concerns, their goals and objectives.</li> </ul> <p>Dörnyei (2001): Students need to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop an informed understanding of the nature of second language acquisition and reasonable criteria for progress;</li> <li>• be made aware of the fact that the mastery of a second or foreign language can be achieved in a number of different ways, using diverse strategies; and</li> <li>• discover for themselves the methods and techniques by which they learn best.</li> </ul>



<b>Benson &amp; Lor</b> (1999): conceptions of learning. <b>Arnold</b> (1999): "very strong filters of reality"	
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#### 2.4.4.2 Attitudes.

The successful acquisition of a second language seems to some extent, contingent upon learners' attitudes toward the language learning environment, the learning situation, and how they view the target language and its speakers. This together with other variable factors such as the motivation to learn, to persist and to make an effort with learning a new skill may affect or significantly contribute to language learning outcomes. To Dörnyei<sup>64</sup>, in the field of psychology, these two terms come from different branches. Attitude is a sociological term and an aspect of the social context, while motivation is the subject of investigation for psychologists looking at the individual's instinct, drive, arousal and needs. However, a quick review on the literature about attitude reveals a lack of consensus and a great diversity of definitions:

- Fasold (1984), for example, suggested that the attitude towards a language is often the reflection of the attitudes towards the members of that speech community. People's reaction towards a language variety reveals their perception regarding the speakers of that variety -- their social, political and economic backdrop.
- Gardner (1985) operationally defined attitude as an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent. To Gardner, attitudes do not influence learning directly but they are instrumental in the development of motivation. With regard to language learning we can distinguish two types of attitude: (1) attitudes toward the learning object itself as well as the reasons for studying the language and (2) attitudes toward the target language group.
- Brown (1994) saw attitudes as a part of one's perception of self, of others, and of the culture in which one is living or the culture of the target language.
- Laura Yokochi (2003) defined attitudes are a social as well as emotional aspect of an individual learner. The perception of the value of learning the target language, opinions and attitudes toward the TL, the culture, the people and the learning situation itself (including the teacher, the classroom and the teaching method) all may influence learning to some degree.

The significant number of definitions available shows how difficult it is to reach a unanimous decision about this affective variable. At this point, in our particular

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<sup>64</sup> DÖRNYEI, Z. Motivation and Motivating in the Foreign Language Classroom. In *Modern Language Journal*. No. 78 (1994); p. 274.

context (EFL learning), and with the sole purpose of moving forwards, I will describe what some researchers have said about attitudes recently.

From a general perspective, Kasey Farris<sup>65</sup> defined attitudes as *the stands a person takes about objects, people, groups, and issues*. People, affirmed Farris, form attitudes about many aspects of life and for many different reasons: to simplify complex subjects; to protect self esteem; to help us adjust to world and to allow us to express fundamental values. To Farris, there are three main sources of attitudes: a) *direct experience with the objects and situations*; b) *explicit and implicit learning from others*, and c) *personality development*. However, formation and change of attitude are not two separate things, they are interwoven because people are always adopting, modifying, and relinquishing attitudes to fit their ever-changing needs and interests. Farris remarked that attitudes change when:

- a person receives new info from others or media (*cognitive change*);
- through direct experience with the attitude object (*affective change*); and
- a person is made to behave in a way different than normal (*behavioral change*).

From the ESL/EFL learning perspective, Mohsen Ghadessy and Mary Nicol<sup>66</sup> supported entirely Baker's main characteristics of attitudes (1992): they are both cognitive (i.e. are capable of being thought about) and affective (i.e. have feelings and emotions attached to them); they are dimensional rather than bipolar; they vary in degree of favorability/unfavorability'; they predispose a person to act in a certain way, but the relationship between attitudes and actions is not a strong one; they are learnt, not inherited or genetically endowed and they tend to persist but they can be modified by experience. These researchers also concurred with Ellis (1994) when this author stated that attitudes are manifested towards a number of things including the target language, the target language speakers, the target language culture, the social value of learning the L2, particular uses of the target language, and students themselves as members of their own culture.

Four aspects of classroom persuasion should be considered, suggested Morgan<sup>67</sup>, in attempting to change attitudes:

- learning content should require active learner involvement;
- the classroom environment should be one of "change or novelty";
- students need to struggle with complex material and reach their own conclusions; and
- students should become aware of their attitudes toward language and culture.

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<sup>65</sup> FARRIS, K. Attitude change. In *Theories of persuasive communication and consumer decision making*. The center for interactive advertising. (Fall, 2002).

<sup>66</sup> GHADESSY, M. and NICOL, M. Attitude change in bilingual education: The case of Brunei Darussalam. In *Multilingual matters*. Vol. 5, No. 2 (2003); p. 114.

<sup>67</sup> MORGAN, C. Attitude change and foreign language culture learning. Survey article. In *Language teaching* (Abstracts). Vol. 26 (1993); p. 73.

However, since attitudes can create barriers in the language learning process, language teachers should follow more concrete and simple recommendations to overcome rather negative attitudes or to create more positive attitudes (See Attitude change in Karen DeBord's<sup>68</sup> compilation on Adult Learners):

- A. *Try to pinpoint what is causing the negative attitude.* Is the negative attitude:
  - toward the instructor?;
  - toward the subject or learning situation?;
  - toward themselves as learners?; or
  - toward their expectancy for success in the learning activity.
- B. *To overcome attitudes towards the instructor.*
  - Share something of value with your learners: an experience or anecdote, something about yourself; your involvement in the subject matter.
  - Display a concrete indication of your cooperative intention to help students to learn: your availability, flexibleness and your special resources (websites, copies, etc).
  - Reflect language, perspective and attitude of language learner: establish rapport; strive for a feeling of "connectedness"; give rationale for assignments.
- C. *To overcome negative attitudes towards the subject.*
  - Eliminate or minimize any negative conditions surrounding the subject since things that frighten or stress learners could cause avoidant behavior, fear, humiliation, and boredom.
  - Ensure successful learning by varying instructional mode, avoiding interlearner competition, setting clear standards of learning, breaking down the course into small units for mastery, and using formative evaluation.
  - Pair negative learners with other enthusiastic learners (enthusiasm is contagious) to work towards a goal cooperatively.
- D. *To overcome attitudes towards themselves as learners:*
  - Positively confront the possibly erroneous beliefs, expectations, and assumptions that may underlie their negative attitude about themselves.
  - Help each student identify their strengths and weaknesses so that they can set goals either.
  - Give learners some opportunities to initiate and direct their own learning because the learners must believe that they are the primary cause for new learning and they must feel independent of the instructor.
- E. *To overcome attitudes towards learning activities:*
  - Relate learning to students' interests and needs in life: work, study, personal growth, etc.
  - Use humor liberally and frequently because people love to laugh, humor is an attitude, and laugh at oneself and with others helps reduce tension.
  - Use examples, stories helps with clarification, comprehension keep stories imaginative, unpredictable, and interesting.

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<sup>68</sup> DEBORD, K. Refreshing Your Memory on Adult Learners. In North Carolina State University, Youth Development & Family & Consumer Sciences, 1996.

This brief overview of language attitude shows how important it is to collect data about attitudes. This study will assume attitudes as the evaluative and socioaffective reactions, thoughts and predispositions that EFL beginner students have toward language learners, English and its culture, the value of learning the target language, and the learning situation itself. Data collection about EFL students' attitudes can help EFL teachers to better design or include classroom activities to address attitude structures, emotional reactions and typical behaviors explicitly. By doing so, EFL teachers can help beginner students be aware of their existing attitudes and encourage them to adopt or adapt better or more favorable attitudes towards their EFL learning. The table below summarizes the main ideas of this section:

Table 8

*Summary of the Literature Review on Attitudes*

ATTITUDES	
DEFINITIONS	SUGGESTIONS
<p><b>Fasold</b> (1984) suggested that people's attitudes towards a language reveal their perception regarding the speakers of that variety -- their social, political and economic backdrop.</p> <p><b>Gardner</b> (1985) operationally defined attitude as an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent. To Gardner, attitudes do not influence learning directly but they are instrumental in the development of motivation.</p> <p><b>Baker</b> (1992) characterized attitudes as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• both cognitive (i.e. are capable of being thought about) and affective (i.e. have feelings and emotions attached to them);</li> <li>• dimensional rather than bipolar;</li> </ul>	<p>Recommendations to overcome rather negative attitudes or to create more positive attitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share something of value with your learners.</li> <li>• Display a concrete indication of your cooperative intention to help students to learn.</li> <li>• Reflect language, perspective and attitude of language learner.</li> <li>• Eliminate or minimize any negative conditions surrounding the subject.</li> <li>• Ensure successful learning.</li> <li>• Positively confront mistaken beliefs.</li> <li>• Pair students to work towards a goal cooperatively.</li> <li>• Help each student identify their strengths and weaknesses so that they can set their own learning goals.</li> <li>• Give learners some opportunities to initiate and direct their own learning.</li> <li>• Relate learning to students' interests and needs in life.</li> <li>• Use humor liberally and frequently because laugh at oneself and with others helps reduce tension.</li> <li>• Avoid pressure to think or do since</li> </ul>

- varying in degree of favorability/unfavorability’;
- predispositions to act in a certain way;
- learnt, not inherited or genetically endowed; and
- persistent but capable of being modified by experience.

**Brown** (1994) saw attitudes as a part of one’s perception of self, of others, and of the culture in which one is living or the culture of the target language.

**Kasey Farris** (2002) defined attitudes as *the stands a person takes about objects, people, groups, and issues*. Farris maintains that attitudes can be formed by many situations in life, and they are constantly evolving to accommodate new information.

**Laura Yokochi** (2003) defined attitudes are a social as well as emotional aspect of an individual learner. They include the perception of the value of learning the target language, opinions toward the TL, the culture, the people and the learning situation itself.

#### 2.4.4.3 Anxiety

Research on affect in language learning has flourished and grown to such an extent over the past twenty years that it has come to be seen as a crucial factor at the very heart of language acquisition research. Alongside this surge of interest in affect, Mark Daubney<sup>69</sup> said that anxiety is one of the many internal factors that are part of the learner’s personality and can clearly be placed within

<sup>69</sup> DAUBNEY, M. (2002). Anxiety and inhibitive factors in oral communication in the classroom: Study of third year English Language specialists at the Catholic University in Viseu. In *Mathesis*. No. 11 (2002); p. 289.

Arnold and Brown's general definition of affect. When talking about anxiety, he cited Scovel who in 1978 viewed anxiety as *a state of apprehension, a vague fear, a cluster of affective states, influenced by factors which are intrinsic and extrinsic to the foreign language learner*. This researcher made an important distinction between *facilitating* anxiety and *debilitating* anxiety. The former helps the learner to fight the new task or structure and is often seen as that state somewhere between anxiety and nervousness that keeps us alert and gives us a competitive edge. Debilitating anxiety on the other hand, causes us to flee the new task or structure and hence leads to avoidance behaviour.

In 1986, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's addressed the same topic as Scovel. They defined anxiety as *the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system*. These authors related three performance anxieties to foreign language learning, more specifically to the foreign language classroom situation. To begin with, they understood *communication apprehension* as uneasiness arising from the learner's inability to adequately express mature thoughts and ideas. Then, they saw *test anxiety* as fear or apprehension over academic evaluation. Finally, they comprehended *fear of negative evaluation* as apprehension arising from the learner's need to make a positive social impression on others.

In 1993, Gardner and MacIntyre also offered a definition of language anxiety. They understood anxiety as *a fear or apprehension occurring when a learner is expected to perform in the second or foreign language*. To them, anxiety is the strongest negative correlate of language achievement because the anxious student may be characterized as an individual who perceives the L2 as an uncomfortable experience, who withdraws from voluntary participation, who feels social pressures not to make mistakes and who is less willing to try uncertain or novel linguistic forms.

Daubney<sup>70</sup> also noted that anxiety as studied in psychology has essentially been broken down into three categories:

- *Trait anxiety* – that is, people who have a more permanent predisposition to being anxious;
- *State or situational anxiety* – that is, the actual experience of anxiety in relation to some particular event or act; and
- *Task anxiety* – that is, people who feel anxious while doing a particular task.

Foreign and second language research has focused primarily on state or specific anxiety seeing learning a foreign language as an experience that may cause anxiety in people who are not normally predisposed to being anxious. However, research on task anxiety has indicated that people feel language-skill-specific anxiety in relation to language tasks related to speaking and listening.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 290.

In regard to language anxiety, D. J. Young<sup>71</sup> distinguished a number of potential sources. *The personality component* revolves around the individual's feelings of self-esteem and includes the characteristic anxiety, various personal and interpersonal anxieties, the extent of desire for popularity, diffidence, stage fright, perfectionism, etc. *The learner's beliefs about language learning* refer to unrealistic expectation and erroneous ideas about the language that according to the learner's perception must be learned and controlled for him or her to become a 'knower' of the language. *The teacher's beliefs about language learning* which include the language teacher's private speculations or doubts about the ways to treat the students so as to encourage them to learn the language. *The interaction between the learner and the teacher* refer to the constant correction of grammar mistakes in discussions and conversations. *Processes, atmosphere, and events in class* refer to the current emphasis on oral competence that has led to a dilemma for the instructors as the greater focus on oral activities, the greater the likelihood that the number of students experiencing language anxiety will increase. *Tests in the second language* include the stress caused by difficult tests and unclear or unfamiliar instructions.

To overcome their anxieties, argued David Shaffer<sup>72</sup>, it would be helpful for the learners to implement the following suggestions:

- *Examine the thoughts that cause the fear.* Learners need to recognize that their fears are unfounded and unwarranted and that making errors is an integral part of the language learning process.
- *Learn how to relax.* Learners need to sit comfortably and straight in the classroom seat. Before class and during class, they need to take long, slow breaths and they need to relax the facial muscles.
- *Know what you want to say.* Learners need to think through the ideas that they want to express and prepare the vocabulary, structures, and intonation that are appropriate to correctly express those ideas.
- *Concentrate on the message rather than on the people.* Learners should not worry about what people may think if they make a mistake in the message they are trying to communicate. Instead, they need to concentrate on producing a message to make communication successful.
- *Become familiar with your audience.* They need to get to know your classmates. The better they know someone, the easier it is to speak with them.
- *Gain experience to build confidence.* The more learners speak English, the more confidence they will have in speaking English.

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<sup>71</sup> YOUNG, D. J. Creating a low anxiety classroom environment: What does language anxiety research suggest?. In *Modern language journal*. No. 75 (1991); p. 426-439.

<sup>72</sup> SHAFFER, D. Fear and fun: Dealing with student anxiety in the classroom. In *National Conference*, Cheonan, Korean TESOL, 2006, p. 162-163.

Renée Von Wörde<sup>73</sup> recommended teachers to strive to create a low stress, friendly and supportive learning environment; foster a proactive role on the part of the students themselves to create an atmosphere of group solidarity and support; be sensitive to students' fears and insecurities and help them to confront those fears; use gentle or non-threatening methods of error correction and offer words of encouragement; make judicious use of purposeful group work or collaborative activities; use relevant and interesting topics for class discussions and exercises; consider ways to layer and reinforce the material in an attempt to aid acquisition and retention; give written directions for homework assignments; attend to the learning styles or preferences of the students; and hear and appreciate the voices of students for valuable insights, ideas and suggestions.

Having acknowledged the clash that certain language classroom situations, processes, and elements have on language students, it seems useful, even necessary to provide teachers and students with a practical tool and set of activities to help them reduce or overcome different anxieties that may arise from EFL learning. Anxieties will be understood as a subjective state of apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system which occurs at the learner, language, classroom and learning level when a student is expected to perform in a foreign language. This study will identify some anxiety-related factors EFL beginner students perceive in class to propose some strategies or guidelines for EFL teachers to take into account in order to help their students deal with anxiety effectively when learning and speaking English. The table below summarizes the main ideas of this section.

Table 9

*Summary of the Literature Review on Anxieties*

ANXIETY	
DEFINITIONS	SUGGESTIONS
<p><b>Scovel</b> (1978): a state of apprehension, a vague fear, a cluster of affective states, influenced by factors which are intrinsic and extrinsic to the foreign language learner.</p> <p><b>Horwitz, et al.</b> (1986): the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal</p>	<p>David E. Shaffer's (2006) suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine the thoughts that cause the fear.</li> <li>• Learn how to relax.</li> <li>• Know what you want to say.</li> <li>• Concentrate on the message rather than on the people.</li> <li>• Become familiar with you audience.</li> <li>• Gain experience to build confidence.</li> </ul> <p>Renée Von Wörde's (2003)</p>

<sup>73</sup> VON WÖRDE, R. Students' perspectives on foreign language anxiety. In *Inquiry*. Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring 2003).



<p>of the autonomic nervous system.</p> <p><b>Gardner and MacIntyre (1993):</b> a fear or apprehension occurring when a learner is expected to perform in the second or foreign language.</p> <p>Anxiety as studied in psychology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Trait anxiety</i> – that is, people who have a more permanent predisposition to being anxious;</li> <li>• <i>State or situational anxiety</i> – that is, the actual experience of anxiety in relation to some particular event or act; and</li> <li>• <i>Task anxiety</i> – that is, people who feel anxious while doing a particular task.</li> </ul>	<p>recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create a low stress, friendly and supportive learning environment;</li> <li>• foster a proactive role on the part of the students themselves to create an atmosphere of group solidarity and support;</li> <li>• be sensitive to students' fears and insecurities and help them to confront those fears;</li> <li>• use gentle or non-threatening methods of error correction and offer words of encouragement;</li> <li>• make judicious use of purposeful group work or collaborative activities;</li> <li>• use relevant and interesting topics for class discussions and exercises;</li> <li>• consider ways to layer and reinforce the material in an attempt to aid acquisition and retention;</li> <li>• speak more slowly or consider using English to clarify key points or give specific directions;</li> <li>• attend to the learning styles or preferences of the students; and</li> <li>• hear and appreciate the voices of students for valuable insights, ideas and suggestions.</li> </ul>
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#### 2.4.4.4 Motivation

Out of the abundance of individual learner variables identified in the final decades of the last century by many researchers, the construct of motivation remains one of the most important factors in second language acquisition (Jose, 2003). To try to answer what motivation is and whether it can be clearly defined, one should overview definitions of many authors. Gardner (1985), for instance, described motivation in terms of attitude, effort and desire. Pintrich and Schunk defined motivation as “the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained”<sup>74</sup>. Peacock<sup>75</sup> defined motivation as interest in and enthusiasm for the materials used in the class; persistence with the learning task, as indicated by levels of attention or action for an extended duration; and levels of concentration and enjoyment.

<sup>74</sup> PINTRICH, P.R., and SCHUNK, D.H. *Motivation in Education: Theory, Research and Application*. New Jersey : Prentice Hall, 1996, p. 20.

<sup>75</sup> PEACOCK, M. The effect of authentic materials on the motivation of EFL learners. In *English Language Teaching Journal*. Vol. 51, No. 2 (1997); p 145.

Brown<sup>76</sup>, however, discussed motivation from two distinctly different viewpoints or as he called them: *camps*. One of these camps is a traditional view of motivation that accounts for human behavior through a behavioristic paradigm that stresses the importance of rewards and reinforcement. In the other camp are a number of cognitive psychological viewpoints that explain motivation through deeper, less observable phenomena. Brown concluded that due to learner and context variables, and also to other complex factors, which most likely affect motivation, *it appears that there are no clear-cut definitions that are suitable and relevant for every researcher, or for all contexts of study*. However, he stated that most educators and authors seem to be in agreement that motivation is *to some extent, a mental state of degree in behavior and desire, to achieve a certain task or reach particular goals*.

In Self-Determination Theory, Edward Deci and Richard Ryan<sup>77</sup> distinguished between different types of motivation based on the different reasons or goals that give rise to an action. They differentiated between *intrinsic motivation*, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and *extrinsic motivation*, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome. In 2000, Ryan and Deci<sup>78</sup> revisited the classic definitions of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and discussed the relations of both classes of motives to basic human needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. They stated that if intrinsic motivation is to be maintained or enhanced, people must not only experience perceived feelings of competence (*self-efficacy*) but they must also experience a sense of autonomy (*self-determination*). Thus, classroom and home environments can facilitate or forestall intrinsic motivation by supporting versus thwarting the needs for autonomy and competence. Deci and Ryan explained that the freedom to be intrinsically motivated becomes increasingly curtailed by social demands and roles that require individuals to assume responsibility for nonintrinsically interesting tasks. To them, individuals perform nonintrinsical behaviors to satisfy an external demand or obtain an externally imposed reward contingency; to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego-enhancements or pride; to identify with the personal importance of a behavior and to assimilate some behaviors to the self for their presumed instrumental value. At the end, they saw that social contextual conditions that support one's feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness are the basis for one maintaining intrinsic motivation and becoming more self-determined with respect to extrinsic motivation.

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<sup>76</sup> BROWN, H. D. Op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>77</sup> DECI, E. L., and RYAN, R. M. *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York : Plenum, 1985.

<sup>78</sup> RYAN, R. and DECI, E. *Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions*. In *Contemporary educational psychology*. Vol. 25 (2000); p. 60-61.

Two of the most important models of motivation are Gardner's socio-educational model and Dörnyei's Model. According to Elizabeth Root<sup>79</sup>, Gardner was one of the pioneering researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) to focus on motivation. He chose to define motivation by specifying *four aspects of motivation*: a) a goal; b) effortful behavior to reach the goal; c) a desire to attain the goal, and d) positive attitudes toward the goal (Gardner, 1985, p. 50). Root makes it clear that Gardner<sup>80</sup> focused on classifying reasons for second language study, which he then identified as orientations. He found *two main orientations* through his research: *Integrative*: a favorable attitude toward the target language community; possibly a wish to integrate and adapt to a new target culture through use of the language and *Instrumental*: a more functional reason for learning the target language, such as job promotion, or a language requirement. Root explains that Gardner received criticism for focusing on the integrative motive. However, she maintains that some of his assertions have been misconstrued because Gardner himself stated that since the SLA process is extremely complex, when considering motivation to learn a language the complexity must also be realized and motivation must be looked at in totality and in relation to other characteristics of the individual. To Root, Gardner in no way meant to limit the possibilities of orientation to two classes. He simply found that studies have demonstrated "that subjects who select integrative reasons over instrumental ones as indicative of themselves evidence higher levels of motivational intensity"<sup>81</sup>.

In 1994, Dörnyei was concerned with expanding the model of motivation beyond two orientations, specifically in a FL setting because "the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of second language motivation is always dependent on who learns what languages where"<sup>82</sup>. Contrary to Gardner's focus on integrativeness, Dörnyei asserted that *in a FL setting instrumental orientation would have a greater influence on language learners*. Dörnyei created a model of FL learning motivation that could account for and include some of the expanding views of motivation. Three different levels of factors were included, which not only allowed for the inclusion of orientations but also for specific situations that involved the learner and the surrounding context. *The first level* in Dörnyei's model is the language level, which encompasses both integrative and instrumental motivational subsystems focusing on reactions and attitudes toward the target language. *The second level* is the learner level, which focuses on the individual's reaction to the language and the learning situation. At this level, different cognitive theories view motivation as a function of someone's thoughts, not as an instinct, need, drive, or state. *The third level* is the learning situation level, which takes into account specific motivational factors connected with the teacher, the course,

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<sup>79</sup> ROOT, E. *Motivation and learning strategies in a foreign language setting: A look at a learner of Korean*. Minnesota, 1999, 102 p. Master's thesis. Department of English as a Second Language, university of Minnesota.

<sup>80</sup> GARDNER, R. C. *Social psychology and language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London : Edward Arnold, 1985, p. 54. As cited by ROOT, E. Op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>82</sup> DÖRNYEI, Z. Op. cit., p. 275.

and the group of language learners with which an individual interacts. This level consists of extrinsic (doing something because of an external reward that may be obtained,) and intrinsic (when we do something because we get rewards enough from the activity itself) motives in different areas. Dörnyei states that “Each of the three levels of motivation exert their influence independently of the others and have enough power to nullify the effects of the motives associated with the other two levels... [However]...many of its components have been verified by very little or no empirical research in the L2 field”<sup>83</sup> (p. 283).

In 2001, Dörnyei suggested ten commandments for motivating language learners:

1. Set a personal example with your own behaviour;
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom;
3. Present the task properly;
4. Develop a good relationship with the learners;
5. Increase the learner's linguistic self-confidence;
6. Make the language classes interesting;
7. Promote learner autonomy;
8. Personalize the learning process;
9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness and
10. Familiarize learners with the target language culture.

Oxford & Shearin<sup>84</sup> also offered five practical suggestions for teachers:

- *Teachers can identify why students are studying the new language.* Teachers can find out actual motivations (motivation survey). Information on motivation can be passed on to the next class in a portfolio. Teachers can determine which parts of L2 learning are especially valuable for the students.
- *Teachers can help shape students' beliefs about success and failure in L2 learning.* Students can learn to have realistic but challenging goals. Teachers can learn to accept diversity in the way students establish and meet their goals, based on differences in learning styles.
- *Teachers can help students improve motivation* by showing that L2 learning can be an exciting mental challenge, a career enhancer, a vehicle to cultural awareness and friendship and a key to world peace.
- *Teachers can make the L2 classroom a welcoming, positive place* where psychological needs are met and where language anxiety is kept to a minimum.
- *Teachers can urge students to develop their own intrinsic rewards* through positive self-talk, guided self-evaluation, and mastery of specific goals, rather than comparison with other students. Teachers can thus

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>84</sup> OXFORD, R. and SHEARIN, J. Language Learning Motivation: expanding the theoretical framework. In *Modern language journal*. Vol. 3 (1994); p. 13.

promote a sense of greater self-efficacy, increasing motivation to continue learning the L2.

This brief overview of language motivation shows how important it is to collect data about learner motivations. This study will assume motivations as the desire, the interest, the satisfaction, the persistence and the effort that learners have to achieve tasks or reach goals satisfactorily at the learner, language, classroom and learning levels. Data collection about EFL students' motivation can help EFL teachers to better design or include classroom activities to address students' mental states to achieve certain tasks or reach particular goals. The table below summarizes the main ideas of this section.

Table 10

*Summary of the Literature Review on Motivation*

MOTIVATION	
DEFINITIONS	SUGGESTIONS
<p><b>Gardner</b> (1985): He chose to define motivation by specifying four aspects of motivation: 1. a goal; 2. effortful behavior to reach the goal; 3. a desire to attain the goal, and 4. positive attitudes toward the goal.</p> <p><b>Deci and Ryan</b> (1985): They distinguished between <i>intrinsic motivation</i>, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and <i>extrinsic motivation</i>, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome.</p> <p><b>Dörnyei</b> (1994): Three different levels of factors are included in motivation: the language level, which encompasses both integrative and instrumental motivational subsystems; the learner level, which focuses on the individual's reaction to the language and the learning situation; and the learning situation level, which takes into</p>	<p>Dörnyei's (1998) commandments :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set a personal example with your own behaviour;</li> <li>2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom;</li> <li>3. Present the task properly;</li> <li>4. Develop a good relationship with the learners;</li> <li>5. Increase the learner's linguistic self-confidence;</li> <li>6. Make the language classes interesting;</li> <li>7. Promote learner autonomy;</li> <li>8. Personalize the learning process;</li> <li>9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness and</li> <li>10. Familiarize learners with the target language culture.</li> </ol> <p>Oxford &amp; Shearin's (1996, p. 139) suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers can identify why students are studying the new language.</li> <li>• Teachers can help shape students' beliefs about success and failure in L2 learning.</li> <li>• Teachers can help students improve motivation by showing that L2 learning can be an exciting mental challenge, a</li> </ul>

<p>account specific motivational factors connected with the teacher, the course, and the group of language learners with which an individual interacts.</p> <p><b>Brown</b> (1994): there are no clear-cut definitions that are suitable and relevant for every researcher, or for all contexts of study. However, he says that most educators and authors seem to be in agreement that motivation is to some extent, a mental state of degree in behavior and desire, to achieve a certain task or reach particular goals.</p> <p><b>Pintrich &amp; Schunk</b> (1996): the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained.</p> <p><b>Peacock</b> (1997): interest in and enthusiasm for the materials used in the class; persistence with the learning task, as indicated by levels of attention or action for an extended duration; and levels of concentration and enjoyment.</p>	<p>career enhancer or a vehicle to cultural awareness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers can make the L2 classroom a welcoming, positive place.</li> <li>• Teachers can urge students to develop their own intrinsic rewards through positive self-talk, guided self-evaluation, and mastery of specific goals.</li> </ul>
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#### 2.4.5 Affective factors and language learning strategies.

It may seem that affective factors, especially motivation, have been extensively researched, but particularly in individual differences in learners, there has been insufficient research. As Ellis rightly brought to attention: "The bulk of the research has focused rather narrowly on integrative and instrumental [motives]"<sup>85</sup>. Perhaps the educator's role should be brought to the fore and explored in greater depth. In this regard, Dörnyei suggested that "teacher skills in [helping] learners should be seen as central to teaching effectiveness"<sup>86</sup>. This implies that teachers should not only be knowledgeable about general affective

<sup>85</sup> ELLIS, R. *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 517.

<sup>86</sup> DÖRNYEI, Z. *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 116.

and motivational concepts in language learning, but also be able to apply them to promote affect and emotion where they may be lacking. Following this line of thought, this study tries to prove the need or importance of an adaptation of current teaching methods to create and foster learner's affective attributes, by being aware of learner's needs and what their learning expectations may involve.

In addition to Dörnyei's suggestion, this study takes Oxford's call for research regarding FL settings: "For the sake of students worldwide, we cannot afford to restrict ourselves to a small set of motivational variables, especially when we know from research in other fields that [the affective domain] is an extraordinarily complex, multifaceted, and important construct"<sup>87</sup>. This study attempts to explore the nature of an FL setting in language instruction, how it impacts affect in beginner learners, and to include the possibility of a wide range of affective factors which influence the language experience. One specific area in which these factors can be seen at work is in the use of different learning strategies since studies by Oxford and Nyikos (1989) showed that the degree of motivation and other affective factors are the most powerful influence on how and when students use language learning strategies. The next section distinguishes what language learning strategies are.

## 2.5. LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

In 1997, Michael Lessard-Clouston asserted that within L2/FL education, a number of definitions of language learning strategies (LLS) have been used by key figures in the field. Early on, Tarone (1981) defined LLS as an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language --to incorporate these into one's interlanguage competence. Rubin (1987) later wrote that LLS are strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs and affect learning directly. In their seminal study, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) defined LLS as the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information. Finally, building on work in her book for teachers, Oxford provided this helpful definition of LLS:

...language learning strategies --specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval, or use of the new language. Strategies are tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability<sup>88</sup>.

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<sup>87</sup> OXFORD, R. *Language learning strategies around the world: Cross-cultural perspectives*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1996, p.1

<sup>88</sup> OXFORD, R. *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York : Newbury House, 1990, p. 8.

According to Lessard-Clouston, it is clear that a number of further aspects of LLS are less uniformly accepted. Oxford and others such as Wenden and Rubin (1987) noted a desire for control and autonomy of learning on the part of the learner through LLS. Cohen (1991) insisted that only conscious strategies are LLS, and that there must be a choice involved on the part of the learner. Transfer of a strategy from one language or language skill to another is a related goal of LLS, as Pearson (1988) and Skehan (1989) discussed. In her teacher-oriented text, Oxford (1990) summarized her view of LLS by listing twelve key features. In addition to the characteristics noted above, she states that LLS:

- allow learners to become more self-directed
- expand the role of language teachers
- are problem-oriented
- involve many aspects, not just the cognitive
- can be taught
- are flexible
- are influenced by a variety of factors.

Within 'communicative' approaches to language teaching, Lessard-Clouston stated, a key goal is for the learner to develop communicative competence in the target L2/FL and he believed LLS can help students in doing so. After Canale and Swain's (1980) influential article recognised the importance of communication strategies as a key aspect of strategic (and thus communicative) competence\*, a number of works appeared about communication strategies in SL/FL teaching. Lessard-Clouston noted that an important distinction exists, however, between communication and language learning strategies. Communication strategies are used by speakers intentionally and consciously in order to cope with difficulties in communicating in a SL/FL. The term LLS is used more generally for all strategies that SL/FL learners use in learning the target language, and communication strategies are therefore just one type of LLS. For all SL/FL teachers who aim to help develop their students' communicative competence and language learning, then, an understanding of LLS is crucial.

In addition to developing students' communicative competence, LLS are important because research suggests that training students to use LLS can help them become better language learners. Early research on 'good language learners' by Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) suggested a number of positive strategies that such students employ, ranging from using an active task approach in and monitoring one's L2/FL performance to listening to the radio in the L2/FL and speaking with native speakers. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) also suggested that effective L2/FL learners are aware of the LLS they use and why they use them. Graham's (1997) work in French further indicated that SL/FL teachers can help students understand good LLS and should train them to develop and use them.



The study of learning strategies is well documented through a large literature base with links to a variety of course subjects as well as higher-level thinking. Miriam Stawowy Diaz<sup>89</sup> that the past three decades, however, have seen a growing interest in studying how learning strategies help students acquire a second or foreign language. LLS theorists attribute students' success rate in language learning to the varying use of strategies. Furthermore, they believe that these strategies are teachable skills, meaning that teachers can help in the language learning process by making students aware of strategies and encouraging their use, and that students who are less successful language learners can learn these skills. Stawowy also stated that while most researchers have agreed on a definition for learning strategies, they still have differing views on how to categorize them. In broad terms, some researchers have divided learning strategies into a variety of categories. The next section discusses inventories of language learning strategies in more detail.

### 2.5.1 Inventories of language learning strategies.

LLS have been classified by many scholars (Wenden and Rubin 1987; O'Malley et al. 1985; Oxford 1990; Stern 1992; Ellis 1994, etc.). However, most of these attempts to classify language learning strategies reflect more or less the same categorizations of language learning strategies without any radical changes. Murat Hismanoglu<sup>90</sup> discussed Rubin's, O'Malley's and Oxford's inventories of language learning strategies.

### 2.5.2 Rubin's inventory of language learning strategies.

Rubin (1987), who pioneered much of the work in the field of strategies, made the distinction between strategies contributing directly to learning and those contributing indirectly to learning. These strategies are:

- *Learning strategies*: they are of two main types, being the strategies contributing directly to the development of the language system constructed by the learner:
  - Cognitive learning strategies: they refer to the steps or operations used in learning or problem-solving. They require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials. Rubin identified 6 main

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\* Dell Hymes proposed the concept of communicative competence. He argued that a speaker can be able to produce grammatical sentences that are completely inappropriate. In communicative competence, he included not only the ability to form correct sentences but to use them at appropriate times. Since Hymes proposed the idea in the early 1970s, it has been expanded considerably, and various types of competencies have been proposed.

<sup>89</sup> STAWOWY D., M. *Learning strategies in the secondary foreign language classroom: An essential curriculum component for beginning students*. 2004. 47 p. Master's Project in Curriculum and Instruction. The College of William and Mary: School of Education.

<sup>90</sup> HİSMANOĞLU, M. Language learning strategies in foreign language learning and teaching. In *The Internet TESL journal*. Vol. 6, No. 8 (August 2000).

cognitive learning strategies contributing directly to language learning: clarification/verification, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, practice, memorization and monitoring.

- Metacognitive learning strategies: these strategies are used to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning. They involve various processes as planning, prioritizing, setting goals, and self-management.

- *Communication strategies*: They are less directly related to language learning since their focus is on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker intended. Communication strategies are used by speakers when faced with some difficulty due to the fact that their communication ends outrun their communication means or when confronted with misunderstanding by a co-speaker.
- *Social strategies*: they are those activities learners engage in which afford them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge. Although these strategies provide exposure to the target language, they contribute indirectly to learning since they do not lead directly to the obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using of language.

Table 11

*Overview of Rubin's Inventory*

Rubin (1987)			
<b>Direct strategies</b>	<u>Learning strategies</u> : strategies that contribute directly to the development of the language system constructed by the learner	<i>Cognitive learning strategies</i> : the steps or operations used in learning or problem solving that require direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of learning materials.	Clarification/verification; guessing/inductive inferencing; deductive reasoning; practice; memorization and monitoring.
		<i>Metacognitive learning strategies</i> : strategies to oversee, regulate or self-direct language learning.	Planning, prioritizing, setting goals, and self-management.

<b>Indirect Strategies</b>	<u>Communication strategies</u> : their focus is on the process of participating in a conversation and getting meaning across or clarifying what the speaker intended	Circumlocution, synonyms, formulaic interaction, gestures, contextualization, new sentence production.
	<u>Social Strategies</u> : activities that learners engage in which afford them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge.	Practicing with L2 speakers, conversation initiation, accessing L2 materials, self-management, practice acquired knowledge.

### 2.5.3 O'Malley's inventory of language learning strategies.

O'Malley et al. (1990, 1994) divided language learning strategies into three main subcategories:

- *Metacognitive strategies*

Metacognitive is a term to express executive function, strategies which require planning for learning, thinking about the learning process as it is taking place, monitoring of one's production or comprehension, and evaluating learning after an activity is completed. Among the main metacognitive strategies, O'Malley et al. included advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, functional planning, self-monitoring, delayed production, self-evaluation.

- *Cognitive strategies*

Cognitive strategies are more limited to specific learning tasks and they involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, inferencing are among the most important cognitive strategies.

- *Socioaffective Strategies*

As to the socioaffective strategies, it can be stated that they are related with social-mediating activity and transacting with others. Cooperation and question for clarification are the main socioaffective strategies.

Table 12

*Overview of O'Malley and Chamot's Inventory*

<b>O'Malley and Chamot (1990)</b>		
<b>METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES:</b> They involve thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned.	<i>Planning</i>	Advance organization; strategy proposition and plan generation to handle an upcoming a task.
	<i>Direct attention</i>	General attention; distracter ignorance and attention maintenance.
	<i>Selective attention</i>	Specific attention to input or situational details; before or during a task.
	<i>Self-management</i>	Arranging for successful task conditions and controlling language performance.
	<i>Self-monitoring</i>	Checking, verifying, or correcting comprehension or performance in a task.
	<i>Problem identification</i>	Difficult point or hindering aspects identification in a task.
	<i>Self-evaluation</i>	Checking performance, language repertoire, strategy use, or ability practice.
	<i>Repetition</i>	Language model imitation, overt practice and silent rehearsal
	<i>Resourcing</i>	Dictionaries, textbooks, and prior work use.
	<i>Grouping</i>	Ordering, classifying, or labeling material.

<b>COGNITIVE STRATEGIES:</b> They involve interacting with the material to be learned, manipulating the material mentally or physically, or applying a specific technique to a learning task.	<i>Note taking</i>	Key words and concepts in abbreviated verbal, graphic, or numerical forms.
	<i>Deduction/Induction</i>	Consciously learned or self-developed rules application.
	<i>Substitution</i>	Selecting alternative approaches, revised plans, or different words or phrases
	<i>Elaboration</i>	Relating new information to prior knowledge through personal, world, academic, self-evaluative, creative, imagery elaboration.
	<i>Summarizing</i>	Mental, oral, or written summary of language and information.
	<i>Translation</i>	Rendering ideas from one language to another.
	<i>Transfer</i>	Using previously acquired linguistic knowledge to facilitate a language task
	<i>Inferencing</i>	Guess the meanings or usage of unfamiliar language items associated with a language task, predict outcomes, or fill in missing information.
<b>SOCIOAFFECTIVE STRATEGIES:</b> They involve interacting with another person to assist learning or using affective control to assist a learning task.	<i>Questioning clarification</i> for	Asking for explanation, verification, rephrasing, or examples about the material or the task; self-questioning.
	<i>Cooperation</i>	Peer work to solve a problem, pool information, learning task checking, language activity modeling, and feedback on oral or written performance.

	<i>Self-talk</i>	Reducing anxiety by using mental techniques.
	<i>Self-reinforcement</i>	Providing personal motivation by arranging rewards for oneself.

#### 2.5.4 Oxford's inventory of language learning strategies.

Oxford divided language learning strategies into two main classes, direct and indirect, which are further subdivided into 6 groups. In Oxford's system, *metacognitive strategies* help learners to regulate their learning. *Affective strategies* are concerned with the learner's emotional requirements such as confidence, while *social strategies* lead to increased interaction with the target language. *Cognitive strategies* are the mental strategies learners use to make sense of their learning, *memory strategies* are those used for storage of information, and *compensation strategies* help learners to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication.

Table 13

#### Overview of Oxford's Inventory

Oxford (1990)			
	<u>Memory strategies</u>	<i>Creating mental linkages</i>	1. Grouping. 2. Associating or elaborating. 3. Placing new words into a context.
		<i>Applying images and sounds:</i>	1. Using imagery. 2. Semantic mapping. 3. Using keywords. 4. Representing sounds in memory.
		<i>Reviewing well</i>	1. Structured reviewing.
		<i>Employing action</i>	1. Using physical response or sensation. 2. Using mechanical techniques.

<b>Direct strategies:</b> language learning strategies that directly involve the target language and require mental processing of the language.	<u>Cognitive strategies</u>	<i>Practicing</i>	1. Repeating. 2. Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems. 3. Recognizing and using formulas and patterns. 4. Recombining. 5. Practicing naturalistically.
		<i>Receiving and sending messages</i>	1. Getting the idea quickly. 2. Using resources for receiving and sending messages.
		<i>Analyzing reasoning</i>	1. Reasoning deductively. 2. Analysing expressions. 3. Analysing contrastively (across languages). 4. Translating. 5. Transferring.
		<i>Creating structure for input and output</i>	1. Taking notes. 2. Summarizing. 3. Highlighting.
	<u>Compensation strategies</u>	<i>Guessing intelligently</i>	1. Using linguistic clues. 2. Using other clues.
		<i>Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing</i>	1. Switching to the mother tongue. 2. Getting help. 3. Using mime or gesture. 4. Avoiding communication partially or totally. 5. Selecting the topic. 6. Adjusting or approximating the message. 7. Coining words. 8. Using a circumlocution or synonym.

<b>Indirect strategies:</b> they underpin the business of language learning. They support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language.	<u>Metacognitive Strategies</u>	<i>Centering your learning</i>	1. Overviewing and linking with already know material. 2. Paying attention. 3. Delaying speech production to focus on listening.
		<i>Arranging and your planning learning</i>	1. Finding out about language learning. 2. Organizing. 3. Setting goals and objectives. 4. Identifying the purpose of a language task. 5. Planning for a language task. 6. Seeking practice opportunities.
		<i>Evaluating your learning</i>	1. Self-monitoring. 2. Self-evaluating.
	<u>Affective Strategies</u>	<i>Lowering your anxiety</i>	1. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing or meditation. 2. Using music. 3. Using laughter.
		<i>Encouraging yourself</i>	1. Making positive statements. 2. Taking risks wisely. 3. Rewarding yourself.
		<i>Taking your emotional temperature</i>	1. Listening to your body. 2. Using a checklist. 3. Writing a language learning diary. 4. Discussing your feelings with someone else.
		<i>Asking questions</i>	1. Asking for clarification. 2. Asking for correction.



	<u>Social Strategies</u>	<i>Cooperating with others</i>	1. Cooperating with peers. 2. Cooperating with proficiency users of the new language.
		<i>Empathizing with others</i>	1. Developing cultural understanding. 2. Becoming aware of others thoughts and feelings.

## 2.6 STRATEGY TRAINING

As seen before, a number of inventories has been offered by different theorists to encourage ESL/EFL teachers and students to learn and use a broad range of LLS that can be tapped throughout the learning process. This use of LLS in EFL/ESL contexts is based on the belief that learning will be facilitated by making students aware of the range of strategies from which they can choose during language learning and use. Andrew Cohen<sup>91</sup> stated that the most efficient way to heighten learner awareness is to provide strategy training – explicit instruction in how to apply language learning strategies – as part of the foreign language curriculum.

To Cohen, strategy training aims to provide learners with the tools to do the following:

- Self-diagnose their strengths and weaknesses in language learning;
- Become aware of what helps them to learn the target language most efficiently;
- Develop a broad range of problem-solving skills;
- Experiment with familiar and unfamiliar learning strategies;
- Make decisions about how to approach a language task;
- Monitor and self-evaluate their performance; and
- Transfer successful strategies to new learning contexts.

Although no empirical evidence has yet been provided to determine a single best method for conducting strategy training, Cohen discussed three different instructional frameworks. According to him, each has been designed to raise student awareness of the purpose and rationale of strategy use; give students opportunities to practice the strategies they are being taught, and help them use the strategies in new learning contexts.

<sup>91</sup> COHEN, A. *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. London : Longman, 1998.

Pearson and Dole's framework<sup>92</sup> referred to first language learning, but it is applicable to the study of a second language. This framework targets isolated strategies by including explicit modeling and explanation of the benefits of applying a specific strategy, extensive functional practice with the strategy, and an opportunity to transfer the strategy to new learning contexts. The sequence includes the following steps:

- Initial modeling of the strategy by the teacher, with direct explanation of the strategy's use and importance
- Guided practice with the strategy
- Consolidation, where teachers help students identify the strategy and decide when it might be used
- Independent practice with the strategy
- Application of the strategy to new tasks

Oxford's framework (1990) outlined a useful sequence for the introduction of strategies that emphasizes:

- explicit strategy awareness,
- discussion of the benefits of strategy use,
- functional and contextualized practice with the strategies,
- self-evaluation,
- monitoring of language performance, and
- suggestions for or demonstrations of the transferability of the strategies to new tasks.

Chamot and O'Malley's (1994) framework is especially useful after students have already had practice in applying a broad range of strategies in a variety of contexts. Their approach to helping students complete language learning tasks can be described as a four-stage problem-solving process:

- Planning: Students plan ways to approach a learning task.
- Monitoring: Students self-monitor their performance by paying attention to their strategy use and checking comprehension.
- Problem solving: Students find solutions to problems they encounter.
- Evaluation: Students learn to evaluate the effectiveness of a given strategy after it has been applied to a learning task.

The different frameworks offer options for providing strategy training to a large number of learners. Based on the needs, resources, and time available to an institution, the next step is to plan the instruction students will receive. Cohen<sup>93</sup> proposed seven steps largely based on suggestions of strategy training by Oxford (1990). To Cohen, this model is especially useful because it can be

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<sup>92</sup> PEARSON, P. D. and DOLE, J. A. Explicit comprehension instruction: A review of research and a new conceptualization of learning. In *Elementary school journal*. Vol. 88 (1987); p. 151-65.

<sup>93</sup> COHEN, A. Op. Cit.

adapted to the needs of various groups of learners, the resources available, and the length of the strategy training:

- Determine learners' needs and the resources available for training.
- Select the strategies to be taught.
- Consider the benefits of integrated strategy training.
- Consider motivational issues.
- Prepare the materials and activities.
- Conduct explicit strategy training.
- Evaluate and revise the strategy training.

Table 14

*Overview of Strategy Training Approaches*

<b>Author</b>	<b>Approaches to strategy training</b>
<b>Pearson and Dole</b> (1987)	1) Initial modeling of the strategy by the teacher, with direct explanation of the strategy's use and importance; 2) Guided practice with the strategy; 3) Consolidation, where teachers help students identify the strategy and decide when it might be used; 4) Independent practice with the strategy and 5) Application of the strategy to new tasks
<b>Oxford</b> (1990)	1) Learners do a task without any strategy training. 2) They discuss how they did it and the teacher asks them to reflect on how their strategies may have facilitated their work. 3) Teacher demonstrates other helpful strategies, stressing the potential benefits. 4) Learners are provided with opportunities to practice the new strategies. 5) Learners are shown how the strategies can be transferred to other tasks. 6) Learners are provided with further tasks and asked to make choices about which strategies they will use. 7) Teacher helps learners to understand the success of their strategy use and assess their progress towards more self-directed learning.
<b>O'Malley &amp; Chamot</b> (1994)	O'Malley & Chamot summarized four suggested learner training sequences for different learning situations and ascertained a fundamental approach underlying the sequences: 1) Identify or show students how to identify their current learning strategies; 2) Explain the rationale and application for using additional learning strategies; 3) Provide opportunities and materials for practice; and 4) Evaluate or assist students to evaluate their degree of success

	with the new learning strategies
<b>Cohen (1998)</b>	1) Determine learners' needs and the resources available for training. 2) Select the strategies to be taught. 3) Consider the benefits of integrated strategy training. 4) Consider motivational issues. 5) Prepare the materials and activities. 6) Conduct explicit strategy training. 7) Evaluate and revise the strategy training.

Based on this overview of LLS, it is apparent that most researchers in second language contexts agree on the importance of explicitness in strategy instruction (Cohen, 1998; Oxford, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). The explicit learning strategy instruction essentially involves the development of students' awareness of the strategies they use, teacher modeling of strategic thinking, student practice with new strategies, student self-evaluation of the strategies used, and practice in transferring strategies to new tasks. However, there is less agreement on the issue of whether strategies instruction should be integrated into the language curriculum or taught separately. Given the current state of knowledge about explicit and integrated learning strategy instruction, this study opts for explicit instruction and integrates the instruction into their regular course work, rather than providing a separate learning strategies course. Thus, this study will explicitly teach beginner students about affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies (SLLS) as part of their everyday language instruction following Cohen's approach to strategy training. The next section elaborates on SLLS in greater detail.

## 2.7 SOCIOAFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES (SLLS)

Evidently, language teaching is not just a simple and direct transformation of input given by the teacher into output produced by the student. It involves an active and meaningful language construction through the social activation of learners' cognitive processes and affective traits (Valcárcel, Coyle and Verdú, 1996). In addition, if language is communication, EFL/ESL learning and teaching should be aimed at establishing meaningful communication in the classroom, and the first requirement towards this end is an affective affirmation of the student (Veronica de Andres, 2002). What is needed, then, is awareness that a focus on the subject matter of learning is no longer enough to develop the ultimate aim of education: love of learning. If we want our students to develop their inherent potential to learn, the affective variables such as anxiety, motivation, self-esteem and inhibition can no longer be denied, the inner needs of the learners can no longer be neglected.

Affective and social learning strategies are without doubt of paramount importance in language learning because, as Paola Bruna Scimonelli declared in 2002, these strategies involve the learner as a whole person who feels and interacts all the time with himself and others around him. A more explicit

teaching approach to these strategies is necessary mainly because the EFL learners are not familiar with paying attention to their own feelings and social relationships as part of their learning process. Scimonelli contended that affective and social strategies as well as communication strategies are the areas on which the teacher's intervention should come first, in order to develop positive frames of mind in the students and help them overcome the stress and sense of discomfort that a poor or low oral command of English sometimes causes.

The concept of socio-affective is discussed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) to refer to interaction and affective control through the use of cooperation with peers, social-mediating activities, transacting with others, questions for clarification, self-talk and self-reinforcement. To Oxford (1990), affective strategies consist of lowering one's anxiety, encouraging oneself and taking one's emotional temperature whereas social strategies deal with asking questions, cooperating with others, and emphasizing with others. It is possible to link these taxonomies as follows in order to create a more complete list of socio-affective strategies for a research project to resort to:

Table 15

*Complete List of Socioaffective Learning Strategies*

<b>Socioaffective language learning strategies</b>		
<b>Affective strategies</b>	<i>Lowering one's anxiety</i>	Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing or meditation; using music, and using laughter (Oxford, 1990)
	<i>Encouraging oneself (self-reinforcement)</i>	Providing personal motivation by arranging rewards for oneself when a language learning activity has been successfully completed (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990)  Making positive statements; taking risks wisely and rewarding yourself (Oxford, 1990)
	<i>Taking one's emotional temperature</i>	Listening to your body; using a checklist; writing a language learning diary; discussing your feelings with someone else (Oxford, 1990)
	<i>Self-talk</i>	Reducing anxiety by using mental techniques that make one feel competent to do a learning task (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990)

<b>Social strategies</b>	<i>Asking questions</i>	Asking for explanation, verification, rephrasing, or examples about the material; asking for clarification or verification about the task; posing questions to the self (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990)  Asking for clarification and asking for correction (Oxford, 1990)
	<i>Cooperating with peers (others)</i>	Working together with peers to solve a problem, pool information, check a learning task, model a language activity, or get feedback on oral or written performance (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990)  Cooperating with peers and cooperating with proficiency users of the new language (Oxford, 1990)
	<i>Social-mediating activities (Exposing oneself to social activities in TL) and transacting with others</i>	Active participation in learning tasks, start and maintain conversations (show interest, use follow-up questions, make comments, etc)
	<i>Empathizing with others</i>	Developing cultural understanding and becoming aware of others thoughts and feelings (Oxford, 1990)

Based on the previous theoretical review, this research project largely assumes that socio-affective language learning strategies (SLLS) are related with social cognition and affect since not only do they involve communicating with other people to assist learning (asking questions, cooperating with peers, transacting with others, empathizing with others, exposing oneself to social activities in TL) but also they involve using affective control to assist a learning task (Lowering one's anxiety, encouraging oneself / self-reinforcement, taking one's emotional temperature, and self-talking). SLLS could and should be considered as an effective approach to improve learners' learning success as well as their speaking competence. SLLS explicit training, then, can assist students in facing up to the emotional difficulties of social interaction, communication and language learning. Thus, this research proposes and investigates an integration of SLLS into classroom contents and everyday learning as a useful way to help EFL teachers provide beginner EFL students with an explicit social-affective training that may help them lean and interact more and better. The next section discusses the attributes and strategies that characterize beginner students.

## 2.8 BEGINNER STUDENTS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

A great deal of research has been conducted regarding the strategy instruction of intermediate or advanced second language learners or using the students' native language for instruction (Nunan, 1996; Oxford, 1989, 1990, 1996; Oxford et al., 1990; Wenden, 1987c; O'Malley et al., 1985b). However, relatively little research has been done concerning the strategy instruction of beginner students.

### 2.8.1 Studies on strategies used by beginner students.

Some studies have investigated the strategies that beginner learners tend to use. Lower level students, for example, tend to use fewer strategies, but they use them more frequently (Griffiths, 2004). The strategies they use tend to require less cognitive processing and less active manipulation of the learning task (Kimberly Iverson, 2005). MaryAnn Cunningham<sup>94</sup> (1999) found that her beginning (adult, Hispanic) ESL students used a number of socially oriented strategies. A study by O'Malley et al.<sup>95</sup> found that beginner students also tend to use strategies with less complex and more discrete-point language tasks like vocabulary learning and pronunciation, rather than integrative tasks, and they tend to use more cognitive than metacognitive strategies.

In general, beginner students tend to use memorization as a common strategy. They tend to manage feelings (such as dealing with anxiety about learning the new language) through more inward activities, such as writing in a diary or talking about their feelings, rather than more outgoing, communicative activities. They are likely to use strategies such as repetition, note taking, translation, imagery, and elaboration. Strategies such as inferencing and contextualization are not used as frequently. Other strategies are resourcing strategies (consulting dictionaries, books, or native speakers; using context, pictures), strategies based on prior experience or knowledge (comparing languages, using cognates) and repetition strategies (both oral and written).

### 2.8.2 Instruction and assessment of beginner students.

Bell and Burnaby (1984), Holt (1995), Wrigley and Guth (1992) and Holt and Gaer (1993) all discussed general techniques that facilitate instruction for low-level EL learners by involving them as active participants in selecting topics, language, and materials. Some of those techniques are:

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<sup>94</sup> CUNNINGHAM FLOREZ, M. Improving adult English language learners' speaking skills. In *the center for applied linguistics*, language acquisition, ESL resources, 1999.

<sup>95</sup> O'MALLEY, J.M., CHAMOT, A.U., STEWNER-MANZANARES, G., RUSSO, R.P., and KUPPER, L. Learning strategy applications with students of English as a second language. In *TESOL Quarterly*. Vol. 19, No. 3 (1985); p. 557-584.

- Build on the experiences and language of learners. Invite them to discuss their experiences and provide activities that will allow them to generate language they have already developed.
- Use learners as resources. Ask them to share their knowledge and expertise with others in the class.
- Sequence activities in an order that moves from less challenging to more challenging, such as progressing from listening to speaking, reading, and writing skills.
- Use cooperative learning activities that encourage interaction by providing learners with situations in which they must negotiate language with partners or group members to complete a task (See Bell, 1988).
- Include a variety of techniques to appeal to diverse learning styles. For example, merge holistic reading approaches such as language experience with discrete approaches such as phonics.

Crystal (1982) and Bell (1991) offered suggestions recommending a variety of qualitative ways to assess learners orally through reading and writing, but they made emphasis on assessing beginner students through ongoing classroom observation. Informal assessment through classroom observation can assist the teacher in determining an individual learner's needs. Attention should be paid to how learners work with their classroom materials; how they react and behave when being in class; how quickly or effectively they write or do assignments or exercises and, more importantly, how they interact in large and small groups. The basic idea of this study is help EFL beginners express their opinions, doubts and concerns in a natural and open way about affective factors and SLLS so that teachers when needed can take proper instructional measures.

Teaching strategies to beginner students must begin with knowing as much as possible about the learners themselves: what they think and feel about the teaching situation and their learning skills. This study, then, will use ongoing classroom observation to assist the teacher in determining learners' needs, reactions and behaviors. Part of that involves understanding, which strategies they tend to use and which ones they tend to disregard. Knowing those strategies can be helpful because it indicates which strategies these learners are likely to find easiest to understand, and most applicable. It also indicates what beginner students need to grow in order to expand and improve their language process.

### 2.8.3. General advice for teaching beginner students.

Relatively few experts offer advice that specifically applies to strategy training for low-proficiency learners. Lavine<sup>96</sup> gave some suggestions regarding which strategies should be taught to beginning students. She maintained that among the most useful strategies for these students are the metacognitive strategy of *deciding the purpose for listening*, the social strategy *cooperating with peers*,

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<sup>96</sup> LAVINE, R. Z. (Ed.) *Beyond the boundaries: Changing contexts in language learning*. New York : McGraw Hill, 2001.



the compensation strategies *guessing meaning* and *talking around* (or circumlocution), the affective strategies *laughter*, *group encouragement*, and *positive-self talk*, and the memory strategies of *associating/ elaborating* and *using imagery*.

Holly Andrews<sup>97</sup> noted that English language learners come to ESL/EFL classes to master a tool that will help them satisfy personal, social, professional and cultural needs, wants, and goals. Therefore, they need to learn about the English language, to practice it, and to use it as effectively as possible. ESL/EFL teachers need, then, to examine a variety of instructional approaches and techniques to support their students' language learning and language use adequately.

From a socioaffective perspective, different authors recommend EL teachers working with beginner students to:

- *Get to know their students and their needs.* Since English language learners' abilities, experiences, and expectations can affect learning, teachers need to know their backgrounds and goals as well as proficiency levels and skill needs.
- *Model tasks before asking your learners to do them.* Demonstrate a task before asking learners to respond. Use scaffolding techniques to support tasks. Build sequencing, structure, and support in learning activities. Learners need to become familiar with vocabulary, conversational patterns, grammar structures, and even activity formats before producing them.
- *Foster a safe classroom environment.* Like many adult learners, some English language learners have had negative educational experiences. Many will be not very familiar with the activities and exercises of the language classroom. Therefore, teachers need to include time for activities that allow learners to get to know one another and get to feel comfortable or at ease in class.
- *Avoid overloading learners.* Strike a balance in each activity between elements that are familiar and mastered and those that are new. Asking learners to use both new vocabulary and a new grammatical structure in a role-playing activity where they have to develop original dialogue may be too much for them to do successfully.
- *Celebrate success.* Progress for language learners can be slow and incremental. Learners need to know that they are moving forward. Make sure expectations are realistic; create opportunities for success; set short-term as well as long-term goals; and help learners recognize and acknowledge their own progress.
- *Expose students to the language they will need to manage their own discourse, both in class and out of class.* Practice ways of opening,

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<sup>97</sup> ANDREWS, H. Tips for teaching ESL beginners and pre-literate adults. In *The Internet TESL Journal*. Vol. 11, No. 8 (August, 2005).

maintaining, and closing conversations in different contexts. Expose your students to typical ways of responding and following up, which are different from your evaluative responses to their performances (e.g., expressing interest, reacting to situations appropriately, etc.).

- In language lesson, *learners must be given opportunities to develop both their fluency and their accuracy*. They cannot develop fluency if the teacher is constantly interrupting them to correct their oral mistakes. Teachers must provide students with fluency-building practice and realize that making mistakes is a natural part of learning a new language.

These comments and recommendations are not necessarily ground-breaking ideas, but they can help any EFL teacher to focus not only on what their beginner EFL learners need but also on what they sometimes overlook or ignore when learning a language. This study will strive to put most of these teaching strategies into use to better focus the instruction in a beginning-level class and to assist students to learn the language and develop their cognitive, social, psychological, and affective domains properly.

Table 16

*Summary of Literature on Beginner Students*

Strategies	Suggestions
<p><b>O'Malley et al. (1985):</b> They tend to use strategies with less complex and more discrete-point language tasks like vocabulary learning and pronunciation, rather than integrative tasks, and they tend to use more cognitive than metacognitive strategies.</p> <p><b>Cunningham (1999):</b> Most strategies are socially oriented strategies (consulting others and working together, helping each other, translating for each other, and confirming answers with each other). Other strategies, she labeled, were resourcing strategies (consulting dictionaries, books, or native speakers; using context, pictures), strategies based on prior experience or knowledge (comparing languages, using cognates), repetition strategies (both oral and written), and coping strategies (humor, encouraging one</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Get to know their students and their needs.</i> Teachers need to know their backgrounds and goals as well as proficiency levels and skill needs.</li> <li>• <i>Model tasks before asking your learners to do them.</i> Demonstrate a task before asking learners to respond by using scaffolding techniques to support tasks. Build sequencing, structure, and support in learning activities.</li> <li>• <i>Foster a safe classroom environment.</i> Teachers need to include time for activities that allow learners to get to know one another and get to feel comfortable or at ease in class.</li> <li>• <i>Avoid overloading learners.</i> Strike a balance in each activity between elements that are familiar and mastered and those that are new.</li> <li>• <i>Celebrate success.</i> Teachers need</li> </ul>

<p>another, sharing memories and traditions).</p> <p><b>Lavine</b> (2001): the most useful strategies for these students are the metacognitive strategy of deciding the purpose for listening, the social strategy cooperating with peers, the compensation strategies guessing meaning and talking around (or circumlocution), the affective strategies laughter, group encouragement, and positive-self talk, and the memory strategies of associating/ elaborating and using imagery.</p> <p><b>Griffiths</b> (2003): They tend to use fewer strategies, but they use them more frequently.</p> <p><b>Iverson</b> (2005): The strategies they use tend to require less cognitive processing and less active manipulation of the learning task.</p>	<p>to create opportunities for success; set short-term as well as long-term goals; and help learners recognize and acknowledge their own progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Expose students to the language they will need to manage their own discourse, both in class and out of class.</i> Practice ways of opening, maintaining, and closing conversations in different contexts.</li> <li>• <i>In language lesson, learners must be given opportunities to develop both their fluency and their accuracy.</i> Teachers must provide students with fluency-building practice and realize that making mistakes is a natural part of learning a new language.</li> </ul>
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## 2.9 SUMMARY

This chapter has described what EFL/ESL researchers and educational psychologists have said about learning, affect in EFL, the role and nature of some affective factors in language learning, the existence of language learning strategies, the importance of strategy training, and the role of socioaffective language strategies. All this information provided a proper groundwork to elaborate a basic EFL model to help teachers better understand their practices and more effectively engage students in creating, understanding, and connecting to language learning through truly educational experiences.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The uniqueness of each classroom setting implies that any proposal – even at school level – needs to be tested and verified and adapted by each teacher in his own classroom. The ideal is that the curricular specifications should feed a teacher's personal research and development programmes through which he is increasing his teaching... it is not enough that teachers' work should be studied; they need to study it themselves.  
Lawrence Stenhouse<sup>98</sup>

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers as researchers? According to Virginia LoCastro<sup>99</sup>, most classroom practitioners, upon seeing or hearing this phrase, will react less than enthusiastically, probably dismissing the idea as something they might like to do some time in the future, but for which they have no time right now. To her, teachers may also feel less than confident with the notion of "research" as they may believe they lack the training to carry out classroom research (CR). LoCastro explained that these reactions, based on beliefs resulting from stereotypes about "research" and "researchers," are understandable since they derive from traditional generalizations about what research is and how it should be done.

However, Bernardo Restrepo Gómez<sup>100</sup> explained that teachers, in fact, do research when they submit their daily practice to rigorous self-examination to face and transform their everyday practices in ways that respond adequately to their working environment, the needs of their students and their sociocultural agenda. To him, teachers as educational practitioners can use retrospection, introspection and participant observation to clarify guiding theories and to specify pedagogical interventions in order to re-signify and transform unsuccessful practices. He argued that, if done systematically and consistently, the empirical doing of teachers can become a reflective doing, a reflective practice. This "pedagogical know-how" can allow teachers both to overcome

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<sup>98</sup> STENHOUSE, L. *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. London: Heinemann Educational, 1975.

<sup>99</sup> LOCASTRO, V. (2000) Teachers helping themselves: Classroom research and action research. In *The language teacher*. No. 94 (Feb. 2000), p. 1.

<sup>100</sup> RESTREPO, B. Maestro investigador, Escuela investigadora e Investigación. In *Cuadernos Pedagógicos*, No. 14. Medellín : Universidad de Antioquia, 2000.

their repetitive routine and to objectify their practices, which can ultimately help them reflect on and transform their practices simultaneously.

In 1975, Stenhouse called for similar educational research centered on educational processes and done by the educational practitioners themselves, the teachers. His student and collaborator, John Elliot, continued this line of inquiry and published a book on Action Research on Education (1994) to develop this proposal. According to Stenhouse and Elliot (1993, 1994), teaching should not be an activity done by teachers and research on teaching another activity conducted by external researchers. To them, the practice of teaching should be regarded as a reflective activity, which would dispel the division between teachers and researchers. In other words, teaching and researching should be assumed as an integrated action by educational practitioners.

Similarly, Stephen Kemmis (1983, 1997, and 1998) and James McKernan (1988, 1996) believe that educational practitioners should direct research at concerns about the formative quality of the curricular experiences of the students and about the pedagogical conditions that make them possible. In this endeavor, teachers should be learners interested in studying the curricular and pedagogical considerations surrounding their practices and, at the same time, researchers who regard their practices as provisional and improvable and who use research to achieve changes that are educational worthy. To Kemmis and McKernan, educational research is the basis for teachers' personal and professional development and autonomy.

This study adheres to the previous theoretical appreciations about educational research and assumes that teachers are researchers who should permanently submit their daily practice to rigorous self-examination to overcome their repetitive routine by continuously reflecting on and transforming their practices. At the heart of teachers' educational research enterprises, there should be a focus on critically inquiring their own practice. In other words, teachers should use educational research to think about their own contexts, to analyze their judgments and interpretations and to distance themselves to make the basis of their work open to inspection.

One way to critically open teachers' work to inspection is what Donald Schön (1993, 1987) called *practice-as-inquiry*. This inquiry occurs when the practitioner reflects both while engaged in action and subsequently on the action itself as an attempt to make his or her own understanding problematic to him or herself. The teacher-researcher strives to test his or her constructions of the situation by bringing to the surface, juxtaposing, and discriminating alternate accounts of reality. The point is to see the taken-for-granted with new eyes to be able to come out of this experience with an expanded appreciation of the complexity of learning, of teaching, and a stronger sense of how external realities affect what the teacher-researcher can (want to) really do.

Another proponent of practice-as-inquiry is Jack Whitehead<sup>101</sup> who saw it as a way to construct *a living educational theory* from practitioner's questions of the kind: How do I improve my practice? Valid accounts of a teacher's educational development, explained Whitehead, should be accepted when teachers ask themselves how to improve their practices, undertake to improve some aspect of their practice, reflect systematically on such a process and provide insights into the nature of their descriptions and explanations. With this standpoint, Whitehead did not deny the importance of propositional forms of understanding. Instead, he argued for a reconstruction of educational theory into a living form of question and answer which includes propositional contributions from the traditional disciplines of education.

This study, then, assumes that when doing educational research, teachers-researchers should consider ways to think about contexts and how they affect their judgments and interpretations; distance a bit to make the basis of their work open to inspection; reflect both while engaged in action and subsequently on the action itself; test their constructions of the situation by bringing to the surface, juxtaposing, and discriminating among alternate accounts of that reality; include propositional contributions from the traditional disciplines of education, and ultimately construct *a living educational theory*.

An obvious question arises: How can language teachers (or any for that matter) use educational research in their classrooms? The next sections will discuss classroom research and action research.

### 3.2 CLASSROOM RESEARCH

According to Daniel Madrid<sup>102</sup>, classroom research is normally *practical research* which is centred on the classroom. It aims to explain what actually happens inside the classroom, the direct and indirect influence of internal and external factors related to the student, the teacher and the ELT curriculum. As van Lier pointed out, we know very little about what is going on in classrooms, so classroom research becomes an important tool to explain the relation between the diversity of variables that continuously interact: "As yet we know too little about all the variables that play a role in all the classrooms to be able to make rash recommendations about methods of teaching and ways of learning"<sup>103</sup>.

Virginia LoCastro<sup>104</sup> proposed a simple and practical definition of classroom research (CR) closer to teachers' practices. *CR is a thorough concentration on*

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<sup>101</sup> WHITEHEAD, J. Creating A Living Educational Theory From Questions Of The Kind, How Do I Improve My Practice? In *Cambridge journal of education*. Vol. 19, No.1. (1988), p. 41-52.

<sup>102</sup> MADRID, D. Observation and research in the classroom. In *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*. Barcelona : The Australian Institute, 2000b, p. 2-3.

<sup>103</sup> VAN LIER, L. *The classroom and the language learner. Ethnography and second language classroom research*. Harlow : Longman, 1988, p. 7.

<sup>104</sup> LOCASTRO, V. Op. Cit., p. 2

*classroom interaction --what goes on between and among teachers and students-- in order to gain insights and increase our understanding of classroom learning and teaching.* According to Nunan<sup>105</sup>, CR can focus on teachers or on learners, or on the interaction between teachers and learners. Teacher-focused research examines such factors as the classroom decision-making processes of teachers, and what is referred to as teacher talk. Research that focuses on the learner looks at, for example, the developmental aspects of learner language, the learning styles and strategies used by different learners, the type of language prompted by various types of materials and pedagogic tasks, the classroom interaction that takes place between learners, and the effect of this interaction on learner language development.

This study will be a learner-focused classroom research because its research questions and topics focus on the role that affective factors play on the learning process of some beginner EFL students and on the effect that the explicit teaching of socioaffective language learning can have on their language learning. The next section discusses the approach that this classroom research study will follow.

### 3.2.1 Approaches in classroom research.

Research questions and topics can be looked into from many different perspectives, by following different approaches and by using different procedures. To Daniel Madrid<sup>106</sup>, the approach that one adopts needs to be suitable for the kind of research one wants to carry out, for the variables one wants to control. In some occasions, an observational process will be enough because the data one wants to collect cannot be quantified, but in others one may need to illustrate one's findings with figures and a statistic treatment may be necessary. So, the approach one adopts depends on the nature of the research one aims to do. However, a wide variety of approaches are used to obtain and analyse the data, and the choice of approach depends upon many factors: the researcher's philosophy, the issue to be investigated, the constraints inherent in the situation and so on.

Madrid<sup>107</sup> explained that the problem of approach can be addressed in terms of potentially opposing viewpoints on how research should be conducted. The difference between these perspectives hinges primarily on differing attitudes towards intervention and control. The issues of *subjectivity* and *objectivity* often arise when devising observation schedules, recording classroom data, developing a coding procedure, etc. Although the dichotomy is too simplistic, one tends to think of research as being categorized as quantitative, using numbers as data to describe events or establish relationships between events (positivism), or qualitative, using words as data to describe human experience

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<sup>105</sup> NUNAN, D. *Understanding language classrooms: A guide for teacher-initiated action*. UK : Prentice Hall International, 1989, p. 15.

<sup>106</sup> MADRID, D. Op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

or behavior (phenomenological). Qualitative research had its origins in the types of field research conducted by anthropologists as they observed the day-to-day lives of their subjects. The qualitative approach became standard for sociologists in the 1920s and 1930s but never became popular among educators and psychologists who relied primarily on their adaptation of the empirical methods utilized by physical scientists engaged in a search for relationships and causes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Because qualitative research is often defined by how it differs from quantitative research, it may be helpful to compare the two approaches. According to Paul Bloland (1992), a major difference lies in their fundamentally different assumptions about the goals of research. E. Babbie<sup>108</sup>, for example, defined qualitative analysis as "the non-numerical examination and interpretation of observation for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships" as opposed to quantitative research, "the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect".

The differences between the two approaches, then, result because each is defining problems differently and each is looking for different solutions or answers. As defined above, qualitative methods lend themselves to discovering meanings and patterns while quantitative methods seek causes and relationships demonstrated statistically, a theoretical perspective –positivism– that is concerned with facts, prediction, and causation and not the subjective nature of the groups or individuals of interest. Researchers in the qualitative mode seek understanding through inductive analysis, moving from specific observation to the general. Quantitative analysis, on the other hand, employs deductive logic, moving from the general to the specific, i.e., from theory to experience.

This classroom research study opted to follow the qualitative research approaches mainly because its main interest is not so much in questions that seek to identify cause and effect, that answer the question, "Why?", but in questions that ask, "What?" and "How?". The answers to the latter questions also require that the teacher-researcher accessed the internal experiences and the daily context of the population being studied. The teacher-researcher needed to critically weigh up pre-established standards, models, schemes against the everyday classroom phenomena from the point of view of the ordinary actors. Consequently, questions can not just be answered by identifying variables in advance but mainly by discovering the dimensions of the phenomenon while and after observing and analyzing the participants' responses, behaviors, and interactions. In the next section, I will describe an approach to carrying out classroom research, called action research (AR).

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<sup>108</sup> BABBIE, E. *The practice of social research* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA : Wadsworth, 1983, p. 537.



### 3.3. ACTION RESEARCH

In literature, the definition of action research is provided by many scholars, and a selection of them is as follows:

*Action research can be defined as a combination of the terms "action" and "research." AR puts ideas into practice for the purpose of self-improvement and increasing knowledge about curriculum, teaching, and learning. The ultimate result is improvement in what happens in the classroom and school (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982).*

*A form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which these practices are carried out (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).*

*AR is the reflective process whereby in a given problem area, where one wishes to improve practice or personal understanding, inquiry is carried out by the practitioner --; first, to clearly define the problem; secondly, to specify a plan of action --; including the testing of hypotheses by application of action to the problem. Evaluation is then undertaken to monitor and establish the effectiveness of the actions taken. Finally, participants reflect upon, explain developments, and communicate these results to the community of action researchers. AR is systematic self-reflective inquiry by practitioners to improve practice." (McKernan, 1996)*

*La investigación acción es una aplicación de la autorregulación o de la aplicación de los procesos metacognitivos a la propia práctica. Esta aplicación puede ser individual si es una reflexión de un maestro sobre su práctica o colaborativa cuando un grupo de docentes reflexionan en grupo sobre su práctica y se apoyan, critican, validan sus procesos en pos del mejoramiento del aprendizaje de sus alumnos, del mejoramiento de la profesión y de la superación del aislamiento del docente. (Bernardo Restrepo, 2000).*

*AR is a term which refers to a practical way of looking at your own work to check that it is as you would like it to be... it is often referred to as practitioner based research; and because it involves you thinking about and reflecting on your work, it can also be called a form of self-reflective practice... In action research, researchers do research on themselves... AR is an enquiry conducted by the self into the self. You, a practitioner, think about your own life and work, and this involves you asking yourself why you do the things that you do, and why you are the way that you are. (McNiff, 2002)*

This study assumes that AR for teachers-researchers is studying what is happening in our classroom and deciding how to make it a better place by

changing what and how we teach and how we relate to students and the community. Teachers-researchers study a problem systematically and consistently ensuring the intervention is informed by theoretical considerations. Much of their time is spent on refining the methodological tools to suit the exigencies of the situation and on collecting, analyzing, and presenting data on an ongoing, cyclical basis.

### 3.3.1 Research paradigm of action research.

For its capability to raise awareness, AR is situated in a specific research paradigm: *the paradigm of praxis*. Rory O'Brien<sup>109</sup> maintained that though sharing a number of perspectives with the interpretive paradigm, and making considerable use of its related qualitative methodologies, neither it nor the positivist paradigms are sufficient epistemological structures under which to place action research. Rather, a paradigm of praxis is seen as where the main affinities lie. *Praxis*, a term used by Aristotle, is the art of acting upon the conditions one faces in order to change them. A cornerstone of AR is that knowledge is derived from practice and practice informed by knowledge in an ongoing process.

### 3.3.2 Types of action research.

There are several varieties of action research. James McKernan<sup>110</sup>, for example, identified the three following types of AR: scientific-technical view of problem solving, practical-deliberative action research and critical-emancipatory action research. The next table explains these types of AR.

Table 17

#### *Types of Action Research*

<b>Scientific-technical view of problem solving</b>	<b>Practical-deliberative action research</b>	<b>Critical-emancipatory action research</b>
The fundamental goal of the researcher in the scientific-technical approach is to test a particular intervention used by a practitioner in the field. The research is	In the practical-deliberative type of action research the researcher and practitioners come together to identify potential problems, their	Critical-emancipatory action research promotes emancipatory praxis in the participating practitioners; that is, it promotes a critical consciousness which

<sup>109</sup> O'BRIEN, R. An overview of the methodological approach of action research. In Roberto Richardson (Ed.), *Theory and practice of action research*. João Pessoa, Brazil : Universidade Federal da Paraíba, 2001, p. 6.

<sup>110</sup> MCKERNAN, J. *Curriculum action research. A handbook of methods and resources for the reflective practitioner* (2nd ed.). London : Kogan, 1996, p. 16-27.

<p>based on a pre-specified theoretical framework. The researcher identifies the problem and a specific intervention, and then the practitioner is involved in implementing the intervention or treatment. The collaboration between the researcher and the practitioner is technical, in the sense that it is instrumental to the research goals. This approach to action research results in the accumulation of predictive knowledge, <i>the major thrust is validation and refinement of existing theories.</i></p>	<p>underlying causes and possible interventions. The problem is defined in dialogue and mutual understanding between the researcher and the practitioner. The goal of practical action research is to understand practice and solve immediate problems. Practical action research fosters <i>the improvements in professional practices by emphasising the part played by personal judgement in decisions to act.</i></p>	<p>exhibits itself in political as well as practical action to promote change (See Grundy, 1987). There are two goals for the researcher using this approach, one is to increase the closeness between the actual problems encountered by practitioners in a specific setting and the theory used to explain and resolve the problem. The second goal, which goes beyond the other two approaches, is <i>to assist practitioners in identifying and making explicit fundamental problems by raising their collective consciousness.</i></p>
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O'Brien<sup>111</sup> also identified 4 main 'streams' that had emerged in AR: traditional, contextural (action learning), radical, and educational action research. The next table summarizes these streams in AR:

Table 18

*Streams in Action Research*

<b>Traditional Action Research</b>	<b>Contextural Action Research</b>	<b>Radical Action Research</b>	<b>Educational Action Research</b>
Traditional Action Research stemmed from Lewin's work within organizations and encompasses the concepts and practices of Field Theory, Group Dynamics, T-	Contextural Action Research, also sometimes referred to as Action Learning, is an approach derived from Trist's work on relations between organizations. It is contextural,	The Radical stream, which has its roots in Marxian 'dialectical materialism' and the praxis orientations of Antonio Gramsci, has a strong focus on	A fourth stream, that of Educational Action Research, has its foundations in the writings of John Dewey, the great American educational philosopher of the

<sup>111</sup> O'BRIEN, R. Op. cit., p. 7-8.

Groups, and the Clinical Model. This traditional approach tends toward the conservative, generally maintaining the status quo with regards to organizational power structures. Some representatives are Hilda Taba, Webb and Webb, etc.	insofar as it entails reconstituting the structural relations among actors in a social environment. I stresses that participants act as project designers and co-researchers. Contextual action research is more of a liberal philosophy with social transformation occurring by consensus and normative incrementalism. Some representatives are R.S. Peters, Jacques, Whyte and Hamilton, etc.	emancipation and the overcoming of power imbalances. Participatory Action Research and Feminist Action Research both strive for social transformation via an advocacy process to strengthen peripheral groups in society. Some representatives are Holter and Schwartz-Barcott, Zuber-Skerritt, Dick, etc.	1920s and 30s, who believed that professional educators should become involved in community problem-solving. Its practitioners, not surprisingly, operate mainly out of educational institutions, and focus on development of curriculum, professional development, and applying learning in a social context. It is often the case that university-based action researchers work with primary and secondary school teachers and students on community projects. Some representatives are Stenhouse, Elliot, Kemmis, McKernan, etc.
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Owing to its nature, this project is educational AR that seeks to be practical-deliberative since it aims at identifying potential problems with the affective domain in an EFL classroom; it strives to expose underlying causes in terms of inappropriate or poor beliefs, attitudes, motivations and anxieties and it endeavour to implement some interventions through the explicit teaching and learning of socioaffective language learning strategies. Its basic goal is to understand teaching practices and learning experiences to elucidate immediate setbacks in a beginner's EFL class. In addition, this study also seeks to promote a critical consciousness both to promote change in a class for beginner students and to assist me as a practitioner in identifying and challenging underlying beliefs and perspectives towards teaching, learning and researching. I will have some further discussion of my decision to do action research when I

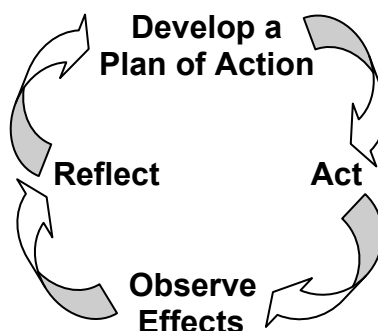
talk about the rationale for doing a study on socioaffective language learning strategies.

### 3.3. Stages, phases and steps in action research.

A variety of procedural plans have been evolved by different scholars. All adopt methodical and iterative sequences of research. The methodology offers a systematic approach to introducing innovations in teaching and learning. It seeks to do this by putting the teacher in the role of producer of educational theory, and user of this theory. The process of researching in AR brings theory and practice together.

According to Daniel Madrid<sup>112</sup>, there are four classic developmental phases of AR:

- Phase 1: Develop a plan of action to a) improve what is already happening or b) identify and examine a "puzzle" or problem area in your teaching;
- Phase 2: Act to implement the plan;
- Phase 3: Observe the effects of action in the context in which it occurs, and
- Phase 4: Reflect on these effects.



*Figure 1.* Four basic developmental phases of research.

Nevertheless, other authors have established proposed different models of AR. Some of them coincide in the number of stages whereas others include different stages and even number of research cycles. In the end, all the authors agree on the fact that it is the researcher himself who needs to choose the best model, the number of stages and research cycles according to his needs, context and available time and resources. The following table offers an overview of some

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<sup>112</sup> MADRID, D. Op. cit., p. 22.

models proposed by some well-known authors in the field of classroom research.

Table 19

*Some Models of Action Research*

STAGE	Cohen and Manion (1980)	Kemmis and McTaggart (1988)	Nunan (1993)	McKernan (1996)	Anne Burns (1999)	Jean McNiff (2002)
1	Identification and formulation of the problem.	Plan.	Problem Identification.	Definition or determination of issue or problem.	Exploring	Review current practice.
2	Preliminary draft proposal.	Act and observe.	Preliminary Investigation.	Needs assessment	Identifying	Identify an aspect to investigate.
3	Review of research literature.	Reflect.	Hypothesis.	Hypothesis, ideas.	Planning	Imagine a way forward.
4	Restatement of the problem and/or formulation of a hypothesis.	Revise plan.	Plan intervention.	Develop action plan.	Collecting data	Try it out.
5	Selection of research procedures and methods.	Act and observe.	Outcome.	Implement and monitor action plan.	Analysing / reflecting	Take stock of what happens.
6	Choice of evaluation procedures.	Reflect.	Reporting.	Evaluate monitoring data.	Hypothesising / speculating	Modify what is being done and continue working in this new way.
7	Implementation of the project itself.			Reflect on, explain or understand in light of data.	Intervening	Monitor what it is done.
8	Interpretation, inferences and evaluation.			Make decisions.	Observing	Review and evaluate the modified action.
9				Redefine issue or problem.	Reporting, writing and presenting	

As can be seen in the table above, AR embraces problem identification, action planning, implementation, evaluation, and reflection. It involves a spiral of steps. This study adopts Anne Burns'<sup>113</sup> model of action research because it allows for practical, but critical classroom enquiry and self-reflection which provide a sound source for pedagogical planning and action. It also enables EFL teachers to easily frame the local decisions of the classroom within broader educational, institutional, and theoretical considerations. Therefore, this study assumes that the action research process starts with the identification of the problem area, and the scope problem is narrowed down to make it manageable. Through investigation (e.g. observation, interviews, surveys, recording, etc.), the teacher identifies when the problem occurs, what affects it, what causes it, etc. In order to suggest a solution, talking to other teachers and/or reading is needed and the researcher considers what evidence to collect to decide whether his/her action is successful or not. Later, the hypothetical solution is implemented, and evidence to be analyzed is gathered to decide if the aim is achieved or not. After the analysis, reflection identifies the result of the research and whether the problem has been solved or not reveals; if not, the next step is taken with the beginning of a new research cycle. But, if the results point out positive improvements, it is important to disseminate the research not so much as findings but as a research orientation towards teaching.

There are some authors who have also suggested a set of steps and guiding questions to help novice action researchers to go about their studies. This study follows and adopts Whitehead's<sup>114</sup> 8 questions to help the teacher-researcher's action plan to be as critical and reflective as possible. The next table summarizes this author's proposal.

Table 20

*Whitehead's set of questions*

Whitehead (1993)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What issue am I interested in researching?</b> Ask yourself: What is especially high in my mind at the moment? You should be practical and ask: Can I influence the situation, or is it outside my scope?</li> <li>• <b>Why do I want to research this issue?</b> You need to be reasonably clear why you want to get involved. The reasons for our actions are often rooted in our values base, that is, the things we believe in and that drive our lives.</li> <li>• <b>What kind of evidence can I gather to show why I am interested in this issue?</b> You need to gather data about the situation, and you can use a</li> </ul>

<sup>113</sup> BURNS, A. *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. Cambridge, UK : Cambridge university press, 1999, p. 35.

<sup>114</sup> WHITEHEAD, J. *The growth of educational knowledge: Creating your own living educational theories*. Hyde : Bournemouth, 1993.

variety of methods for this – journals, diaries, notes, audio and videotape recordings, surveys, attitude scales, pictures, etc.

- **What can I do? What will I do?** You need to imagine ways in which you might begin taking action. You might want at this stage to consult your critical friend or validation group about how you could move forward. You need to consider your options carefully and decide what you can reasonably expect to achieve, given the time, energy and other resources you have.
- **What kind of evidence can I gather to show that I am having an influence?** This is your second set of data, which will also turn into evidence by meeting your nominated criteria. You can use the same, or different, data-gathering methods that you used before. You should try to show, through this set of data, whether there is an improvement in the situation, even though that improvement might be very small.
- **How can I explain that influence?** You are aiming to show a development of influence, an unfolding of new understandings and actions from people working together in new ways, and their influence on one another, that is, how they learn with and from one another. To gauge your impact on them, you need to get their reactions or perceptions about their relationship with you.
- **How can I ensure that any judgments I might make are reasonably fair and accurate?** If you say, “I think that such and such happened”, you can expect someone to say, “Prove it.” The answer is that you can’t. You can’t prove anything. You can, however, produce reasonable evidence to suggest that what you feel happened really did happen, and you are not just making it up. You need that other people consider your claim and agree that you have good reason for making your claim.
- **How will I change my practice in the light of my evaluation?** You will probably carry on working in this new way because it seems to be better than the way you were working before. This does not mean closure. Each ending carries its own potentials for new creative forms.

As can be seen in the table above, this set of questions depicts a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by teachers-researchers to answer systematically and consistently research questions that stem from areas considered problematic bearing the aim of the improvement in teaching. But, these questions also contain a social intent. Jean McNiff<sup>115</sup> explained that the intention is that one person improves his/her work for his/her own benefit and the benefit of others. If one can improve what one is doing (at least improve one’s understanding of what one is doing), there is a good chance one will influence the situation one is working and living in. One’s increased awareness and one’s readiness to be self critical will probably have an influence on the people one works and lives with. Additionally, McNiff claimed that these questions also entail a methodology of action research in which one want to

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<sup>115</sup> MCNIFF, J. (2002). *Action research for professional development: Concise advice for new action researchers*. Retrieved from <http://www.jeanmcniff.com/booklet1.html>



assess and reflect about what one is doing. This awareness of the need for self evaluation shows one's willingness to accept responsibility for one's own thinking and action. In doing this type of action research, one is giving an account of oneself. One is showing that one is a responsible person and can justify what one is doing with good reason. Action research helps one to formalize one's learning and give a clear and justified account of one's work, not on a one-off basis, but as a continuing regular feature of one's practice.

The unique feature of these teachers-researchers' questions is that they emanate solely neither from theory nor from practice, but from critical reflection on the intersection of the two. This study strives to follow this set of guiding questions in an attempt to permit an individual teacher-researcher to carry out a systematic and critical AR study into the teaching and learning of affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies in a very specific context (a beginner course at the Centro Colombo Americano) with a very specific group of learners (a course of beginner students that take classes from 6 to 8 a.m. for 3 months). This set of questions can help the teacher-researcher to take responsibility for the development of his/her own practice through critical decision-making and ongoing self-reflection. In the next section, I will explain why AR fits this study.

### 3.4 RATIONALE FOR ACTION RESEARCH IN THIS STUDY

Today, the roles of a teacher are changing rapidly from a traditional perspective to a modern one. Instead of being just a follower of new methodologies, teachers are the source and creator of the theoretical basis of their own implementation techniques, becoming researchers within the territories of their own classroom and/or institution. So, teachers are becoming both practitioners and theorists of today's language teaching profession. In 1992, David Nunan suggested that in order for language teachers to understand the classroom in which they work, they need to systematically observe and investigate these classrooms. Additionally, he suggested that such investigations should grow out of the problems and issues which confront teachers in their daily work. The outcome of such research should be intended to be fed back into the classroom, rather than simply becoming part of the pool of knowledge on a particular aspect of language learning and teaching.

Also, EFL teachers should not simply aim at doing research to create new or improved activities, practices and principles; they should do research to bring to light their rationale behind those activities, practices and principles. In particular, research should allow EFL teachers to engage in critical reflection about their set of beliefs or expectations about what language learning is, how a foreign language is learned and why certain practices or activities are acceptable or not in a foreign language classroom. EFL teachers should do research to learn about themselves because, as Bernard Dufeu put it, "we [EFL teachers] do not leave our personal attitudes and preoccupations behind when we enter our

professional world. Our teaching reflects who we are”<sup>116</sup>. It seems feasible to state, then, that EFL teaching should involve researching and researching should lead to learning; learning new things about activities and practices, expectations and beliefs, strengths and weaknesses.

Evidently, the integration between teaching, researching and learning requires a type of research that proffers reflection and self-examination to teachers. This integration also requires a type of research in which teachers can search for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in schools, or look for ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Based on these requirements, EFL studies should use AR to provide for a type of research in which teaching, learning, reflection and self-actualization can take place in the classroom. Rightly, Martin Parrot defined AR as:

...not so much something that we do in addition to our teaching as something that we integrate into it. In many ways it is a state of mind – it is skepticism about assumptions and a willingness to put everything to the test... It is a way of ensuring that we continue to learn even as we teach. It helps stave off staleness and routine<sup>117</sup>.

### 3.5 RATIONALE FOR ACTION RESEARCH ON SOCIOAFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

While previous quantitative and qualitative studies measured the effects of the potential effects of socioaffective strategies in the achievement of L2 (See Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Goh & Kwah, 1997; Kinoshita, 2003), this present study used AR to answer questions regarding beginner students’ experiences with receiving explicit teaching of socioaffective language strategies. The utilization of qualitative methods is justified by the nature of the research questions mention earlier in chapter One, which required that the researcher approach his own L2 classroom setting. Newman and Benz (1998) emphasized that research questions should determine what research methods are used. Additionally, Anne Burns<sup>118</sup> believed that qualitative researchers intervenes the research with a view of detecting cause and effect relationships between the phenomena they wish to investigate, whereas qualitative researchers intervene the research with a view of collecting data to develop insights and implications of the human behavior which may then become the basis for further research.

This study aimed at providing a qualitative (naturalistic) picture of my beginners students’ experiences with the explicit teaching of socioaffective language strategies while engaging in a course that is based on learning-to-learn and a communicative language learning approach as two major goal of the course

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<sup>116</sup> DUFEU, B. *Teaching Myself*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 11.

<sup>117</sup> PARROT, M. *Tasks for language teachers: A resource book for training and development*. UK : Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 3

<sup>118</sup> BURNS, A. Op. cit., p. 12.

(see course design in appendix). Thus, the use of AR was appropriate since it took place in a natural setting and depended on data collection methods that were based on words and interactions rather than on numbers and statistics. These methods were questionnaires, a rating scale, field notes, learner journals and strategy-based activities and worksheets.

This study sought to gain in-depth insights about the research questions, which eventually entailed that the use of qualitative methods was the best for this study. Thick description in qualitative research is considered as an advantage because the emphasis is on people, events, and texts (Patton, 1990). Qualitative research, stated Burns, goes beyond formulating, testing and confirming or disconfirming hypothesis. It aims at providing in-depth data to make sense of the human behavior within the research context. In her words:

Observation and description and the gathering of data from a range of different resources are the main methodological tools. The process of observation and the emerging descriptions and insights of the researchers themselves become an important aspect of the research findings<sup>119</sup>.

This study aimed at describing as much as possible what students felt and said when they engaged in the activities being studied, so that any implications or recommendations were sufficiently rooted in the findings of the study. Therefore, this study needed to take place in a natural setting. Lincoln and Guba asserted that:

Naturalistic inquiry demands a natural setting, we should not be understood as making a play on the word “natural,” ... Rather, we suggest that inquiry must be carried out in a “natural” setting because phenomena of study . . . take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves<sup>120</sup>.

Actually, the present study conformed to Silverman’s (1993) call for the need to utilize a “natural” setting. I depended heavily on natural resources to collect data that help give valid descriptions of the activities being studied and reliable answers to the research questions. I conducted the study in connection with my classroom practices during a regular academic period of three months at the Centro Colombo Americano, and with students taking the English course as their own personal option. Unlike the artificial and constrained settings utilized in quantitative research that influence behavior (Marshall & Rossman, 1989), the present study focused on student affective factors toward realistic activities in an authentic classroom involving the experiences of EFL students.

In the following sections, I provide a brief discussion of the setting of the study, the course design, the participants and the concept of purposive sampling.

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>120</sup> LINCOLN, Y. S. and GUBA, E. G. *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA : Sage, 1985, p. 189.

Following these sections, I discuss the research methodology and the data collection instruments in detail.

### 3.6 SETTING OF THE STUDY

#### 3.6.1 The institution.

I teach at the Centro Colombo Americano (the CCA) in Bogota, Colombia. According to its statutes, the CCA is a non-profit foundation dedicated to strengthening the cultural understanding between the United States and Colombia. It is mainly geared towards using effectively advanced methodologies to enable Colombians to learn English as a foreign language. The CCA's English language programs include the Saturday program for children and adults, special programs for outside clients such as businesses and universities, and the adult English program (Appendix G). According to the academic direction, the Center's English language programs seek to offer state-of-the-art English language programs and student services to the Bogotá community. The programs do not see English or any other language as purely an instrument to be acquired in a technical fashion, but as a means of communication and interaction that allows individuals to be themselves and to develop their sociocultural skills. Hence, the CCA does not simply offer language services, but comprehensive learning programs that attempt to consider the needs and interests of the clients taking into account the context and setting of the instruction, the needs of the students, and the expectations of the parent client or other stake holders, if applicable.

The Academic Department at the CCA has always considered the student as the center of the learning process, as the agent of this process, and as a learner in development, as a person who, in addition to new language content, should also be acquiring daily the tools to continue learning independently. The goals of the Center's English Language Programs are not only linguistic, but rather have always linked the linguistic to the social and communicative. When the academic direction considers communication, it has always been concerned with what is essentially a social phenomenon. As such, linguistic knowledge and communicative acts are bound to social encounters and interaction. By interaction the academic department does not mean only speaking to other individuals, but rather it considers social interaction to include the written word, and the spoken word intended for mass communication, not only interpersonal speech routines. Thus, the Center's English Language Programs see language learning as an on-going process with the student at the center, continuously developing learning skills, communicative abilities and language knowledge. In sum, the CCA has committed to using a comprehensive approach to create the necessary conditions in terms of three principles for all its learners to be successful: language, learning, and communication<sup>121</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> See Curricular Framework for Evaluation, 2006 at <http://eduspaces.net/libiar/files/-1/13929/tasks%2C+objectives+and+competencies2006.doc>

### 3.6.2 The program.

The Adult English Program (AEP), in particular, offers courses to students ages 16 and up from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday, in courses of 38 hours, 2 hours daily. The largest group of students is in the early twenties and late thirties, followed by the next largest group, 17-20 years of age. The Adult English Program (AEP) at present consists of four distinct blocks of courses: BASIC, SKILLS, CHALLENGE, and ADVANCE. This program seeks to be coherent with both the institution's mission and the Academic Department's language and learning philosophy. The AEP is designed mainly to:

- help students achieve high levels of proficiency and learning expertise simultaneously;
- put students in the center of the process by constantly monitoring and coaching each students' learning, and
- create rich contexts and conditions for students to have permanent real-life English encounters.

### 3.6.3 The course.

According to the AEP's syllabus and teaching guidelines, students leaving the first three courses of the Basic Block are expected to be more self-aware learners. They are expected to achieve certain objectives in each of the principles of the AEP: learning, language and communication. In learning, students are expected to: 1) be able to state short-term goals for learning English; 2) have developed a set of good study habits in and out of class, and 3) be familiar with the use support units (multimedia lab), computer-based resources (CD/CD-ROM) and learning tools (A bilingual dictionary, IPA, some correction symbols, and a vocabulary notebook). In language, students are expected to: 1) use basic sentences, expressions, formulae and chunks to carry out book exercises, class activities and course tasks; 2) write and read basic texts, and 3) understand and produce basic messages. In communication, students are expected to: 1) initiate and participate in basic conversations related to personal information, routines and small talk; 2) have minor difficulties to communicate in class with the teacher and fellow classmates, and 3) use simple conversation strategies to maintain interactions as much as possible. Basically, students leaving the first three course of the Basic Block should demonstrate that they have clicked into English and can accommodate themselves personally to the language, its learning, and its communication.

### 3.6.4 The book.

Beginner students for three months use the first book of the series "Touchstone" published by Cambridge University Press. Touchstone is a series for adult and young-adult learners of English that combines an integrated multi-skills syllabus with a communicative approach to language teaching. According to its authors

(Michael McCarthy, Jeanne McCarten and Helen Sandiford), this series has been developed using the North American English portion of the Cambridge International Corpus of English. This series introduces “conversation management” strategies, places special emphasis on teaching vocabulary and vocabulary-learning strategies with a vocabulary notebook section, and offers ideas for personalized, learner-centered interaction.

### 3.6.5 Class setting.

The chairs in the class were set in one long semi-circular row, which included twenty one seats. The class was provided with a white board, a TV set used to show videos about some topics from the course, and a CD-player on the teacher’s podium used to play the vocabulary and the dialogs from the textbook. (See figure 8 to have an idea of what the classroom looked like). Computers were available at the multimedia lab for students to use them whenever I planned an internet-based activity or when they wanted to do autonomous work. We used the multimedia lab, at least, twice a month to log in to [www.nicenet.org](http://www.nicenet.org). Here, they could explore an online class I had designed for them. In this course, the students used nicenet for three main purposes. These purposes were reviewing class contents, reinforcing difficult grammar points, and expanding vocabulary.

### 3.6.6 The students.

The students in the AEP come from different social and cultural backgrounds, and although they enter the program to study English, this is not their first contact with the language since most schools and universities in Colombia teach it. The majority of the students are in their twenties and thirties, although some are a little younger or older. In my beginner EFL classes, students come with an enormous variety of educational backgrounds and various levels of experience in learning English. Many come from years of formal education in public schools and universities. Some have been to private schools or universities. A few have had experience in learning the language in other English language institutes.

In the year 2002, the Adult English Program of the CCA held a series of meeting with its teachers to find out the kind of student it had. Teachers stated that most of the students at the CCA come with a strong belief that English should be learned through a grammar-based methodology and many of them feel it is the teacher’s job to make them learn since they have experienced in previous English classes that they have little or none control in the process of learning a language. Teachers also said that some students also have fixed ideas on how to study some of the language skills. For example, many of them believe they need to know the Spanish translation of every single word they do not know in English so they can read well; some think that the teacher needs to correct every single mistake they make when they write or speak; others think

they need to keep long lists of all the vocabulary they are learning; some think that English grammar and pronunciation do not make much sense and all they have to do is to memorize structures and sounds as they are; many even think all they have to do to learn English is come to class and do the textbook exercises.

### 3.7 PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study were EFL beginner students enrolled in the first three courses of the basic block of the AEP at the CCA in Bogota, Colombia described in the previous section. They took classes from 6:10 to 7:50 a.m. from September to December, 2006. Most of the participants were not taking any other courses or classes. Many work from 8 to 5 p.m. A few were studying at university and needed to take an English course to satisfy university requirements and the needs of their majors.

The information was taken from the study site and with the participants' consent. The students enrolled in my 6 to 8 a.m. class were asked to voluntarily participate in this study, which aimed at describing the usefulness of the explicit teaching socioaffective language learning strategies in the beliefs, attitudes, motivations and anxieties of beginner students in their first 3 courses.

#### 3.7.1 Purposive sampling.

The number of students registered in each EFL class at the CCA usually ranges from 17 to 21. I asked all the students taking this class to voluntarily participate in this study. Although the participants represented different sociocultural backgrounds, the purpose of this study was not to generalize the findings. It mainly focuses on describing their experiences throughout their first three courses in a basic EFL block. This block is based on a learning-to-learn philosophy and the communicative language teaching approach and it uses tasks with formative assessment purposes. The study focuses on providing an appropriately thick description in the context described above.

According to Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993), the researcher's main goal is to obtain purposive and directed sampling that renders a large amount of information. They also mentioned two essential criteria for purposive sampling: selection of who and what to study, and choosing who and what not to study. In my study, I decided to select all the participants taking this course, since they could best help answer my research questions. Merriam emphasized this issue of selecting participants who "can express thoughts' feelings, opinions . . . on the topic being studied"<sup>122</sup>.

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<sup>122</sup> MERRIAM, S. B. *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco : Jossey-Bass, 1988, p. 76.

I decided not to investigate the connection between metacognitive or cognitive language learning strategies, for instance, as this investigation could only provide relative information to answer my research questions about the students' beliefs, attitudes, motivations and anxieties of learning English in a basic course. Finally, I did not include students from other classes because I wanted to do action research on education-related topics of my interest in my own class and because my co-workers had no theoretical or methodological preparation at that time.

### 3.7.3 Background information.

The participants were all students who had decided to take English classes and had just registered in a Basic English course. Due to their low-level of English or scarce contact with it, the participants were placed in the first course of the Adult English Program at the CCA. This course aims at developing beginner students' language, communication and learning skills to accommodate themselves personally to the language, its learning, and its communication. Although the participants came from different sociocultural backgrounds, they shared similar background information about their academic/work experiences, in general, and about their L2 learning experiences, in particular. This section highlights the participants' background information based on the first questionnaire.

On average, the participants' age was 30. They had all come to the CCA for the first time. All the participants had graduated from high school and most of them had studied at university and were working. Three were studying at universities. One was retired and only devoted to her English class. Their English learning experiences were limited to school and university. The English courses in high school and university were confined to basic language skills, such as common vocabulary (family, feelings, professions, everyday activities and places) and grammar (present of verb To Be and present simple). Their experience with a L2 learning-to-learn philosophy was scant. Some of them were familiar with the use of bilingual dictionaries, mainly for translation, knew a few classroom expressions (How do you say?, What does it mean?) and could understand their textbook mechanics (sections, instructions, type of exercises). Basically, their English learning was limited to completing exercises or doing homework, again largely focused on grammar and vocabulary. This EFL course for beginner students was their first and serious contact with the language. All agreed on not having really benefited from their classes from school or university and on this being their first honest attempt to study English formally and earnestly.

### Research Methodology

As explained previously, this study embraced problem identification, action planning, implementation, evaluation, and reflection. The study integrated a



series of steps following Anne Burns' model of action research and followed Whitehead's set of questions (Refer to pages 87-88). This study integrated and followed the following phases as follows:

Phase 1: I explored and reviewed my current practice.

I kept a field notebook in which I wrote down particular accidents that called my attention in class. I also wrote questions I had about different aspects of my own teaching and its effect on learners: talking time, instructions, error correction, etc. I talked to some colleagues who had or had had the same course to try to spot rather negative or unsatisfactory aspects in beginner classes.

Phase 2: I identified an aspect to investigate.

I noticed that no matter how structured or sequenced my classes were, many beginner students would be reluctant to fully participate, enthusiastically interact and adequately speak with one another in pair and whole-class activities. I selected an area of focus: the role of the affective domain in the learning of my beginner students. Later, I identified four areas of interest: beliefs, attitudes, anxieties and motivation of beginner students. Finally, I chose a focus on my beginner students: their understanding and use of socioaffective language learning strategies.

Phase 3: I planned and imagine a way forward.

I identified 5 topics in the professional literature that related to or matched my areas of interest: educational psychology, learning theories, strategy instruction, affective factors in EFL, and the communicative language teaching approach. I gathered research reports, research syntheses, and articles mainly from professional online sites and magazines, the Cambridge language teaching library and some works of distinguished ELT researchers and authors such as Rebecca Oxford, Anna Unh Chamot, Jane Arnold, Douglas Brown, etc. I collected and compiled these materials for study over a period of three months. I analyzed and interpreted the information in these materials as aids to understanding and to action.

I determined the most promising action. I needed to carry out an action research study to be able to inform and change my professional practices in relation to training in the affective domain and my beginner students' learning. AR could foster my critical reflection and expanded my appreciation of the complexity of EFL learning and teaching. I read books on action research such as McKernan's curriculum action research, Wallace's action research for language teachers and Burns' collaborative action research for English language teachers. Additionally, I read several articles and consulted some websites that dealt with action research.

Next, I decided to explore through *participant observation* aspects of what went on in my classroom in terms of how my beginner students normally engage and perform when doing everyday activities. I wanted to *have a focus on my*

*students' learning*: the way they worked, the way they interacted, the way they responded to my teaching, their most noticeable on-task and off-task behaviors. The observation was done by me, *the teacher concerned*, since the focus of my observation was my own students and some aspects of the context I teach in (affective-related factors). The observation I did was *real time* since it was done and analyzed as the teaching/learning actually happened without using any electronic means of recalling the observed data. I simply took daily notes. The observed data was analyzed through *an unstructured method* since I wanted to have an impressionistic approach whereby I noted whatever seemed of most importance and relevance, given my purpose for observing. To minimize subjectivity, I examined my impressionistic comments along with a more objective kind of analysis: *the system-based observation*. Michael Wallace<sup>123</sup> defined it as an approach in which the observational data are analyzed in terms of an existing system of pre-specified categories based on my literature review. I used this kind of analysis to guide my analysis in a methodical way and to provide good coverage of the most salient aspects of my classroom process.

#### Phase 4: I collected data.

One of the most important decisions as teacher-researchers was the use of a set of instruments. The first instrument was a structured questionnaire with open-ended items that was used in the first month of the course to focus on specific issues connected with affective factors of my beginner students' learning: attitudes, beliefs, anxieties and motivations. This questionnaire had an advantage and it was that it invited attitudinal responses. Similarly, a structured questionnaire with open-ended items was used to gain responses and attitudinal responses from a group of co-workers at the Adult English Program of the Centro Colombo Americano who had a great deal of experience with beginner students. They supplied interesting insights into affective factors with this population.

The group of beginner students was asked to keep a regular dated account of their learning process, in which they could include personal reactions, reflections, and explanations of whatever they felt had been relevant, interesting, demanding or difficult in class. Since I wanted this account to resemble a learner diary, I encouraged my students to confide to it whatever thoughts or feelings occurred to them in relation with affective factors. This sort of diary was included because, as Michael Wallace<sup>124</sup> explained, they are suitable for exploring affective data and they allow the writer to be honest and forthright in his or her comments. Students could choose to keep this journal in English, Spanish or both.

Finally, a self-assessment rating scale on socioaffective factors and language learning strategies was used. This rating scale supplied information about the

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<sup>123</sup> WALLACE, M. *Action research for language teachers*. Cambridge, UK : Cambridge university press, 1998, p. 110.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

frequency of certain affective-related behaviors of the group of beginner students. I designed it based on previous scales and research instruments.

Phase 5: I assembled, coded, compared and built interpretations of the data.

First, I scanned the data in a general way noting down thoughts, ideas or impressions as they occurred to me during this initial examination. Then, I reread the data using my initial research questions as starting points. I strived to bring up broad patterns which compared and contrasted to see what fitted together. Basically, I adapted or added them as I proceeded. Once I had done some overall examination of the data, I developed manageable categories of concepts, themes or types to identify some patterns more specifically. As soon as I had categorized the data, I made comparisons to see whether themes or patterns were repeated or developed across different data gathering techniques. I noticed some relationships or connections between different sources of data. I made an effort to map frequencies of occurrences, behaviors and responses. I created some tables using simple descriptive techniques to note frequency counts and percentages. My main aim was to describe and displayed the data rather than to interpret or explain them. I displayed data in simple tables and charts arranging data.

Phase 6: I analyzed, reflected and interpreted data to build interpretations.

First, I squeezed the data for maximum information. I endeavored to use a certain amount of creative thinking since this stage demands a certain amount of resourcefulness to articulate underlying concepts and develop theories about why particular patterns of behaviors, interactions or attitudes had emerged. As Anne Burns<sup>125</sup> explained, I needed to come back to the data several times to pose questions, rethink the connections, and develop explanations of the bigger picture underpinning my study. I discussed some of my finding and explanations with my critical colleague (Gicel Rodriguez) and my validation group (Luz Libia Rey, Sandra Serrano and Katya Tinoco). So that the judgment of my work was not held to be only my opinion, I made the work available to the critical scrutiny of others, such as my critical friend and my validation group. They, as Jean McNiff<sup>126</sup> explained, would be able to make professional judgments about the validity of my report and offered critical feedback.

Phase 7: I hypothesized and decided to take some actions.

I determined priority area(s) for action by identifying strengths and weaknesses in my beginner students' engagement and performance with some affective factors and language learning strategies. I imagined ways in which I might began taking action based on the literature review I had done. I also consulted with others about how I could move forward. These others were my critical

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<sup>125</sup> BURNS, A. Op. Cit., p. 159.

<sup>126</sup> MCNIFF, J. Op. Cit., p. 12-13.

friend, my validation group, and my thesis advisor. I considered my options carefully and decided what I could reasonably expect to achieve, given the time, energy and other resources I had. I crafted some worksheets with socioaffective language learning strategies (SLLS) and affective factors. These worksheets were meant to help my beginner students discuss and reflect on these issues. I implemented a set of activities related to affective factors as part of my daily teaching practices. I took these activities from suggestions that had been made by EFL researchers and educators in books and articles.

#### Phase 8: I intervened.

I used activities and worksheets dealing with SLLS and affective factors within the humanistic language learning approach for almost a month with my beginner students. I assessed the implementation of my selected activities. I made changes and adjustments.

Instruments:

- a) I implemented activities and worksheets designed by me based on my findings and conclusions from the data analysis I did in phase 5.
- b) I continued with *participant observation* of what went on in my classroom in terms of how my beginner students engaged and performed when doing SLLS and affective-related activities.

#### Phase 9: I determined the usefulness of the explicit teaching of SLLS and the use of worksheets and activities addressing affective factors.

I used a questionnaire with open-ended items in the last month of my course to get my beginner students' assessment of the usefulness and relevance of using SLLS and discussing affective factors. Not only did I want to invite attitudinal responses but also I wanted to open up space and time for assessment and reflection of the experience as a whole.

Because of time constraints and inherent restrictions in my institutional context, I could not do a second cycle with the improved version of the worksheets and activities to be able to double-check my results, instruments and procedures. However, I decided to follow the last three steps suggested by D. Ozdeniz<sup>127</sup>. First, I reflected on all of the information I had gathered and the conclusions I had drawn from it. I tried to make an overall assessment of the innovation in relation to my teaching style and my students' learning preference. Then, based on how the innovation operated within my classroom, I decided I would incorporate it into my teaching repertoire. I realized I had to modify some my teaching practices and teaching values in a way to concord with the innovation,

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<sup>127</sup> OZDENIZ (1996) suggested a set of 10 steps to help novice action researchers to go about their studies. The last three steps are: reflect on the information you have gathered and the conclusion you have drawn from it; decide whether or not you will incorporate the innovation into your teaching repertoire and write up your teaching puzzle and circulate it among colleagues or have it published in a teaching journal.

which ultimately helped gain and develop a critical and reflective view about EFL teaching and learning.

#### Phase 10: I reported and wrote.

I opted to write up a dissertation so that my study could circulate among colleagues and other members of my profession to profit from my explorations. This does not mean closure. Although I have addressed one issue, others emerged which now need attention. In addressing affective-related issues, I have unearthed other issues that I had not expected. As McNiff stated:

There is no end, and that is the nature of developmental practices, and part of the joy of doing action research. It resists closure. Each ending is a new beginning. Each event carries its own potentials for new creative forms<sup>128</sup>.

### 3.9 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The participants of this study performed the normal tasks required by the instructor of the class, except for keeping a reflective diary after every two units. As a teacher-researcher, I took an active role with regards to both the implementation of normal classroom activities based on the syllabus of the adult English program at the CCA and teaching guidelines and the planning and conduct of socioaffective-related activities and worksheets based on my study's objectives. My main concern was to collect data through observing the class, conducting questionnaires, and collecting students' responses from the assigned worksheets for the course. I observed and reflected on all activities that were related to the study's purpose. In other words, the main emphasis was on socioaffective-related activities and students' beliefs, attitudes, motivations and anxieties.

In this study, I used a number of qualitative research methods following Anne Burns and Michael Wallace's suggestions for EFL teachers. These methods included two open-ended questionnaires, a checklist, participant observation, and fieldnotes. These multiple methods of data collection were interactively used to obtain an optimum amount of information local to the context of the study. Eileen Ferrance reflected on the use of interactive resources of data collection:

The collection of data is an important step in deciding what action needs to be taken. Multiple sources of data are used to better understand the scope of happenings in the classroom or school. There are many vehicles for collection of data: interviews, portfolios, diaries, field notes, audio tapes, photos, questionnaires, focus groups, anecdotal records, checklists, journals, videotapes, case studies, surveys, samples of

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<sup>128</sup> MCNIFF, J. Op. Cit., p. 11.

student work, projects, performances, etc. Select the data that are most appropriate for the issue being researched. Are the data easy to collect? Are there sources readily available for use? How structured and systematic will the collection be? Use at least three sources (triangulation) of data for the basis of actions<sup>129</sup> (p.11).

### 3.9.1 Questionnaires.

I approached questionnaires with the participants in line with Anne Burns' definition of questionnaires as non-observational techniques for data collection. Questionnaires are written sets of questions used to gain responses in non-face-to-face situations. The questions are usually focused on specific issues and may invite either factual or attitudinal responses<sup>130</sup>. Questionnaires and surveys have the advantage of being easier and less time-consuming to administer than interviews, and the responses of larger number of informants can be gathered. The informants can also usually respond more rapidly to the questions, and, as the responses are supplied in written form the researchers does not need to further record them with supplementary techniques such as recordings or notes. M. Wallace<sup>131</sup> asserted the value of questionnaires as they are "introspective" techniques that can involve respondents reporting on themselves, their views, their beliefs, and their interactions. These data can give rise to issues that have not been anticipated by the researchers, or which take the question beyond what was originally expected.

Since this study was conducted to investigate the effect of the explicit teaching of socioaffective language learning strategies on the students' beliefs, attitudes, motivations and anxieties about learning English as a foreign language, I used questionnaires with open questions as they can be one of the best ways to know about the participant's feelings and thoughts, as Anne Burns put it:

The aim of these types of [questions] is to explore the informant's own perceptions, beliefs or opinions and to provide opportunities for unforeseen responses or for those which are richer and more detailed than responses obtainable through closed questioning<sup>132</sup>.

I used two questionnaires: an initial questionnaire with my beginner students and some colleagues with a lot of experience with that population of students and a final questionnaire only with my students. On one hand, the purpose of the initial questionnaire with my students was to gather their personal opinions and perspectives about the research questions of the study. It also tried to explore their general experience and feelings regarding the issues at hand. The purpose of the initial questionnaire with some colleagues, on the other hand, was to gather information based on their expertise and experience with

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<sup>129</sup> FERRANCE, E. *Action Research*. Providence RI : The Education Alliance, 2000, p. 11.

<sup>130</sup> BURNS, A. Op. Cit., p. 117.

<sup>131</sup> WALLACE, M. Op. Cit., p. 124.

<sup>132</sup> BURNS, A. Op. cit., p. 131.

beginner students to get useful insights for the study. It also allowed for a comparison between what my students reported and what my colleagues regarded as important or basic matters. At the end of the course, I conducted a final questionnaire with my beginner students. The purpose of this final questionnaire was to note my students' final thoughts regarding their experience with socioaffective language learning strategies, affective-related factors or any other issue they wanted to add.

#### 3.9.1.2 Initial questionnaire.

To gain the participants' trust in this instrument, I introduced myself and the purpose of study. I also explained to them the value of their participation to the academic research represented in this study. I handed out the initial questionnaires and explained the questions as simply and easily as I could. I told them to ask them anything they wanted while answering these questionnaires. The questionnaires had questions about attitudes, beliefs, anxieties, motivations and language learning strategies.

The questionnaire covered seven areas. These areas reflected the research questions of this study. Each area contained one question divided into two parts. The first part was meant to collect general opinions and concepts that participants had. The second part strived to get participants to give more personal viewpoints. The two parts aimed at providing in-depth information about the issue being discussed with the participants. Students' responses to these questions represented the data sought from the questionnaires. The purpose of this technique was to make it insightful for the study to reasonably guide the questionnaires and arrange the questions under a specific category. Also, this technique helped me guide the data analysis. These categories were the following:

- Students' perceptions about good or necessary attitudes in class to learn English;
- Students' perceptions about good, positive, or necessary beliefs in class to learn English;
- Students' perceptions about anxiety-generating situations in class when learning English;
- Students' perceptions about motivation-related factors or situations when learning English;
- Students' perceptions about useful language learning strategies in class to learn English;
- Students' opinion about the one factor that influence their English learning the most: attitudes, beliefs, motivation or anxiety and
- Students' recommendations to their teacher to work with affective-related factors and language learning strategies.

As explained previously, each question had two parts meant to get the respondents give their opinions from a general perspective and from a more

personal viewpoint. Appendix A shows the initial questionnaire I used with my students.

#### 3.9.1.2 Final questionnaire.

At the end of the course, I conducted a final questionnaire. The purpose of this final instrument was to note common conclusions and final thoughts regarding my students' opinions, beliefs and attitudes or any other issue they wanted to add about the convenience or effectiveness of the information and the activities they had received during their three-month course.

The questionnaire covered six areas. These areas reflected the research findings of this study. Each area contained one question aimed at providing in-depth information about the issue being discussed with the participants. Students' responses to these questions represented the final data sought in this study. I opted to collect these final data to verify if the study had aided my students' learning and my teaching practices. These areas were the following:

- Students' ranking of the usefulness of the language learning activities implemented in this study;
- Students' opinions about their ability and confidence to learn and speak English after having received instruction in affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies;
- Students' opinions about their having better or more appropriate beliefs and attitudes to learn and study English due to their participation in this study;
- Students' opinions about their ability and knowledge to control or reduce their anxiety when speaking English in class;
- Students' opinions about the inclusion of the information and the activities they received in this study as a normal element of an English class; and
- Students' recommendations to improve the appropriateness or effectiveness of this type of studies.

Appendix B has the final questionnaire I used with my students.

#### 3.9.2 Rating Scale.

As explained in chapter two, students' beliefs, attitudes, motivations and anxieties toward English and English learning directly influence their perceptions, emotions and behaviors in their language classes (Arnold, 1999). It seems logical, then, to study how affective factors can either enhance or hinder students' learning awareness, experiences and success in EFL. However, these factors are not typically investigated or addressed explicitly and effectively in class. One method that EFL teachers-researchers can resort to when



attempting to attend to and measure these affective factors can be the use of rating scales.

In 1997, James P. Key explained that a rating scale is a set of statistical or numerical values along a well-defined evenly spaced continuum. This continuum is assigned to subjects, objects, behaviors, or situations for the purpose of quantifying the measuring qualities. More specifically, scales are used to measure the degree, direction or intensity which an individual possesses certain attitudes, values or characteristics of interest. In general, a statement is presented, and then the respondent can answer on a scale that indicates how much (or little) he or she agrees with the statement. In brief, all respondents have to do is to indicate the choice that represents their opinion or feeling about a particular subject.

After a careful literature search, it was clear that there were no affective scales or checklists specific to an overall measurement of affective factors in relation to EFL learning. Thus, without an already validated EFL learning scale or checklist, it became imperative to create a credible affective-based measure of EFL learning. This study followed six of the eight steps suggested by Popham<sup>133</sup> for building a rating scale:

- Step 1: Choose the affective variable you want to assess.
- Step 2: Generate a series of favorable and unfavorable statements regarding the affective variable.
- Step 3: Get several people to classify each statement as positive or negative.
- Step 4: Decide on the number and phrasing of the response options for each statement.
- Step 5: Prepare the self-report inventory, giving students directions regarding how to respond and stipulating that the inventory must be completed anonymously.
- Step 6: Administer the inventory either to your own students or, if possible (as a tryout), to other students.
- Step 7: Score the inventories.
- Step 8: Identify and eliminate statements that fail to function in accord with the other statements.

Instead of steps 2 and 3, statements about affective factors were not generated or classified, but adapted from previous studies in which different ELT professionals had created scales or checklists about affective factors successfully. My critical buddy, my validation group, and my thesis advisor helped me both choose appropriate statements and define the last version of the rating scale according to my research questions. The rating scale was created based on the following questionnaires and instruments: the language

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<sup>133</sup> POPHAM, W. J. *Classroom assessment: What teachers need to know*. (5<sup>rd</sup> edition). Boston : Allyn & Bacon, 2002, p. 225-226.

learning attitude questionnaire (LLAQ), Horwitz et al.'s (1986) foreign language classroom anxiety scale, Gardner's (1985) attitude and motivation test battery (AMTB), Cheng's English classroom anxiety Scale, English learning self-Efficacy scale and belief in giftedness for foreign language learning scale (BGFLLS), Sean Jose's (2003) attitude and motivation questionnaire (AMQ), Benjamin's (2003) motivation orientation and language learning strategies scales (MOLLS) and Oxford's (1990) strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL).

The final rating scale presented 50 statements that my beginner students had to rank on a scale that indicated how frequent they exhibited certain behaviors or did certain language learning strategies: almost never, a few times, some times, frequently and almost always. All my students had to do was to check the choice that represented the most appropriate frequency for 50 basic language learning beliefs, attitudes, motivations, anxieties and strategies. Students' choices to these statements represented the data sought from the rating scale. The topics addressed in the rating scale were the following:

- English language learning anxieties (from statement 1 to statement 10);
- English language learning attitudes (from statement 11 to 20);
- English language learning beliefs (from statement 21 to statement 30);
- English language learning motivations (from statement 31 to statement 38) and
- English language learning strategies (from statement 39 to statement 50).

Each topic had a set of statements to gather information about different aspect within it based on different issues indicated by ELT literature and research. The sets of statement in each topic were the following:

- English language learning anxieties:
  - English use anxiety (statements 1, 2, and 3);
  - English class anxiety (statements 4, 5, and 6) and
  - General English anxiety (statements 7, 8, 9, 10)
- English language learning attitudes:
  - Self-image (statements 11 and 12);
  - Risk-taking (statements 13 and 14);
  - Tolerance to ambiguity (statements 15 and 16);
  - Negative attitudes towards English learning (statements 17 and 18) and
  - Positive attitudes towards English learning (statements 19 and 20)
- English language learning beliefs:
  - Self perceived efficacy (statements 21, 22, and 23);
  - Beliefs in giftedness (statements 24, 25 and 26) and

- Beliefs in English language learning (statements 27, 28, 29 and 30)
- English language learning motivations:
  - Integrative motivation (statements 31 and 32);
  - Instrumental motivation (statements 33 and 34);
  - Intrinsic motivation (statements 35 and 36) and
  - Extrinsic motivation (statements 37 and 38)
- English language learning strategies:
  - Memory strategies (statements 39 and 40);
  - Cognitive strategies (statements 41 and 42);
  - Compensation strategies (statements 43 and 44);
  - Metacognitive strategies (statements 45 and 46);
  - Affective strategies (statements 47 and 48) and
  - Social strategies (statements 49 and 50)

The purpose of including these issues in this rating scale was to incorporate as many aspects as possible of my beginner students' perspectives on the frequency of the affective factors addressed by this study. It also tried to explore their general familiarity and practice regarding the issues at hand. These data gave useful insights for the study and permitted a comparison with the data yielded by the first questionnaire. Appendix C has the rating scale about affective factors and language learning strategies of beginner students that was created for this study.

### 3.9.3 Observation.

Observation was the third method that I used for my data collection. Anne Burns<sup>134</sup> defined observation as taking regular and conscious notice of classroom actions and occurrences which are particularly relevant to the issues or topics being investigated. It also refers to using procedures that ensure that the information collected provides a sound basis for answering research questions and supporting the interpretations that are reached. Due to the nature of my study, observation was a powerful way to provide data relevant to my research questions. According to Lincoln and Guba:

Observation . . . maximizes the inquirer's ability to grasp motives, beliefs, concerns, interest, unconscious behavior, custom, and the like; observation ...allows the inquirer to see the world as his subjects see it, to live in their time frames, to capture the phenomenon in and on its own terms, and to grasp the culture in its own natural, ongoing environment<sup>135</sup>.

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<sup>134</sup> BURNS, A. Op. Cit., p. 80.

<sup>135</sup> LINCOLN, Y. S. and GUBA, E. G. Op. cit., p. 273.

Contemporary methods include two types of observations: participatory observation and nonparticipatory observation. I took a participant role in this study. In other words, I took an active role as I taught the class and observed the students simultaneously. My purpose in choosing this method was two-fold: (1) I wanted to collect data that can not be gained except through observation; and (2) I wanted to triangulate my findings with the other methods used in this study. Lincoln and Guba preferred that observation be in “natural” settings as opposed to “contrived” settings. Therefore, I conducted my observations inside my own classroom. The principle of purposive sampling of my study was applied to my observations as well as to the questionnaires. In other words, in order to gain more in-depth information I observed all the participants of my study in our natural context: our classroom.

Based on Wallace<sup>136</sup>, I decided that *the focus of the observation* was in general “myself as a teacher” since I paid attention to the techniques I used, my management procedures, my instructional practices, etc. But, in particular, the focus of my observation was on my beginner students: the way they worked, the way they interacted, the way they responded to my teaching and their on-task and off-task behaviors. I used *real time observation* to gather observed data which means that the observation is observed and analyzed as the teaching/learning actually happens without using any electronic means of recalling data. Speculating that some students enrolled in the class might not feel at ease in the study, I believed that videotaping could affect the students’ behavior due to their sensitivity toward the camera; thus it could affect the natural setting of the study. I agree with Lincoln and Guba (1985) who asserted that videotaping might minimize the observer’s chances to take notes, as he or she is busy with videotaping or with camera-related problems. Therefore, I opted, as they recommend, for other modes of recording other than videotaping, such as field notes. Note taking will be discussed later in this section.

Observation in the study took two forms: (1) *observing the class in general and any salient incidents that came up in the classroom*; and (2) *observing students when engaging in communicative-based activities and language learning experiences*. I used an *unstructured method to do my observations*. As Wallace explains<sup>137</sup>, this observation method is essentially an impressionistic approach whereby we note whatever seems of most importance and relevance, given our purpose for observing. As far as possible, I observed and avoided assessing or evaluating. Instead, I opted for writing down questions for myself or for taking notes of my doubts or positions.

To help guide my observations and to make them more manageable, I took into account Burns’ suggestions for doing observations. These suggestions are: *decide on a focus for the observation, which is relevant to your research; identify a specific physical location in which the observation will be conducted; consider the group or individual to be observed; record the events as they happen or as soon as possible; be as objective and precise as possible in your*

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<sup>136</sup> WALLACE, M. Op. cit., p. 105-106.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 109.

*observations and avoid using attitudinal or evaluative language; try to record complete events or incidents and develop a system for recording that fits in with other activities occurring in the context of the observation*<sup>138</sup>.

I mainly took notes of affective-related situations and behaviors in class. Most of the time, I conducted my observations from my desk. I decided to observe the whole class as a group. I did my observations mainly while students were doing pair or group work. I sometimes jotted things down when I was checking their work or explaining things to them individually. A few times, I made notes on my lesson plan or my textbook when I was explaining grammar or giving instructions. I also made an effort to include informal and unplanned activities, symbolic connotative meaning of words, and nonverbal communication. These subtle factors were less obvious but important to the observation. I was clear that I was observing and I was not supposed to assess or evaluate what I saw. Instead, I wrote down questions or comments for myself in a different color or inside a circle. This way I kept track of my own doubts or positions so they would not interfere with my observations. I took notes of everything that went on when students were interacting in pairs and groups or when they were working individually. I knew it was vital to do so in order to get a more inclusive and holistic picture of the situation to emerge. As I mentioned before, I usually recorded my observation when students were working in groups and pairs. Occasionally, I recorded some observation when students were working individually or when I was giving instructions or explaining grammar points.

To ensure insightful observations, I followed some tips. Having the advantage of being present every day, I utilized them in any way that helped me observe naturalistic behaviors. For instance, I made no attempt to gather data until several classes after the students and I became acquainted. Then, in my first observations, I just documented general information about the class, such as the setting, its atmosphere, and students' most relevant interactions. I acted as a researcher but not as a detective. In other words, I did not take excessive notes in a way that might be disturbing to the participants. I was as spontaneous as possible, yet attending to important and less important events.

#### 3.9.4 Field notes.

Making fieldnotes, as explained Wallace<sup>139</sup>, is not customary among teachers because teaching is not usually performed in a one-to-one situation and because the number of students and the complexity of class activities leave little time for taking notes. Wallace recommended finding time to take notes that could be useful for later reflection. Making fieldnotes of general instant self-evaluation of lessons and particular aspects of teaching and learning (group work, individual student's performance, common or interesting errors, problematic issues, etc) can be useful for later reflection and as Wallace noted apart from increasing effectiveness, making fieldnotes can prevent our hard-

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<sup>138</sup> BURNS, A. Op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>139</sup> WALLACE, M. Op. cit., p. 58.

won experience ebbing away and being lost in the tide of the pressures caused by getting on with the next thing.

As both a participant and an observer in the classroom, it can be difficult for the teacher to juggle teaching and note-making (Burns, 1999, p. 85). Practical solutions need to be found that fit in with personal preferences and time constraints. In this study, I opted to keep my fieldnotes in a structured way following a particular format that Wallace<sup>140</sup> called *teaching log* to distinguish it from the more fluid and ad hoc fieldnotes. I always included administrative details such as level, classroom, date, lesson, and unit. I then included the classroom activity or action that was taking place and some notes about what my students were doing. In this section, I also wrote down occurrences relevant to the issue or topic being investigated: affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies. Appendix D shows an example of the type of teaching log I used to make fieldnotes.

### 3.9.5 Student Journal

Diaries and journals are an alternative to field notes, or a supplement, if time permits (Burns, 1999, p. 89). They provide continuing accounts of perceptions and thought processes, as well as of critical events or issues which surface in the classroom. Not only do they contain subjective and personal reflections and interpretations but also they enable some of the pressures to be taken off. That was why I decided to ask my students to keep a regular dated account of their learning process, in which they could include personal reactions, reflections, and explanations of whatever they felt had been relevant, interesting, demanding or difficult in class. I encouraged my beginner students to confide to it whatever thoughts or feelings occurred to them in relation with affective factors every other unit.

In order to keep my students' focus on affective factors and to increase the chances of getting relevant and useful data for my study, I gave them a form to use when writing down their reflections and interpretations. Although this decision might have decreased the degree of personalization and the sense of intimacy with the journal, it aimed at helping me get more specific data and it could teach my students a way to be more systematic and concrete when reflecting about their learning process. I asked them to let me photocopy their journals if they wanted to do it because, as I explained to them, I wanted to keep a copy to do some data analysis of their personal and individual beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and anxieties. However, I could not do this analysis because of three reasons: the amount of data already gathered, time constraints, and a research decision. I opted to use these learner journals not as data collection instrument, but as a socioaffective language learning strategy since different EFL researchers suggest the potential benefits it has (This will be

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

better explained in chapter 4). Appendix E exemplifies the journal my students used during this study.

### 3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis in action research implies moving away from the action components, where the main focus is on planning and acting, to the research aspects, where the focus changes to more systematic observing and reflecting. *Data analysis is the stage where statements or assertions about what the research shows are produced* (Burns, 1999, p. 153). These statements are based on general patterns or themes which emerge from the data. These patterns or themes, in turn, describe the “what” of the research and explain the “why” of the research. With the “what” aspects we aim to set out what the data show, while with the “why” aspects we aim to explain what emerges from the descriptions of the data. In brief, through data analysis, we strive to organize data in order to make sense of the great amount of information that has been collected.

In practice, it is difficult and probably unnecessary to separate the processes of the data collection and analysis since, as Burns<sup>141</sup> explained, they are dynamic in the sense that they inevitably overlap, interrelate and recur since ideas, explanations, and hypothesis emerge as data are collected. Collecting data enables us to generate hypothesis, by noting events and finding explanations for them. In turn, this gives rise to further action, in the light of our own personal observations, theories, and what the data seem to be telling us. In this way, long before the investigation is finished, we will have noticed emerging patterns or trends, developed numerous predictions, and trialed different strategies to test out what seems to be happening in the classroom.

Through data analysis, we test out what seems to be happening *not only to achieve more informed classroom practices, but also to develop a critical assessment of sets of classroom actions in the light of newer and better understanding* (Burns 1999, p. 154). The aspirations of action research are not just to generate technical and practical improvements in practice, but mainly self-critical awareness and theoretical ideas about the nature of teaching and the personal values we bring to it. Carr and Kemmis expressed this idea in the following way: “A rational understanding of practice can only be gained through systematic reflection on action by the actor involved. The knowledge developed by action researchers about their own practices is of this kind”<sup>142</sup>.

In dealing with data analysis, I regarded it as a dynamic process, in which I engaged in making sense of the data both by identifying broad trends, characteristics or features and by drawing out theories and explanations in

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<sup>141</sup> BURNS, A. Op. cit., p. 154-155.

<sup>142</sup> CARR, W., and KEMMIS, S. *Becoming critical: Education, knowledge, and action Research*. Lewes, Sussex : Falmer Press, 1986, p. 189.

attempt to interpret the meaning of these trends or features. So, I started data processing and analysis with checking for completeness of the data and performing quality control checks, while sorting the data by instrument used. I also did the data processing and analysis with careful consideration of the objectives of my study as well as of the tools I developed to meet its objectives.

The procedures I used for the analysis of data collected through different techniques were somehow different. On the one hand, I used the questionnaires and the rating scale to get more quantitative data since they were obtrusive and controlled measurements from which I could create statistics and frequency checks. The starting point in their analysis was a description of the data for each section included in the instruments. Description and analysis were carried out after the fieldwork had been completed. On the other hand, I used my observations and fieldnotes to get more qualitative data since they were more descriptive, naturalistic and discovery-oriented. Their analysis was more a matter of describing, summarizing and interpreting the data obtained for each instrument. I was concerned with understanding students' behavior from my literature review and my frame of reference as an EFL teacher-researcher.

When making my plan for data processing and analysis, I considered the following issues: sorting data, performing quality-control checks, data processing, and data analysis (Corlien M. Varkevisser, Indra Pathmanathan, and Ann Brownlee, 1999). An appropriate system for sorting the data is important for facilitating subsequent processing and analysis. I numbered the instruments and their different sections separately right after they were sorted. I checked the data in the field to ensure that all the information had been properly collected and recorded. However, before and during data processing, I checked the information again for completeness and internal consistency. I only had to exclude responses from one of the initial questionnaires because the student had filled it out incorrectly. He wrote examples instead of giving answers. I used *frequency counts* for each section of my questionnaires and rating scale. A frequency count is defined as an enumeration of how often a certain measurement or a certain answer to a specific question occurs (M. Varkevisser et al., 1999).

Further analysis of the data required the combination of information on the first questionnaire and the rating scale in order to describe my research puzzle or to arrive at possible explanations for it. For this purpose and based on the objectives and the type of my study, I used *descriptive cross-tabulations* that aimed at describing the problem under study. I used *content analysis* for each section of my fieldnotes. Content analysis is concerned with analyzing the meaning of the structures and expressions contained in a message or communication to uncover incidences of certain words, phrases or key themes (Burns, 1999, pp. 166-167). Based on these key words or themes, I *set up relevant categories* by choosing as unambiguous categories as I could and by avoiding overlaps among the categories I chose (my thesis advisor and my critical buddy helped a great deal with this task). Once working categories were



set up, I observed, noted, and counted instances of the categories. In the next section, I will explain my coding procedures more deeply.

### 3.10.1 Data coding procedures.

As a qualitative researcher, I could not predict the emerging trends or themes in this study before analyzing the data. Therefore, I was subjected to the data coming out from participants to build my categories. Data analysis includes three processes as Merriam declared: “The analysis of qualitative data range from organizing a narrative description of the phenomenon, to constructing categories or themes that cut across the data, to building theory”<sup>143</sup>. Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed similar processes of data analysis: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. My data coding followed two basic steps: unitizing and categorizing.

#### 3.10.1.1 Unitizing.

Unitizing is the process of reducing large information into small pieces as units (Ali S. Al-Ghonaim, 2005, p. 93). I wrote down these units based on certain repeated words, phrases or key themes that emerged in my instruments. I made sure that the unit contained incidents relative to the study and that each unit represented a small piece of information that stood by itself. Furthermore, I made sure that the information was comprehensible to outside readers. These units were taken from the questionnaires, the observations (field-notes), the rating scales and the student journals. The units that I came up with were saved in WORD documents and were taken into the next step, categorization.

#### 3.10.1.2 Categorizing.

This phase represented my second step. I carefully read through the units and brought together ones with similar content. This process went through 5 steps, which are described below:

- The first unit resulting from unitizing represented my first category.
- The second unit went along with the first unit if it matched its content; if not, it represented another category. This process proceeded accordingly with all units. If a unit did not fit any of the established categories, it went to a category named “miscellaneous.”
- The units of each accumulated category were reviewed again to check their inclusion.
- Units in the miscellaneous category were reviewed to see if they fit into any category.

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<sup>143</sup> MERRIAM, S. B. Op. cit., p. 196.

- All units and categories were reviewed for overlap and to assure that nothing had been left aside.

When categorizing, I was aware of a range of coding possibilities discussed by Burns<sup>144</sup> on Bogdan and Biklen's family of codes. This family of codes includes setting/context codes, situation codes, subject-shared perspective codes, process codes, activity/behavior codes, event codes, strategy codes, and social structure codes. In this study, I used *subject-shared perspective codes*. These codes identify and include participants' ways of thinking about particular and specific aspects of the topic. I captured these codes in specific words or expressions that participants used. For example, in the initial questionnaire, "Participation in class" was repeatedly mentioned as a necessary attitude in class:

- It is important to participate in class so the teacher can detect mistakes.
- A participative attitude all the time in class is very important and necessary.
- Students need to participate actively in class\*

\* Translated version of my students' responses in the initial questionnaire

I also used *activity/behavior* codes. These codes are directed towards regularly occurring behaviors or activities within the research context. They can include informal behaviors (student games, coffee break activities) and formal activities (student writing conferences, student placement exams). For example, in my fieldnotes, "Students' work with same classmates class after class" was a repetitive behavior I observed during the second month:

- Ss seem to believe it's OK to practice with the same classmates day after day in every single activity even when I encouraged them to look for other people.
- I assigned students different numbers to talk among them, but in the end they ended up talking to their favorite classmates again.

Finally, I used *strategy* codes. These codes refer to the conscious strategies, methods, techniques or tactics that people use to accomplish various activities. These strategies were identified from explicit statements made by participants, rather than inferred from the way they behaved. For example, in my students' journals, "lesson review" was a common strategy used by my beginner students in their first month of class:

- Normally I review the lesson... mainly what it has to do with vocabulary.
- I review each topic
- I practice and review with my classmates and co-workers (there was a group of employees from a bank taking this class) \*

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<sup>144</sup> BURNS, A. Op. cit., p. 168-173.

\* Translated version of my students' responses notes in their journals

From my readings and experience in research studies, I understand that the process of coding is complex. Therefore, I gave it my utmost attention as it decided the essence of my study. I endeavored to use any valuable advice, recommendations, or suggestions from either my inquiry auditors or experts in the field of qualitative research. So far, this research has shown that it had employed a number of research methods and techniques that added to the research's strength. Below, I discuss some issues related the validity of the study.

### 3.11 A WORD ON VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The qualitative, subjective nature of AR has caused its internal/external validity/reliability to be questioned (see "the Problems of AR relating to reliability and validity table" below). However, such issues are only problems when viewed from the propositional ("scientific", isolationist, experimental, quantitative) perspective. In response to the first question in the table below, Andrew Finch<sup>145</sup> reminded us that AR investigates problems as perceived by and as addressed by actors in those situations. In this context, individuals interpret data according to their own perceived realities, in order to find solutions which produce the required results. Once a working solution has been found for the researcher's unique perception of his/her unique situation, then the purpose of the research has been satisfied, regardless of any differing conclusions which other observers might arrive at. It might appear that this approach is open to subjectively autocratic interpretations of objective facts, but the complex, dynamic nature of every classroom cannot be objectified, and t solutions cannot be imposed externally by a disassociated observer simply because what works for one teacher might not work for another, and what works for one group of students might not work for another group.

Table 21

*Problems of AR relating to reliability and validity (Finch, 2000, based on Nunan 1992)*

Type	Key question
Internal reliability	Would an independent researcher, on reanalyzing the data, come to the same conclusion?
External reliability	Would an independent researcher, on replicating the study, come to the same conclusion?
Internal validity	Is the research design such that we can confidently claim that the outcomes are a result of the experimental treatment?

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<sup>145</sup> FINCH, A. E. Op. cit., p. 4-5.

External validity	Is the research design such that we can generalize beyond the subjects under investigation to a wider population?
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The second question refers to the possibility of replicating the study. Andrew Finch explained that this, again, is a propositional question since AR is concerned only with a unique problem in a unique learning environment. When variables such as classes, teachers, students, age, proficiency level, motivation, attitudes, beliefs, anxieties, perceptions, learning preferences, and teaching styles are considered, it immediately stands out that every class is different, and that conditions cannot be replicated. An independent researcher, on replicating the study, would of necessity come to somewhat dissimilar conclusions.

The assumption underlying question 3 is causal, i.e. that research should identify cause and effect. However, Finch argued that the educational context, with the classroom at its center, should be viewed as a complex system in which events do not occur in linear causal fashion, but in which a multitude of forces interact in complex, self-organizing ways, and create changes and patterns that are part predictable, part unpredictable. Thus, AR does not seek for causal relationships, but attempts simply to describe the interaction of local variables and to predict the global emergence of learning trends. Rather than claiming that results are dependent on research, AR investigates the participants and their perceptions in order to positively influence them, often through raised awareness (on the part of the participants) of the existence and nature of certain variables and factors.

Finally, the fourth question looks at external validity. Once more, Finch claimed that this is not an issue for AR since its purpose is to affect the immediate learning situation. If the results are of interest to other practitioners, then this can be seen as a bonus side-effect. To Finch, action researchers are saying no more (and no less) than "This is the issue which I investigated. This is how I collected and interpreted the data. This is how I fed my interpretation back into the learning environment. These are the changes I subsequently observed." (See previous discussions on validity in Van Lier 1988, Nunan 1989 and LoCastro 2000). The apparently normal process of identifying a problem in the local classroom, and of attempting to find a solution for that problem, is in itself an act of research, and when carried out systematically in order for reliable results to emerge, it is immediately valid since it impacts the local situation. Given the complex, dynamic nature of every language class and the subjective nature of the inquiry, the results of such research cannot be used to infer conclusions about other similar classes. This fact, however, does not detract from the fact that AR activities do indeed qualify as research by:

- addressing questions of interest to other practitioners;
- generating data, and
- containing analysis and interpretation

### 3.12 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Despite its subjective and qualitative nature, AR does not give “carte blanche” to teachers to make conclusions about their classrooms based on subjective and intuitive impressions. Such factors are acknowledged as important by AR, but must be supported by rigorous and trustworthy research methods, as with any serious system of inquiry. Lincoln and Guba<sup>146</sup> claimed that four criteria account for trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry: *credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability*. This study followed some strategies suggested by L. Krefting in 1991 in order to guarantee trustworthiness. Table 22 shows the strategies followed by this study.

Table 22

*Krefting's strategies to establish trustworthiness.*

Strategy	Criteria
Credibility	Prolonged and varied field experience
	Reflexivity (field journal)
	Triangulation
	Peer examination
	Structural coherence
Transferability	Dense description
Dependability	Inquiry audit
	Dense description of research methods
	Triangulation
	Peer examination
Confirmability	Inquiry audit
	Triangulation
	Reflexivity

I was concerned with prolonged engagement to gain trust during data collection inside and outside of the classroom. This was possible due to my presence in class as the teacher. My regular presence helped me conduct persistent observations to detect less salient issues besides the salient influences and to have deep reflection on what went on in class and what emerged from my data. For example, conducting numerous observations enabled me to notice such incidents that could have not been noticed from one visit or two. This study used triangulation, allowing me to verify data through multiple methods of data collection. This study also used peer examination, allowing me to get more and better insights through a combination of viewpoints from my critical buddy and my validation group. This study also systematically followed different research stages and carefully used different data collection techniques to ensure structural coherence.

<sup>146</sup> LINCOLN, Y. S. and GUBA, E. G. Op. cit., p. 43.

Similarly, I realized that the purpose of this study was not to generalize findings. However, I depended heavily on providing a thick description of the research context that enhanced transferability. Yet, it is the responsibility of the person dealing with the results of this study to be sensitive to the differences between this particular setting and any other.

This study employed “overlap methods” of triangulation as a technique that increased validity and credibility. I do not claim that the use of these methods guarantees an absolute level of validity and credibility, but they were important to minimize the threats to validity. Also, I followed Lincoln and Guba’s technique of “inquiry audit,” according to which I made sure that the process of my study observe this technique. To apply this technique, I consulted my advisor, who is head of the EFL department of La Salle University, to examine the process of the inquiry, the product, the findings, and the interpretation. I also checked with members of my institution. Furthermore, I assured that the recommendations and implications raised by this study were supported by the data collected.

In my data analysis, I was exclusively limited to analyze what took place with regards to the purpose of the study. I provided a thick description of whatever seemed relative to my research questions. The purpose of this thick description was to ensure as much as possible verisimilitude which implies that the reader comes to know things told, as if he or she had experienced them. As stated earlier in this chapter, my description was mainly based on the participants’ responses and comments from the instruments. Thus, the possibility of distortion in my data analysis was minimized as much as possible, too.

### 3.13 BIAS

The issue of bias in qualitative research is an important one and requires special attention. I decided to conduct this study for one major reason: interest. I have learnt English in an environment where it is not spoken as the first language. Since I started learning English, I was pushed by my desire to develop my proficiency, especially in my speaking skill. I have noticed that my desires, expectations, needs, and other affective factors were not treated properly by my EFL teachers since they just seemed to be concerned about my grammar, my vocabulary and my pronunciation. I gained more interest in this topic since I started working with language learning strategies as a tutor at the Centro Colombo Americano and this topic resurfaced when I started my MA degree. Literature shows that this affective factors and language learning have received a good deal of attention from researchers, but not some much from book designers and educators. Therefore, I decided to take a step further; I wanted to investigate these issues and gather students' opinions about it.

When thinking about doing teacher research or classroom research, I had to carefully consider the different elements at play because underlying considerations often influence the way that we investigate issues and our reasons and intentions. There are different theories of knowledge creation and

acquisition (epistemologies), there are different ways of doing research processes (methodologies), and researchers have different reasons and intentions for doing research, depending on how they perceive their own realities (ontologies). In consequence, it was vital for me to consider the theories, the processes, the perceptions, the values, interests and purposes we hold in order to understand why and how we do research and produce knowledge.

Following Whitehead<sup>147</sup>, I regard all the different and apparent separate ways of knowledge and research as aspects of a wider evolutionary, transformational process that deals with instrumental, participatory, and emancipatory interests in the human experience. This transformational process requires, what McNiff calls, an *epistemology of practice* that can allow us to explore and share our common humanity by providing justification for our reasons and intentions and a living out of our values and purposes as a conscious practice. This epistemology positions people as active knowers who are responsible for coming to their own insights about the nature of their lives and acting on that knowledge. In other words, this epistemology encourages people to offer explanations for what they do in terms of their own values and intentions. Simply put, research and knowledge are a transformational process in which one's own understanding grows through self-reflection to insightfully act on one's life and the lives of others.

This short account of my beliefs and attitudes about research revealed my bias toward the study. They represent some of my preconceived values and, according to Brown (1996), this documentation of my bias is essential for two reasons: the first reason is to systematically acknowledge and document my biases rather than striving to rise above them. The second one refers to self-discovery, where a researcher learns from his or her experience. Therefore, as a teacher, a researcher and a learner, I hope to exploit the knowledge I gain from this study to understand and improve my practices.

### 3.14 ETHICAL ISSUES

Because action research is carried out in real-world circumstances, and involves close and open communication among the people involved, the researchers must pay close attention to ethical considerations in the conduct of their work. O'Brien<sup>148</sup> listed a number of principles:

- Make sure that the relevant persons, committees and authorities have been consulted, and that the principles guiding the work are accepted in advance by all.
- The development of the work must remain visible and open to suggestions from others.

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<sup>147</sup> WHITEHEAD, J. Op. cit., p. 2-3.

<sup>148</sup> O'BRIEN, R. Op. cit., p. 9-10.

- Permission must be obtained before making observations or examining documents produced for other purposes.
- Descriptions of others' work and points of view must be negotiated with those concerned before being published.
- The researcher must accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality.
- Researchers are explicit about the nature of the research process from the beginning, including all personal biases and interests
- There is equal access to information generated by the process for all participants

As I researched, I understood that the privacy of participants must be protected, even after receiving their permission to participate in the study. All the participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point. Their names were kept confidential. Furthermore, I assured the participants that the questionnaires and observations were used for the sole purpose of the study. I informed students that their participation did not affect their grades in anyway. Above all, the volunteer participants were asked to sign the consent form before the study started. Appendix F shows the consent form I used with my students.

### 3.15 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research paradigm, method and techniques that were used to conduct this study. The study used a number of techniques in order to arrive at insightful conclusions. I was looking forward to implementing this study, understanding my teaching practices, enriching my self and helping my beginner students with their English learning process. The findings of the study are discusses in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND RESULTS



If the field of second and foreign language teaching is to make claims to be a recognizable professional field, practitioners within this field will need to be able to make principled statements and judgments about teaching. These judgments need to be based on concepts about curriculum practice which are shaped by classroom enquiry and critical reflection.  
Anne Burns<sup>149</sup>

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Based on the research methodology and instruments explained in the previous chapter, this chapter explores the participants' beliefs, attitudes, motivations, anxieties related to the issue of socioaffective language learning strategies in a beginner EFL class. As shown in chapter Two, although there has been broad research concerning the connection between affective factors and language learning, educators need more comprehensive insights into how the use of classroom activities and materials explicitly teaching socioaffective language learning strategies can impact the students' beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and anxieties toward foreign language learning. The present study falls in this area. It attempts to answer one main research question, by exploring the impact of socioaffective language learning strategies and activities on EFL beginner students' beliefs, attitudes, motivations and anxieties about language learning. It also attempts to answer a set of secondary research questions related to their EFL learning experience during the course.

I addressed all my beginner students taking BS1 (01) basic course on the fifth day of class. I explained the nature of my study to them and I requested their participation in it. There were 21 students in that class and all of them voluntarily accepted to participate in the study. Two participating students dropped the course in the first month, and three other participants withdrew from the study after the rating scale; therefore, they were excluded from the findings of the study. Two students dropped the course in the third month. The total number of students from the original group was 14 students. Three students joined the class in the second month and they were integrated into the study since they answered the questionnaire and the rating scale, kept a journal and, most importantly, became active and legitimate members of our classroom context. In the end, 17 beginner students took part of this study.

The findings of this study are presented according to the three steps outlined in the design of the study, data recording, data coding, and data analysis. The

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<sup>149</sup> BURNS, A. Op. Cit., p. 48.

findings are presented in this chapter in themes that relate to the research questions of the study and are derived from the students' responses.

Since this study mainly depends on the students' responses, direct quotations from the questionnaires, rating scales, and journals are used to render a more vivid sense of the students' responses. If their responses are paraphrased, they are carefully handled so that the original intention and focus of the students' words remain intact.

This chapter starts with an analysis based on my fieldnotes of my regular observations through the three months the course took. Based on an initial questionnaire, a rating scale, and learner journals, it then provides a report about the participants' socioaffective factors and strategies about EFL learning based on their experience of this relationship during the course. Next, it discusses how the findings were identified and approached. Finally, based on the findings, it provides a description of the educational scheme, the set of activities, and the instructional model employed to aim for the development of students' emotive abilities and the shaping of their affective desires.

## 4.2 OBSERVATION AND FIELDNOTES

This section discusses themes that came out from the observation I made during the first two months of this course. Other themes emerging from observation will be discussed later in this chapter. For purposes of clarity and organization, I will divide the section into the main topics of interest of this study: beliefs (knowledge, representations, concepts, assumptions, and expectations I detected), attitudes (emotional reactions or responses, recurring behaviors, social positions or predispositions I observed), anxiety (tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry I spotted), and motivation (desire, drive, need, goal-orientedness, effort I witnesses). After unitizing and categorizing my data, I divided my findings in four levels: the learner level (data related to students' perceptions about their own roles, responsibilities, and behaviors), the language level (data connected to the central characteristics students assigned to different aspects or skills of the language), the learning level (data linked to stages and requirements students assumed that learning English implies or presupposes) and the classroom level (data associated with the dynamics and the atmosphere students seemed to favor in class). In each level, I strived to offer an interpretation of what I observed based on what I had read, I had noticed in class and I had discussed with my critical buddy and validation group. I will also describe what I observed and concluded in terms of language learning strategies.

### 4.2.1 Beliefs.

Based on what students said and talked in class, I found out that they seemed to believe all they have to do was classroom-based. I mean, they seemed to think that all they have to do was to come to class, do textbook exercises and listen to the teacher's explanations. In other words, they seemed to regard language learning as a rather passive activity in which the teacher and the textbook directed and made their learning possible. Students also seemed to believe all they had to do in class was to complete the exercises. To them, it was not necessary to try to put them into practice or personalize them which sometimes limited their practice and personalization of book topics and course contents. This was probably why they sometimes ended up with simplistic or limited interaction in class. However, they declared that they needed to be very willing and committed to prepare and participate in order to learn. So, besides, making the decision of taking the class, they appeared to understand that they also needed to have a clear purpose and a strong desire to succeed (I will come back to this point when I look at motivation). Unfortunately, they seemed to believe it was enough to work with vocabulary once in order to memorize. In other words, they thought that looking words up was enough to know them, but, as many of us know, it is necessary to review them constantly if we are to store them in our mind permanently. Touchstone and the Colombo's adult English program address this are with a vocabulary notebook section and project. (See the course and the book in chapter 3).

In terms of the language level, although most had taken English courses before, they believed their English level was very poor or inexistent because, according to them, the courses had been boring and bad or because they had not been committed enough. They also believed English was a challenging language to learn; especially its grammar and pronunciation. They believed they could learn it with effort and patience, though. They believed it was hard to learn vocabulary (memorization was the main difficulty), the difference in pronunciation patterns (they were mainly concerned with linking and contractions) and the complexity of sentence structure and grammatical rules (they regarded them as confusing or difficult). These definitely seemed to be the areas they were more concerned with (I will come back to this point when talking about anxiety).

Opportunely, they believed English was not just a social need or academic requirement, but a sociocultural opportunity for them as human beings. That is to say, they did not only want to study English to fulfill a requirement or to get more professional opportunities, but also to have access to a new culture and to expand their own formation. This may have helped them devote time and energy to EFL learning. Namely, they did not only want to study English to fulfill a requirement or to get more professional opportunities, but also to have access to a new culture and to expand their own formation. This belief seemed to be connected not only with an instrumental motivation, but with an intrinsic one, too (See the discussion on combination of motivations in chapter 2).

With regard to the learning level, they believed very strongly that it was necessary to understand every single detail when doing an exercise or

conversation. Otherwise, they seemed to feel they were not doing things right. This belief probably had to do with high levels of anxiety I observed, especially when speaking and interacting in class. Based on their comments, they also seemed to believe it was necessary to ask all sort of questions about everything they did not understand or wanted to know. At first, I had a hard time to convince them they needed to accept and deal with a certain degree of uncertainty. In other words, it was hard to help them develop a certain degree of tolerance to ambiguity in class. In time, most got the idea.

Similarly, they often tried to go beyond their level asking questions about structures they had not studied yet. It was not easy to show them the importance of keeping focused on topics, structures, and activities at hand. This belief took them away from practicing, personalizing and internalizing what they had studied or practiced in class and made them think about and look at language issues that just confused them. A similar belief was the one they had about the use of Spanish as the first or only tool to understand class exercises and clarify doubts. Another rather negative belief was about class preparation. Students seemed to think they just needed to have a quick look at the content of the lesson, but they did not go beyond it by looking up new words or expressions, by preparing possible sentences or questions they could use in class, and by understanding the mechanics of the exercises and activities proposed in their textbook.

With regard to the classroom level, students seemed to believe it was OK to practice with the same classmates day after day in every single activity. This belief was probably based on the assumption that it is the teacher or classmates' responsibility to create and promote a nice and collaborative class atmosphere. Very little did they try to integrate and get to know other classmates apart from their favorite ones. Some also believed the classroom was their only space and time to have contact and practice with English. I had a hard time to get them to understand how important it was for English to become a part of their lives and not just a class they take for two hours<sup>150</sup>.

Sept. 27

They are using basic English and classroom expressions to do the activity (complete application forms). Some are sitting down on their chairs waiting for others to approach them. Um, are they being lazy or just trying to avoid speaking because they feel uncomfortable? I need to pay attention to this issue... Students are just talking to their favorite classmates or friends, but they do not invite other to talk to them. I wonder why. Do they believe it is Ok? Does it help them feel relaxed?... Those who prepared the homework (a short paragraph about their favorite celebrities) are interacting and speaking more. What happened to the others? Why didn't they prepare the paragraph? Did they think it was not really necessary? I guess now

#### 4.2.2 Attitudes.

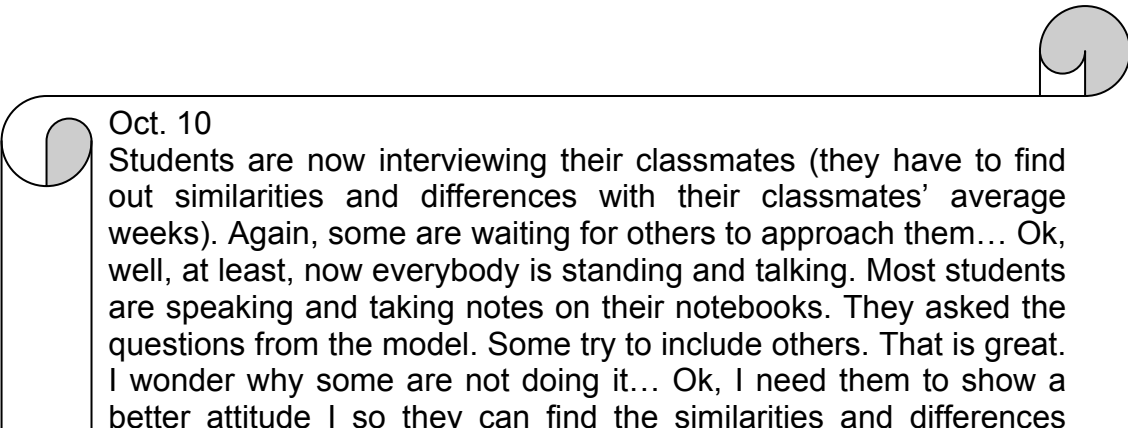
With regard to the learner level, a few students really showed their willingness and ability to participate actively in most class activities. However, most of them volunteered at least once; especially with activities in which they just had to provide a simple answer. A few students were keen to participate and take risks in class while many students were willing to participate only when asked to. Most avoided saying a lot in class and opted to remain quiet. This tendency to participate little or a lot appeared to be linked with their self-confidence, language proficiency and anxiety level. Also, it was noticeable that when doing class activities (surveys, interviews, dialogs, etc), they acted as if it was better to sit and wait instead of standing up and starting conversations. Some students' attitudes seemed to match the beliefs that it is perfectly OK to wait for others to approach them instead of looking for opportunities to practice with new or different classmates. When writing, students had a propensity to take a long time because they tried to translate their ideas word by word instead of using what they know by simplifying or adapting their messages. They would constantly open their dictionaries or asked me or some classmates how to say trivial things; trivial, at least, for the main aim of the activity or exercise.

In terms of the language level, when practising with dialogs, students tended to read them using a strong and flat accent instead of making dialogs sound natural and dynamic. They could not or would not use the basic of intonation and rhythm patterns explained in class. Linking and word stress seemed to be the weakest areas. I noticed that sometimes they felt it was sort of "funny" or "unusual" to sound so differently. I guess this is an issue linked to language ego. However, they usually showed great interest in learning about conversation strategies (phrases or expressions) to make their interactions sound more realistic and personal, but hardly ever would they put them into action, at least, with their classmates.

This apparent contradiction might have been caused because their attention was mainly directed towards grammar and vocabulary and not so much into speaking and interacting; this contradiction seemed to be rooted in their beliefs about what components or elements were central in language learning. Students also tended to answer or speak using content words without making an effort to use complete structures. The overuse of this strategy can certainly affect students' language proficiency first because they do not use complete sentences to better internalize structures from the beginning and second, because they do not develop competence with the use of other language learning strategies. Ultimately, this can affect their ability to express ideas appropriately in the FL. (I will talk about language learning strategies later.)

With regard to the learning level, students were at ease with activities and dialogs after being explained and provided with a clear and simple model. They seemed to feel at ease when being able to resort to memorization and to predictability. They also tended to be more participative and to take risks when activities were interesting for or familiar to them (making introductions, writing an email to a friend, talking about their favorite person, describing their routines, etc). With other class activities, students preferred to do exercises first individually and then in pairs to check their answers, but not in front of the class. These students used to turn around to look at their partners' workbook or textbook to check their answers or to ask questions about vocabulary. After doing exercises, most students tended to start speaking Spanish instead of working on pronunciation, checking their answers, having a conversation using the situation, etc. Once again these actions or behaviors seemed to contradict their intention to speak and practice in class as much as possible; a condition that almost everybody had said was a must in an English class.

In terms of the classroom level, most students felt at ease with doing pair work but no whole class activities. I guess this had to do with anxieties; mainly peer pressure and fear of losing face. Although they were open to practice with different classmates, they would rather stick to their favorite ones if not told otherwise. Some students participated and volunteered constantly in spite of having difficulties with pronunciation or vocabulary. They felt the classroom was the place to work those problems out and their attitudes and participation did reflect this belief. In general, students seemed to have more favorable attitudes towards grammar, pronunciation and listening than towards speaking, writing or reading.



Oct. 10

Students are now interviewing their classmates (they have to find out similarities and differences with their classmates' average weeks). Again, some are waiting for others to approach them... Ok, well, at least, now everybody is standing and talking. Most students are speaking and taking notes on their notebooks. They asked the questions from the model. Some try to include others. That is great. I wonder why some are not doing it... Ok, I need them to show a better attitude so they can find the similarities and differences

Excerpt from field notes, No. 2.

#### 4.2.3 Anxiety.

At first, students as learners were a bit insecure or uncomfortable about their new role in class. Somehow they expected to be asked just to memorize vocabulary, fill out exercises, write short texts, answer questions and do role-plays from time to time. However, the learning-to-learn and the learner-centered approach of the Adult English Program demand an active and participative role from its students and some of them find it difficult to take on much autonomous work. This new demand made some of my beginner students feel anxious since I expected them to do certain things; things that they were not used to do before. For example, using a learner dictionary, understanding the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), keeping a vocabulary notebook, using a CD-ROM, going to a multimedia lab, taking risks, starting and maintaining dialogs, etc. There seemed to be a clash between what students believed or wanted to do and what the institution needed or expected them to do and this clash generated some evident degree of anxiety.


With regard with the language level as such, students were anxious about pronunciation and listening. They avoided expressed their concern about it when we did listening exercises and pronunciation practices. Fortunately, the textbook provides them with different types of exercises and activities that present them with different language learning strategies. I also stressed steps to listen and gave suggestions to help students overcome this anxiety (videos, songs, learner recordings, CD-ROM exercise, etc). Since students seemed not to be reviewing and preparing classes adequately, they experienced some degree of anxiety to do exercises and activities in class. Sometimes exercises were a bit difficult for them because they just did not have the needed vocabulary and structures. This difficulty seemed to make them feel unsure of or uncomfortable with their level and skills. On the other hand, they just did not like being on the spot to be judged or evaluated by the teacher or their classmates. Most students can relate to that feeling because not many people

like or feel comfortable in situations in which judgment and evaluation play an important part. Another issue related to English was the tendency to resort to Spanish to overcome difficulties in class. This seemed to happen due to the fact that they regarded Spanish as the only or best way to get help or assistance. Some students also felt anxious when they could not resort to Spanish to understand grammar explanations and the dynamics of class exercises or activities. They just wanted someone to tell them what was going on in their mother tongue. I had to persuade really hard to avoid excessive dependence on Spanish.

In terms of learning level, some students used to get anxious because they paid attention to every little detail instead of paying attention to the general picture. This misled them and got them confused. Students' participation in front of the class was normally done by a few. Those who volunteered were those with a better English level or those who had a conviction they would benefit from doing improvised dialogs. Those who did not volunteer used to tell me they were shy. This might be an indication of some sort of social anxiety that may inhibit them from showing more appropriate behavior in class such as participating, taking risks, etc.

I noticed that another aspect that made students feel anxious was the fact that there was not as much time as they wanted to have to learn everything they were taught or presented with in class. I had to tell them many times, this was a cyclical process and they were going to have different opportunities to review and practice basic structures and verb tenses. Similarly, they were concerned about the number of topics, structures, and tense they had to learn and memorize. It seemed to them that every single class brought new things and they sometimes felt overwhelmed by this constancy in our classes.

With regard to the classroom level, students' participation was sometimes low because apparently they did not want to lose face, feel embarrassed or be on the spot. That was probably why some students tended to work with the same people class after class. It helped them feel at ease. When doing improvised dialogs, students felt uneasy even more and this definitely was connected to group pressure, fear of losing face and shyness; at least, those were the three main reasons my students always mentioned. Probably, they were afraid of making mistakes because, somehow, they thought they were unacceptable or inappropriate in their learning process. It was hard to show them otherwise. Definitely, some classroom activities were anxiety-inducing; especially those in which students had to interact and speak.



Oct 27th.

SS had to improvise a conversation making an effort to use follow-up questions... Wow, they are taking longer than I thought. Most are taking notes. I need to tell them that it is not necessary because all they need to do is "speak". I guess it is easier said than done... Surprise nobody wants to role-play their dialogs in front of the class. What happens? They had 30 minutes to prepare a 1 minute conversation... Ok, at the end, only 3 groups volunteered... Students show some anxiety towards this activity. Some are nervous about



Excerpt from field notes, No. 3.

#### 4.2.4 Motivation.

Students seemed to be motivated to give new or unfamiliar strategies, activities and material a try. To be exact, they seemed to be open-minded and disposed to change and innovation. However they accepted new responsibilities, most lacked constancy and effort to put them into action as often and properly as they were supposed to. Again, this seemed to be linked to their beliefs and attitudes about what language learning implies and what the language classroom looks like.

In terms of the language level, as I already explained, they had two sorts of motivation<sup>151</sup>. An instrumental one that made them see English as a tool to get better opportunities in their jobs and majors. An intrinsic one that made them really want to study and learn English. Interestingly enough, most students did not see English just in connection to USA or Great Britain, but in relation to the world. The majority of the students wanted to learn the basics of the language to get a good control of the language; especially, to be able to speak English well.

In class, students preferred to do activities in which they could work together with other classmates. As it was explained before, they were not that much into improvisation and dialogs in front of the class, but when they liked to do grammar, vocabulary and reading exercises in pairs or in groups. They wanted to have authentic interactions and personalized conversations, but they avoided them or did an average job because they tended to lose their confidence and become anxious. Conversely, they wanted to do a variety of things in class (activities, videos, songs, games, even quizzes), but they did not really strive to internalize the series elements (the textbook, the workbook, the CD/CD-ROM, the online class) and the series dynamics (the way the students' book, the workbook, the CD-ROM integrate and the way the exercises and the topics are presented and worked in the Touchstone series). As I told them, this

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<sup>151</sup> See DECI and RYAN's discussion on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York : Plenum, 1985.

internalization was an important part of their learning experience since with it, they could benefit from these materials more and better.

Nov 2nd

I asked a volunteer to do a role-play with me of the dialog we have just studied and practiced. XXX volunteered as she almost always does and it was a very good conversation. I congratulated her and her classmates did the same, too... XXX wanted to do the role-play with me, too. He got a bit nervous and forgot some questions, but he did it... Great! I asked them why they decided to volunteer and they said they wanted to practice and lose their fear of speaking in public. That was just the perfect comment and example for others. I love these guys...

Excerpt from field notes, No. 4.

#### 4.2.5 Language learning strategies.

In the first month, I was able to observe the following set of language learning strategies from which it was clear to me that students were using cognitive and compensation language learning strategies a lot more often than any others. On the one hand, I noticed that they tended to use more cognitive strategies because they helped them manipulate the learning materials through direct analysis, transformation, or synthesis of different language contents, class topics, course contents and learning tasks. Compensation strategies, on the other hand, seemed to help students deal with some learning demands to overcome knowledge gaps.

- The cognitive learning strategies that I observed were: note-taking, highlighting, translation, memorization, repetition (when imitating others, speech), substituting (selecting alternative approaches, revised plans, or different words or phrases to accomplish a language task), clarification (asking the teacher or a classmate to explain), and practice (recognizing and using formulas and patterns or recombining them);
- Compensation strategies: switching to the mother tongue, using mime and gestures, avoiding communication partially or totally, using content words.
- Memory strategies: grouping, using imagery, and reviewing;
- Metacognitive learning strategies: paying attention, organizing, delaying speech production;
- Social strategies: accessing L2 materials and working with peers.
- Affective strategies: taking risks wisely;
- Communication strategies: formulaic interaction, gestures, and language switch.

By the end of the second month and through their last month, I was able to observe that my students had increased their number of strategies, but not necessarily their frequency and purposefulness. In other words, they used different strategies, but they did not plan or control their use and purpose when working with textbook exercises or class activities. They just used them in a spontaneous or unintentional way. At least, that was what I could observe. Even so, I noticed that my students started using more metacognitive strategies and increased their use of compensation strategies:

- Compensation strategies: using non-linguistic clues (seeking and using clues such as *knowledge of context, situation, text structure, personal relationship, general world knowledge*), getting help (asking someone for help by hesitating or explicitly asking for the person to provide the missing word or expression in the target language), adjusting or approximating the message (altering the message by omitting some items of information, making ideas less simpler or less precise), problem identification (explicitly identifying the central points needing resolution in a task or identifying an aspect of the task that hinders its successful completion);
- Metacognitive learning strategies: self-monitoring (correcting one's speech for accuracy in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary), overviewing and linking with already known material (overviewing comprehensively a key concept, principle, or a set of materials in an upcoming language activity and associating it with what is already known), identifying one's own learning preferences and needs, and planning for L2 tasks;
- Cognitive learning strategies: resourcing (using target language reference materials), deduction (consciously applying rules to produce or understand the second language sequence), transfer (using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate new language learning items), inferencing (using available information to guess meanings of new items, predicting outcomes, or fill in missing information);
- Social strategies: Accessing L2 materials, practice acquired knowledge, cooperating with peers, asking for clarification (asking the speaker to repeat, paraphrase, explain, slow down, or give examples);
- Affective strategies: Taking risks wisely, writing a language learning diary, listening to your body, making positive statements (most of these used due to the study and my recommendations in class); and
- Communication strategies: word coinage, describing, approximation, starting and maintaining conversations, using conversation strategies (See information about the book in chapter 3).

Nov. 17th

Students compare the similarities and differences between yes-no questions and short answers between present simple and past simple. They are analyzing the grammar chart and having a look at the one we studied in unit 4. It is great to see them contrasting and preparing formulas... Wow! Some have taken notes from our nicenet class and are sharing them with their classmates. Others are using the dictionary to check the grammar charts it has... They said they

Excerpt from field notes, No. 5.

#### 4.2.6 Discussion.

This section discussed some themes emerging from the observation I made during the first two months of this course. The division of the information into the main topics of interest of this study (beliefs, attitudes, anxiety, motivation, and language learning strategies) tried to give a general sense of what I observed and the most common and frequent behaviors or actions I noticed when revising, unitizing and categorizing my fieldnotes. The division I made into four levels (the learner, the language, the learning, and the classroom) was meant to address the salient areas or points that were more noticeable after unitizing and categorizing my data.

In terms of affective factors, the analysis of my observations seemed to show that although motivation in second language learning presents a rich field for research, dealing as it does with the very driving forces behind learning, it was not the most determining factor in students' behaviors and actions in class. At least, based on what I observed. Anyhow, my students appeared to have good levels of motivation to learn English and to try out new strategies, tasks and activities. It definitely contributed to their own learning effectiveness since it increased their sense of educational achievement. Most of my students understood and accepted that their learning success was a result of effort, and that failure could be overtaken with greater effort and better use of strategies. To my surprise, attitudes and beliefs seemed to have a more profound influence on my students' learning behaviors and on their learning outcomes, since I could observe and determine that only those students who had developed insightful beliefs about and appropriate attitudes towards language learning processes displayed better awareness, commitment and performance. These insightful beliefs and appropriate attitudes did seem to have a facilitative effect on those successful students' learning and really favored their own abilities and the use of effective learning strategies.

However, as I observed and noted in the previous description, there was an apparent discrepancy or contradiction between what most of my students said they wanted to do and what they really did in class; particularly, in the area of

speaking and interaction. As I observed, most of my students thought and felt these were important areas to be developed and worked in class, but they did not show acceptable classroom behaviors or appropriate communicative performance. That is probably why my teaching log had many notes about class moments in which not only did I acknowledge my students' rather unhelpful attitudes, beliefs, and expectations, but also I had to explain to them the fact that some of their beliefs and attitudes could lead to frustration, dissatisfaction with the course, unwillingness to perform communicative activities, a lack of confidence in themselves as well as poor language achievement. It was apparent that I had to help them overcome the harmful perceptions and blocks they had towards the language, its learning and its communication.

Anxiety was definitively an issue I had to struggle with in class because, as I observed, there were many instances and reactions of fear, distress, and shame (including shyness and guilt). I noticed that my students tended to feel more apprehension when the tasks or exercises required a more spontaneous and authentic use of a foreign language with which they seemed to feel they were not fully proficient at. This apprehension was characterized by avoidance, passiveness, reluctance, insecurity and discomfort. It seemed to me that the feeling of tension and apprehension was specifically associated, in particular, with foreign language performance; mainly communication apprehension. I also noticed some sort of social anxiety in class, which may bring about disengagement –withholding of communication, breaking eye contact, evasion of interaction –or replacement of communication with innocuous sociability<sup>152</sup>. Therefore, language performance and social interaction were other areas I needed to address explicitly and effectively in class.

Language learning strategies, as I observed and identified them, were the special behaviors or specific actions taken by my students to comprehend, learn, or retain new information and to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, and more effective. Most of the time, I observed that the strategies were goal-oriented. That is to say, my students seemed to use them as tools to solve a linguistic or communicative problem, to accomplish a course task, or to meet an academic objective. It seemed to me that strategies which involve simple operations on linguistic material, such as repetition and memorization, or the use of formulaic language, were the first acquired and the most frequently used by my beginner students. In cognitive strategy use, my beginner students relied most on repetition, translation and transfer, whereas my more advanced students relied most on deducing and inferencing. This difference may indicate that successful and unsuccessful learners tend to different sets of language learning strategies. One would, then, suppose students would use different language learning strategies. However, this difference may also indicate just a matter of preference since, according to Cohen, it is also likely that just as language learners have personal strategy preferences, they also have personal learning styles<sup>153</sup>. In brief, students may favor the use of different language

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<sup>152</sup> See Geen, 1991 cited in Gass and Selinker 2001, p. 357

<sup>153</sup> See COHEN, A. *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. London: Longman, 1998.

learning strategies not only because of their language level, but also because of their personal preferences.

The use of compensation strategies reported by my beginner students seemed to be related to the type of instruction they received. In other words, in a classroom in which communication and interaction are emphasized, students should use using mime and gestures, getting help, adjusting or approximating the message, using content words, switching to the mother tongue, and even avoiding communication partially or totally. This potential relation can bring into prominence the role of teachers and the type of instruction students are involved in. One consequence to be drawn from that could be the impact of the role played by teaching methodologies in students' learning process.

Based on my observations, I could notice that the use of social and affective strategies was much less frequent than the use of other strategies, which is a situation that other studies have observed, too (See Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Chou, 2004). In my teaching log, I noted down some instances in which students use: accessing L2 materials, working with peers, practice acquired knowledge, cooperating with peers, asking for clarification (asking the speaker to repeat, paraphrase, explain, slow down, or give examples), taking risks wisely, taking risks wisely, writing a language learning diary, listening to your body, making positive statements (most of these used due to the study and my recommendations in class).

Table 23

*Summary of the teacher-researcher's observations.*

<b>Beliefs identified in class.</b>	<p><u>1. The learner level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limitation of their English level.</li> <li>- Avoidance of class participation and preference to remain quiet.</li> <li>- Having a clear purpose to do their best in class.</li> <li>- Appropriateness of practicing with the same classmates in every single activity.</li> </ul> <p><u>2. The language level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Previous experiences with English from which they did not learn much.</li> <li>- Perception of English as a challenging language that needed patience and effort to be learned.</li> <li>- Difficulty to deal with the amount of vocabulary, the difference in pronunciation patterns and the complexity of sentence structure and grammatical rules.</li> <li>- Perception of English not just as a social or academic need, but a sociocultural opportunity.</li> </ul>
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		<p><u>3. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unimportance of being focused on topics or structure due to questions about unknown or unstudied structures.</li> <li>- Necessity to understand every single detail when doing an exercise, a conversation, or a listening activity.</li> <li>- Appropriateness of little vocabulary preparation and fast overlook of lesson content.</li> <li>- Importance of completing of exercises, but not to put things into practice or personalizing.</li> <li>- Word repetition is enough to memorize them.</li> <li>- Limited use of symbols or phonetic alphabet to represent their stress or pronunciation.</li> <li>- Little use of imitation of grammatical or written models.</li> </ul> <p><u>4. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spanish is a way to clarify exercises.</li> <li>- T or classmates' responsibility to create a nice and dynamic atmosphere.</li> <li>- Little real disposition to get to know their classmates.</li> <li>- A place to clear up any time of doubt or question they feel or could think of about different language issues.</li> <li>- Little attention to being focused on topics, structures, and activities at hand.</li> <li>- A place to mainly do textbook exercises and offer explanations.</li> </ul>
<b>Attitudes identified in class.</b>	<b>in</b>	<p><u>1. The learner level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Little willingness to participate or volunteer as much as possible.</li> <li>- Openness to talk to different classmates as long as they approach them.</li> <li>- Interest in participating and volunteering, but avoidance to doing it due to pronunciation difficulties or vocabulary problems.</li> <li>- Interest in learning about conversation strategies, but little actual implementation of them in conversations.</li> <li>- Practicing with the same classmates without really looking for opportunities to interact with others unless they were told to.</li> <li>- Little or not frequent participation and risk taking just answering when being asked to or trying not to say much in class.</li> </ul> <p><u>2. The language level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reading instead of making dialogs sound natural or dynamic.</li> <li>- Answering or speaking using content words without making an effort to use complete structures.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opening their textbooks or trying to do it when listening to conversations in the book or just listening and not taking notes.</li> <li>- Trying to say so many and complex things just to end up getting stuck and frustrated or speaking Spanish.</li> <li>- When writing, trying to translate their ideas word by word instead of using what they know by simplifying or adapting their messages.</li> </ul> <p><u>3. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asking the translation of every single new word to feel they understand completely.</li> <li>- After doing exercises, speaking in Spanish instead of working on pronunciation, checking classmate's answers, having a conversation using the situation, etc.</li> <li>- Doing exercises first individually and then in pairs to check their answers.</li> <li>- Preference for grammar, pronunciation and listening over speaking, writing or reading.</li> </ul> <p><u>4. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling comfortable doing pair work more than whole class activities.</li> <li>- Being at ease with activities and dialogs after being explained and provided with a clear model.</li> <li>- Being more participative and take risks to interact when activities are interesting for or familiar to them.</li> <li>- Making an effort to interact and share information.</li> </ul>
<b>Anxieties identified in class.</b>	<b>in</b>	<p><u>1. The learner level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insecurity or discomfort about their more active role in class.</li> <li>- Little student participation in whole class activities.</li> <li>-Volunteering according to control over English vocabulary and structures or to a strong conviction to do so.</li> <li>- Concern with losing face, feeling embarrassed or being on the spot.</li> <li>- Feeling overwhelmed by vocabulary or structures, but not preparing class beforehand to prevent or reduce this discomfort.</li> </ul> <p><u>2. The language level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insecurity and discomfort about the use of classroom expressions when doing pair or group work without teacher's supervision.</li> <li>- Reluctance to use classroom expressions to ask for help or work with classmates.</li> <li>- Concern with the pronunciation and grammar patterns</li> </ul>



		<p>and rules.</p> <p><u>3. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anxiety about having little time to learn everything they were taught or presented with in class perfectly.</li> <li>- Paying attention to details instead of paying attention to the general picture.</li> <li>- Depending too much on Spanish to understand grammar explanations and the dynamics of class exercises or activities.</li> <li>- When doing improvised dialogs, feeling anxious about peer and group pressure (Social anxiety)</li> <li>- Insecurity with the use of limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation and deficient grammar.</li> <li>- Being afraid of making mistakes.</li> <li>- Not finding ways to get their ideas across properly and quickly.</li> <li>- Concern with the number of topics, structures, and tense they had to learn and memorize.</li> </ul> <p><u>4. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anxiety about understanding every thing or small details instead of paying attention to the general picture.</li> <li>- Little participation out or fear of losing face, feeling embarrassed or being on the spot.</li> <li>- Increased anxiety with activities or tasks in which they had to interact and speak.</li> <li>- Freezing and getting stuck when being asked first to answer a question or give an example.</li> <li>- Avoiding approaching the teacher to ask him their questions or to clarify their doubts.</li> <li>- Anxiety when not being able to resort to Spanish to understand grammar explanations and the dynamics of class exercises or activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Motivations identified in class.</b>	<b>in</b>	<p><u>1. The learner level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Openness to give new or unfamiliar strategies, activities and material.</li> <li>- Lack of lacked constancy and effort to put them into action as often and properly as they were supposed to.</li> <li>- Desire to learn the basics of the language to get a good control of the language; especially, to be able to speak English well.</li> </ul> <p><u>2. The language level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desire to have the basics of the language to get a good control when using it.</li> <li>- Instrumental motive to learn English as a tool to get better opportunities in their jobs and majors.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrative motive to learn English as an access to a different culture and to the rest of the world.</li> </ul> <p><u>3. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desire to speak and interact in class, but lack of effort to prepare or review what they can ask and say.</li> <li>- Desire to use class time to prepare vocabulary (pronunciation, grammar category, meaning, etc).</li> <li>- A desire to learn in a more slowly pace.</li> </ul> <p><u>4. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking about one's favorite person seems to be a very interesting, motivating and self-rewarding activity.</li> <li>- Desire to avoid improvisations and dialogs in front of the class, but desire to do their best when asked to.</li> <li>- Desire to do more and different things (activities, other materials, videos, songs, etc) without really internalizing the series elements and the series dynamics (the way the students' book, the workbook, the CD-ROM integrate and the way the exercises and the topics are presented and worked in the Touchstone series).</li> </ul>
<b>Language learning strategies identified class.</b>	<b>in</b>	<p><u>1. The learner level</u></p> <p>Using imagery: pictures, drawings, and colors.  Repeating (when imitating others, speech).  Substituting (selecting different words or phrases to accomplish a language task).  Organizing (content and materials).</p> <p><u>2. The language level</u></p> <p>Looking up translation of unknown words.  Understanding grammar structures through formulas and chart analysis.  Translating or switching to Spanish.</p> <p><u>3. The learning level</u></p> <p>Preparing class; mainly vocabulary.  Using language materials: dictionary and workbook.  Doing homework.  Deducing (consciously applying rules to produce or understand the second language sequence),  Transferring (using previously acquired linguistic and/or conceptual knowledge to facilitate new language learning items),  Inferencing (using available information to guess meanings of new items, predicting outcomes, or fill in missing information)</p> <p><u>4. The classroom level</u></p>

	Asking questions. Paying attention to class. Using mime and gestures. Using content words. Taking few risks. Avoiding communication partially or totally. Asking for clarification; mainly, asking the speaker to repeat or give examples. Adjusting or approximating the message Asking for help; mainly translation or clarification. Practicing dialogs with favorite classmates. Participating in class only when asked to. Cooperating with peers.
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#### 4.3 BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, ANXIETIES, MOTIVATIONS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES: STUDENTS

This section provides a description of the participants' beliefs, attitudes, anxieties, motivations and language learning strategies toward EFL learning, and their views on the relationship between socioaffective factors and language learning at the beginning of the course. This description is limited to the participants' affective factors and strategies based on their responses to some questions and statements that explicitly addressed this issue in a semi-structured questionnaire and a rating scale. I divided this analytical description in two sections.

The first section will address the main coincidences, differences and emergences I could identify in my beginner students' responses to the semi-structure questionnaire explained in chapter Three. Following each set of coincidences, differences, and emergences, there is an interpretation of the findings with comments and impressions on what those data seems to show or evidence. The second section will address my students' most frequent choices in the rating scale described in chapter Three. Each part of the scale is analyzed and interpreted. Finally, there will be a conclusion based on the two instruments.

##### 4.3.1 Semi-Structured questionnaire.

##### 4.3.1.1 Students' beliefs.

“Lo más necesario es estar siempre con buena disposición porque creo que a quien no le gusta el inglés se le dificulta más el aprendizaje. Y, sobretodo, siempre obligarse a uno mismo a pensar y a entender en inglés SIN TRADUCIR.”

“Ser participativo, interactuar con otros y poner en práctica los consejos dados por el profesor... Participar en clase para que otros me corrijan mis errores”

Excerpt of students' answers, No. 6.

I could identify the following coincidences, differences and emergences in beliefs based on my students' responses to the second question of the questionnaire: ¿En general, qué se cree bueno, positivo o necesario para aprender inglés en clase? ¿Por qué? EN SU CASO PERSONAL, ¿Qué cree usted es bueno, positivo o necesario para aprender inglés en clase?

#### Coincidences

In general	In their personal case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clarity in the T's explanation</li><li>• An adequate T's orientation</li><li>• Have good materials to work with</li><li>• Use audio and video aids</li><li>• Being well-disposed</li><li>• Practice</li><li>• Participation</li><li>• Interacting with others</li><li>• Trying to make oneself understood</li><li>• Avoiding translation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feeling comfortable with the methodology</li><li>• Having access to tutorials or extra assistance</li><li>• A good instructor is necessary</li><li>• Reference to the structure (grammar)</li><li>• Repetition of previous topics</li><li>• Use of different tools/resources</li><li>• Having a motivation or purpose</li><li>• Listening to music and watch TV</li><li>• Practice</li></ul>

Most of my beginner students seemed to believe the teacher's role is a determining factor of their own learning; in particular, teachers' clarity, orientation and use of good materials as part of his/her methodology. This belief probably reflects the traditional teacher-centered classroom, in which it is assumed that it is the teacher's job to make students learn and to give them simple information and resources to learn. I wonder if some of the reluctance or discomfort I observed was due to the fact that my students were facing a student-center learning-to-learn language program. I can not state I notice this situation explicitly, but my observations seemed to suggest it. All I can say is that most of my students seemed to accept the program's principles and enjoy its tasks, but there were moments in class in which they failed to put them into

practice since they would not be as participative, active and willing as they were supposed to.

Evidently, unhelpful anxieties, attitudes and beliefs played a decisive important role in this situation. It is very interesting to think about the intricate interplay of all these affective factors in student achievement and performance since many EFL teachers who witness students' problems are not prepared or informed enough to provide their students with effective strategies or activities to overcome them successfully.

This set of coincidences also seems to show a belief about the students' role; especially, the existence of certain attributes and behaviors that language students should have. For example, students seemed to regard being well-disposed, having a motivation, striving to practice and participate, and avoiding translation as positive and necessary characteristics in an EFL learner. However, based on my observations, most of them did not live up to their own expectation since they just did not practice and participate as much as they seemed to believe it was needed.

It is necessary to clarify that this was so mostly in relation to speaking and interacting. This apparent contradiction may demand better attention for EFL teachers since they could find ways to first help students become aware of their own assumptions about language learning to then help them find methods and strategies to overcome their lack of oral participation and reluctance to practice in class.

#### Differences

In general	In their personal case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the vocabulary</li><li>• Attention to listening vs. attention to pronunciation and speaking</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have extra support and guidance</li><li>• Practice speaking vs. practice listening</li></ul>

Some students seemed to believe it was important to review vocabulary. However, my observations suggested that somehow they were not putting the necessary effort into this area as they could, since they would not prepare or review vocabulary as often and well as they were encouraged to do (keep a vocabulary notebook, buy a bilingual learner's dictionary, use link at our online class, etc). It seems to me they expected me or the textbook to do the job for them. They differed on their interest in speaking and listening. Some believed listening was more important than speaking whereas others believed speaking was more important than listening. This belief may have been the reason why some students did not feel that compelled to speak and participate in class.

They may have regarded listening comprehension as the one area they needed to work on. That is probably why some students used to say to me they liked to listen to their classmates speak instead of speaking themselves. I had thought it

was just a matter of avoidance and reluctance, but it could have been a matter of belief. I had not considered this option before, which is a small gain I made out of this study: not to jump into conclusions and be open to different interpretations.

## Emergences

In general	In their personal case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel comfortable with the methodology</li> <li>• Have fun and active activities to prevent students from getting bored or distracted</li> <li>• Avoid evaluation</li> <li>• Place students correctly (have heterogeneous groups in terms of level)</li> <li>• Get familiar with the language watching TV or listening to music</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuity</li> <li>• Punctuality and attendance</li> </ul>

I did not expect to find students mentioning methodology (the type of instruction and activities done in class) as an important factor on the success of their language learning. However, this belief appears to be in line with the similar belief discussed before; namely that it is the teacher, the activities, or the material the ones to guarantee or support the student learning. I might even argue that this belief can be related to or can give rise to learned helplessness: a passive, often resigned state that results when learning success is perceived as being beyond the learner, or when decision-making and control is in the hands of the teacher (See attribution theories in Weiner 1992; Bandura, 1989). This is another issue I had never considered before: how much of what EFL teachers do or say trigger students' belief in helplessness. It is important, then, that teaching practices get away from traditional practices that tend to make students take on passivity and vulnerability when learning.

### 4.3.1.2 Students' attitudes.

"Participación ya que de esta depende o mejor se MIDE el progreso que tiene cada persona y se identifican las fallas para así mejorarlas. Preparación porque de ésta depende el mayor entendimiento durante la clase... Disposición sacándose de la cabeza que soy negado para el inglés. Este es un buen comienzo. En mi caso particularmente."

"Es necesario tener una actitud emprendedora que muestre interés para aprender el idioma. En general, es necesario tener una actitud de incertidumbre para llenar los vacíos que se tengan. Debemos

Excerpt of students' answers, No. 7.

The following coincidences, differences and emergences in attitudes were identified based on my students' responses to the first question of the questionnaire: ¿En general, qué actitudes son buenas o necesarias en clase para aprender inglés? ¿Por qué? EN SU CASO PERSONAL, ¿Con cuáles actitudes se identifica al aprender inglés en clase?

#### Coincidences

In general	In their personal case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in class</li> <li>• Being well-disposed to learn</li> <li>• Interest in learning</li> <li>• Spanish avoidance</li> <li>• Content review</li> <li>• Practice with classmates</li> <li>• Attention</li> <li>• Concentration</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Class preparation</li> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• Discipline</li> <li>• Constancy</li> <li>• Practice to improve</li> <li>• Use resources</li> <li>• Being aware of the importance of English</li> <li>• Being open</li> <li>• Classroom atmosphere</li> <li>• Being demanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review</li> <li>• Participation</li> <li>• Preparation</li> <li>• Practice with classmates / interaction</li> <li>• Practice speaking and listening</li> <li>• Being well-disposed</li> <li>• Do homework</li> <li>• Willingness</li> <li>• Attention</li> <li>• Do activities</li> <li>• Enthusiasm (positive attitude)</li> <li>• Reinforce or expand</li> <li>• Commitment / responsibility</li> <li>• Effort / discipline</li> <li>• Determination</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Reinforce or expand</li> </ul>

The majority of beginner students agreed on some important attitudes for class. They seemed to agree on the worth of participating, being well-disposed in class, showing interest, practicing, and being responsible. All of these qualities

are indeed important in any student and it sure was something I noticed in them. They did have suitable reactions and predispositions towards language learning, which turned out to be invaluable contributors to their learning success. They also appeared to concur with necessary out-of-class practices; mainly reviewing content and doing homework. In general, one could say they seemed to have adequate attitudes to develop new routines and to take charge of their learning.

However, new routines and autonomy are hard things to get since they demand a lot of commitment, effort and perseverance; so hard indeed that too often students end up doing the same things they have done before spite of their best intentions. Just like the saying goes “old habits die hard”. This is another aspect EFL teachers need to reflect about: practical and realistic ways to help students do as they say and reach what they want in their EFL classes.

### Differences

In general	In their personal case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shyness and avoidance to ask questions</li> <li>• Resistance to follow teachers' instructions</li> <li>• Be demanding with classmates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice speaking and listening vs. practice class contents</li> <li>• Participate daily vs. participate often</li> </ul>

Some students seemed to regard as unfavorable certain attitudes in class. For example, shyness and avoidance to ask questions or resistance to follow teachers' instructions were assessed as undesired or obstructive attitudes. However, I often saw my students do just that. I guess they did have helpful views about the learning process, but they just could not or did not know how to articulate them in class when faced with language, communication and learning demands. Once again this seems to raise an important issue for language teachers: how to help language students become successful language learners. I could not agree more with C. Mantle-Bromley when this author wrote:

... if we attend to the affective and cognitive components of students' attitudes as well as develop defendable pedagogical techniques, we may be able to increase both the length of time students commit to language study and their chances of success in it<sup>154</sup>.

### Emergences

In general	In their personal case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A multimedia program</li> </ul>

<sup>154</sup> MANTLE-BROMLEY, C. Positive attitudes and realistic beliefs: Links to proficiency. In *Modern language journal*. Vol. 79 (1995); p. 383.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T's creativity</li> <li>• Have learning goals</li> <li>• Effort</li> <li>• Being flexible / open</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuality</li> <li>• Demanding attitude</li> <li>• Open-mindedness to change</li> </ul> |
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I was surprised to see that some students did value teachers' efforts to be creative. I guess they wanted to have a person who could not only explain topics and guide them adequately, but also a professional who were resourceful and innovative. That was probably why they also seemed to regard flexibility and openness as important attitudes in language learning. I guess the inclusion on an online class may have been considered as a positive component. That was possibly the reason why they seemed to enjoy log on in the class when we visited the multimedia lab as a class.

#### 4.3.1.3 Students' anxieties.

"Participar en clase puede generar bastante ansiedad por el temor a equivocarse y la reacción que pueda tener los compañeros de clase."

"... el hecho de no tener resultados rápidos en el aprendizaje del idioma y desear hablarlo como lengua propia."

" Poder tener una conversación amena con mis compañeros... El hecho de realizar actividades de escucha y habla."

Excerpt of students' answers No. 8.

I could identify the following coincidences, differences and emergences in beliefs based on my students' responses to the second question of the questionnaire: ¿En general, qué factores o situaciones de clase generan o aumentan la ansiedad al aprender inglés? ¿Por qué? EN SU CASO PERSONAL, ¿Qué factores o situaciones de clase le generan ansiedad al aprender inglés?

#### Coincidences

In general	In their personal case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in class</li> <li>• Doing dialogs / making oneself understood</li> <li>• Fear of making mistakes</li> <li>• Being mocked by classmates / classmates' reactions</li> <li>• The higher level of some</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing listening exercises (little comprehension)</li> <li>• Speaking / having conversations</li> <li>• Pronunciation</li> <li>• Participation</li> <li>• Match or keep your classmates' level</li> </ul>

classmates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous negatives attempts with other courses</li> <li>• Not having fast results (urge to learn)</li> <li>• A lot of language to learn</li> <li>• A slow mechanization of grammar</li> <li>• Little listening comprehension</li> <li>• A desire to understand a lot</li> <li>• Fear of failure</li> <li>• The teacher's demand (very low frequency)</li> <li>• Not understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falling behind</li> <li>• New vocabulary</li> <li>• Not understanding</li> </ul>
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Most of my students seemed to be concerned with certain aspects inherent to language learning. Most of the aspects mentioned appear to represent a sort of task anxiety or more specifically language-skill-specific anxiety – that is, students who feel anxious while doing a particular task or working with a particular language skill in class. My students explicitly addressed speaking, pronunciation and participation in class as situations or moments which they felt or knew made them feel insecure and nervous. I did observe many instances in which some of my students showed or expressed a sort of insecurity or shyness to speak with others. This anxiety to speak and interact with others can, according to Gass and Selinker, be associated with social anxiety which is basically concerned with constructing and /or maintaining a favorable impression upon others<sup>155</sup>.

With regard to this speaking apprehension, Horwitz et al. (1991) also stated that difficulty speaking a foreign language while feeling anxious in class seemed to be the biggest concern for most language learners; especially, when oral performance is regarded as the most prominent indicator of students' language competence. It seems unquestionable, then, that EFL teachers need to help students manage oral anxiety and improve communicative performance by offering training in affective strategies and implementing techniques to ease tensions, to reduce demands, and to increase learning satisfaction.

Other aspects such as the course pace (falling behind), the classmates' level, previous experiences and learning process could also lead to or create another sort of anxiety called debilitating anxiety. This type of anxiety causes one to flee the new tasks or structures and hence leads to avoidance and reluctance (Scovel, 1978). In my observations, it is possible to perceive moments in which some students had issues with certain course tasks (doing role-plays, working with the IPA, etc) and some language structures (possessive pronouns, articles, etc). This is probably why many students who had expressed their desire to adopt good or appropriate behaviors just could not make it happen in class.

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<sup>155</sup> GASS, S., and SELINKER, L. Op. cit., p. 357.

Many of these anxieties were observed in class and it is likely that my students had already experienced them in previous language learning experiences. Undoubtedly, students' experience with anxiety-inducing factors and the tendency of language classrooms to promote anxiety makes the promotion of a low-stress language environment an important priority for EFL teachers.

#### Differences

In general	In their personal case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn fast vs. learn is a process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not knowing how to speak English</li> </ul>

Something really interesting was the fact that some of my students seemed to be worried or concerned about the learning process as such. In other words, they expressed some anxiety toward how they view language learning: as a process that takes and needs time or as a product that demands certain standards and features. This may be an interesting factor to consider and explore because it seems to me that there can be a link between this worry and both students' beliefs about what language learning entails and students' attitudes towards language standards. Similarly, this concern may be an expression of how soon they expect to be able to use language structures, functions and course resources. In other words, students may have unrealistic expectation about when and how to use the language.

Students' anxiety could have been reinforced by the fact that there were some classmates who could handle structures, functions and resources without much trouble; a type of anxiety that I detected acted as an intimidating factor. Students appeared to feel apprehensive about others' better language level. It is important, then, to have students identify, reflect and correct their misconceptions and unrealistic expectations to better understand and assess their language process.

#### Emergences

In general	In their personal case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having a specific work or social pressure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not having the time to benefit from all the resources</li> <li>Falling behind</li> <li>Little time to do all one is supposed to</li> </ul>

Students also addressed some out of class issues such as work or social pressure and lack of time as anxiety-inducing factors. This might be an aspect that has not been explored properly in the EFL field because to my knowledge there has not been a study that had attempted to research the effects that external factors can have in students' emotions and behaviors. This is an area that clearly deserves more and better attention because the impact of these

factors should be acknowledged and considered when planning language programs and designing language textbooks.

#### 4.3.1.4 Students' motivations.

"...El buscar nuevos horizontes a partir del idioma. Querer comprender y desenvolverse con el inglés... En primer lugar, estudio una carrera que me exige saber el idioma y estoy cansado de pagar traducciones y en segundo lugar creo que aprender inglés dejó de ser un gusto personal para convertirse en una necesidad general."

"Actividades agradables y diferentes. Interacción con los compañeros de clase. La claridad que el profesor tiene con sus explicaciones motivan a practicar."

"El deseo de superación, el querer avanzar, el desenvolverme mejor para poder interactuar con otros."

Excerpt of students' answers No. 9.

The following coincidences, differences and emergences in motivations were identified based on my students' responses to the fourth question of the questionnaire: ¿En general, qué factores o situaciones motivan a la gente a aprender inglés? ¿Por qué? EN SU CASO PERSONAL, ¿Qué factores o situaciones de clase lo motivan en clase a aprender inglés?

#### Coincidences

In general	In their personal case
Traveling	Company's support
A work requirement	Usefulness of English in one's environment
One's pleasure	One's profession
Usefulness of English	The teacher
Job opportunities	The dynamism of the class
Interesting topics	Today's world / society
The teacher	Personal growth
Variety and dynamism in class / different activities	One's preference
The desire to learn and succeed ( a wish to advance)	Necessity
General Culture	
The classmates	

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Being able to interact

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## Differences

In general	In their personal case
Work requirement vs. job opportunities English as an instrument vs. English as an opportunity	One's personal growth vs. one's personal competence English as a personal preference vs. English as a general need

Most of my students coincided with reasons to learn English connected not to an inherent interest in English itself, but connected to some utilitarian purposes. To Gardner (1985), such purposes are associated with instrumental motivation, which is characterised by the desire to obtain something concrete from the study of a second language. With instrumental motivation, the purpose of language acquisition is more practical, such as meeting the requirements for school or university graduation, applying for a job, reading technical material, translation work or achieving higher social status.

Some of my students seemed to be pragmatically driven since L2 skills were translated into practical benefits related to better employment and business opportunities, access to higher education, academic development, traveling needs, and the like. This seems to confirm what Belmechri and Hummel (1991) claimed about instrumental motivation being more prominent than integrative motivation in EFL contexts.

Students also mentioned factors that can be connected to intrinsic motivation. This motivation originates within the individual who learns for the joy, satisfaction and sense of accomplishment. In other words, intrinsic motivation refers to motivation to perform an activity simply for the personal and satisfaction that accompanies the action. Namely, people are likely to feel that they successfully complete a challenge or a task which can show their competencies or abilities.

My students seemed to regard English as an opportunity for self-actualization and personal growth which is probably a good motivation that EFL teachers should promote and take advantage of. This seems to confirm what Dörnyei stated long ago: "... the inherent intrinsic motivation of human beings to encounter new stimulus events and creative challenges... [should be] provided by the learning process itself..."<sup>156</sup>.

My students also pointed out other factors that seem to play a role in their motivation in class. Some of those factors appeared to be associated with group-specific motivational components (dynamics of the learning group, group

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<sup>156</sup> DÖRNYEI, Z. Conceptualizing motivation in foreign-language learning. In *Language Learning*. Vol. 40 (1990); p. 66.

cohesion, and classroom goal structures), the course-specific motivational components (syllabus, teaching materials, teaching method, and learning task) and teacher-specific motivational components (teacher personality, teaching feedback, relationship with the students).

Evidently, EFL teachers can not work on all the areas or provide every single learner with the best motivational strategy, but, at least, we can provide them with different opportunities to reflect about and work on their own motivational intensity, desire to learn English, satisfaction with the act of learning the language and stamina to achieve the goal of mastering the language.

#### Emergences

In general	In their personal case
Being able to help or assist one's children	Avoiding being blocked in the globalized world
Interaction with other cultures	Stop paying translations
Understanding the topics	Visiting a speaking country and not being able to say anything at all
Expanding one's horizons / options	The class schedule
Getting tips to learn	

It was very remarkable to notice that students were motivated to learn English as a way to help their children and family, to integrate into other cultures through L2, to learn how to learn language, and to expand their erudition. A very interesting factor that I had not considered was class schedule. In other words, students value the time the class is taught and the frequency it has.

In the AEP at the Centro Colombo Americano, we have classes from Monday to Friday in eight different shifts: 6-8 a.m., 8-10 a.m., 10-12 a.m., 12-2 p.m., 2-4 p.m., 3-5 p.m., 5-7 p.m., and 7-9 p.m. I wonder if these shifts really have a long-term impact on student performance and language achievement. It would be interesting to do a study on this issue.

#### 4.3.1.5 Students' language learning strategies.

"Total atención en clase, realizar trabajos extra clase, escuchar música, videos y programas de TV en inglés, consultar palabras desconocidas en diccionario"

"Practicar vocabulario, practicar estructuras gramaticales y practicar con ejercicios de lectura, escritura y escucha"

"Participar en clase, revisar el material que acompaña el curso, realizar los ejercicios propuestos en los libros, preparar la clase y practicar lo que más se pueda"

Excerpt of students' answers No. 10.

I could identify the following coincidences, differences and emergences in language learning strategies based on my students' responses to the fifth question of the questionnaire: En general, qué estrategias de aprendizaje para idiomas se deben utilizar en clase? ¿Por qué? EN SU CASO PERSONAL, ¿Qué estrategias de aprendizaje para idiomas usa o tiene para aprender inglés?

Coincidences

In general	In their personal case
Understand grammar structures	Review the material
Learn vocabulary	Listening to music and watching TV
Do skill-based exercises	Ask questions
Practice dialogs with classmates	Do activities or exercises
Review material and vocabulary	Prepare next lessons
Participate in class	Do homework
Prepare class	Look up unknown words
Practice as much as possible	
Listen to music and watch TV	
Use course materials	

Differences

In general	In their personal case
Listen to the CD	Look for help out of class
Audiovisual aids	Practice the language with the textbook vs. practice the language speaking
Avoid Spanish or translation	

Evidently, students at all levels use strategies. Strategy use varies according to the task, stage of the learner, age of the learner, the context of learning, individual learning styles, and cultural differences. The data analysis showed that students seemed to resort to general actions that are markedly aimed at language learning, as well as they resort to others that may well lead to learning but which do not necessarily have learning as their primary goal. Whereas *language learning* strategies have an explicit goal of assisting learners in improving their knowledge in a target language (use course materials, learn vocabulary, listen to music, do skill-based exercises, do homework, look up unknown words, etc), *language use* strategies focus primarily on employing the language that learners have in their current interlanguage (practice dialogs with classmates and ask questions).

Based on the greater number of language learning strategies, students seemed to be better-prepared to study English, but not that well-prepared in terms of using it. This may have been another reason for students' difficulty to participate and interact in class as often and well as they wanted or tried to do. The apparent preference that students have to employ language learning strategies over language use strategies can suggest the existence of some sort of personal strategy preference. Just as students have learning styles, they may also have strategy styles. These findings seem to show that EFL teachers need to implement explicit classroom instruction directed at helping learners identify and comprehend both their language learning strategies and language use strategies. The main goal of this strategy-based instruction should be, then, to help EFL students become more aware of the ways in which they learn, ways to enhance their own comprehension and production of the target language, and ways to continue learning after leaving the classroom.

## Emergences

In general	In their personal case
The multimedia resources	Analyze
Clearing doubts up	Pay attention to class
Analyze	Practice with one's children
Do programmed activities consciously	

It was interesting to notice that students felt or thought that analysis and doubt clarification were necessary strategies to learn English. To me, this emergence may derive from a tendency to regard English as a subject that needs to be studied and analyzed inside out instead of being treated as an experience that needs to be experienced and enjoyed properly.<sup>157</sup> In other words, although students need to develop some degree of critical thinking to make sense of the

<sup>157</sup> In Colombia, EFL classes are taken by high school and university students as part of their curricula. They are used to seeing it as an academic subject and not as a means of communication.



structural and linguistic part of language learning, they also need to adopt and develop a perspective of English as an experiential opportunity to get in contact with the nature and quality of one's life. Thus, students need to learn to see English as a vehicle for interaction, communication and expression and not just as a subject to be studied and evaluated.

#### 4.4 RATING SCALE

Based on frequency counts (enumerations of how often a certain measurement or a certain answer to a specific question occurs), these are the choices that students ticked more frequently.

##### 4.4.1 Students' beliefs.

###### 1. Perceived self-efficacy

4, 56 % - Puedo hacer ejercicios y actividades si me esfuerzo lo suficiente.  
(The highest frequency)

3, 87 % - Confío que puedo resolver cualquier problema o dificultad que se me presente al aprender o hablar inglés.

3, 75 % - Creo que tengo la habilidad para aprender y hablar inglés bien.

###### 2. Beliefs in English learning

2, 75 % - Es más fácil leer inglés que escribirlo.

2, 25 % - Es más fácil escuchar inglés que hablarlo.

2, 18 % - Se aprende inglés bien sólo al vivir en Estados Unidos o Inglaterra.

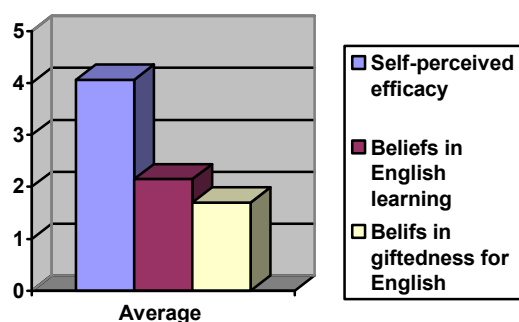
1, 43 % - Lo más importante para aprender y hablar inglés es poder traducir

###### 3. Belief in giftedness for English

2 % - Creo que algunas personas nacen con un don especial para los idiomas extranjeros que les permite aprender idiomas muy bien.

1, 62 % - Creo que el don para los idiomas es prerequisite para aprender inglés exitosamente.

1,5 % - Creo que los buenos estudiantes de idiomas nacen y no se hacen.



*Graph 1. Students' Beliefs*

In general, my beginner students seemed to have self-confidence in themselves as language learners, which was a good beginning and probably helped them click into the AEP of the Centro Colombo Americano. Although the next beliefs were not so frequent, some students appeared to believe that reading is easier than writing and listening is simpler than speaking. This may be due to the fact that reading and listening are skills in which one basically receives certain input with some linguistic and discursive clues that facilitate comprehension whereas writing and speaking are skills in which one has to produce output following certain rhetorical and communicative strategies. The belief in the existence of a sort of giftedness to learn foreign languages was not that high, but it was present in the study.

#### 4.4.2 Students' attitudes.

##### 1. Positivism.

4, 81 % - Me parece que el aprendizaje de inglés enriquece mi bagaje cultural. (The highest frequency)

4, 81 % - Me parece que estudiar inglés me permitirá conocer y conversar con más y diferentes personas en el mundo. (The highest frequency)

##### 2. Tolerance to Ambiguity.

4, 37 % - Procuro saber exactamente cómo hacer los ejercicios o actividades de clase para poder hacerlos bien.

4, 18 % Procuro tener conceptos claros antes de hablar o escribir algo en inglés.

##### 3. Self-image.

3, 87 % - Siento que soy un buen estudiante de inglés.

3, 5 % -Me considero una persona que se le facilita aprender idiomas.

#### 4. Risk-taking.

3, 75 % - Me gusta participar en clase aún cuando no estoy completamente seguro de qué o cómo hablar.

3, 62 % - Tomo riesgos en clase ya que quiero aprender y hablar inglés bien.

#### 5. Negativism

2, 18 % - Siento que el inglés es un idioma complicado de aprender.

1, 5 % - Preparar o repasar inglés es aburrido y agotador.

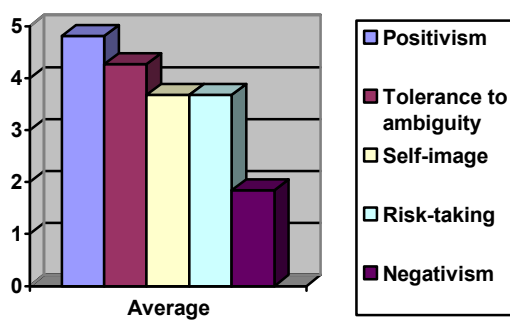


Chart 2. Students' attitudes

My students definitively had positive attitudes towards English and its learning and they also had a somewhat helpful image about themselves as language learners. These attitudes could have helped students face the demands and challenges of their beginner course. However, their tolerance to ambiguity and their risk-taking were kind of high and they could have affected students' opportunities to practice and participate in class.

A low level of tolerance to ambiguity can play a decisive role in inhibiting students' desire to use English and a low tendency to take risks can reduce students' chances to practice what they are learning in class. These are areas EFL teachers need to pay close attention to.

#### 4.4.3 Students' anxieties.

##### 1. English use

4, 18 % - Me preocupa pronunciar mal cuando hablo inglés. (The highest frequency)

3, 12 % - Me siento nervioso cuando uso inglés.

2, 62 % - Me siento inseguro cuando uso inglés en diálogos o textos escritos.

## 2. General anxiety to the study of English

3, 06 % - Me preocupa no poder entender lo que se está explicando o haciendo en clase.

2, 06 % - Me estresa presentar quizzes, exámenes, evaluaciones o pruebas

1, 87 % - Me incomoda que mis compañeros o profesor me califiquen de manera negativa al hacer actividades o prácticas en clase

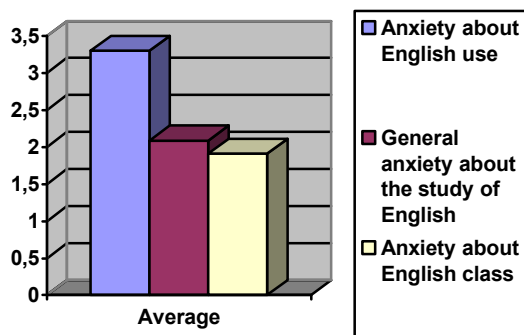
1,37 % - Me incomoda conversar con otro compañero o grupo de compañeros.

## 3. English class anxiety

3 % - Me siento ansioso(a) cuando el profesor me pide que responda una pregunta o haga un comentario frente a la clase.

1, 5 % - Me preocupa que mis compañeros se burlen de mí cuando hablo inglés en clase.

1, 25 % - Me incomoda que mi profesor o mis compañeros corrijan mis errores frente a la clase.



*Chart 3. Students' anxieties*

Interestingly enough students showed a rather high concern about mispronouncing when speaking, answering or making comments when asked to, and feeling nervous when using English. All of these anxieties were observed by me and mentioned by them previously and they certainly affected students' participations and interactions in class. Clearly, these anxieties deserved careful attention and examination.

#### 4.4.4 Students' motivations.

##### 1. Intrinsic motivation.

3, 81 % - Busco participar en clase porque deseo practicar y mejorar mi inglés.

3, 75 % - Hago ejercicios y actividades adicionales porque quiero tener un mejor progreso.

##### 2. Instrumental motivation.

4, 62 % - Me motiva estudiar inglés porque me ayudará con mi trabajo, mi profesión y mi estudio.

2,75 % - Me motiva aprender inglés para pasar un examen: TOEFL, Michigan, GRE, etc.

##### 3. Integrative motivation.

3, 18 % - Me motiva estudiar inglés porque me permitirá conocer y entender más a los anglo-parlantes: su manera de ser y hablar.

2, 75 % - Me motiva estudiar inglés porque estoy interesado en el arte, la literatura y la educación de Estados Unidos, Inglaterra y Australia. (Low frequency)

##### 4. Extrinsic motivation.

3, 12 % - Preparo o repaso unidades anteriores cuando el profesor lo exige o cuando hay quizzes, exámenes o actividades finales.

1, 87 % - Estudio inglés porque es un requisito para mi colegio, universidad o trabajo.

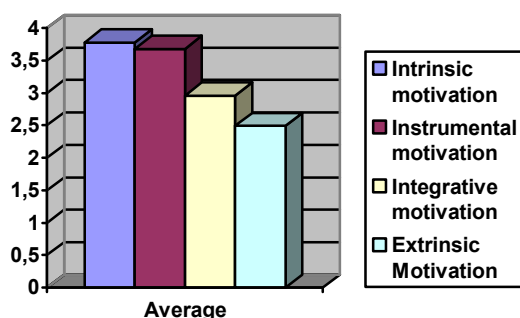


Chart 4. Students' motivations

As noticed before, students appeared to display high levels of intrinsic and instrumental motivations simultaneously. In general, students appeared to have a combination of intrinsic-instrumental motivation – a desire to attain a goal utilizing L2, intrinsic motivation to know –doing an activity or task for the pleasure related to developing knowledge or new ideas, and intrinsic motivation towards accomplishment –positive feeling associated with attempting to realize a goal or master a task (See Junko Matsuzaki, 2005, p. 45-46). Evidently, my students' motivations could have evolved and even changed during their

course, but it is a very interesting finding to see different combinations of motivation in action in class because, as Noels (2001) claimed, one would expect intrinsic motivation to be correlated with integrative motivation (since they are more related to internal or personal desires), whereas extrinsic motivation would be associated with instrumental motivation (since they are more based on external or social interests).

#### 4.4.5 Frequency of students' language learning strategies.

4,43 % - Pido aclaraciones o explicaciones cuando no entiendo lo que alguien me está hablando = **Social strategy**.

4,18 % - Intento mantenerme positivo y relajado frente al aprendizaje del inglés = **Affective strategy**.

4 % - Le colaboro a mis compañeros de clase con su práctica y los animo en su aprendizaje = **Social strategy**.

3,93 % - Evalúo y reflexiono sobre mi progreso en inglés = **Metacognitive strategy**.

3,87 % - Pido ayuda a mi profesor o compañero con palabras o estructuras olvidadas o desconocidas = **Compensation strategy**.

3,75 % - Repaso lecciones y/o refuerzo temas ya vistos = **Memory strategy**.

3,75 % - Procuro reconocer y usar fórmulas o modelos gramaticales que estudio = **Cognitive strategy**.

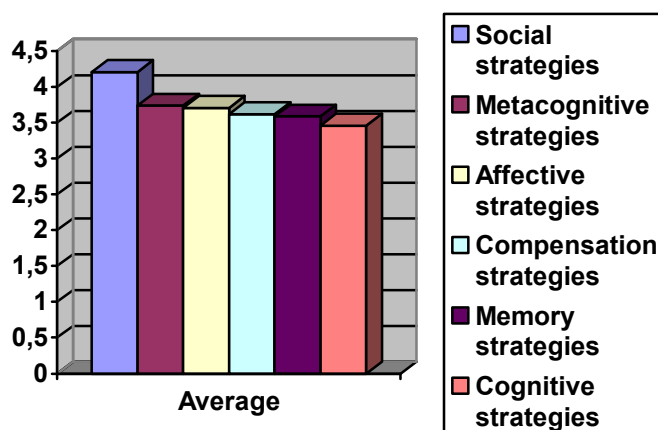
3,56 % - Me pongo objetivos concretos para trabajar las distintas áreas del inglés: preparar vocabulario, escuchar diálogos, repasar verbos, etc. = **Metacognitive strategy**.

3,43 % - Agrupo o asocio palabras o expresiones para memorizarlas = **Memory strategy**.

3,37 % - Intento utilizar sinónimos, gestos, mímica, ejemplos cuando no se o recuerdo una palabra = **Compensation strategies**.

3,25 % - Comparto con mis compañeros, amigos y profesor las sensaciones y opiniones que tengo sobre la clase y/o mi rendimiento = **Affective strategy**.

3,18 % - Trato de encontrar diferencias y/o semejanzas claves entre inglés y español = **Cognitive strategy**.



*Chart 5. Students' language learning strategies.*

At first, these findings were highly unusual and even contradictory because they appeared to indicate that students were more likely to resort to social and affective language learning strategies than previous research had shown. At first glance, it seems that it is true that the students asked clarifications and explanations, tried to keep positive and relaxed, and tried to collaborate and encourage one another. However, after analyzing my observations and reflecting on the data with other colleagues, I could figure out that they resorted to the overuse of some basic and rather unhelpful language use and learning strategies, namely translation, switching to mother tongue, communication avoidance, reluctance to participate, grammar-oriented questions, and work with favorite classmates or friends. In other words, they overused a few language learning strategies just to avoid difficulties with learning and communication, but did not really strive or wanted to use other strategies to face and overcome those difficulties. This was a situation that I needed to address promptly and effectively. I needed to help my students confront and solve their communication and interaction difficulties successfully.

Something very interesting to observe in my students' choices about language learning strategies is that they seemed to prefer indirect strategies over direct ones. They seemed to value the use of strategies that provide indirect support for their language learning through coordinating the learning process, regulating emotions and attitudes about learning and increasing interaction with others. In other words, they seemed to recognize the relevance of using certain steps or actions to support and manage their learning. Unfortunately, the contents, the materials, the method, and the class itself bombarded them with such a big number of new structures, functions, rules, and skills that they ended up getting caught up with the mental processing of the new language. In other words, it is likely that the large amount of new information got them so focused on remembering and memorizing vocabulary, on understanding and producing the language, and on compensating for their knowledge gaps that they simply disregarded the affective, social and decision-making aspects of language learning; aspects they had appeared to regard as relevant and necessary. This

apparent disregard for the indirect language learning strategies when students are in a language class appears to validate this study and its main aim: to explicitly train and assist students in how to face up to the emotional difficulties of social interaction and language learning.

#### 4.4.6 Discussion.

This previous section discussed some themes emerging from the two instruments I used to collect data from my students: a semi-structured questionnaire and a rating scale about beliefs, attitudes, anxieties, motivations and language learning strategies. The separation of the information into the main topics of interest of this study (beliefs, attitudes, anxiety, motivation, and language learning strategies) tried to give a quick glance at what they wrote to identify the most common or frequent comments, opinions, answers or choices that were identified while analyzing these data. The separation I made of my analysis into similarities, differences and emergences was meant to better detect and elucidate the most salient areas or points from these instruments.

In terms of beliefs, students appeared to have two sets of perceptions about language learning. On the one hand, most of my students seemed to believe in themselves as language learners and believe in the philosophy of the Adult English Program at the Centro Colombo Americano<sup>158</sup>. They seemed to accept the program's principles, enjoy the course tasks, and benefit from the textbook exercises, but more importantly they believe they could do a lot of actions and tactics to face the demands of language learning. This set of expectations seems to be related to a positive set of opinions about what Horwitz (1987) called *beliefs about the nature of language learning*. On the other hand, there were moments in class in which students failed to put their positive expectations into practice since they would not or could not be as participative, active, willing and committed as they said they were going to be. Many of them did not live up to their own expectation since they just did not speak and interact as much as they seemed to believe it was needed. These apparent negative behaviors or performances may have resulted from unrealistic or inappropriate beliefs, which as Young (1991) pointed out, can influence negatively learners' behaviors, use of strategies and affective states.

In regard to attitudes, most of my beginner students seemed to agree on the importance of participating, being well-disposed in class, showing interest, practicing, and being responsible. Therefore, they did have suitable reactions and predispositions towards language learning, which most likely were invaluable contributors to their learning success. They also seemed to regard as negative or unfavorable certain attitudes in class. For example, shyness and

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<sup>158</sup> Students are expected to achieve some certain objectives according to the three principles of the Adult English program: learning, language and communication. Students are told about the objectives and the principles at the beginning and at the end of each course. They also received a checklist in which teachers assessed their performance. See objectives and principles of the Adult English Program in chapter 2, the course.



avoidance to ask questions or resistance to follow teachers' instructions were assessed as undesired or obstructive attitudes. However, I often saw my students do just that. Evidently, they did have helpful views about the learning process, but they just could not or did not know how to articulate them in class when faced with language, communication and learning demands. Their tolerance to ambiguity and their risk-taking were high and they appeared to decrease their desire to practice and participate in class. These two findings seem to confirm one of Baker's (1992) characteristics of attitudes; namely, attitudes predispose people to act in certain ways which in combination with other factors such the motivation to learn, to persist and to make an effort significantly affect actual learning outcomes.

In terms of anxieties, most of my beginner students appeared to express their concern with, what Daubney (2002) defined, task anxiety related to a specific language skill. In particular, my students explicitly identified speaking, pronunciation and class participation as situations or moments which they felt insecure and nervous. These situations seemed to generate, what Scovel (1978) called, debilitating anxiety, which, in turn, may have caused students' avoidance of social situations, withholding of communication, and replacement of meaningful communication with innocuous sociability. However, students' social avoidance could also have been related to, what Horwitz et al. (1991) called communication apprehension, an uneasiness derived from their inability to express ideas fluently. Students mentioned aspects such as the course pace, the classmates' level and the learning itself as anxiety-inducing factors. This apprehension matched one of Young's (1991) potential sources of anxiety: the processes, atmosphere and events in class and it confirmed Shaffer's (2006) suggestion in which EFL teachers should help their students to learn to relax and gain experience to build confidence.

In regard to motivation, most of my beginner students coincided with reasons to learn English connected to, what Gardner (1985) called, some utilitarian purposes that are characterised by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of a second language. Their main purpose to learn English was instrumental since my students appeared to be pragmatically driven since they had translated L2 skills into practical benefits related to better employment and business opportunities, access to higher education, academic development, traveling needs, and the like. Many students also mentioned factors connected to intrinsic motivation, which refers to motivation to perform an activity simply for the personal and satisfaction that accompanies the action. Namely, people are likely to feel that they successfully complete a challenge or a task which can show their competencies or abilities. Other motivational factors were associated with what Dörnyei (1994) called the learning situation level. These factors were connected to group-specific motivational components (dynamics of the learning group, group cohesion, and classroom goal structures), the course-specific motivational components (syllabus, teaching materials, teaching method, and learning task) and teacher-specific motivational components (teacher personality, teaching feedback, relationship with the students). The most interesting finding was to find that Junko Matsuzaki (2005)

seems to be right when proposing a new framework for various types of intrinsic/extrinsic and integrative/instrumental motivations. Based on this new framework, the data I collected seem to show that my students had a combination of intrinsic-instrumental motivation – a desire to attain a goal utilizing L2, intrinsic motivation to know –doing an activity or task for the pleasure related to developing knowledge or new ideas, and intrinsic motivation towards accomplishment –positive feeling associated with attempting to realize a goal or master a task.

In terms of language learning strategies, students seemed to resort to what Cohen (1996) defined as *language learning* strategies, which have an explicit goal of assisting learners in improving their knowledge in a target language and *language use* strategies, which focus primarily on employing strategically the language that learners have to start and maintain conversations. Students appeared to favor some language learning strategies over language use strategies, which may suggest the existence of some sort of strategy preferences. Based on the results, it appeared that students were predisposed or inclined to study English as a subject, but not so much to use it as a vehicle of communication. This may have been another reason for students' difficulty to participate and interact in class as often and well as they wanted or tried to do. Another interesting finding was the fact that many students tended to overuse a few number of language learning strategies in order to avoid difficulties with learning and communication (translation, language switch, communication avoidance, use of content words), but did not really strive to use other strategies to face and overcome those difficulties. It seemed that the contents, the materials, the method, and the class itself bombarded students with such a big number of new structures, functions, rules, and skills that they focused much more on remembering and memorizing vocabulary and on understanding and producing the language than on compensating for their knowledge gaps and on paying attention to the affective, social and decision-making aspects of language learning. This situation was also noted by Griffiths (2003) and Iverson (2005) since they explained that beginner students tend to use fewer strategies more frequently favoring strategies that require less cognitive processing and active manipulation of the language.

#### 4.5 COLLEAGUES' OPINIONS ABOUT BEGINNER STUDENTS' AFFECTIVE FACTORS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

This section provides a description of 10 of my colleagues' opinions on beginner students' typical beliefs, attitudes, anxieties, motivations and language learning strategies toward EFL learning. Their opinions were collected in a semi-structured questionnaire, too. This data helped me get further ideas and try to validate my own observations in the course I was teaching. But, more importantly, it provided this study with some more information about what the normal classes and common students think, do, feel and use to learn English in a basic level. I also divided this analytical description into coincidences,

differences and emergences. The following table summarized my colleagues' opinions.

Table 24

*Colleagues' Opinions about Beginner Students' Affective Factors and Language Learning Strategies*

	<b>Beliefs</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>	<b>Anxieties</b>	<b>Motivations</b>	<b>Language learning strategies</b>
<b>Similarities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- English is not difficult, but it requires time.</li> <li>- Learn not just grammar and vocabulary, but a new culture.</li> <li>- Ss believe they can learn a language.</li> <li>- They need practice.</li> <li>- They need a variety of learning aids.</li> <li>- They believe in activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being well-disposed.</li> <li>- Open-mindedness.</li> <li>- Being receptive to suggestions.</li> <li>- Positivism.</li> <li>- Willingness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role-plays and dialogues.</li> <li>- Ignoring how to study.</li> <li>- Losing face (language ego)</li> <li>- Being with classmates with a higher level.</li> <li>- The t or the classmates' attitude (classroom atmosphere)</li> <li>- Lack of understanding (following instructions)</li> <li>- Lack of strategies to deal with difficulties.</li> <li>- Being on the spot.</li> <li>- Making or correcting mistakes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The student's learning desire (internal drive)</li> <li>- The student's learning necessity (external interest, need)</li> <li>- The reasons to do something.</li> <li>- The teacher</li> <li>- The materials</li> <li>- The classmates</li> <li>- The topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dictionary use for translation.</li> <li>- Spanish use.</li> <li>- Prepare class in advance.</li> <li>- Watch TV in English and listen to music.</li> <li>- Take notes (have a notebook)</li> </ul>
<b>Differences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning English vs. learning other content subjects.</li> <li>- Believing in themselves vs. believing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tolerance to ambiguity vs. taking risks.</li> <li>- Be willing to spend extra time vs. just doing class work.</li> </ul>	Working with classmates or being mocked by classmates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Their experience now vs. their previous experiences.</li> <li>- Themselves vs. their classmates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dictionary use to learn vs. dictionary use to translate.</li> <li>- Use of some strategies</li> </ul>

	in the activities.	- Tolerance to others vs. tolerance to the process.			they believe work vs. not knowing what strategies to use
<b>Emergences</b>	- Autonomy / dependence - Decision making.	- Be self-confident (believe in yourself) - Look for other opportunities - Patience - Autonomy	- Facing new situations / Ss' unfamiliarity with the English classroom - Not having clear objectives	- Their experience now vs. their previous experiences. - Themselves vs. their classmates.	- Organizing time and giving priorities - Skill-based strategies

In terms of affective factors, my colleagues addressed many of the issues that I identified in my observation and that my students mentioned in their answers and choices. For example, they referred to the fact that most beginner students at the AEP of the Centro Colombo Americano believe English is not difficult, but that it needs time and practice which is a belief that was identified in other instruments used in the study. They also recognized the apparent confrontation that seems to exist based on how student believe English should be learned: as any other academic subject or as a communication vehicle. My colleagues brought up the subject of autonomy as a belief that most students have a hard time to develop as connected to language learning. My colleagues mentioned that common attitudes that beginner students have are being well-disposed, open-minded, positive and willing. However, they discussed the little tolerance for ambiguity that students tend to have and the few risks they take. In the area of tolerance, my colleagues also addressed tolerance for others in class and tolerance for the learning process as such. I had already noted some issues around tolerance with how fast and well people can or should use English, but I had not considered tolerance for others. I presume this may also be a factor that influenced my students' willingness to interaction and practice in class. It may have the case that some students did not want to speak with other classmates because they were not open enough to establish any sort of contact beyond the purely academic one that governs many classrooms.

My colleagues also practically mentioned all anxieties I identified in my observations and the ones that students included in their answers and choices. Then, this seems to suggest that oral activities (dialogs, role-plays, improvisations, etc) and working with classmates generate a certain level of anxiety in beginner students. My colleagues also spoke about some classroom-inducing factors such as losing face, feeling on the spot, making mistakes, facing new situations, lacking clear objectives, and not understanding

instructions. Once again, they brought up classroom atmosphere as a possible anxiety originated in teachers and/or classmates' attitudes. This can also explain why some beginner students showed reluctance and avoidance to interact and speak in class.

In terms of motivation, my colleagues all agreed on many classroom-specific elements as having an effect on students' motivation. They, for instance, talked about the materials, the tasks, the topics, the classmates and the teacher. Some of these issues were identified, too. I did not see any evidence of the motivational value of the tasks and the topics, but they could have somehow reduced students' desire to or interest in speaking and interacting with others.

Finally, my colleagues addressed four basic issues in terms of strategy use: use of tools, Spanish translation and interference, class preparation, and out-of-class contact with English (TV, videos, and music). They also helped me see the importance of considering students' opinions or preferences about the significance and usefulness of certain strategies. Students may use a few or prefer some strategies over others based on their opinions and preferences when learning a foreign language. Finally, my colleagues helped me realize the importance of helping students both to organize their time to study English and to prioritize areas (vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar) and skills (listening, speaking, writing and reading). Some students may have opted to stress grammar and pronunciation due to unawareness of other language, learning, and communication elements.

#### 4.6 DATA TRIANGULATION

It has been shown so far that this study managed to collect and analyze a great deal of data, which helped give valid descriptions of the situations being studied and reliable answers to the research questions. It is difficult and probably unnecessary to separate the processes of the data collection and analysis since they inevitably overlap, interrelate and recur since ideas, explanations, and hypothesis emerge as data was collected. Therefore, I understood data analysis as a dynamic process, in which I engaged in making sense of the data both by identifying broad trends, characteristics or features and by drawing out hypotheses and explanations in attempt to interpret the meaning of these trends or features. Even so, I made sure I used multiple methods and the perspectives of different participants in order to gain a richer and less subjective picture than I could have obtained by relying on a single data gathering technique. Triangulation, then, helped me be more confident that my analyses were not simply the result of using a particular method since similar outcomes were obtained and supported by four techniques (observations, fieldnotes, semi-structured questionnaires, and rating scales) and by three different participants (my students, some colleagues and me).

At first, the amount of information was such that it made it hard to have a clear identification and comprehension of the main matters I needed to deal with.

Based on Anna Burns' suggestions, I decided to create an interpretation matrix (See interpretation matrix in appendix H) with the basic findings and interpretations to be able to scan all the data in a general way and then to squeeze it for maximum information. I strived to bring up broad patterns which I compared and contrasted to see what fitted together. When making comparisons, I made an effort to see whether themes or patterns were repeated or developed across different data gathering techniques. I endeavored to use a certain amount of creative thinking to articulate underlying concepts and develop theories about why particular patterns of behaviors, interactions or attitudes had emerged.

After going over my interpretation matrix, the identification and comprehension of the following issues were possible:

Motivation was not the most determining factor in students' behaviors and actions in class. Students' motivation seemed to be primordially instrumental since they appeared to be pragmatically driven to translate L2 skills into practical benefits (better employment and business opportunities, access to higher education, academic development, traveling needs, and the like). Students were also intrinsically motivated since they appeared to want to feel satisfaction with the successful completion of classroom tasks and activities with which they could notice and show their language achievement. Students seemed to have a combination of intrinsic-instrumental motivation – a desire to attain a goal utilizing L2, intrinsic motivation to know –doing an activity or task for the pleasure related to developing knowledge or new ideas, and intrinsic motivation towards accomplishment –positive feeling associated with attempting to realize a goal or master a task.

Attitudes and beliefs appeared to have a profound influence on students' learning behaviors and, ultimately, on their learning outcomes. Students appeared to have two sets of perceptions about language learning. A helpful set of beliefs which made them believe in themselves as language learners and in their ability to do a lot of actions and tactics to face the demands of language learning. An unhelpful set of beliefs made them fail to put many actions and tactics into practice since they would not or could not be as participative, active, willing and committed as they said they were going to be. Students agreed that participating, being well-disposed in class, showing interest, practicing, and being responsible were positive attitudes. Students regarded shyness, avoidance to ask questions and resistance to follow teachers' instructions as negative or unfavorable certain attitudes. However, their tolerance to ambiguity and their risk-taking were rather high and they seemed to decrease their desire to practice and participate in class.

Students tended to feel more apprehension when the tasks or exercise required a more spontaneous and authentic use of a foreign language. This apprehension was characterized by avoidance, passiveness, reluctance, insecurity and discomfort. The apprehension was specifically associated with foreign language performance; mainly communication apprehension and social

evaluation. Students showed a language-skill-specific anxiety. In particular, they identified speaking, pronunciation and class participation as situations or moments which made them feel insecure and nervous. Students also experienced some sort of social anxiety which brought about disengagement or replacement of meaningful communication with innocuous sociability. Students also suffered a debilitating anxiety caused by the course pace, the classmates' level, previous experiences and the learning process itself.

Strategies use was mainly goal-oriented to solve linguistic or communicative problems, to accomplish course tasks, or to meet academic objectives. The actual use of social and affective strategies in class was much less frequent than the use of other strategies (cognitive and compensation strategies). Students seemed to favor the use of some strategies about others which may indicate the existence of some sort of strategy preferences. Students tended to overuse a few number of language learning strategies in order to avoid difficulties with learning and communication, but did not really strive to use other strategies to face and overcome those difficulties. Students focused much more on remembering and memorizing vocabulary, on understanding and producing the language, and on compensating for their knowledge gaps than on paying attention to the affective, social and decision-making aspects of language learning.

Based on the triangulation and on the analytical steps I used, I could determine that anxiety, beliefs, attitudes, and the effective use of socioaffective strategies to solve learning and communication difficulties were priority areas to work on.

#### 4.7 SUGGESTIONS, STRATEGIES AND POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES FROM THEORY

After having determined priority areas for action, I created an inventory of suggestions, strategies, and possible activities I had collected from the literature review to be able to imagine ways in which I could take action based on previous research. (See Appendix Q). Then, I consulted with others about how I could move forward (my critical friend, my validation group, and my thesis advisor). I considered my options carefully and decided what I could reasonably expect to achieve, given the time, energy and other resources I had. Next, I established a set of guidelines to follow and implement in my beginner course. I crafted some worksheets with socioaffective language learning strategies (SLLS) and affective factors. After that, I implemented a set of activities as part of my daily teaching practices. Just then, I assessed the implementation of my selected activities. I made changes and adjustments when necessary. Finally, I used a structured questionnaire with open-ended items to get my beginner students' assessment of the usefulness and relevance of using SLLS and discussing affective factors in an EFL beginner course.

The table below shows the set of guidelines and suggestions that were chosen for this study.

Table 25

*Practical and useful guidelines to work on beginner students' beliefs, attitudes, and anxieties.*

Beliefs	Attitudes	Anxieties
<p>Bassano's six steps (1986) towards dealing with student beliefs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• become aware of students' past classroom experiences and their assumptions about language learning;</li> <li>• build students' confidence;</li> <li>• begin where the students are and move slowly;</li> <li>• show them achievement;</li> <li>• allow for free choice as much as possible; and</li> <li>• become aware of the students' interests and concerns, their goals and objectives.</li> </ul> <p>Dörnyei's (2001) suggestions to rectify students' erroneous assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help students develop an informed understanding of the nature of second language acquisition and reasonable criteria for progress;</li> <li>• encourage students to be aware of the</li> </ul>	<p>Morgan's (1993) four aspects of classroom persuasion to change attitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning content should require active learner involvement;</li> <li>• the classroom environment should be one of "change or novelty";</li> <li>• students need to struggle with complex material and reach their own conclusions; and</li> <li>• students should become aware of their attitudes toward language and culture.</li> </ul> <p>Shrader's (2003) suggestions to promote attitude change as well as learner empowerment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to talk about what they know. As an example, have students tell about their own families or work, where they choose what about their family or work might be interesting for people to know.</li> </ul>	<p>Shaffer's (2006) suggestions to reduce or control anxiety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exhibit genuine concern for your students and their language learning.</li> <li>• provide a warm, reassuring classroom atmosphere.</li> <li>• provide students with a maximum of speaking time in a non-threatening environment.</li> <li>• incorporate into the lesson classroom activities that indirectly get the student to think about their own anxiety, the cause of it, and possible ways of alleviating it.</li> <li>• to create a more relaxed and comfortable classroom atmosphere, song activities may be introduced into the lesson.</li> </ul> <p>Wörde's (2003) suggestion to reduce or control language anxiety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• foster a proactive</li> </ul>



<p>fact that the mastery of a second or foreign language can be achieved in a number of different ways, using diverse strategies; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help students discover for themselves the methods and techniques by which they learn best.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value what the students have to say, and encourage an atmosphere of mutual respect.</li> <li>• Don't attack students' ideas, but encourage them to take them deeper and find out more.</li> <li>• Set up a meaning negotiation based class, with an emphasis on student-initiated question asking (rather than the much more common pattern of teacher-initiated questioning). Don't talk at the students, ignoring their needs and ideas. This disempowers.</li> <li>• Emphasize the uniqueness of their experiences, and the contribution that it can make to the community. Even negative experiences can be looked on in this way.)</li> </ul>	<p>role on the part of the students themselves to create an atmosphere of group solidarity and support;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be sensitive to students' fears and insecurities and help them to confront those fears;</li> <li>• use gentle or non-threatening methods of error correction and offer words of encouragement;</li> <li>• make judicious use of purposeful group work or collaborative activities;</li> <li>• use relevant and interesting topics for class discussions and exercises;</li> <li>• speak more slowly or consider using English to clarify key points or give specific directions;</li> <li>• attend to the learning styles or preferences of the students; and</li> <li>• hear and appreciate the voices of students for valuable insights, ideas and suggestions.</li> </ul>
Other Suggestions and Recommendations to Consider		
<p>Dörnyei's (1998) suggests Ten Commandments for Motivating Language Learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set a personal example with your own behavior.</li> </ul>	<p>Rogers' (1951) Conditions to Facilitate Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere which encourages people to be active.</li> <li>• Learning is facilitated</li> </ul>	<p>Arnold's (2003) suggestions to make speaking easy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let students begin to speak when they are ready. Then give them a chance to speak – less teacher</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.</li> <li>• Present the task properly.</li> <li>• Develop a good relationship with the learners.</li> <li>• Increase the learner's linguistic self-confidence.</li> <li>• Make the language classes interesting.</li> <li>• Promote learner autonomy.</li> <li>• Personalize the learning process.</li> <li>• Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.</li> <li>• Familiarize learners with the target language culture.</li> </ul>	<p>in an atmosphere that facilitates the individual's discovery of the personal meaning of ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere that consistently recognizes the right to make mistakes.</li> <li>• Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere that tolerates ambiguity.</li> <li>• Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere in which evaluation is a cooperative process with emphasis on self-evaluation.</li> <li>• Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere which encourages openness of self rather than concealment of self.</li> <li>• Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere in which people are encouraged to trust in themselves as well as in external sources.</li> <li>• Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere in which people feel they are respected and accepted.</li> </ul>	<p>talk that is obtrusive and unnecessary and more room for student talk. Similarly, let students have time to process what they want to say before having to speak in front of others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim for an appropriate level of difficulty and risk with speaking activities.</li> <li>• Don't insist on perfect pronunciation, complete sentences, near native grammar. Leave most accuracy work for other moments.</li> <li>• After any pre-communicative exercises needed to prepare learners, be sure to focus on real communication tasks, not excuses for language practice.</li> <li>• Expect learners to be successful. Teachers' expectations can have great influence, positively or negatively, on learners.</li> <li>• When students speak, listen to the person, not only to the language.</li> </ul>
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#### 4.8 CLASS PROCEDURES

Language learning can be a complex task susceptible to human anxiety, unrealistic beliefs and inappropriate attitudes which, in turn, can lead to feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, and apprehension in class. One of the challenges faced by EFL teachers is, then, to provide students, especially beginner ones, with a learner-centered and low-filter classroom environment, which motivates, interests, and contributes not only to students' language development, but also to personal growth. Such an environment clearly calls for an educational scheme, a set of activities, and an instructional model to truly aim for the development of emotive abilities, the shaping of affective desires, and the fullest expression of ingenious qualities. This section describes how this study strived to create an affective environment conducive to language learning.

First of all, it was necessary to choose a scheme or model to create the crucial ingredients of a learner-centered and low-filter classroom environment in which beginner students could learn to use the language in a non-threatening and enjoyable setting. A scheme, adapted from Yeap Lay Leng<sup>159</sup>, was elaborated to work with affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies. This scheme consists of three steps:

- assessing learners' affective characteristics:
  - in an on-going process, and
  - constantly interacting with the learners prior to, during and after instruction.
- drawing affective characteristics informally:
  - non-confrontational conversations,
  - diaries,
  - incidental encounters,
  - one-to-one chit-chats,
  - social gatherings,
  - interacting with colleagues who know the learners,
  - extracurricular activities,
  - peer groups, and
  - field trips and outings
- choosing some formal activities:
  - administering a simple questionnaire,
  - group therapy,
  - discussion in support groups,
  - counseling sessions,
  - instructional activities using videos, games, role playing and simulations to determine the learners' levels of commitment to the affective objectives,
  - sharing of success stories,
  - conversational pieces,

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<sup>159</sup> LENG, Y. L. Learner analysis in instructional design: The affective domain. In *CDTLink*. National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Center for development of teaching and learning. Vol. 6, No. 2 (2002).

- meeting with actual role models,
- case studies,
- autobiographies, and
- testimonies from invited speakers to depict the desirable choices of affective characteristics.

Evidently, the study had already addressed the first two steps and only needed to choose some formal activities to develop appropriate learning beliefs, to enhance positive learning attitudes, to reduce language anxiety and to promote socioaffective language learning strategies. Numerous authors have described activities for enhancing L2 learners' affective experiences (e.g., Oxford, 1990, Campbell & Ortiz, 1991; Hooper Hansen, 1998; Rinvolucris, 1999; Medgyes, 2002). Some of the most common activities that have been proposed are:

- discussion of the ideal language learner,
- cooperative learning activities,
- an 'agony column' (in which learners reply to letters expressing language learning difficulties),
- learner journals,
- use of learner anxiety graphs,
- visualization,
- humour,
- cartoon story telling, and
- rhythmic breathing exercises.

However, affective-enhancing activities need to be backed up by and implemented through some instructional model to build up a teaching/learning process aiming for affective training. Krathwohl's taxonomy of affective objectives<sup>160</sup> is perhaps the best known of any of the affective taxonomies and has become a commonly used model in education. His taxonomy is a framework that classifies the affective objectives into specific levels of commitment to the desired affective changes in the learners' value system. I resorted to the first three levels in this taxonomy to have students:

- be willing to receive or to attend to their beliefs, attitudes, anxieties and use of socioaffective language learning strategies (receiving);
- become sufficiently involved in or committed to affective factors so as to seek them out and gain satisfaction from working with them or engaging in them (responding); and
- see worth or value in the affective-enhancing activities, materials, and experiences not by the desire to comply or obey, but by their individual's commitment to the matter (valuing).

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<sup>160</sup> KATHWOHL, D., BLOOM, B. and MASIA, B. *Taxonomy of educational objectives. Handbook H: Affective domain*. New York : David McKay Company, 1964.

Based on receiving, responding and valuing, some strategy-based lessons, activities and materials were designed to emphasize self-discovery, introspection, self-esteem, and help students get in touch with the strengths and positive qualities of themselves and others. The study followed a strategy-based instruction because: 1. students were explicitly taught how, when, and why socioaffective language learning strategies could be used to facilitate language learning and language use tasks, and 2. strategies were integrated into everyday class materials, and were explicitly and implicitly embedded into the language tasks. In order to successfully instruct my students on language strategies, I took into account Wendy's (1991) principles for strategies training and Brown's (2000) approaches to teaching strategies in the classroom. See the table below.

Table 26.

*Wenden's principles for strategies training and Brown's approaches to teaching strategies*

<b>Wenden's principles for strategies training</b>		<b>Brown's approaches to teaching strategies</b>	
<b>Principle</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Approach</b>	<b>Examples/ goals / techniques</b>
Informed	Strategy training should be informed. The purpose of the training should be made explicit and its value brought to the students' attention.	Teach strategies through interactive techniques	1. Lower inhibitions. 2. Encourage risk-taking. 3. Build self-confidence. 4. Develop intrinsic motivation. 5. Engage in cooperative learning. 6. Use right-brain processes. 7. Promote ambiguity tolerance. 8. Practice intuition. 9. Process error feedback. 10. Set personal goals"
Self-regulation	Students should be trained how to regulate or oversee the use of the strategy, i.e. when it is appropriate to use it; the difficulties they have implementing it; and its effectiveness.		

		Use compensatory techniques to overcome cognitive style problems or weaknesses	<p>1. Low tolerance of ambiguity: brainstorming, retelling, role-play, paraphrasing, finding synonyms, skimming, jigsaw techniques to overcome.</p> <p>2. Excessive impulsiveness: making inferences, syntactic or semantic clue searches, scanning, and inductive rule generalization.</p> <p>3. Excessive reflectiveness/caution: small-group techniques, role-play, brainstorming, fluency techniques.</p> <p>4. Too much right-brain dominance: syntactic or semantic clue searches, scanning, proofreading, categorizing, information-gap activities.</p> <p>5. Too much left-brain dominance: integrative language techniques, fluency technique, retelling, skimming.</p>
Contextualized	Strategies should be contextualized. Training should be in the context of the subject matter content and/or skill for which it is appropriate. It should be directed to specific language learning problems related to the learners' experience.		
Interactive	Strategy training should be interactive. According to this mode of training, learners are not told what to do and then left on their own to practice. Rather, until they evidence some ability to regulate their use of the strategy, teachers are expected to continue to work with them.	Administer a strategy inventory	Introduce a self-checklist for learner styles and/or

Diagnosis	The content of the training should be based on the actual proficiency of the learners. Therefore, at the outset of any strategy training, information on which strategies students use and how well they use them should be collected.		strategies inventory in the classroom, such as the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). Use the inventory to raise awareness of strategies, base assignments on, and as a reference for strategies to teach
		Make use of impromptu teacher-initiated advice	Pass on the 'tricks of the trade' which helped you with your own language learning (e.g. using flashcards, reading, drawing pictures, etc).

#### 4.9 CLASS ACTIVITIES

This study strived to provide beginner students with a learner-centered and low-filter classroom environment through 9 basic activities:

- improvisation (dialogs done without any preparation, using models and conversations from the textbook);
- skills-based tips (practical techniques and ideas to work with the different areas of the language),
- role-plays in front of the class (training activities in which students pretend to be in particular communicative situations),
- presentations (planned activities in which students describe or present ideas, places, or situations),
- chats with classmates (informal talks between two or three students),
- interviews (activities in which a student asks some classmates questions, especially to get information about a particular topic),
- videos (a television programme, or a real-life situation, recorded on videotape for students to fill out a worksheet or do a set of language learning activities),
- songs (activities to enjoy music, work with lyrics and develop listening comprehension), and
- discussions (activities to talk about something with someone or others in order to exchange ideas, decide something or reach a consensus). Here I included three worksheets and learner journal (see description below).

These activities were chosen because most of my beginner students had expressed some concern or had shown some difficulty with them while speaking and/or participating in class. Also, they were chosen because I wanted to help them face and overcome their main difficulties and fears instead of avoiding or ignoring them. Finally, they were part of our everyday classroom activities, in which I wanted to integrate affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies as simply and effectively as possible. The use of learner journals (written records that students make of the things that happen to them in class) was also implemented to encourage students to do personal reflection about their learning experience. I asked my students to keep a journal to be discussed and shared in class every two units. Students had 15 minutes to share their notes and to discuss their impressions at the end of every two units. My main goal was to give students some time to realize that their feelings and concerns were common (other students also had them) and pertinent (they played an important part in class).

This study designed and implemented a set of socioaffective-based materials: three worksheets, one assessment format, a final practical activity and a final semi-questionnaire (See socioaffective-based materials appendixes I, J, K, and L). These materials tried to help my beginner students become more aware of the ways in which they could enhance their own comprehension and production of the target language, and ways in which they could continue to learn on their own and communicate in the target language after they left the language classroom. In other words, these materials aimed to assist learners in becoming more effective learners by allowing them to individualize the language learning experience. They also aimed to assist them in becoming more responsible for their efforts in learning and using the target language.

The first worksheet addressed anxiety and beliefs. Students had to read a student's description that a teacher had written based on his observations. Next, they had to answer some questions to try to identify the causes of the student's difficulties. This was done as a whole class activity. Next, students got in group of 3 or 4 and discussed some questions about anxiety-related symptoms. They had to assess the anxiety level in their class. After that, students had to choose 5 suggestions from a list of 12 recommendations to reduce or control anxiety. Each group explained their options to the class. Finally, as a class, they went over a list of common beliefs language students to check which one could cause or enhance anxiety. Appendix I shows this worksheet.

The second worksheet addressed speaking and classroom oral activities. First, students needed to read what two students had said about speaking. Then, they needed to answer who they identified more with and why. After that, they read about some class situations in which students need to speak English in class. They needed to identify which situations they feel relaxed or secure with and which situations they feel anxious or nervous. Next, they read about socioaffective language learning strategies. I offered simple explanations about the strategies. They had to identify which ones they think were easy, which



ones were difficult, and which ones they needed to use more. Finally, they needed to imagine what socioaffective strategies they would use for a role-play. Appendix J shows this worksheet.

The last worksheet had three sections: general recommendations to control or reduce your anxiety, good or positive opinions for your English class, and socioaffective language learning strategies for your English class. All students got a copy of this worksheet. We read the different sections as a class and I offered examples and explanations when necessary. Students had to identify recommendations, opinions and strategies that they liked or needed. I encouraged students to share their opinions and perceptions with their classmates as openly and honestly as possible. I allowed them to speak Spanish for this final part of the class because I wanted them to express exactly what they felt, thought, and believed. Appendix K shows this final worksheet.

The assessment format was used after we had done 4 of the 9 class activities that were chosen to enhance affective factors and promote the use of socioaffective language learning strategies: the role-play, the presentation, the interview and the improvisation. It normally took 15 minutes for the students to reflect on attitude, anxiety, participation and production. First, they had to write some suggestions for their classmates and their personal reflection about the activity. Then, they shared their notes and gave classmates comments and suggestions based on the activity and on the reflection. Appendix L displays the final assessment format used in this study.

#### 4.10 PARTICIPANTS' PERFORMANCE

It is worth mentioning here the students' performance that I observed while implementing the classroom activities or reacting to the teacher's instructions and questions. This section falls in one category: participants' performance. It highlights the major issues concerning the participants' behavior as I observed in the classroom. This includes (1) participants' receptiveness, (2) their reactions to socioaffective training, (3) and their performance with the socioaffective-based guidelines, activities and worksheets.

##### 4.10.1 Participants' receptiveness.

As stated earlier, not only does the AEP at the Centro Colombo Americano follow a communicative language teaching approach to EFL teaching, but also it supports and promotes learning-to-learn and learner-centeredness. Therefore, I normally had my student practice real-life situations, pay attention to meaning (messages they are creating or task they are completing) instead of form (correctness of language and language structure), focus on specific vocabulary and expressions to accomplish communicative intents, use strategies to facilitate language learning, and work in pairs and groups cooperatively.

Because of my study, I also had them reflect about affective factors, understand the nature of language learning, increase enjoyment of learning, reduce stress and anxiety, and develop their esteem and confidence. I did all of this as explicitly as possible by setting up clear goals, giving step-by-step instructions, using student-friendly explanations, doing purposeful in-class tasks, following learning-inducing guidelines, and allowing different self, pair and class-assessment moments.

The students' receptiveness to most of the class activities was notable. Most of them did their best to take advantage of the activities, the materials and the strategies I suggested. They kept taking notes based on my comments about either features of language structures, about some communication errors from the students' work in class or about learning strategies or techniques to enhance their language proficiency. They especially liked my acronyms to remember strategies. For example, the *3Ps* to learn effectively (**P**repare before class, **p**articipate in class, and **p**actice after class), the *SODA* to work effectively (**S**top before an exercise or activity, **o**bserve its instructions or process, **d**ecide what and how to do it, **a**ct accordingly), or the *AAMEC* to speak properly (**A**sk good questions, **a**nswer with complete information, **m**ake appropriate comments, **e**xpand the conversation and **c**ooperate with your classmates).

I also noticed that my students focused closely on my explanations and did not occupy themselves while I was engaging in language, communication or learning analysis. Although participants used their notebooks to keep notes on relevant tips, explanations or examples I gave, this rarely happened when they were doing group or pair activities. At these times, they tended to either listen to their classmates attentively or periodically participated giving opinions, making comments or making corrections.

#### 4.10.2 Participants' reactions to affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies.

As mentioned above, socioaffective factors and strategies issues were incorporated into my teaching practices explicitly. I had this incorporated in class because, as explained in chapter Two, I think and feel EFL teachers should make learners' affective world a relevant and active component in their language classes. As a rule, I would present, explain and implement tips, strategies, and techniques according to the textbook section, the language skill, or the class topic being addressed. In order for my explanations and implementations to be experienced by my students actively, I asked them to read about, comment on and share their perceptions of affective issues and socioaffective language learning strategies, paying special attention to their contribution to their language learning process.

Generally, the participants responded promptly to me when I asked them to talk about affect and strategies. Some of them, even, surprised me with their

honesty, their level of reflection and their interest in addressing these issues in class. For example, some participants earnestly shared their feelings and thoughts with their classmates. They would even invite their classmates to take advantage of this experience because they felt it was important and useful and they knew not many teachers and classes opened up such spaces. A few, of course, were less enthusiastic, but still expressed their interest. In my observations and data analysis, I did not notice or find any student who had a negative or apathetic opinion or reaction to this experience.

I noted, however, that the students' interest and response was connected to three factors or topics: their progress in the course, their personality style, and their commitment to their own learning. I mean, their attention and their effort to comment on and share their perceptions of the proposed activities and the strategies depended greatly on how satisfied they were with their understanding and control of the course contents, how comfortable they felt with talking about themselves in front of others and how devoted they were to improve or maintain their language process as effectively as possible. These factors are closely related to their beliefs and attitudes (I will come back to this point later).

#### 4.10.3 Participants' performance with socioaffective-based guidelines, activities and materials.

The participants' performance when working with socioaffective-based guidelines, activities and materials was very different from their behavior while engaging in traditional classroom activities and textbook exercises. This is particularly puzzling, as most of the participants reacted to these activities in a completely different manner. As most EFL teachers do, I had my students work on classroom activities and textbook exercises individually, in pairs and in groups. Sometimes they would sit together, but worked independently and quietly until they were finished and ready to compare their answers or to put pieces together to finish an activity. It seemed to me that was their aim: to finish something so I could either check it or approve of it. This dynamics was not different to previous classes I had had or seen. However, when I had my students read, comment, and share their perceptions about the socioaffective-based activities and materials, they would work actively and cooperatively exchanging opinions, giving ideas, and making an effort to reach a consensus. They seemed not to be that interested in me checking or approving, but more in me giving them assessment and feedback in their performance.

As suggested above, although the two activities required them to analyze, integrate and interact to get an outcome: communicative, linguistic or academic, the participants' performance in socioaffective-based activities seemed to be more active than their normal responses to more traditional classroom activities. The main difference between these two activities, I concluded, was that the fact that they were now reading, speaking, listening, and writing about themselves not just as language learners, but as human beings. I believe the set of guidelines, activities and materials managed to give my students the chance to

go beyond course contents, class topics, language issues, communicative tasks and academic activities.

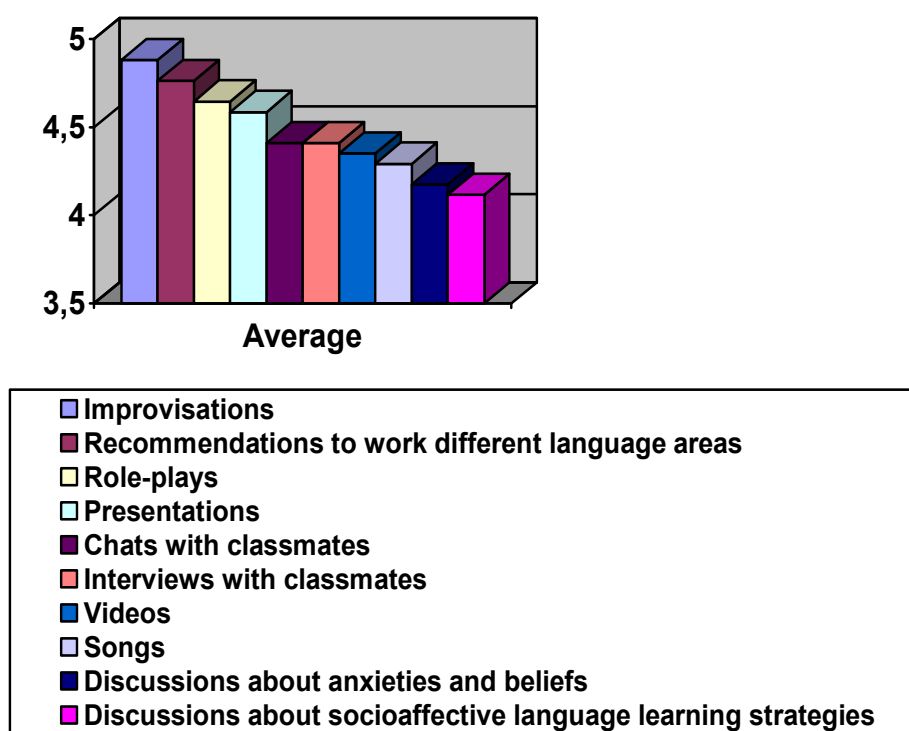
These socioaffective-based materials gave them the change to address themselves at a more personal level. They were a lot more engaged because they were talking about themselves; their ideas, feelings and emotions when facing the language process. In brief, their attention and interest were not focused on the language, its communication and learning, but on their inner world, their feelings and viewpoints; on themselves.

#### 4.11 FINAL SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

This section provides a description of the participants' views on the usefulness of the different socioaffective activities and materials used in class. It also checks if students believed there was any improvement or development in their language learning, in their beliefs and attitudes, and in their control of anxiety. This description is limited to the participants' responses to some questions that explicitly addressed the effectiveness of the explicit teaching of affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies at the end of the course. I divided this analytical description in two sections. The first section will address the main coincidences, differences and emergences I could identify in my beginner students' responses to the final semi-structure questionnaire explained in chapter Three. Following the set of coincidences, differences, and emergences, there is an interpretation of the findings with comments and impressions on what those data seems to show or evidence. Finally, a general conclusion will be offered.

##### 4.11.1 Usefulness of class activities.

This study provided beginner students with a learner-centered and low-filter classroom environment through 9 basic activities: improvisations, skills-based recommendations, role-plays in front of the class, class presentations, chats with classmates, interviews, videos, songs, and discussions. Based on frequency counts (enumerations of how often a certain measurement or a certain answer to a specific question occurs), the usefulness of the activities, according to my students, was as follows:



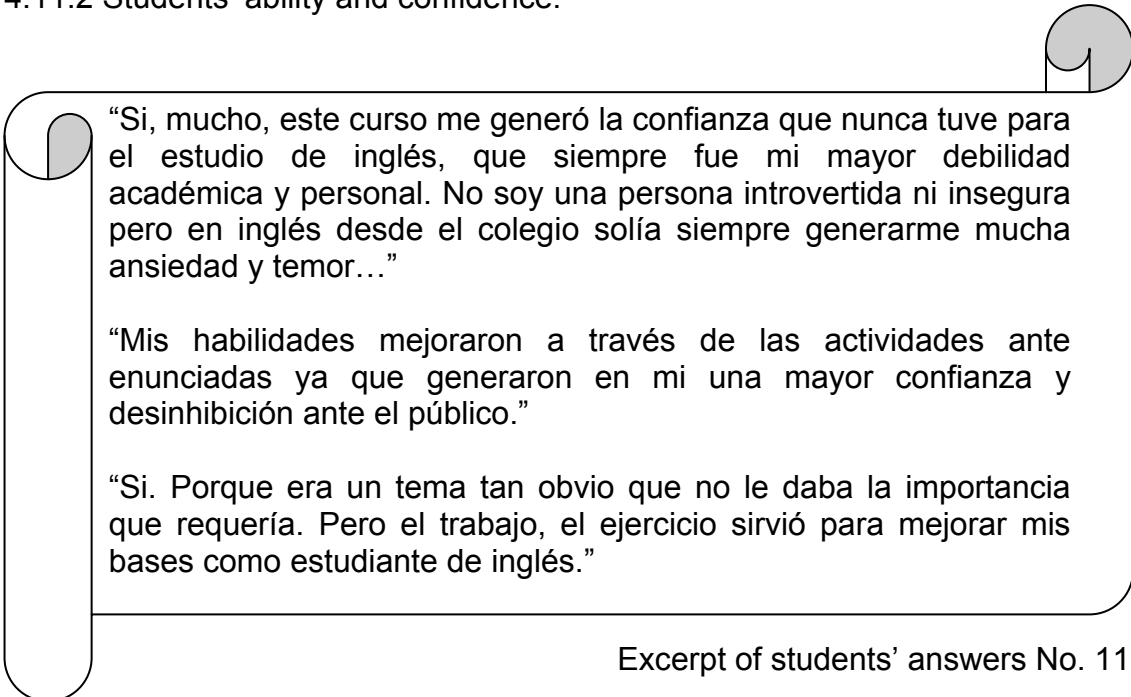
*Graph 6. Usefulness of activities from the study*

I was surprised when I got these results because students appeared to favor high anxiety-inducing activities over low anxiety-inducing activities. Students seemed to find improvisations, role-plays, presentations and chats with their classmates more useful than the other activities that were proposed in the study. It is likely that this preference indicates that although these activities could make them feel more apprehensive, they had the chance to put into practice the tips, suggestions, and strategies they had been given, which allowed them to get more practical and valuable results for their own learning. Through the implementation of these activities, students appeared to think that they could experience some degree of uneasiness and apprehension but, at the same time, they could learn how to be sensitive to their own fears and insecurities and how to confront the emotional and affective demands of common typical classroom activities. If this was so, then the study achieved one of its main goals: to help language learners not only to acquire a language better, but also to get to know themselves deeper and better.

These results could also suggest that students experienced improvisations, role-plays, presentation and chats from a new and improved perspective. Instead of avoiding them, they started facing them with more and better strategies. Somehow, they appeared to have learned to trust in themselves as language learners developing a stronger sense of self-confidence. They seemed to understand that they were free to make mistakes and cope with failure without feeling that they were bad or poor students. This new

understanding may have influenced the amount of satisfaction they experienced after adequate activity completion in class and can determine how they will approach and tackle subsequent learning tasks in future classes. EFL teachers, then, definitely need to help learners to evaluate themselves in a positive light, showing them ways to overcome their difficulties and encouraging them to take credit for their advances. That is probably why Dörnyei<sup>161</sup> encouraged teachers to increase learner satisfaction and to promote attributions to effort rather than to ability.

#### 4.11.2 Students' ability and confidence.



"Sí, mucho, este curso me generó la confianza que nunca tuve para el estudio de inglés, que siempre fue mi mayor debilidad académica y personal. No soy una persona introvertida ni insegura pero en inglés desde el colegio solía siempre generarme mucha ansiedad y temor..."

"Mis habilidades mejoraron a través de las actividades ante enunciadas ya que generaron en mi una mayor confianza y desinhibición ante el público."

"Sí. Porque era un tema tan obvio que no le daba la importancia que requería. Pero el trabajo, el ejercicio sirvió para mejorar mis bases como estudiante de inglés."

Excerpt of students' answers No. 11.

The main gains students appeared to get out of this experience were higher confidence, awareness and risk-taking.

- The increase in students' confidence was a positive achievement because when students believe in their own capability at learning languages and feel comfortable while doing class activities, they approach language learning with a greater measure of self-assurance and tend to be more open to allowing the new language to go deep into their heads and hearts. Besides, the students' confidence is not easily undermined when they participate, interact or speak in class. Then, part of the efforts teachers make to improve students' confidence as well as participation should be aimed at drawing their involvement and stimulating their reactions as well as offering them chances to experience success.

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<sup>161</sup> DÖRNYEI, Z. *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 134.

- Greater awareness can help learners to be self-directed, mentally active and conscious, as well as being informed about the language, about language learning techniques and processes, and about themselves as language learners. In the long run, awareness can empower students by allowing them to feel that they can experiment with their language learning and, ultimately, take control of their own language learning process. This result seems to show that a focus on awareness brings numerous benefits such as: better appreciation of the complexity and sophistication of communication, a rewarding route for exploring the richness and complexity of language learning, and a broadened, deepened understanding of how English works (See Arndt, Harvey and Nuttall, 2000).
- Taking calculated risks in class allows students to try out new strategies and behaviors, which can enhance their learning success because, as Brown stated (2000), “learners have to be able to gamble a bit, to be willing to try out hunches about the language and take the risk of being wrong”<sup>162</sup>. Students appeared to understand that risking takes us out of our comfort zone into a learning/growing zone, which may imply a temporary loss of security and a disorienting feeling, but eventually helps us develop the knowledge, the skills and the understanding we need to be successful learners. To Dufeu<sup>163</sup>, training students in using socioaffective strategies and eliminating their own uneasiness seems to be an effective way to enhance the quality of trying out hunches about the language, which ultimately is crucial to learn a language in the EFL classroom.

Confidence, awareness and risk-taking seem to be crucial keys to learn a language in the EFL classroom and teachers should develop an ample affective framework both to help students revise how well-disposed they are and to let students be better-prepared.

Table 27.

*Students' improved ability and confidence.*

QUESTIONS	SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES	EMERGENCES
¿Do you think that your ability and confidence to study and learn English improved or increased	-Improvement of confidence. - Recognition of weaknesses and factors in learning. - Awareness of	- Self-confidence vs. confidence to use the language. - Weaknesses recognition vs. strengths	- A good method to correct mistakes with the teacher and the classmates.

<sup>162</sup> BROWN, H. D. *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.) NY : Addison Wesley Longman, 2000.

<sup>163</sup> DUFEU, B. Op. cit., p. 89.

through the activities and the information you did and received in this course about affect and language learning strategies? Why?	obvious but disregarded factors. - Taking more risks of participating in class. - Better and easier English learning.	recognition. - Problem awareness vs. solution awareness.	- An enjoyable atmosphere. - Importance of revising how well-disposed one is.
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#### 4.11.3 Student's beliefs and attitudes.

"Si tal vez el hecho de que se dedique tiempo a hablar de como trabajar las diferentes áreas del aprendizaje y de las creencias que se tienen hacen ver que el único problema que se tiene para aprender inglés es tener dedicación y lanzarse a ello."

"Sí. Tengo mejores creencias, me es necesario desarrollar la actitud pues se que puedo aprender de mis errores, que debo intentarlo pero esta en mi mente en mi razón aún no he podido actuar de tal forma completamente en mi clase de inglés."

"Creo que si ya que para mi era muy difícil el estudiar y expresarme en inglés (le tenia cierta fobia). Este curso cambió mi actitud frente al estudiar inglés."

Excerpt of students' answers No. 12.

Training in affective factors and socioaffective strategies, according to participants' feedback, promoted and facilitated the process of English learning by stimulating them to have a deeper thinking about their learning state as well as the affect factors they had brought into learning process, whether positive or negative, and then made favorable adjustments accordingly. Such a self-reflection appeared to make them become aware of their learning beliefs and attitudes, adapt new learning strategies and behaviors, and plan more effective learning methods and directions for future efforts. They seemed to be able to regulate their English study in a more reasonable way and get more satisfactory learning results. Clearly, EFL teachers need to help students' develop insightful beliefs and appropriate attitudes about language learning processes, their own abilities and the use of effective learning strategies, which ultimately can have a facilitative effect on their success.

Table 28

*Improved students' beliefs and attitudes.*



Do you think that you now have better beliefs and attitudes when learning and speaking English in class? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling more secure.</li> <li>- Improvement in attitudes towards English learning.</li> <li>- Improvement in shyness.</li> <li>- Leaving "wrong" beliefs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dependence on one's interest and attitude.</li> <li>- Leaving "negative" beliefs vs. Acquiring "better or new" beliefs.</li> <li>- Improvement in one's beliefs, but need to work on one's attitudes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One's beliefs are most of the times limits/restrictions.</li> <li>- Importance of having and trusting "positive" beliefs = Having a positive mind.</li> <li>- Help with one's shyness.</li> <li>- Liking more the language.</li> <li>- More awareness, more improvement.</li> <li>- The only key to English learning is having dedication and going for it.</li> </ul>
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#### 4.11.4 Students' anxiety.

"Si, porque se ha hablado y puesto en práctica muchas de las estrategias que se socializaron en clase."

"Se como reducir mi ansiedad en clase pero me falta practicar más y prepararme más."

"Si he tratado de poner en práctica los consejos dados en clase pero esto a veces es complicado ya que es un proceso y yo ya estoy dando los primeros pasos. Se que debo relajarme aun más y prepararme más con ello tendré mejores resultados."

"Creo que tengo herramientas que me pueden ser muy útiles al momento de enfrentarme a un instante de ansiedad, el que lo puede controlar va a depender de poner en práctica estas herramientas y comprender que en la medida en que mas enfrente estos estados de ansiedad será mas fácil manejarlos."

Excerpt of students' answers No. 13.

The explicit teaching of socioaffective language learning strategies also seemed to somehow benefit my beginner students because they believed it was

important to have strategies and techniques to reduce anxiety and they showed interest in having more practice with them. Many agreed on saying that the more learning and speaking they do, the more control they have. After a certain amount of practice and use, they started to develop and show lower levels of anxiety, avoidance, passiveness, reluctance, insecurity and discomfort, which was confirmed when students recognized the importance of doing more talking and socialization in class. Students also seemed to understand that mistakes were natural and useful elements in language learning, which probably helped them speak more comfortably. Definitely, language teachers need to strive to develop students' ability to cope effectively with the emotional and motivational problems they meet, approach tasks with a positive frame of mind, develop the necessary energy to overcome frustrations and persist in their efforts.

*Table 29*

*Student's reduced anxiety.*

Do you think that now you can and know how to control or reduce your anxiety when speaking English in class? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having strategies and techniques to control one's anxiety</li> <li>- The importance of more practice to use strategies.</li> <li>- The more learning and speaking one does, the more control one has.</li> <li>- The need for more preparation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I know what and how to control anxiety vs. I need more practice and time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased self-control and self-confidence.</li> <li>- The importance of talking and socializing in class.</li> <li>- The importance of being secure about class topics.</li> <li>- A better expression of one's personality.</li> <li>- Accepting mistakes as natural and useful and speaking feeling comfortable.</li> <li>- The strategies that is beneficial.</li> </ul>
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#### 4.11.5 Students' opinions and suggestions.

Students acknowledged the fact that most students are afraid of speaking a FL and that the explicit teaching of affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies can help people desinhibit and forget about their shame. Their answers suggested that this teaching can also help students to be aware about external and internal factors that play a role in their learning and know how to deal with their own weaknesses and difficulties, which ultimately seemed to help them develop positive attitudes, better behaviors and a more pleasant

classroom atmosphere. This study was also regarded as an important activity because it helped them focus not only on academic or linguistic matters, but also on their interest, security and learning, which helped them realized that different affective and social factors can affect their behavior and success in class.

“Creo que es importante que este proyecto tenga continuidad. Creo que es bastante importante recoger las experiencias de los estudiantes haciendo un seguimiento periódico del proceso porque en este punto se tiene las herramientas para identificar mas adelante que tan efectivas han sido.”

“Sí, se debe trabajar con más fuerza con las personas más tímidas o ansiosas de la clase.”

“Creo que debe difundirse a todos los docentes no sólo aplicarlo como una tesis o proyecto académico.”

“Es importante realizar más prácticas orales en las que se pueda enfrentar la ansiedad. Pienso que es la manera más efectiva de solucionar este aspecto a mejorar.”

Excerpt of students' answers No. 14.

In the end, my beginner students appreciated my efforts and attempts to discover what they thought in relation to the problems on hand, to discuss their misconceptions sensitively, and to give them situations to readjust their ideas and behaviors. Students, then, seem to value a learner-centered environment in which the teacher pays careful attention to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs that they bring to the educational setting. Consequently, EFL teachers should recognize the importance of building up an educational framework that can address the affective factors and the language learning strategies that students bring with them to the language classroom.

Table 29

*Students' main opinions.*

Would you recommend that the information you received and the activities you did about affective factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most people are afraid of speaking.</li> <li>- It will help people desinhibit and forget about shame.</li> <li>- Importance of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More practice with exercises and less talk or reflection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No magic or miracle, just preparation and practice.</li> <li>- Important for life in general to know about how</li> </ul>
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and socioaffective language learning strategies were included as a normal part of an English class? Why?	being aware about external and internal factors. - Knowing how to deal with weaknesses and difficulties. - Generation of a comforting environment. - Generation of a positive attitude in students.		affective and social factors affect one's behavior. - Focus not only on academic or linguistic matters, but also on one's interest, security and learning. - A plus/ an advantage. -Promotion of integral development.
Do you have any observations or recommendations for this project to be more appropriate or effective?	- More oral practice / More use of visual aids / Use of round tables / quizzes and homework correction / checking students' workbooks. - Doing out-of-class activities to do motivation and group activities. - Starting from the very beginning. - More frequency. - Helping shy or anxious students much more. - Being careful with gestures and expressions, especially the teacher.		

#### 4.12 CONCLUSION

It seems that beginner students can become more interested in and ready for their language learning if they realize that the focus of attention and interest is upon themselves as intelligent individuals and effective learners. With a socioaffective learning training, students can realize that they do not necessarily need to work more, but simply need to be more aware of affective factors, use language strategies better, and organize their efforts more effectively. Those learners who just "plod along" through their classes, like many of my beginner students did at the beginning, can be led into a process of self-discovery in order to develop an awareness of themselves as learners and can start exploiting their potential inner resources as successful and responsible learners.

With a socioaffective-based training, language teachers can have a further instrument to get to know the learners individually and give them "learning-to-learn" tools that are useful both for their present life in class and for their future life. Colleagues can, thus, stop complaining of the lack of "a good method" to make students learn more and better if they realize that one simple thing they can do is to design and implement socioaffective materials and activities in

order to help their students not just to learn the language but also to become better informed about, aware of, and prepared for their learning process.

#### 4.13 SUMMARY

This chapter described and explained the main findings detected after analyzing the collected data. It started with a general description of the classroom setting and the class materials. Then, it moved to an analysis based on my observations. Based on an initial questionnaire, a rating scale, and learner journals, it provided a report about the participants' socioaffective factors and strategies about EFL learning. Next, it discussed how the findings were identified, approached and treated. After that, based on the findings, it provided a description of the educational scheme, the set of activities, and the instructional model employed to aim for the development of students' emotive abilities and the shaping of their affective desires. Finally, it discussed some of final findings based on students' performances and responses in class during and after the implementation of affective-based training through some activities and worksheets. The next chapter will describe the answers to the research questions the study had, offer some major conclusions from the data and the actions taken and suggest further research on certain areas.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Being aware of other's colleagues ideas can give us a fresh slant on problem and ideas for our own action research, to say nothing of the saving of time when solutions are presented to us ready-made. Similarly, sharing our own ideas with others can be beneficial in many obvious ways. Sometimes, the mere necessity of having to articulate our ideas to an audience can help us to develop them in ways that might not otherwise have happened. The feedback from colleagues can be motivating and rewarding, as well as providing basis for further reflection.

Michael Wallace<sup>164</sup>

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter, the final chapter, begins with a brief presentation of the major findings. These findings relate to: (a) beliefs, (b) attitudes, (c) anxieties, (d) socioaffective language learning strategies, (e) activities and worksheets, and (f) speaking and interaction. Following the findings, a brief review of the research questions of the study will be presented. Next, some implications and recommendations will be discussed. After that, I will present some personal insights about this study. Then, I will address its main limitations. Next, I will make some suggestions and recommendations for future research about affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies. The chapter ends with a general conclusion.

The main findings from this study show that participants' beliefs, attitudes, anxieties and socioaffective language strategies can be powerful tools for enhancing language learning when addressed and taught explicitly. However, participants experienced affective-related problems and contradictions that EFL teachers should be aware of when teaching beginner students. These problems also suggest directions for further studies.

During this study, I conducted observations, as well as questionnaires and rating scales, which yielded rich data. Equally important, the participants were helpful and receptive, which helped me thoroughly explore their experiences. Sometimes willingly, other times passively halfheartedly, they tried out all the suggestions and activities I asked them in class.

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<sup>164</sup> WALLACE, M. Op. cit., p 208.

I am grateful to all the participants who attended my class and participated in this study. They provided me not only with data, but with a great learning opportunity to do research in my class and to reflect about my teaching practices. Not only did the participants help me carry out this study gladly, they actually seemed to benefit from the activities and suggestions implemented in class.

## 5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

Briefly, the main findings of the study are summarized below.

- At the beginning of the course, many beliefs, attitudes and anxieties had a profound influence on students' learning behaviors and, ultimately, on their learning processes. Then, it is important to EFL teachers to explain to their students the fact that some of their beliefs and attitudes could lead to frustration, dissatisfaction with the course, unwillingness to perform communicative activities, and to lack of confidence in themselves as well as affect their language achievement. It seems reasonable to state that EFL teachers should explicitly help their students overcome harmful perceptions and blocks towards the language, its learning and its communication.
- Students appeared to have two sets of beliefs about language learning. On the one hand, a first set of "helpful" beliefs which made them believe in themselves as language learners and in the importance of using different actions and tactics to face the demands of language learning. On the other hand, a second set of "unhelpful" beliefs in class which made them fail to put many actions and tactics into practice since they would not or could not be as participative, active, willing and committed as they said they were going to be. As Bassano (1986) and Dörnyei (2001) stated EFL teachers should help their students become aware of unrealistic or harmful beliefs by encouraging them to bring that knowledge to consciousness and transform it into positive or good behaviors in class.
- Students seemed to agree that participating, being well-disposed in class, showing interest, practicing, and being responsible were positive attitudes. Quite the contrary, shyness, avoidance to ask questions and resistance to follow teachers' instructions were assessed as negative or unfavorable certain attitudes. Unfortunately, their low tolerance to ambiguity and their low risk-taking were factors that appeared to decrease their practice and participation in class. This situation seems to confirm one of the reasons that Farris (2002) used to explain the formation of attitudes: the protection of one's self-esteem because students may avoid risks and ambiguity as a means to protect their self-ego. It seems reasonable to state that EFL teachers should strive to

change negative attitudes towards the learning situation and the language itself so that students can increase the probability of successful attainment in proficiency.

- Students tended to feel more apprehension or fear when the tasks or exercise required a more spontaneous and authentic use of a foreign language. The apprehension was characterized by avoidance, passiveness, reluctance, insecurity and discomfort. Students showed a language-skill-specific anxiety when speaking, pronouncing and participating. Students also experienced some sort of social anxiety in class, which very likely brought about disengagement or replacement of meaningful communication with innocuous sociability. Finally, students appeared to suffer a debilitating anxiety triggered by the course pace, the classmates' level, previous experiences and the learning process itself. These findings confirm what previous research on task anxiety has shown: people experience language-skill-specific anxiety in relation to speaking. Therefore, EFL teachers should implement, at least, three of Shaffer's (2006) suggestions: help students know what they want to say, get them to concentrate on the message rather than on people and let them gain experience to build experience.
- Strategies use was mainly goal-oriented to solve linguistic or communicative problems, to accomplish course tasks, or to meet academic objectives. Students seemed to favor the use of some strategies –cognitive, compensation and metacognitive over other types of strategies, which may indicate the existence of some sort of strategy preferences. Students appeared to focus much more on remembering and memorizing vocabulary, on understanding and producing the language, and on compensating for their knowledge gaps than on paying attention to the affective, social and decision-making aspects of language learning. That was probably why students tended to overuse a few number of language learning strategies in order to avoid difficulties with learning and communication without really striving to use other strategies to face and overcome those difficulties. Thus, as Stawowy Diaz (2004) explained EFL teachers can help in their students' learning process by training them in the existence of language learning and language use strategies and encouraging them to use strategies purposefully in class. This training can be better implemented, according to Cohen (1998), if EFL teachers provide explicit strategy training as part of the foreign language curriculum.
- At the end of the course, participants had better-informed beliefs, attitudes and socioaffective language learning strategies. Although they faced different types of anxiety, they also were aware of strategies and suggestions to overcome them. They reported growth in confidence and also indicated that strategy instruction is useful in an EFL class since they now knew what to do. Although the participants showed consistent



responses, I caution readers that they might overstate trends in their comments to show social desirability to me as a teacher/researcher.

- Participants noted several benefits that they had gained from receiving explicit teaching on affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies. These included improvement of self-confidence, recognition of weaknesses and factors in their own learning, awareness of obvious but disregarded factors and a need to take more risks to participate.
- Participants reported an increase in their mastery of strategies and techniques to control their own anxiety. They seemed to gain this control over their anxiety from consciously adopting tips given in class and from suggestions given and explored in the worksheets and with the activities that were used in this study. They mentioned that this strategy-based instruction can help people desinhibit and forget about shame since they will be better prepared to deal with language, learning, and communication weaknesses and difficulties.
- Participants reported that they had several suggestions for EFL teachers to take into account. For instance, they suggested having more oral practice, more use of visual aids, use of round tables, implementation of quizzes and workbooks' correction. These suggestions show that EFL teachers can learn a great deal from their students when doing classroom research. EFL teaching should, then, involve researching and researching should lead to learning; learning new things about students and teachers' activities, practices, strengths and weaknesses. That is why AR suited this study best. It provided for a type of research in which teaching, learning, reflection and self-actualization could take place in the classroom both for the teachers and for the students.
- Practice in participating and interacting in the classroom is important for any degree of fluency to develop. However, practice depends on willingness to speak. But, the truth of the matter is that EFL teachers do not only need to make the students feel interested in speaking, but also teach them how to do it adequately in class. One of their main functions, then, in enhancing participating, speaking and interaction needs to be the work on the affective side of the students' learning process and on the explicit teaching of socioaffective language learning strategies in beginner courses.

### 5.3 METHODOLOGY FINDINGS

One incidental, yet valuable, benefit of this research has been the knowledge I have gained. In particular, I have developed a profound awareness of research methodology. I am especially pleased with the number and quality of the instruments that I employed in the study. Every instrument was unique, in that each one was set at a critical interval of the course. For example, the first and

the final questionnaires provided me with in-depth information relevant to the research questions. Specifically, the final semi-structured questionnaires were so helpful because they allowed me to find out about issues related to the participants' experiences with the worksheets and the activities.

The quality of the interaction between the participants and me was equally important. I now fully appreciate face-to-face contacts. First and foremost, they fulfill a primary requirement of the natural research setting. Therefore, this study meets the research criteria of Lincoln and Guba, who warn researchers not to misinterpret the word "natural." They urge researchers to use methods of data collection that are absolutely natural: "...Rather, we suggest that inquiry must be carried out in a "natural" setting because phenomena of study . . . take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves"<sup>165</sup>.

Another benefit of this research has been the use of action research (AR) in this study. AR certainly helps to bring out to the open the fact that teachers and students' actions are based on implicitly held assumptions, theories and hypotheses. It allows teachers and students to make explicit the justifications for their actions and to question the bases of those justifications. The ensuing practical applications that follow are, then, subjected to further analysis in a transformative cycle that continuously alternates emphasis between theory and practice.

There are two goals for the EFL teacher-researcher using this approach, one is to increase the closeness between the actual problems encountered by practitioners in a specific setting and the theory used to explain and resolve the problem. The second goal is to assist practitioners in identifying and making explicit fundamental problems by raising their critical consciousness. Thus action research promotes emancipatory praxis in the participating practitioner; that is, it promotes a critical consciousness which exhibits itself in practical action to promote change.

#### 5.4 SUMMARIZED FINDINGS

Findings from the study have important and relevant implications in my classroom practices, and to a certain extent, in my own theoretical background in regard to socioaffective aspects of language teaching. The results are supportive of the notion that beliefs, attitudes, and anxieties are important considerations in beginner student variables, and that the explicit teaching of socioaffective language learning strategies can improve the frequency and the quality of students' participation and interaction in class. The results indicate that although it may seem that many beginner students experience avoidance, passiveness, reluctance, insecurity and discomfort, uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, and apprehension when speaking and participating in class because of an array of factors, if we look beneath the surface of accepted categorizations

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<sup>165</sup> LINCOLN, Y. S. and GUBA, E. G. Op. cit., p. 189.

and theories of educational psychology and language learning teaching, important and potent reasons for these rather unhelpful or negative learning behaviors are identifiable. These considerations are summarized below:

- Particularly in a monolingual setting, inappropriate beliefs and attitudes affect how learners perceive not only themselves as learners, but also the language, the classroom practices and the learning process.
- Anxieties that may exist within a learning group are key pedagogical factors to be considered, especially when teaching beginner courses.
- The identification and comprehension of socioaffective language learning strategies, and the creation of an affect-based classroom are vital to many learners' positive psychological and linguistic needs, and may have an effect on learning outcomes.
- The incorporation of certain classroom activities and materials into the classes and the creation of a more relaxed and comfortable classroom atmosphere can both help students develop a deeper understanding of the nature of foreign language learning and help student become involved in or committed to affective factors so as to seek them out and gain satisfaction from working with them or engaging in them.

## 5.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study has attempted to answer one main question: How does the explicit teaching of socioaffective language learning strategies impact the beliefs, attitudes, anxieties and motivations of a group of beginner students in an EFL three-month course?

In answer to this main question, it is clear that the participants have modified their previous beliefs, attitudes and anxieties when engaging in oral activities to practice and interact in class. They reported many benefits from getting explicit strategy instruction of affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies. Their improved understanding of the affective side of their learning process helped them understand communicative and oral requirements, and affective-based activities and worksheets had a positive impact on their speaking abilities, judging from their responses to the relevant final semi-structured questionnaire questions. They considered affective-based training to be a useful tool for them as EFL learners. Finally, they reported that this beginner course produced a considerable increase in their awareness of and confidence in EFL learning. The study has also attempted to answer a set of secondary questions. These are:

1. What are the EFL beginner students' beliefs, attitudes, motivations and anxieties about learning English at the end of a three-month course that implements affective-based strategy instruction?

In contrast with participants' responses about their beliefs, attitudes, and anxieties regarding speaking, participating and interacting at the beginning of the course, their responses at the end of the course revealed better-informed beliefs, healthier attitudes, and reduced anxieties about EFL language learning. When asked at the end of the course, participants responded in ways that suggest that socioaffective-based activities and materials had helped them appreciate their beginner EFL course at the Centro Colombo Americano.

2. What obstacles and difficulties do EFL students experience when engaging in learning activities as part of their classroom experience?

As described in Chapter Four, the participants seemed to encounter problems and difficulties when trying to implement strategies and tips for speaking, participating and interacting in class. These included difficulty with overcoming their shyness, with being affected by their teacher and classmates' gestures, and with implementing the socioaffective language learning strategies as often as possible in and out of class.

3. What language learning strategies do EFL beginner students make use when engaging in such activities as part of their learning experience?

Based on participants' responses, socioaffective-based activities and materials did help them develop strategies for learning to speak, participate and interact through explicit teaching of affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies. Although they typically did not mention specific strategies, they did refer often to the increased awareness that this strategy-based study brought to them, and said that they tried to apply the suggestions, tips and techniques they read and learnt in the course. They mentioned making positive statements, taking risks wisely, discussing their feelings with someone else, cooperating with peers, becoming aware of their own and others thoughts and feelings, and seeking practice opportunities as language learning strategies that they tried to implement to cope with avoidance, passiveness, reluctance, insecurity and discomfort in class.

4. What are EFL students' reactions against the effects of activities and materials on affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies?

Anxiety reduction was a salient finding in the study. Participants reported that learning socioaffective language learning strategies explicitly helped them develop and show lower levels of anxiety, avoidance, passiveness, reluctance, insecurity and discomfort, which was confirmed when students recognized the importance of doing more talking and socialization in class. Many participants' oral skills and classroom performances showed development in frequency and in length just after two weeks of implementing some of the practical and useful guidelines found in the literature. Beginner students' beliefs, attitudes, and anxieties seemed to improve even more after working in class with the first two worksheets (anxiety and beliefs and speaking and oral activities).

5. How does students' learning develop over the course, and what impact do the students feel the explicit strategy instruction has on them as EFL learners?

Although oral fluency and communicative competence take time, the explicit teaching of affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies is perceived to have a positive impact on the participants. Participants reported a preference for activities (improvisations, role-plays, presentations, and chats) that present them with opportunities to learn how to be sensitive to their own fears and insecurities and how to confront the emotional and affective demands of common typical classroom activities. Some participants reported that they learned to practice, participate and interact more and better in class thanks to this instruction. Other participants' responses revealed greater confidence, awareness and risk-taking through the use of affective-based activities and materials.

6. Judging from beginner EFL students' feedback, how does a socioaffective language learning strategy approach enrich their language learning process?

Some participants reported that they were more aware of their learning beliefs and attitudes; they were adapting new learning strategies and behaviors, and they were planning more effective learning methods and directions for future efforts. They seemed to be able to regulate their English study in a more reasonable way and get more satisfactory learning results. Furthermore, some participants reported that they will continue to use socioaffective language learning strategies and advise others to use them as well. Finally, some participated appeared to increase the learner's linguistic self-confidence and their learners' goal-orientedness.

## 5.6 FURTHER DISCUSSION: AUTONOMY

Different authors (Stenhouse, Elliot, Kemmis, Nunan, etc) have acknowledged that analysis, problem-solving skills, evaluation, and innovation are part of the daily practices of most teachers. They do these actions every day, only not as carefully and systematically as they could and should. With training and support, teachers can learn how to systematize their inquiry from informal reflection and teacher story sharing to research. One way to systematize teachers' inquiry is action research (AR). To Eileen Ferrance<sup>166</sup>, for instance, AR gives teachers the chance to conduct classroom-based research in order to critically reflect upon and evolve their teaching. She explained that AR provides teachers with a systematic, documented inquiry that allows them to gain understanding of teaching-learning situations and, ultimately, to use that knowledge to increase teaching worth and student learning.

But, apart from systematization, documentation, understanding and knowledge, I realized that AR provides teachers with *autonomy*. Here, I do not understand

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<sup>166</sup> FERRANCE, E. Op. cit., p. 1.

autonomy as a generalized “right to freedom from control” (Benson 2000) or as “a teachers’ capacity to engage in self-directed teaching (Little 1995), but as a capacity for self-directed teacher-learning (Smith 2000). Richard Smith<sup>167</sup> explained that the idea that education should embrace teacher autonomy is not at heart a new proposition (advocates of teacher development, teacher-research, classroom-research and so on would appear to share this goal implicitly). What might be a relatively new idea is the emphasis on the development of *autonomy through reflective teacher-learning*. This autonomy must be understood as a critical reflection that teachers do on when, where, how and from what sources they (should) learn. This type of autonomy mainly takes place when teachers monitor the extent to which they constrain or scaffold students’ thinking and behavior, when they reflect on their own role in the classroom, when they attempt to understand and advise students, and, ultimately, when they engage in investigative activities.

In my opinion, actual *engagement in and concern with* reflective teacher-learning appear to be a powerful means for developing teacher autonomy; particularly, when they are explicitly linked to an action research orientation. I believe that reflective teacher-learning and AR are essential for teachers to construct an autonomy. This autonomy takes place when teachers gain better abilities and a greater willingness to learn for themselves. It emerges when teachers develop an appropriate expertise of their own. The point I am trying to make here is that teachers become autonomous when they use AR and reflective teacher-learning as a methodology to develop a capacity to open their own work to inspection and to construct valid accounts of their educational development (See Whitehead and Schön’s discussions on living educational theory and practice-as-inquiry in chapter 3).

I am convinced now that when engaged in and concerned with AR and reflective teacher-learning, foreign language teachers can critically analyze their students, identify potential problems, modify their teaching practices, and evaluate the results. They can also adapt successfully instances of pedagogical theories into their professional performance according to their particular personality traits and their working environment. They can even face and transform their daily practices in ways which let them respond adequately to their students’ needs and sociocultural agendas. They can, in the end, create what Bernardo Restrepo Gomez called “pedagogical know-how”: a practical but professional knowledge built up through reflection on one’s own practice in the everyday action and through its permanent transformation in relation to the disciplinary components that determine it<sup>168</sup>.

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<sup>167</sup> SMITH, R. Starting with ourselves: Teacher-learner autonomy in language learning. In SINCLAIR, B., MCGRATH, I. and LAMB, T (Eds.) *Learner autonomy, teacher autonomy: New directions*. London : Addison Wesley Longman, 2000, p. 95.

<sup>168</sup> RESTREPO, B. La investigación-Acción pedagógica, variante de la investigación acción educativa que se viene validando en Colombia. In: SIMPOSIO INTERNACIONAL INVESTIGACION ACCION Y EDUCACION EN CONTEXTOS DE POBREZA. (Bogota, 2007) Documentos simposio. Bogotá : Universidad de L Salle, 2007. Retrieved from [www.lasalle.edu.co/iaccion2007/documentos/PonenciaUniv.BernardoRestrepo.pdf](http://www.lasalle.edu.co/iaccion2007/documentos/PonenciaUniv.BernardoRestrepo.pdf)

In my search for helping my beginner students learn, I ended up learning about me as an autonomous professional. I found out that autonomy through reflective teacher-learning and the construction of pedagogical know-how are particular benefits that AR offers. I gained them from carrying out an action research study about the explicit teaching of affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies.

Additionally, autonomy was promoted for my students. With this study, I opened up room for *learner autonomy* because, as Dimitrios Thanasoulas<sup>169</sup> explained, learner autonomy consists in becoming aware of and identifying one's strategies, needs and goals as a learner and having the opportunity to reconsider and refashion approaches and procedures for optimal learning. This study did just that. It helped my students become aware of and identify affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies. It also encouraged them to assume greater responsibility for their own language learning and it helped them assume control over their own learning process. Learner autonomy, then, was present in this study because it launched them into generating new or improved behaviors and ideas in their learning process and into availing themselves of learning opportunities rather than simply reacting to various stimuli of their teacher.

I believe that studies on socioaffective language learning strategies and affective factors make it possible for students to become agents in their own learning process. Such studies can let them see that they are not learners to whom things merely happen; but that they are individuals who, by their own volition, can cause things to happen. EFL teacher research should definitely strive to make students understand that language learning is mainly the result of their own self-initiated interaction with their teachers, their classmates, their materials and their own personal, social, affective and cultural attributes. In other words, EFL studies and research should help students realize that they can and should be active, reflective and autonomous agents of their own language learning.

## 5.7 PERSONAL INSIGHTS: LEARNING AND RESEARCHING

When I began this research, I was wrestling with questions about how to help my students learn more about learning and deal with affective factors I felt influenced their behaviors and efforts in class. I felt confident that my students were capable of getting more out of the learning opportunities they had, and taking more initiative and responsibility for their own learning. But I felt limited in my ability to help them do that.

Whether or not this research was permanently beneficial for the students, I can definitely say that it was an enlightening experience for me as a teacher, a

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<sup>169</sup> THANASOULAS, D. What is learner autonomy and how it can be fostered? In *The Internet TESL journal*. Vol. 6, No. 11 (Nov. 200). Retrieved in July 2007 from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Thanasoulas-Autonomy.html>

researcher and a learner. It has given me more understanding about the process of teaching and the significance of learning how to learn. It has given me tools to approach strategy instruction, even to low-proficiency students. I can say with confidence that I feel better equipped to help students move toward becoming more independent, effective learners. Just as Bernardo Restrepo Gómez explained, teachers have a great deal of practical pedagogical know-how, but when they reflect on it critically and systematically, it becomes rich personal pedagogical knowledge.

This study has enriched me as a researcher as well, both in my classroom and outside of it. It has given me knowledge about how to watch students, to recognize their specific needs and abilities, and to diagnose how to help them. It has made me more inquisitive, and it has made me verify the evidence that lies behind assumptions that I (or others) make.

## 5.8. CONTRIBUTIONS TO EFL LEARNING AND TEACHING

The data derived from the students' responses to the research questions present (a) general contributions for teachers of beginner students as well as (b) specific contributions concerning the teaching of affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies.

### 5.8.1 General contributions to teachers of beginner students.

1. The beliefs, attitudes and anxieties of EFL beginner students are constructed based on previous experiences with activities and materials related to EFL language learning. Teachers should be aware of these affective factors especially when using learner-centered approaches or strategy-based instruction, since students may come to the class with erroneous preconceptions, poor experiences or with limited exposure to these methods. The participants in this study faced some initial avoidance, passiveness, reluctance, insecurity and discomfort due to their lack of experience in dealing with participating, interacting and speaking in a language class. Since students' affective factors may support or hinder students' effective use of language learning strategies and language use strategies, EFL teachers should be sensitive to students' preconceptions, behaviors and fear and help them to confront and overcome them.

2. The contents, the materials, the method, and the class itself bombard students with such a big number of new structures, functions, rules, and skills that they tend to focus much more on remembering and memorizing vocabulary, on understanding and producing the language, and on compensating for their knowledge gaps that on paying attention to the affective, social and decision-making aspects of language learning. Consequently, EFL teachers should create a relaxed and comfortable classroom and incorporate into the lesson classroom activities that directly get students to think about their



own learning anxieties, concerns and dilemmas, the causes of them, and possible ways of alleviating or solving them. In brief, EFL teachers need to help students manage oral anxiety and improve communicative performance by offering training in affective strategies and implementing techniques to ease tensions, to reduce demands, and to increase learning satisfaction.

3. Since English language learners' abilities, experiences, and expectations can affect learning, EFL teachers need to get to know their students and their needs. Teachers need to know their backgrounds and goals as well as their proficiency levels and skill needs. Then, it is extremely important to include time for activities that allow learners to get to know one another and get to feel comfortable or at ease in class. These activities should also foster a safe classroom environment in which beginner students can know that they are moving forward. Teachers also must provide students with fluency-building practice, affective-based activities, and reflective sessions to build up speaking skills, demystify wrong beliefs and promote appropriate attitudes.

4. EFL teachers should value the awareness of the learner differences in EFL language learning environments because uncovering information about their students language learning strategies (or lack thereof) may provide useful insights that can prompt teachers to change or modify the way they plan, teach and interact with students, thus helping learners overcome challenges in new language learning environments. In addition, teachers may take into account other variables, for example, preferred strategies, cultural considerations and access to opportunities outside the classroom environment. Helping learners become more aware of LLS and develop a thorough repertoire of these strategies, and having them reflect on their experiences of learning and using the target language can also help them to become more autonomous learners.

5. The participants in this study showed several specific difficulties that may have lessened the effectiveness of the strategy-based instruction. Accordingly, teachers should be sure to foster communication with their students about their experiences, for that is likely to help them hear and respond to student concerns. The positive experiences and challenges that students perceive can be utilized to promote class participation and interaction, and any problems can be resolved or minimized by an ongoing dialogue between students and teachers. In fact, some participants reported in their final comments about the study that the questionnaires and the worksheets had focused their attention on their learning process and language problems, and had thus become a part of their learning experience. Once again, I encourage teachers to be aware of their students' experiences during the course, and not only at the end of the course, so that not only the instructor's future students, but also his or her current ones will be able to gain the advantage of having their voices heard and their ongoing experiences appreciated by their instructors.

#### 5.8.2 Specific contributions to the use of affective training and socioaffective activities and materials

I hope the findings of this study will help readers to understand the effects of using socioaffective-based strategy training and explicit teaching of affective factors on the speaking, practice, and participation of EFL learners. The study shows instances of the ways in which beliefs, attitudes and anxieties can change if students are exposed to the direct relationship between affect, learning, language and communication. Therefore, the findings suggest a number of points regarding the teaching of affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies.

Above all, the participants showed a special preference for instruction that draws an explicit relationship between socioaffective factors, speaking and class interaction; their comments at the start of the course suggested that they would not have spontaneously participated or interacted, as they were not well-disposed or aware as to do so in class. Teachers might find the strategy of overtly relating affect to participative and interactive practices useful in promoting student language learning. Some specific recommendations are presented below in numerical form for reader convenience.

1. Since participants claimed to have gained many benefits by integrating affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies in their classes course, EFL language teachers and course designers could consider integrating affect as a regular part of EFL curricula and teaching. Likewise, affective activities and materials should be used in EFL classes.
2. Evidence found in this study supports the use of socioaffective-based strategy instruction to help students cope with frustration, dissatisfaction with the course, unwillingness to perform language tasks and communicative activities. Participants found affective-based activities and worksheets useful and effective because they allowed them to increase their self-confidence as well as enrich their language learning. Therefore, teachers might consider using them in class in order both to reduce avoidance, passiveness, reluctance, insecurity and discomfort and to help student create an enhanced picture of the language learning process and classroom.
3. Attitudes and beliefs seem to have a profound influence on students' learning behaviors and on their learning outcomes. I could observe and determine that only those students who had developed insightful beliefs about and appropriate attitudes towards language learning processes displayed better awareness and commitment. Then, EFL teachers need to help students develop insightful beliefs and appropriate attitudes if they really want to have a facilitative effect on their students' learning and favor their students' abilities and appropriate use of effective learning strategies.
4. Beginner students' tolerance to ambiguity and their risk-taking tend to be low and they could have an effect on their intentions and opportunities to practice and participate in class. EFL teachers need, then, to implement strategies and activities to develop a high level of tolerance to ambiguity and a high tendency

to take risks if they really want to play a decisive role in enhancing students' desire to use English and expanding students' chances to practice what they are learning in class.

5. Affective-enhancing activities, no matter how good they are, can not really benefit students if there is not some instructional model to build up a teaching/learning process aiming for affective training. EFL teachers can resort to the first three levels of Krathwohl's taxonomy of affective objectives to help their beginner students be willing to receive or to attend to affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies; become sufficiently involved in or committed to these issues so as to seek them out and gain satisfaction from working with them; and see worth or value in the affective-enhancing activities, materials, and experiences not by the desire to comply or obey, but by their individual's commitment to the matter. Based on these levels, EFL teachers can design and implement some strategy-based lessons, activities and materials to emphasize self-discovery, introspection, self-esteem, and help students get in touch with the strengths and positive qualities of themselves and others.

## 5.9 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFL TEACHERS

In thinking of language-learning strategies and affective factors, it is important to see this as a better and smarter way of teaching foreign languages, not a new instructional method. Learning strategies and affective training fit easily alongside other theories, methods and approaches practiced already in foreign language education. Although affective-based strategy instruction requires teachers to make some philosophical and instructional changes, it does not require a total revamping of their practice.

To fully understand socioaffective language learning strategies and its instruction, training is essential. It is unlikely to find an institution that will offer such specialized training through an in-service. Teachers will most likely need to seek training through specialized articles, books and associations. In choosing a training program, teachers must understand which model or framework should be implemented according to their needs, interests and desires. It should reflect their beliefs about strategies, and address the ones they feel are important. They must also recognize that even after training, educators will still need to invest time in creating or adapting existing materials. They might consider looking for a colleague willing to collaborate or become a strategies buddy.

As with any new topic, practitioners must stay up-to-date on new research findings and instructional materials. They must pay particular attention to information about student choice of strategies based on learning styles, gender and cultural/ethnic background. Finally, they must promote the incorporation of language learning strategies into the curriculum by talking about it; encourage other teachers to try it; and fostering collaboration.

## 5.10 LIMITATIONS

Overall I was pleased with the study and its outcomes, particularly as a first time researcher. However, on reflection I think the study would have had much more validity and reliability if several groups, as opposed to just one, had been involved in the whole process of the study. Unfortunately, teaching circumstances dictated the number of groups that were involved, and the data-collection methods employed. I had originally intended to work with two classes, to further explore, and consolidate questionnaire findings. However, this was not possible as I had certain time restraints and there was only one person involved in this research. I have learnt from this that ample time and meticulous planning is needed, as well as being aware of, and respecting the learners' wishes.

This study has many weaknesses. The participants were few in number and there was only one researcher. Findings and results are intrinsically connected to one particular instance in time (from September to December, 2006) and space (Basic 1, room 305, Centro Colombo Americano, Bogotá, Colombia) and subsequent research will most likely encounter different results from similar situations. With such a limited study of this scale, the interpretations are themselves limited and are not completely applicable to all EFL learners in a similar situation. In fact, much more research and comparisons of findings from different learning situations would be needed before any conclusions or recommendations could be confidently suggested. Indeed, this study only focused on affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies of one particular group of learners in a limited setting.

In further research of this or any type, I would employ a variety of data collection methods so that further cross checking and triangulation would be possible. Even though I was fairly confident of the outcomes of the research, nothing should be wholly assumed or taken for granted. Thus in studies of this type where somehow there are limitations on its generalisability, it would be desirable to have more than one researcher and a wider scope within the actual research. However, it is certainly true in my opinion that the best method of actually learning how to do research, is by actually doing it. With more research experience, and with other types of learner and context studies, I feel that I will be able to contribute meaningful and worthwhile data in the future.

## 5.11 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While conducting this study, I came across several ideas that I would recommend be investigated in future research. I address this issue here in more detail. The duration of this study was very limited. Research shows that speaking skills, student participation, and communication development can be best seen in a long term of engagement. I am eager to repeat this study with an

expanded period of time, involving more than one course, and working collaboratively with some co-workers.

This action research study focuses heavily on verbatim responses about the participants' beliefs, attitudes and anxieties toward learning and speaking EFL. Although students' performances were used in this study, they did not receive the same amount of attention as my observations, the questionnaires and the rating scale. Therefore, a study that examines students' development more closely over a longer period of time would be highly informative.

As this study has focused on a small number of students (17), I am interested in comparing the results of this study with a similar study that would involve a larger sample of EFL students. The findings of this study cannot be generalized. Therefore, a follow-up study with a larger number of participants could be a significant contribution to the field.

This study focuses on EFL students enrolled in Basic 1, Adult English Program, at the Centro Colombo Americano in Bogota, Colombia. Findings of a study carried out in an ESL setting where English is spoken as the main language might also make a valuable contribution. Likewise, a study carried out with students enrolled in content area courses, rather than EFL courses, would be valuable.

The present study involved that I worked as the teacher and as the researcher; therefore, the participants might have overstated their responses to try please me. A study in which responses were confidential could present valuable data, such as via emails provided that participants show seriousness and have enough time to write their responses.

On another level, it is interesting to consider a study investigating the ways in which teachers integrate learning, communication, interaction, teaching and affective factors in their classes. Such a study would shed light on the teachers' beliefs, attitudes, anxieties, motivations and language teaching strategies of student involvement in affective-related activities. Likewise, another study could investigate factors that hinder EFL teachers from implementing socioaffective materials and activities in their EFL classrooms. Research, including this study, has shown the significance of the socioaffective-learning connection. Therefore, additional studies that investigate this connection from different directions are needed to show that separating these two factors represent a potentially important obstacle to student success.

This study also raises interesting questions about finding clearer links between motivational factors and specific choices of learning strategies. Some possibilities have been noted, but more work in that area is needed. Also, this study looked only at learning strategies used in a FL setting. It would be interesting to analyze any identifiable differences between strategies used in a FL setting in comparison to a second language or immersion setting.

Much is left to be discovered about how to make language learning strategies more accessible for low-proficiency students. First of all, since this study focused only on socioaffective language learning strategies, it would be interesting to learn more about strategy instruction for low-proficiency students in other kinds of language learning strategies, such as cognitive, compensatory, and metacognitive. Secondly, this study was heavily influenced by the fact that a majority of the students were Colombian. Research with students from other cultures would be intriguing as well. Given the existence of so many levels of proficiency that could all be classified as beginners, it would also be beneficial to study other levels of beginners. Perhaps even more significantly, most of the students in this study had relatively high literacy skills in another language. Learning more about strategy instruction for students with lower literacy skills provides another significant opportunity for further research.

Finally, more studies using action research are needed in EFL contexts. Action research focuses language teachers' attention on interpretation—it makes us think about contexts and how they affect our judgments and our interpretations upon which those judgments are based. For me, it grounds the research in the ongoing narrative of our professional activity. Because our judgments are based largely on our tacit theories, on values and beliefs that are culturally determined and not explicitly articulated, the act of creating a narrative permits us to distance ourselves from our judgments a bit and affords an opportunity to make the basis of our work open to inspection. Action research is, thus, not an attempt to "scientifically" analyze, dissect and dehumanize the learning/teaching process. Instead, it sees the practitioners of learning/teaching (teachers and students) as the most important players in the process. Action research starts with the teacher and student, and is first of all a reflection on the learning/teaching process according to these people. Even if teachers and learners do nothing more than keep a diary, and reflect on the ideas that appear in that diary, this will positively affect the learning/teaching environment.

## 5.12 CONCLUSIONS

In spite of the promise that learning strategies offer to foreign language education in developing independent, informed and prepared learners, strategy instruction in EFL classrooms appears to be informal and haphazard. Perhaps some consider the field's relative novelty and need for additional research a reason to feel skeptical about including strategies in language lessons. There is still much to understand about the technical aspects related to learning strategies and its instruction. But a substantial body of literature, supported by research studies, strongly suggests that strategies are teachable and help students become better language learners.

Based on those findings, more foreign language educators should include socioaffective language learning strategies as part of their lessons to give students the tools they need to succeed. However, this cannot happen without the proper training in language learning strategies for pre- and in-service EFL

teachers. Such training should begin at the teacher-training level, and continue as part of a professional development program either sponsored by the school or a professional organization.

To maximize the effectiveness of socioaffective language learning strategies, they first must be integrated into lessons. But this integration should take place as part of collaboration by EFL institutes, centers, faculties or schools in order to maximize the benefits of strategies across the language levels.

### 5.13 SUMMARY

All students in all learning situations must grapple with the process of learning. Beginning EFL students like Cristina, who was described in the introduction of this study, are often set back by additional factors such as erroneous beliefs, inappropriate attitudes, acute anxieties, inadequate motivations, and poor use of language learning strategies. For these students, being able to learn a new language effectively is even more crucial than it may be for others. Helping all EFL students acquire more effective language learning strategies should be a cornerstone of outreaching practices and undoubtedly this effort can be better achieved if EFL teachers seek to understand their values as they give them life in their everyday work practices and living. EFL teachers should need to accept a responsibility as educational researchers to submit their accounts of teaching, researching and learning for public criticism in order to test and to strengthen their validity as contributions to educational knowledge. In conclusion, we should seek to enhance our own learning and our educational influence in the social organizations in which we live and work; even more when we have in front of us a group of EFL students who are willing, show interest or feel obliged to embark on a class as language learners.

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## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

## INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

**Factores Afectivos Y Estrategias De Aprendizaje De Estudiantes De Inglés  
En Nivel Básico**

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

**Curso:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fecha:** \_\_\_\_\_

Por favor responda las siguientes preguntas de la manera más honesta y clara que pueda. Tome en cuenta su experiencia previa como estudiante de inglés y su opinión personal sobre el estudio de idiomas.

1.1. ¿En general, qué actitudes son buenas o necesarias en clase para aprender inglés?, ¿Por qué?

EN SU CASO PERSONAL, ¿Con cuáles actitudes se identifica al aprender inglés en clase?

1.2. ¿En general, qué se cree bueno, positivo o necesario para aprender inglés en clase? ¿Por qué?

EN SU CASO PERSONAL, ¿Qué cree usted es bueno, positivo o necesario para aprender inglés en clase?

1.3. ¿En general, qué factores o situaciones de clase generan o aumentan la ansiedad al aprender inglés? ¿Por qué?

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1.7. ¿Qué le recomendaría a su profesor que hiciera en clase para trabajar las actitudes, las creencias, la ansiedad, la motivación y las estrategias de aprendizaje de idiomas de los estudiantes de inglés en nivel básico?




APPENDIX B  
FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

**SOCIOAFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH IN A BASIC COURSE  
WRAP-UP ACTIVITY**

NOMBRE: \_\_\_\_\_ FECHA: \_\_\_\_\_

Este formato busca valorar la efectividad o conveniencia de la información y las actividades que se hicieron en este curso sobre factores emotivos y estrategias de aprendizaje socioafectivas. POR FAVOR COMPLETELO TAN HONESTA Y DETALLADAMENTE COMO PUEDA.

Clasifique las siguientes actividades según la utilidad que le prestaron para su aprendizaje de inglés.

Creo que _____ fueron...		Bastante útiles	Muy útiles	Más o menos útiles	Algo útiles	Poco Útiles
1	Las discusiones sobre ansiedad y creencias					
2	Las discusiones sobre las estrategias socioafectivas					
3	Las recomendaciones para trabajar las diferentes áreas del inglés (vocabulario, gramática, escucha, escritura, pronunciación, habla, etc.)					
4	Las representaciones frente a la clase					
5	Las charlas con mis compañeros					
6	Las entrevistas a mis compañeros					
7	Los videos					
8	Las canciones					
9	Las presentaciones					
10	Las improvisaciones					

¿Cree usted que su habilidad y confianza para estudiar y hablar inglés mejoraron o se incrementaron a través de las actividades y la información que recibió en este curso sobre afectividad y estrategias de aprendizaje? ¿Por qué?

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¿Cree usted que tiene ahora mejores creencias y actitudes al estudiar y hablar inglés en clase? ¿Por qué?

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¿Cree usted que ahora puede y sabe cómo controlar o reducir su ansiedad al hablar inglés en clase?  
¿Por qué?

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¿Recomendaría usted que la información que recibió y las actividades que hizo sobre factores afectivos (creencias, actitudes, ansiedad, motivación) y estrategias de aprendizaje socioafectivas se incluyeran como parte normal de una clase de inglés? ¿Por qué?

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¿Tiene usted alguna observación o recomendación para que este proyecto sea más apropiado o efectivo? ¿Cuál(es)?

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**MUCHAS GRACIAS POR SU PARTICIPACIÓN**

*Yamith J. Fandiño*

## APPENDIX C

### RATING SCALE

### CUESTIONARIO GENERAL SOBRE CREENCIAS, ACTITUDES, ANSIEDAD, MOTIVACIÓN Y ESTRATEGIAS DE APRENDIZAJE DE ESTUDIANTES DE INGLÉS DE NIVEL BÁSICO

NOMBRE: \_\_\_\_\_ FECHA: \_\_\_\_\_

Lea los siguientes enunciados **CUIDADOSAMENTE**. Escoja para cada enunciado la opción **MÁS ACORDE** con lo que hace, piensa o siente al aprender y hablar inglés:

<i>CASI NUNCA... (CN),</i>	<i>POCAS VECES...(PV),</i>	<i>ALGUNAS VECES... (AV),</i>	<i>CON FRECUENCIA (CF),</i>	<i>CASI SIEMPRE (CS).</i>
<i>10 % de las veces</i>	<i>30 % de las veces</i>	<i>50 % de las veces</i>	<i>70 % de las veces</i>	<i>90 % de las veces</i>

Trate de ser lo más **HONESTO** y **PRECISO** posible al escoger las opciones. Utilice la abreviatura respectiva: **CN**, **PV**, **AV**, **CF**, **CS**.

ENUNCIADOS	CN	PV	AV	CF	CS
1.1 Me preocupa pronunciar mal cuando hablo inglés.					
1.2 Me siento nervioso cuando uso inglés.					
1.3 Me siento inseguro cuando uso inglés en diálogos o textos escritos.					
1.4 Me incomoda que mi profesor o mis compañeros corrijan mis errores frente a la clase.					
1.5 Me preocupa que mis compañeros se burlen de mí cuando hablo inglés en clase.					
1.6 Me siento ansioso(a) cuando el profesor me pide que responda una pregunta o haga un comentario frente a la clase.					
1.7 Me preocupa no poder entender lo que se está explicando o haciendo en clase.					
1.8 Me incomoda conversar con otro compañero o grupo de compañeros.					
1.9 Me estresa presentar quizzes, exámenes, evaluaciones o pruebas.					
1.10 Me incomoda que mis compañeros o profesor me califiquen de manera negativa al hacer actividades o prácticas en clase.					
2.1 Siento que soy un buen estudiante de inglés.					
2.2 Me considero una persona que se le facilita aprender idiomas.					
2.3 Me gusta participar en clase aún cuando no estoy completamente seguro de qué o cómo hablar.					
2.4 Tomo riesgos en clase ya que quiero aprender y hablar inglés bien.					
2.5 Procuro tener conceptos claros antes de hablar o escribir algo					

	en inglés.					
2.6	Procuro saber exactamente cómo hacer los ejercicios o actividades de clase para poder hacerlos bien					
2.7	Siento que el inglés es un idioma complicado de aprender.					
2.8	Preparar o repasar inglés es aburrido y agotador.					
2.9	Me parece que el aprendizaje de inglés enriquece mi bagaje cultural.					
2.10	Me parece que estudiar inglés me permitirá conocer y conversar con más y diferentes personas en el mundo.					
3.1	Creo que tengo la habilidad para aprender y hablar inglés bien.					
3.2	Puedo hacer ejercicios y actividades si me esfuerzo lo suficiente.					
3.3	Confío que puedo resolver cualquier problema o dificultad que se me presente al aprender o hablar inglés.					
<b>ENUNCIADOS</b>		<b>CN</b>	<b>PV</b>	<b>AV</b>	<b>CF</b>	<b>CS</b>
3.4	Creo que los buenos estudiantes de idiomas nacen y no se hacen.					
3.5	Creo que el don para los idiomas es pre-requisito para aprender inglés exitosamente.					
3.6	Creo que algunas personas nacen con un don especial para los idiomas extranjeros que les permite aprender idiomas muy bien.					
3.7	Es más fácil leer inglés que escribirlo.					
3.8	Es más fácil escuchar inglés que hablarlo.					
3.9	Se aprende inglés bien sólo al vivir en Estados Unidos o Inglaterra.					
3.10	Lo más importante para aprender y hablar inglés es poder traducir a español.					
4.1	Me motiva estudiar inglés porque estoy interesado en el arte, la literatura y la educación de Estados Unidos, Inglaterra y Australia					
4.2	Me motiva estudiar inglés porque me permitirá conocer y entender más a los anglo-parlantes: su manera de ser y hablar.					
4.3	Me motiva aprender inglés para pasar un examen: TOEFL, Michigan, GRE, etc.					
4.4	Me motiva estudiar inglés porque me ayudará con mi trabajo, mi profesión y mi estudio.					
4.5	Busco participar en clase porque deseo practicar y mejorar mi inglés.					
4.6	Hago ejercicios y actividades adicionales porque quiero tener un mejor progreso.					
4.7	Estudio inglés porque es un requisito para mi colegio, universidad o trabajo.					
4.8	Preparo o repaso unidades anteriores cuando el profesor lo exige o cuando hay quizzes, exámenes o actividades finales.					
5.1	Agrupo o asocio palabras o expresiones para memorizarlas.					

5.2	Repaso lecciones y/o refuerzo temas ya vistos.					
5.3	Procuro reconocer y usar fórmulas o modelos gramaticales que estudio.					
5.4	Trato de encontrar diferencias y/o semejanzas claves entre inglés y español.					
5.5	Intento utilizar sinónimos, gestos, mímica, ejemplos cuando no se o recuerdo una palabra.					
5.6	Pido ayuda a mi profesor o compañero con palabras o estructuras olvidadas o desconocidas.					
5.7	Me pongo objetivos concretos para trabajar las distintas áreas del inglés (preparar vocabulario, escuchar diálogos, repasar tiempos verbales, etc)					
5.8	Evalúo y reflexiono sobre mi progreso en inglés.					
5.9	Intento mantenerme positivo y relajado frente al aprendizaje del inglés.					
5.10	Comparto con mis compañeros, amigos y profesor las sensaciones y opiniones que tengo sobre la clase y/o mi rendimiento.					
5.11	Pido aclaraciones o explicaciones cuando no entiendo lo que alguien me está hablando.					
5.12	Le colaboro a mis compañeros de clase con su práctica y los animo en su aprendizaje.					



APPENDIX D  
TEACHING LOG

Level:	Classroom:	Date:	Lesson:	Topic:	Unit:
Classroom activity/action:	Students' work:	Relevant occurrences:			
Classroom activity/action:	Students' work:	Relevant occurrences:			
Classroom activity/action:	Students' work:	Relevant occurrences:			



## APPENDIX F

### CONSENT FORM

#### **FORMATO DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN EL PROYECTO IDENTIFICACIÓN DEL PROYECTO / TÍTULO**

*LA ENSEÑANZA EXPLÍCITA DE ESTRATEGIAS DE APRENDIZAJE  
SOCIOAFECTIVAS PARA EL APRENDIZAJE DE INGLÉS Y EL  
DESARROLLO DE LA HABILIDAD COMUNICATIVA DE ESTUDIANTES  
PRINCIPIANTES EN EL CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO*

#### **Declaración de edad**

Tengo 18 o más años de edad

#### **Interés Por Participar**

Quiero participar en el trabajo de investigación de Yamith José Fandiño, profesor de Inglés en el Centro Colombo Americano y estudiante de la maestría en Docencia de la Universidad de La Salle

#### **Propósito**

Entiendo que el propósito de este estudio es llevar a cabo una investigación sobre la enseñanza explícita de Estrategias de Aprendizaje Socioafectivas para el aprendizaje de Inglés y para el desarrollo de la habilidad comunicativa de estudiantes principiantes en el Centro Colombo Americano.

#### **Procedimientos**

Responderé de manera **honesta y completa** un cuestionario, una encuesta y unos formatos hechos por el profesor, Yamith José Fandiño, sobre factores afectivos, estrategias de aprendizaje socioafectivas y habilidad comunicativa de estudiantes principiantes de Inglés como lengua extranjera. Así mismo, llevaré un diario reflexivo sobre mis opiniones, sensaciones y reflexiones a lo largo de esta experiencia.

#### **Confidencialidad**

Entiendo que toda la información recogida en estos formatos es y será confidencial; será SÓLO utilizada con fines académicos para la elaboración de un estudio sobre la enseñanza de Inglés. Entiendo que mi identidad será protegida y que no aparecerá en los resultados finales de esta investigación.

#### **Riesgos**

Entiendo que mi participación en este estudio no conlleva ningún riesgo distinto al tiempo que emplearé al responder los formatos y al llevar mi diario reflexivo.

**Beneficios**

Entiendo que este estudio me permitirá entender y emplear las estrategias de aprendizaje socioafectivas para aprender y hablar Inglés más eficiente y efectivamente.

**Posibilidad de retiro**

Entiendo que puedo retirarme de este estudio en cualquier momento que quiera o que decida.

***Posibilidad para preguntar***

Entiendo que puedo hacer tantas preguntas como desee antes de y durante mi participación en este estudio.

**Información de contacto del Investigador**

Yamith José Fandiño

Teléfono casa: 4811201

Teléfono móvil: 310 5661049

Correo Electrónico: [yamithjose@gmail.com](mailto:yamithjose@gmail.com)

**Firma del participante:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fecha:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G

### ADULT ENGLISH PROGRAM

#### **ADULT ENGLISH PROGRAM**

The Adult English Program offers courses to students ages 16 and up from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The Program consists of four distinct blocks:

- BASIC
- SKILLS
- CHALLENGE
- ADVANCED

The Adult English Program seeks to be coherent with both the institution's mission and the Academic Department's language and learning philosophy. The Adult English Program is designed with the following objectives:

- to make language learning widely available and achievable for each and every motivated student
- to help students define and reach their personal learning goals
- to enable students to achieve high levels of proficiency and learning expertise at the same time
- to put students squarely in the center of the process, and to monitor and coach each students' learning in a continuous way
- to create rich contexts and conditions for students to be in contact with real-life English encounters on a daily basis
- to generate realistic and truthful expectations in the public in terms of what language learning entails and the personal commitment necessary for success
- to aid students in achieving the long-term goal of independence and life-long learning

## APPENDIX H

## INTERPRETATION MATRIX

**Beliefs:** Constructed assumptions, opinions, conceptions, and expectations that EFL students have about themselves as learners, the language, the classroom and the learning process.

Semi-structured questionnaire	Rating scale	Teaching log	Theory
<u>1. The learner level</u> - The need to have willingness / disposition to have a purpose . to push/demand oneself  - A positive perceived self-efficacy: confidence in their effort, in their abilities (The most frequent students' choice)	<u>Perceived self-efficacy</u>  4, 56 % - Puedo hacer ejercicios y actividades si me esfuerzo lo suficiente.  3, 87 % - Confío que puedo resolver cualquier problema o dificultad que se me presente al aprender o hablar inglés.  <u>Beliefs in English learning</u>  2, 75 % - Es más fácil leer inglés que escribirlo.  2, 25 % - Es más fácil escuchar inglés que hablarlo.  2, 18 % - Se aprende inglés	<u>1. The learner level</u> - Limitation of their English level. - Appropriateness of practicing with the same classmates in every single activity.  <u>2. The language level</u> - Asking questions about vocabulary	<u>1. The learner level</u> - themselves as learners, - foreign language aptitude, - self-efficacy, - self-concept and identity, - their language knowledge and competence  Learners with realistic and informed beliefs tend to behave productively in class, work harder outside class, and persist longer with study.  Learners believe in the existence of foreign language aptitude.  Learners can have self-fulfilling (often negative) prophecies.  <u>2. The language level</u> - the difficulty of language learning, - reactions to the

<p>reading and listening easier than writing and speaking.</p>	<p>bien sólo al vivir en Estados Unidos o Inglaterra.</p> <p>1, 43 % - Lo más importante para aprender y hablar inglés es poder traducir</p> <p><u>Belief in giftedness for English</u></p> <p>2 % - Creo que algunas personas nacen con un don especial para los idiomas extranjeros que les permite aprender idiomas muy bien.</p>	<p>related to lesson content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ss try to go beyond their level asking questions about structures they haven't studied.</li> <li>- Working with vocabulary once is OK in order to memorize</li> </ul>	<p>target language, - language skills</p> <p>Learners give more value to accent that teacher do.</p> <p>Learners underestimate the difficulty of language learning.</p> <p>Learners tend to believe that learning a language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules</p> <p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the teacher,</li> <li>- the methodology,</li> <li>- the activities,</li> </ul>
<p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The importance of practice in class: dialogs and interpretation; listening exercises.</li> <li>- The need to participate in class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. to correct mistakes; especially pronunciation,</li> <li>. to ask questions and</li> <li>. to give examples</li> </ul> </li> <li>- The need for a good instructor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to explain clearly,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>1, 62 % - Creo que el don para los idiomas es pre-requisito para aprender inglés exitosamente.</p>	<p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spanish is a way to clarify the exercises.</li> <li>- The T's or their classmates' responsibility to create a nice and dynamic atmosphere.</li> <li>- Little integration or disposition to get to know their classmates.</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to orient and</li> <li>- to help them learn.</li> </ul> <p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The importance of practice out of class: listening to music and watching TV in English.</li> <li>- Belief in giftedness for English: believing that some people are natural foreign language learners.</li> </ul>		<p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Normal experiences with English from which they did not learn much.</li> <li>- Necessity to understand every single detail when doing an exercise or conversation.</li> <li>- Necessity or importance of understanding most or everything when watching a video.</li> <li>- Vocabulary preparation and fast overlook of lesson content without going beyond it.</li> <li>- Exercises just to be completed, but not to put things into practice or do personalization.</li> <li>- It's OK to open their textbooks when doing listening activities.</li> <li>- Just pay attention to listening exercises without taking notes to facilitate their comprehension.</li> <li>- Word repetition is enough to memorize them.</li> <li>- Little use of</li> </ul>	<p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the nature of language learning,</li> <li>- the situation,</li> <li>- the materials needed,</li> </ul> <p>Learners hold misconceptions about how to learn foreign languages.</p>
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		<p>symbols or phonetic alphabet to represent their stress or pronunciation.</p> <p>- Following grammatical or written models is not that important.</p>	
<p><b>Attitudes:</b> The evaluative and socioaffective reactions, thoughts and predispositions that EFL beginner students have toward language learners, English and its culture, the value of learning the target language, and the learning situation itself.</p>			
Semi-structured questionnaire	Rating scale	Teaching log	Theory
<p><u>1. The learner level</u></p> <p>- Discipline/effort. Responsibility.</p> <p>- Interest in learning (willingness). Attention.</p> <p>- Positivism: English to enrich one's culture. English to contact and interact with varied people.</p> <p>- Self-image: positive image as a foreign English student and learner.</p>	<p><u>Positivism.</u></p> <p>4, 81 % - Me parece que el aprendizaje de inglés enriquece mi bagaje cultural.</p> <p>4, 81 % - Me parece que estudiar inglés me permitirá conocer y conversar con más y diferentes personas en el mundo.</p> <p><u>Tolerance for Ambiguity.</u></p> <p>4, 37 % - Procuro saber exactamente cómo hacer los ejercicios o actividades de clase para poder hacerlos bien.</p>	<p><u>1. The learner level</u></p> <p>- Willingness to participate or volunteer at once.</p> <p>- Openness and interest in talking to different classmates.</p> <p>- Participation and volunteering in spite of their pronunciation difficulties or vocabulary problems.</p> <p>- Interest in learning about conversation strategies.</p> <p>- Practicing with the same classmates day after day without looking for opportunities to interact with others unless the T tells them to.</p> <p>- Waiting for others to approach them</p>	<p><u>1. The learner level</u></p> <p>- Students rate their proficiency significantly higher than their teachers.</p> <p>- Confidence and proficiency was adversely affected by previous lack of practice using the TL</p>

<p>2. The language level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being aware of the importance of English</li> <li>• English as a tool and an opportunity</li> <li>• English as a subject</li> </ul>	<p>4, 18 % Procuro tener conceptos claros antes de hablar o escribir algo en inglés.</p> <p><u>Self-image.</u></p> <p>3, 87 % - Siento que soy un buen estudiante de inglés.</p> <p>3, 5 % -Me considero una persona que se le facilita aprender idiomas.</p> <p><u>Risk-taking.</u></p> <p>3, 75 % - Me gusta participar en clase aún cuando no estoy completamente seguro de qué o cómo hablar.</p> <p>3, 62 % - Tomo riesgos en clase ya que quiero aprender y hablar inglés bien.</p> <p><u>Negativism</u></p> <p>2, 18 % - Siento que el inglés es un idioma complicado de aprender.</p> <p>1, 5 % - Preparar o repasar inglés es aburridor y agotador.</p>	<p>instead of looking for opportunities to practice with new or different classmates.</p> <p>- Little or not frequent participation and risk taking just answering when being asked to or trying not to say much in class.</p> <p><u>2. The language level</u></p> <p>- Reading instead of making dialogs sound natural or dynamic</p> <p>- Answering or speaking using content words without making an effort to use complete structures</p> <p>- Opening their textbooks or trying to do it when listening to conversations in the book. Just listening and not taking notes.</p> <p>- Trying to say so many and complex things to just end up getting stuck or blocked.</p> <p>- When writing, trying to translate their ideas word by word instead of using what they know by simplifying or</p>	<p><u>2. The language level</u></p> <p>- English is viewed as a necessity for their careers, and is not seen as conflicting with their national identity;</p> <p>- Language stress: feelings of dissatisfaction, frustration and guilt from a perceived deficiency in the language.</p> <p>- Feelings of alienation or rejection of native speakers values</p>
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<p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Class participation.</li> <li>- Disposition to learn.</li> <li>- Practice to improve.</li> <li>- Class preparation.</li> <li>- Content review.</li> <li>- Do homework.</li> </ul> <p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tolerance for Ambiguity: preference for the know-how-to of things in class. Preference for having clear concepts before using the language.</li> <li>- Risk-taking: liking for class participation and taking risks.</li> </ul>		<p>adapting their messages.</p> <p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling comfortable doing pair work.</li> <li>- Being at ease with activities and dialogs after being explained and provided with a model.</li> <li>- When activities are interesting for or familiar to them, being more participative and take risks to interact.</li> <li>- Making an effort to interact and share information.</li> </ul> <p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asking the translation of every single new word to feel they understand completely.</li> <li>- After doing exercises, speaking in Spanish instead of working on pronunciation, checking classmate's answers, having a conversation using the situation, etc.</li> <li>- Doing exercises first individually and then in pairs</li> </ul>	<p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking in class and engaging in pair and group work were perceived as enjoyable and beneficial</li> <li>- Error correction was seen as important</li> <li>- Students did not attribute importance to raising comments and questions in class.</li> </ul> <p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive or negative perceptions about the teacher, the classroom and the teaching method</li> <li>- Anxiety (due to the infantile persona necessarily projected by the language learner)</li> </ul>
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		to check their answers	
<b>Anxieties:</b> A subjective state of apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system which occurs at the learner, language, classroom and learning level when a student is expected to perform in a foreign language.			
Semi-structured questionnaire	Rating scale	Teaching log	Theory
<u>1. The learner level</u> - Poor or little understanding (comprehension). - Falling behind. - Little availability to study enough. - Previous negatives attempts with English courses.	<u>English use</u> 4, 18 % - Me preocupa pronunciar mal cuando hablo inglés. 3, 12 % - Me siento nervioso cuando uso inglés. 2, 62 % - Me siento inseguro cuando uso inglés en diálogos o textos escritos. <u>General anxiety to the study of English</u> 3, 06 % - Me preocupa no poder entender lo que se está explicando o haciendo en clase. 2, 06 % - Me estresa presentar quizzes, exámenes, evaluaciones o pruebas	<u>1. The learner level</u> - Ss' participation in front of the class is normally done by a few. - Ss who volunteer are those with more English-related experience or those who have a conviction to do so. - Ss' participation is sometimes low because apparently they don't want to lose face or feel embarrassed or be on the spot. - Feeling overwhelmed by vocabulary or structures, but not preparing class beforehand to prevent or reduce this discomfort.	<u>1. The learner level</u> - When learners compare themselves to others or to the idealized self-images. - A permanent trait: as some people are predisposed to be anxious - self-deprecating thoughts, - fear of failure, - worry over performance procedures - Low self-esteem - Self-perceived low ability levels - Students' fear of being incorrect in front of their peers - Students' concerns over how mistakes are perceived in the language class
<u>2. The language level</u> - Doing listening exercises.		<u>2. The language level</u> - Insecurity and	<u>2. The language level</u> - Speaking - Listening - Pronunciation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Speaking</li> <li>- Slow mechanization of grammar.</li> <li>- Constantly studying new vocabulary.</li> <li>- Mispronunciation.</li> <li>- Nervousness and insecurity to use English.</li> </ul> <p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Speaking / having conversations (making oneself understood).</li> <li>- Being mocked by classmates.</li> <li>- The higher level of some classmates.</li> <li>- The teacher's demand.</li> <li>- Negative classmates and teacher's evaluation. (Low frequency)</li> </ul>	<p>1, 87 % - Me incomoda que mis compañeros o profesor me califiquen de manera negativa al hacer actividades o prácticas en clase</p> <p><u>English class anxiety</u></p> <p>3 % - Me siento ansioso(a) cuando el profesor me pide que responda una pregunta o haga un comentario frente a la clase.</p> <p>1, 5 % - Me preocupa que mis compañeros se burlen de mí cuando hablo inglés en clase.</p>	<p>discomfort about the use of classroom expressions when doing pair or group work without teacher's supervision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeling a bit shocked at how fast native speakers speak when watching a video</li> </ul> <p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Freezing and getting stuck when being asked first to answer a question or give an example.</li> <li>- Avoiding approaching the teacher to ask him their questions or to clarify their doubts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grammar</li> <li>- Vocabulary (memorization, spelling)</li> </ul> <p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitating anxiety to work harder.</li> <li>- Debilitating anxiety to avoid class.</li> <li>- A situational trait: a response to a particular situation or act.</li> <li>- Lack of SL group membership</li> <li>- The teacher's role: to correct students constantly, to do most of the talking and teaching, to be like a drill sergeant</li> <li>- The teacher's harsh manner of correcting student errors.</li> <li>- Speaking in the TL in front of the class.</li> <li>- Responding orally and exclusively in the SL.</li> </ul>
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<p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not having fast results (urge to learn).</li> <li>- Making mistakes.</li> <li>- Fear of failure.</li> <li>- Not understanding explanations or activities.</li> <li>- Testing (Low frequency)</li> </ul>		<p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spanish is seen as a way to help people feel OK or to clarify doubts or to confirm understanding.</li> <li>- Spanish as the first resource students have when trying to ask questions, but with the T's encouragement they can ask them with a bit of struggle.</li> <li>- Paying attention to details instead of paying attention to the general picture.</li> <li>- Depending too much on Spanish to understand grammar explanations and the dynamics of class exercises or activities.</li> <li>- When doing improvised dialogs, feeling anxious about peer and group pressure.</li> <li>- Feeling they do not have enough vocabulary.</li> <li>- Being afraid of making mistakes.</li> <li>- Not finding ways to get their ideas across properly</li> </ul>	<p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The competitive nature of L2 learning.</li> <li>- Communication apprehension,</li> <li>- Test anxiety: unfamiliar test tasks, Test formats.</li> <li>- Fear of negative evaluation or social anxiety (the prospect or presence of interpersonal evaluation in real or imagined social settings).</li> </ul>
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		and quickly.	
<b>Motivations:</b> The desire, the interest, the satisfaction, the persistence and the effort that learners have to achieve tasks or reach goals satisfactorily at the learner, language, classroom and learning levels.			
Semi-structured questionnaire	Rating scale	Teaching log	Theory
<u>1. The learner level</u> - One's pleasure/preference. - Personal growth. - Traveling. - Helping one's children. - Being able to interact with varied people. - A work requirement. - Company's support. - One's profession. - Job opportunities. - English as a professional, work, and study aid.	<u>Intrinsic motivation.</u> 3, 81 % - Busco participar en clase porque deseo practicar y mejorar mi inglés. 3, 75 % - Hago ejercicios y actividades adicionales porque quiero tener un mejor progreso. <u>Instrumental motivation.</u> 4, 62 % - Me motiva estudiar inglés porque me ayudará con mi trabajo, mi profesión y mi estudio. 2,75 % - Me motiva aprender inglés para pasar un examen: TOEFL, Michigan, GRE, etc.	<u>1. The learner level</u> - Desire to speak English well. - Desire to do activities in which they can interact with their classmates.	<u>1. The learner level</u> - Expectancy of success or failure - Outcomes (extrinsic/intrinsic rewards) - Needs for achievement: physiological needs, safety and security, belongingness and love, self-esteem and self-perception and self-actualization. - Self-confidence: perceived TL competence and causal attributions (self-attributed or external) and - Self-efficacy: level of effort, degree of persistence, and quality of performance.
<u>2. The language level</u> - Usefulness of English. - Culture. - Today's world/society. - A way to know and understand native	<u>Integrative motivation.</u> 3, 18 % - Me	<u>2. The language level</u> - Desire to have the basics of the language to get a good control when using it. - Desire to continue	<u>2. The language level</u> - Interest in the language based on existing attitudes, experience and background knowledge;

<p>speakers' personality and behaviors.</p> <p>- A way to approach art, literature and education (Low frequency)</p>	<p>motiva estudiar inglés porque me permitirá conocer y entender más a los anglo-parlantes: su manera de ser y hablar.</p>	<p>developing their ability to interact about basic topics such their weekends, their neighborhoods, etc.</p>	<p>- Integrative motivation: a favorable attitude toward the target language community</p> <p>- Instrumental: a functional reason for learning the TL, such as job promotion, or a language requirement.</p>
<p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <p>- Class participation to practice and improve.</p> <p>- Variety / dynamism in class (activities)</p> <p>- Interesting and understandable topics.</p> <p>- The teacher.</p> <p>- The classmates.</p> <p>- Review and prepare for quizzes, exams or final activities.</p>	<p>2, 75 % - Me motiva estudiar inglés porque estoy interesado en el arte, la literatura y la educación de Estados Unidos, Inglaterra y Australia.</p> <p><u>Extrinsic motivation.</u></p> <p>3, 12 % - Preparo o repaso unidades anteriores cuando el profesor lo exige o cuando hay quizzes, exámenes o actividades finales.</p> <p>1, 87 % - Estudio inglés porque es un requisito para mi colegio, universidad o trabajo.</p>	<p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <p>- Talking about one's favorite person seems to be a very interesting, motivating and self-rewarding activity.</p> <p>- Desire to avoid improvisations and dialogs in front of the class, but desire to do their best when asked to.</p>	<p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <p>a. Course-specific components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- interest</li> <li>- relevance</li> <li>- expectancy (anticipatory goal states)</li> </ul> <p>b. Teacher-specific components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- affiliative drive</li> <li>- authority type</li> <li>- modeling, task presentation, feedback</li> </ul> <p>c. Group-specific components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-goal orientation</li> <li>- norm and reward system</li> <li>- group cohesion</li> <li>- classroom goal structure</li> </ul>
<p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <p>- Additional exercises/activities to better progress.</p>		<p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <p>- Desire to speak and interact in class without</p>	<p><u>4. The learning level</u></p> <p>- Learned helplessness (passive,</p>



<p>- International exams (Low frequency)</p>		<p>preparation of what to ask and say to feel at ease and practice more comfortably in class.</p> <p>- Desire to continue being given class time to prepare vocabulary (pronunciation, grammar category, meaning, etc) without doing it out of class.</p> <p>- Desire to do more and different things (activities, other materials, videos, songs, etc) without really internalizing the series elements and the series dynamics (the way the students' book, the workbook, the CD-ROM integrate and the way the exercises and the topics are presented and worked in the Touchstone series).</p>	<p>resigned and pessimistic state that results when success is perceived as beyond the learner or when decision-making and control is entirely in hands of the teacher)</p> <p>- Goal setting: having realistic goals function as immediate regulators of behavior and students who have devised specific and challenging goals persist longer at the learning task.</p> <p>- Equity theory: the learner must believe that the expected results are worth the effort expended.</p>
<p><b>Language learning strategies:</b> Operations, actions, behaviors, techniques learners employ both to facilitate the acquisition, retrieval, storage, recovery or use of new information and to make the learning process easier, faster, more enjoyable, more effective and more self-directed.</p>			
<p>Semi-structured questionnaire</p>	<p>Rating scale</p>	<p>Teaching log and theory</p>	

<p><u>1. The learner level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- review material and vocabulary</li> <li>- Participate in class</li> <li>- Prepare class</li> <li>- Listen to the CD</li> <li>- Practice with one's children</li> <li>- Understand grammar structures</li> </ul>	<p><u>1. The learner level</u></p> <p>4,18 % - Intento mantenerme positivo y relajado frente al aprendizaje del inglés</p> <p>3,93 - Evalúo y reflexiono sobre mi progreso en inglés</p> <p>3,75 % - Repaso lecciones y/o refuerzo temas ya vistos</p>	<p><u>1. The student does it individually</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note-taking</li> <li>- High-lighting</li> <li>- Grouping</li> <li>- Using imagery</li> <li>- Reviewing</li> <li>- Taking risks wisely</li> <li>- Self-monitoring</li> <li>- Using mime and gestures</li> </ul>
<p><u>2. The language level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listen to music and watch TV in English</li> </ul>	<p><u>2. The language level</u></p> <p>3,37 % - Intento utilizar sinónimos, gestos, mímica, ejemplos cuando no se o recuerdo una palabra</p> <p>3,18 % - Trato de encontrar diferencias y/o semejanzas claves entre inglés y español</p>	<p><u>2. English is used as a tool to attain something</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practice (recognizing and using formulas and patterns or recombining them)</li> <li>- avoiding communication partially or totally</li> <li>- Using content words.</li> <li>- Describing or approximating with synonyms or examples</li> </ul>
<p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practice as much as possible</li> <li>- Clearing doubts up</li> <li>- Analyzing charts and exercises</li> </ul>	<p><u>3. The classroom level</u></p> <p>4 % - Le colaboro a mis compañeros de clase con su práctica y los animo en su aprendizaje</p> <p>3,87 % - Pido ayuda a mi profesor o compañero con palabras o estructuras olvidadas o desconocidas</p> <p>3,25 % - Comparto</p>	<p><u>3. The classroom allows this to happen</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Substituting</li> <li>- Clarification</li> <li>- Avoiding communication partially or totally</li> <li>- Using content words</li> <li>- Translation</li> <li>- Switching to the mother tongue</li> </ul>

	con mis compañeros, amigos y profesor las sensaciones y opiniones que tengo sobre la clase y/o mi rendimiento	
<u>4. The learning level</u> - Look for help out of class - Do skill-based exercises - Practice dialogs with classmates - Use multimedia resources	<u>4. The learning level</u> 4,43 % - Pido aclaraciones o explicaciones cuando no entiendo lo que alguien me está hablando 3,75 % - Repaso lecciones y/o refuerzo temas ya vistos 3,56 % - Me pongo objetivos concretos para trabajar las distintas áreas del inglés: preparar vocabulario, escuchar diálogos, repasar verbos, etc. 3,43 % - Agrupo o asocio palabras o expresiones para memorizarlas	<u>4. The learning level</u> - Accessing L2 materials - Cooperating with peers - Getting help (asking someone for help by hesitating or explicitly asking for the person to provide the missing word or expression in the target language) - Overviewing and linking with already known material

## APPENDIX I

### WORKSHEET ON ANXIETY AND BELIEFS

#### 5 SOCIOAFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH IN A BASIC COURSE AWARENESS ACTIVITY

##### ANXIETY AND BELIEFS



A teacher observed one student for a week. The teacher wrote the student's description. Read the description carefully.

General evasion: This student usually "forgets" the answers. The student shows negligence with the homework and the classroom's activities. The student is constantly late and does not prepare class. The student hardly ever participates voluntarily. The student sometimes can't answer simple questions. The student usually shows small levels of oral production.

Physical actions: The student moves feet or hands nervously. The student plays with hair or clothing very often. The student often looks nervous and stressed. The student shows tension and discomfort.

Other symptoms: The student evades social contact. The student abandons conversations rapidly. The student does not establish eye contact with the teacher or the classmates. The student answers with one word or fragmented sentences. The student uses too much Spanish to transmit ideas. The student hardly ever tries to practice with other classmates. The student sometimes makes aggressive or angry faces.

- What do you think about this student? Is s/he a bad student? Is s/he lazy? Is s/he irresponsible? Is s/he anxious?
- What do you think this student's problem is?



Answer these questions about anxiety-related symptoms.

Symptoms	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never
Do people in your class come late?					
Do people in your class come unprepared for the lesson?					
Do people in your class show small levels of oral production?					
Do people in your class evade class participation?					
Do people in your class feel nervous, insecure or stressed in oral activities?					
Do people in your class abandon conversations rapidly?					
Do people in your class use fragments or words when speaking?					
Do people in your class use Spanish to transmit their ideas?					

Do people in your class feel tedium, apathy or despair?					
Do people in your class volunteer?					

Based on your group's answers, do you think the anxiety level in your class is: **high / medium / normal / low?**



Read the following recommendations to reduce or control anxiety in a language classroom. **Number the group's top five recommendations.** Be ready to explain your options to the class.

- a. \_\_\_ Don't be afraid to make grammatical or pronunciation mistakes.
- b. \_\_\_ Keep a *language journal, diary or notebook* to write your reflections and emotions.
- c. \_\_\_ Review and practice vocabulary and grammar points constantly.
- d. \_\_\_ Learn to relax with respiration, music, visualization, and positive ideas.
- e. \_\_\_ Concentrate on giving ideas with the English you know.
- f. \_\_\_ Make an effort to volunteer and practice in class as often as possible.
- g. \_\_\_ Socialize with your classmates to feel comfortable and familiar with them.
- h. \_\_\_ Exhibit genuine interest and concentration in class.
- i. \_\_\_ Prepare the lesson as much as you can - be ready and informed
- j. \_\_\_ Encourage yourself mentally - be optimistic and positive
- k. \_\_\_ Cooperate and help classmates when they get nervous or can't speak properly.
- l. \_\_\_ Talk with your friends or classmates about your impressions and emotions in class.



Students' ideas and concepts about the learning of English can cause or facilitate anxiety. Read the following list of students' ideas and concepts. Which ideas or concepts can cause or facilitate anxiety? Tick ☒ or ☐. Try to get to a group consensus.

1. \_\_\_ When I speak in English, I need to say exactly what I have in my head.
2. \_\_\_ Mistakes are an indication of a poor or bad level of English.
3. \_\_\_ My classmates and the teacher will have a negative opinion of me if I make grammatical or pronunciation mistakes.
4. \_\_\_ Speaking English can make me feel like a child or a ridiculous person.
5. \_\_\_ I can help my classmates feel comfortable and relaxed with my expressions and my attitude.
6. \_\_\_ It is sufficient if I practice once or twice in class every day.
7. \_\_\_ It is not necessary to volunteer or take risks in class.
8. \_\_\_ I need to be very sure of what I want to say before I can say it.
9. \_\_\_ It is OK to practice with the same classmate(s) every day.
10. \_\_\_ It is important to create a positive and dynamic atmosphere in class.
11. \_\_\_ It is more appropriate not to be silent in class if I am nervous, anxious, or insecure.
12. \_\_\_ My classmates and my teacher can help me feel secure, relaxed, and OK in class.
13. \_\_\_ Speaking English is extremely difficult and stressing.
14. \_\_\_ Mistakes are a normal and natural part of a student's learning process and s/he can learn from them, too.
15. \_\_\_ Lesson topics, book exercises and class activities are easy and I don't really need to prepare them before class.

## APPENDIX J

### WORKSHEET ON SPEAKING AND ORAL ACTIVITIES



Read these two students' opinions about speaking English in class.

Student 1	Student 2
<i>"I don't like to speak in front of the class because it makes me feel nervous and insecure. I usually get blocked; I can't say things fast; I don't pronounce correctly. So, I prefer to listen to my teacher and my classmates... When I'm in a small group or in pairs, I try to speak a little because I don't want to make mistakes. I don't want my classmates to think that I'm a bad student. Additionally, mistakes are terrible."</i>	<i>"I like to speak in front of the class because it is a great opportunity to practice and to learn how to control my nerves. I sometimes get blocked and nervous and I sometimes have problems with pronunciation, but I think it is normal and I know the more I practice, the better my English gets... When I'm in a small group or in a pair, I try to speak as much as possible because that helps me improve. I make mistakes, but I usually learn from them a lot."</i>

- Do you identify with student 1 or student 2? Why?
- What do you think student 1 can do to feel more relaxed and secure?
- How can student 1's classmates and teacher help her/him feel relaxed and secure?

Read this list of situations when you speak English in class:

*You speak English in class when...*

- |                                                    |                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| * You explain vocabulary                           | * You give answers to exercises in your book or workbook            |
| * You answer your teacher or classmates' questions | * You explain what you understand in listening or reading exercises |
| * You practice dialogs in pairs                    | * You do role-plays                                                 |
| * You interview your classmates                    | * You report your interviews or conversations to the class          |
| * You make comments or give opinions               | * You do improvisations                                             |
| * You give presentations                           | * You have free conversations with your classmates and teacher      |

When do you feel relaxed or secure in class? Why?

When do you feel nervous or insecure? Why?

What can you do to reduce your anxiety and insecurity when you speak in class?

How can you help your classmates feel relaxed and secure when they speak in class?

😊 Read the following list of language learning strategies you can use to feel secure, relaxed, and comfortable when you speak English in class.

<b>AFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES</b>	<b>SOCIAL LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use progressive relaxation and rhythmic respiration.</li> <li>2. Use music.</li> <li>3. Use humor.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask for clarification or verification.</li> <li>2. Ask for correction.</li> <li>3. Ask for explanations or examples.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make optimistic affirmations in activities.</li> <li>2. Take intelligent risks.</li> <li>3. Recompense yourself.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cooperate with classmates in exercises and activities.</li> <li>2. Practice with good users of English.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pay attention to your body.</li> <li>2. Use a checklist.</li> <li>3. Write a language learning diary.</li> <li>4. Discuss your feelings with your friends, classmates, or teacher.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand your classmates' culture.</li> <li>2. Pay attention to your classmates' opinions and feelings.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Visualize satisfactory results.</li> <li>2. Use your internal voice.</li> <li>3. Say positive things to yourself.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participate actively in exercises and activities.</li> <li>2. Start and maintaining conversations.</li> <li>3. Use conversation strategies (showing interest, using follow-up questions, making comments, etc).</li> </ol>

How often do you use any of these strategies?

Which strategies do you think are more useful or interesting? Why?

Which strategy (ies) do you think is (are) more difficult or challenging? Why?

Which strategies do you need to use more? Why?

😊 Read this situation. Imagine possible solutions.

Yesterday your teacher announced a role-play about your last vacation. Your teacher recommended checking the vocabulary and the grammatical structures. Today you need to do the role-play in groups of 3. You have 30 minutes to practice and get ready. Your classmates and you are nervous, anxious and insecure. Which affective and social learning strategies can be helpful or useful for the role-play?

Done by Yamith J. Fandiño

## APPENDIX K

### WORKSHEET WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANXIETY AND BELIEFS



#### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE OR CONTROL YOUR ANXIETY

These are some general recommendations you need to take into consideration if you want to reduce or control your anxiety when you speak in your class. Tick (✓) the ones you like most.



- a. ☐ Prepare the lesson as much as you can - be ready and informed
- b. ☐ Review and practice vocabulary and grammar points constantly.
- c. ☐ Do not be afraid to make grammatical or pronunciation mistakes.
- d. ☐ Concentrate on giving ideas with the English you know.
- e. ☐ Make an effort to volunteer and practice in class as often as possible.
- f. ☐ Socialize with your classmates to feel comfortable and familiar with them.
- g. ☐ Exhibit genuine interest and concentration in class.
- h. ☐ Learn to relax with respiration, music, visualization, and positive ideas.
- i. ☐ Encourage yourself mentally - be optimistic and positive
- j. ☐ Cooperate and help classmates when they get nervous or can't speak properly.
- k. ☐ Keep a *language journal, diary or notebook* to write your reflections and emotions.
- l. ☐ Talk with your friends or classmates about your impressions and emotions in class.



#### GOOD OR POSITIVE OPINIONS FOR YOUR ENGLISH CLASS

These are some good or positive opinions you need to have in your English classes to facilitate your learning process. Underline (\_\_\_\_) the ones you think are more important.



- 1) I can express myself socially, emotionally and intellectually if I use different opportunities to speak English in class.
- 2) Speaking English is simple and easy when I am prepared and I feel confident.
- 3) Topics, exercises and activities are productive and effective if I am familiar and confident with them.
- 4) My mistakes are a normal and natural part of my learning progress and I can learn from them.
- 5) My classmates and the teacher will respect and help me with my difficulties in my learning process.
- 6) My classmates and my teacher can help me feel secure, relaxed, and comfortable in class.
- 7) I can help my classmates feel comfortable and relaxed with my expressions and my attitude.
- 8) I need to make an effort to speak even if I feel nervous, anxious, or insecure.
- 9) I do not need to be 100% sure of what I want to say before I say it.
- 10) I need to adapt and simplify what I have in my head when I speak in class.



- 11) I need to practice as often as possible in class every day.
- 12) I need to volunteer or take risks in class every day.
- 13) I need to be open and friendly with all my classmates so we can all learn successfully.
- 14) I need to help create a positive and dynamic atmosphere in class.
- 15) I need to use and help my classmates use social and affective language learning strategies every day.

😊 **SOCIOAFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR YOUR ENGLISH CLASS**

These are some language learning strategies you can implement to

- feel secure, relaxed, and comfortable when you speak English in class.
- create a friendly, respectful and positive class atmosphere in your class.

Identify the group(s) of strategies you want or need to use more.



<b>AFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES</b>	<b>SOCIAL LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use progressive relaxation and rhythmic respiration.</li> <li>2. Use music.</li> <li>3. Use humor.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask for clarification or verification.</li> <li>2. Ask for correction.</li> <li>3. Ask for explanations or examples.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make optimistic affirmations in activities.</li> <li>2. Take intelligent risks.</li> <li>3. Recompense yourself.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cooperate with classmates in exercises and activities.</li> <li>2. Practice with good users of English.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pay attention to your body.</li> <li>2. Use a checklist.</li> <li>3. Write a language learning diary.</li> <li>4. Discuss your feelings with your friends, classmates, or teacher.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand your classmates' culture.</li> <li>2. Pay attention to your classmates' opinions and feelings.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Visualize satisfactory results.</li> <li>2. Use your internal voice.</li> <li>3. Say positive things to yourself.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participate actively in exercises and activities.</li> <li>2. Start and maintain conversations.</li> <li>3. Use conversation strategies (showing interest, using follow-up questions, making comments, etc).</li> </ol>

If you use these recommendations,  
 If you have these opinions,  
 If you implement these strategies,  
 You are on your way to be a great English student  
 And an excellent English speaker.

Yamith J. Fandiño

## APPENDIX L

### FINAL ASSESSMENT FORMAT

**NOMBRE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FECHA:** \_\_\_\_\_

Este formato busca valorar la efectividad o conveniencia de la información y las actividades que se hicieron en este curso sobre factores emotivos y estrategias de aprendizaje socioafectivas. **POR FAVOR COMPLETELO TAN HONESTA Y DETALLADAMENTE COMO PUEDA.**

Clasifique las siguientes actividades según la utilidad que le prestaron para su aprendizaje de inglés.

Creo que _____ fueron...		Bastante útiles	Muy útiles	Más o menos útiles	Algo útiles	Poco Útiles
1	Las discusiones sobre ansiedad y creencias					
2	Las discusiones sobre las estrategias socioafectivas					
3	Las recomendaciones para trabajar las diferentes áreas del inglés (vocabulario, gramática, escucha, escritura, pronunciación, habla, etc.)					
4	Las representaciones frente a la clase					
5	Las charlas con mis compañeros					
6	Las entrevistas a mis compañeros					
7	Los videos					
8	Las canciones					
9	Las presentaciones					
10	Las improvisaciones					

¿Cree usted que su habilidad y confianza para estudiar y hablar inglés mejoraron o se incrementaron a través de las actividades y la información que recibió en este curso sobre afectividad y estrategias de aprendizaje? ¿Por qué?

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¿Cree usted que tiene ahora mejores creencias y actitudes al estudiar y hablar inglés en clase? ¿Por qué?

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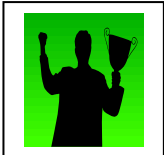
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¿Cree usted que ahora puede y sabe cómo controlar o reducir su ansiedad al hablar inglés en clase? ¿Por qué?

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¿Recomendaría usted que la información que recibió y las actividades que hizo sobre factores afectivos (creencias, actitudes, ansiedad, motivación) y estrategias de aprendizaje socioafectivas se incluyeran como parte normal de una clase de inglés? ¿Por qué?

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¿Tiene usted alguna observación o recomendación para que este proyecto sea más apropiado o efectivo? ¿Cuál(es)?

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**MUCHAS GRACIAS POR SU PARTICIPACIÓN**

*Yamith J. Fandiño*

## APPENDIX M

### The Permission Letter to the Academic Director of the CCA

Bogota, September 20, 2006

Dear Mrs. Josephine Taylor  
Academic Director of the CCA

Thank you so much for your generous support and assistance in the development of my research project about the explicit teaching of socioaffective learning strategies to improve the learning and the speaking development of EFL beginner students.

The purpose of the study is to investigate how EFL teachers should work with affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies for their beginner students to learn English successfully and speak it effectively right from the start. There will be no risks of any kind involved for students or teachers in participating in this study except for the time spent on helping me out with some basic research tools (questionnaires, scales and reflective journals). All data will be kept confidential. Benefits for the participating students and teachers include an increasing awareness of strategy instruction and use and knowledge of a richer strategy repertoire.

The total time spent on this study will be about 3 or 4 months. In return to your generous support and assistance in getting the data, it will be my honor to offer a one- to three-hour workshop for teachers who are interested in affective factors, socioaffective language learning strategies and strategy instruction for beginner students. I will also share with you, the teachers, and the students the results and findings of the study, which will provide a clear strategies instruction of beginner students in our institution. This report will be available once the data is collected and analyzed, probably in January 2007.

Please let me know if you have any questions or any concerns. Again, my most sincere appreciation to your time and help.

Best wishes,  
Yamith José Fandiño,  
Master's degree Candidate  
University of La Salle

## APPENDIX N

### The Participation Letter to Colleagues

Bogota, September 20, 2006

Dear Colleague

Thank you so much for your generous support and assistance in the development of my research project about the explicit teaching of socioaffective learning strategies to improve the learning and the speaking development of EFL beginner students.

The purpose of the study is to investigate how EFL teachers should work with affective factors and socioaffective language learning strategies for their beginner students to learn English successfully and speak it effectively right from the start. There will be no risks of any kind involved for you in participating in this study except for the time spent on giving me your insight into some chapters from my dissertation and the analysis of the data collected from my research tools (questionnaires, scales and reflective journals).

The total time spent on this study will be about 3 or 4 months. In return to your generous support and assistance in doing this research project, it will be my honor to include you in the acknowledgements section of my dissertation. I will also share with you the results and findings of my study, which will provide a clear strategies instruction of beginner students in our institution. This report will be available once the data is collected and analyzed, probably in January 2007.

Please let me know if you have any questions or any concerns. Again, my most sincere appreciation to your time and help.

Best wishes,  
Yamith José Fandiño,  
Master's degree Candidate  
University of La Salle

APPENDIX O  
SAMPLE OF A VALIDATION GROUP LETTER

Bogota, October 10, 2006

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

I agree to participate in the research project about the explicit teaching of socioaffective learning strategies to improve the learning and the speaking development of EFL beginner students carried out by Yamith Jose Fandiño. I acknowledge what my duties in participating in the project are.

Cordially yours,

Sandra Patricia Serrano

Adult English Program Supervisor

Fundación para la promoción y difusión del Inglés “Teachers”

APPENDIX P

VALIDATION GROUP

**KATYA TINOCO**

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**THE EXPLICIT TEACHING OF SOCIOAFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING  
STRATEGIES IN A BEGINNER EFL COURSE**

**VALIDATION**

After having read the discussion about the findings in Yamith Fandiño's study, I consider I could not agree with him more with the conclusions he came to. In order to support my ideas, I will make a generally comment on the aspects that I have also seen happening in my classes and regarding the learner, the language, the learning and the classroom and I will make some other comments of my own which I have been the result of observation and analysis.

As learners, I agree that students always come with preconceived ideas about learning English, and this implies having specific attitudes that play a very crucial role in the learning process. Even though from the very beginning students have a clear idea of what studying English at the Centro Colombo Americano means, there is definitely a contradiction between what they know they are supposed to do and what they actually do. Under this premise, their general belief is to favour receptive skills over the productive ones in order to avoid the apprehension and discomfort the latter ones cause. In fact, what students are accustomed to doing with English is reading and listening to it, so they are already familiar with a series of language learning strategies, which have become the ones they perfectly manage and feel more comfortable with. Needless to say, the teacher's and the student's role is clearly identified as an active and passive one respectively. Teachers are expected to guide reading and listening activities by telling them what to read/listen to before carrying out some comprehension activities, which are also proposed/prepared, by the instructor.

The importance of production is what students preach all over the place, but it is not what they actually can do in the classroom. Production also means active involvement in the learning process, and even though students acknowledge it, it rarely happens on a regular basis. As Mr. Fandiño states it, I have also seen that students do not consider English a tool to communicate but solely as a subject of study, which has rules to follow. Taking risks and experimenting with the language is something students do not feel motivated to do because their motivation is mainly instrumental. Students usually do not know how to upgrade their practice with the language because the use of language learning strategies

happens at a very basic level (only for receptive skills). I would add, then, that in initial stages, students have not seen the importance of developing their English language ego, which would enable them to articulate different views about the learning process when facing language, communication and learning demands.

The dynamics of the class and the rapport amongst students is also an influencing factor in the learning process, especially in initial stages. I have seen that peer-pressure usually places either high or very low demands on students. Here I have found another contradiction: Whether or not students get along with classmates implies that they feel the group/class will hinder or facilitate their process. However, there is usually very little interest in interacting with peers because of lack of self-confidence mainly. Likewise, class-related feelings towards materials, the instructor and his/her methodology also make students more likely to fit in and perform more successfully.

Finally, the triangulation he makes explicitly states the importance of devoting quite enough time to helping students see the importance of taking some action in their learning process by getting familiar with, developing, and implementing different socioaffective language learning strategies to become successful language learners. I really hope that the materials designed and implemented can be later be used to help our beginner students at the Centro Colombo Americano improve their use of English.

**SANDRA SERRANO**

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**THE EXPLICIT TEACHING OF SOCIOAFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING  
STRATEGIES IN A BEGINNER EFL COURSE**

**VALIDATION**

After Reading Yamith's summary of his findings, I can no less than say that I can picture myself and my students through his experience, observations and conclusions. There is no doubt that the majority of students consider that learning English or a second language will make a difference in their lives. For some of them, it will be at a professional level, for others at a personal level, and for others it will be the mere satisfaction of achieving a new goal.

Nevertheless, the fact that they know that their lives will be affected some how, it does not mean that it is enough motivation and strength to get started on the right foot and therefore, to go the whole way. Those students, who have a clear objective of why they are learning the second language, realize that it requires more than just attending class. Throughout my experience teaching, I have seen many students succeed, others have not succeeded in their attempt and others have come back. No matter what group they belong to, I feel they are all seeking for guidance, not only to learn all the new information that they



are given but also to be able to purposefully use that information. I remember that my mom used to say that she was good at grammar but was not able to say a word. This is similar to many students' situation.

Nowadays, things have changed because both students and teachers have realized that in order to learn better a language it is necessary to establish a cooperative environment. What I mean by cooperative is that both students and teachers be conscious that each one plays an active and important role in the whole process. That it is important to take a small or big step forward the whole way. It is, as Yamith states in his summary, necessary to address important aspects such as "...anxiety, beliefs, attitudes, and the effective use of socioaffective strategies to solve learning and communication difficulties...".

I relate to Yamith's proposal and consider that it would be the ideal to do with each group of students that we can get a hold of. Unfortunately, I personally believe that there is a drawback. In a certain way to be the most effective possible, we would need to transform each of our classes in small research groups in order to design the ideal environment for each one. On the one hand, we do not have the time or resources to do so, and on the other students sometimes change from month to month. The most realistic would be to apply some generalities to all groups regarding time and floating population.

## APPENDIX Q

### SUGGESTIONS, STRATEGIES AND POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES FROM THEORY

#### **BELIEFS**

Bassano (1986) offers teachers six steps towards dealing with student beliefs:

- become aware of students' past classroom experiences and their assumptions about language learning;
- build students' confidence;
- begin where the students are and move slowly;
- show them achievement;
- allow for free choice as much as possible; and
- become aware of the students' interests and concerns, their goals and objectives.

Dörnyei (2001) believes that in order to rectify students' erroneous assumptions they:

- need to develop an informed understanding of the nature of second language acquisition and reasonable criteria for progress;
- should be made aware of the fact that the mastery of a second or foreign language can be achieved in a number of different ways, using diverse strategies; and
- should discover for themselves the methods and techniques by which they learn best.

#### **ATTITUDES**

Shrader (2003) suggests some activities and principles to promote attitude change as well as learner empowerment.

- Ask students to talk about what they know. As an example, have students tell about their own families or work, where they choose what about their family or work might be interesting for people to know.
- Value what the students have to say, and encourage an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Don't attack students' ideas, but encourage them to take them deeper and find out more.
- Set up a meaning negotiation based class, with an emphasis on student-initiated question asking (rather than the much more common pattern of teacher-initiated questioning). Don't talk at the students, ignoring their needs and ideas. This disempowers.
- Emphasize the uniqueness of their experiences, and the contribution that it can make to the community. Even negative experiences can be looked on in this way.)

Morgan (1993, p. 73) suggests that four aspects of classroom persuasion should be considered in attempting to change attitudes:

- learning content should require active learner involvement;
- the classroom environment should be one of "change or novelty";
- students need to struggle with complex material and reach their own conclusions; and
- students should become aware of their attitudes toward language and culture.

Language teacher should follow some of these recommendations to overcome negative attitudes or to create positive attitudes (See Karen's DeBord's attitude change at [www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/nnfr/adult\\_lrn.htm](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/nnfr/adult_lrn.htm)):

A. Try to PINPOINT what is causing the negative attitude. Is the negative attitude:

- Toward the instructor?,
- Toward the subject or learning situation?,
- Toward themselves as learners?, or
- Toward their expectancy for success in the learning activity.

B. To overcome attitudes towards the instructor:

- Share something of value with your learners: an experience or anecdote, something about self, self-disclosure; your involvement in the subject matter; share yourself and your individual attention.
- Display a concrete indication of your cooperative intention to help students to learn: your availability, flexibleness; and your special resources (websites, copies, etc).
- Reflect language, perspective and attitude of language learner: establish rapport, reflect speech; strive for a feeling of "connectedness".
- Give rationale for assignments: don't give busywork and be direct and concise.

C. To overcome negative attitudes towards the subject:

- Eliminate or minimize any negative conditions surrounding the subject; things that frighten or stress learners could cause avoidant behavior, fear, humiliation, and boredom.
- Ensure successful learning: vary instructional mode, avoid interlearner competition (self esteem at stake), set clear standards of learning, break down the course into small units for mastery, and use formative evaluation.
- Make the first experience as positive as possible; safe, successful, interesting.
- Positively confront mistaken beliefs: "You seem somewhat discouraged, could you tell me what...", "Just tell yourself this is practice. Mistakes are expected", "When you start to feel discouraged, let's talk about it and consider possible solutions".
- Pair negative learners with other enthusiastic learners (enthusiasm is contagious); work towards a goal cooperatively; use peer models when possible.

D. Overcoming attitudes towards themselves as learners:

- Positively confront the possibly erroneous beliefs, expectations, and assumptions that may underlie their negative attitude about themselves.
- Help each student identify their strengths and weaknesses so that they can set goals. Provide informative feedback regarding progress toward the goals.
- Help students make statements about how well they are doing to lead them to self-confidence.
- Give learners some opportunities to initiate and direct their own learning. The learners must believe that they are the primary cause for new learning and they must feel independent of the instructor.
- Help students seek others with whom to compare their abilities, opinions, and emotions. Affiliation and approval can result in direct anxiety reduction by the social acceptance and the mere presence of others.

E. Overcoming attitudes towards learning activities:

- Relate learning to students' interests and needs in life: work, study, personal growth, etc.
- Use humor liberally and frequently because people love to laugh, humor is an attitude, and laugh at oneself and with others helps reduce tension.
- Use examples, stories helps with clarification, comprehension keep stories imaginative, unpredictable, and interesting.
- Selectively use questions: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation questions.
- Avoid pressure to "think" a long time about questions. Students resent intimidation.
- Avoid frequent evaluative comments (Good, Excellent). Rather "Now I see how you understand it" or "Well if so, that means..."

## **ANXIETY**

David E. Shaffer (2006)

- Examine the thoughts that cause the fear.
- Learn how to relax.
- Know what you want to say.
- Concentrate on the message rather than on the people.
- Become familiar with you audience.
- Get to know the instructor better.
- Avoid sitting in the rear of the classroom.
- Gain experience to build confidence.

### **Suggestions**

- Exhibit genuine concern for your students and their language learning.
- Provide a warm, reassuring classroom atmosphere.
- Provide students with a maximum of speaking time in a non-threatening environment.

- Incorporate into the lesson classroom activities that indirectly get the student to think about their own anxiety, the cause of it, and possible ways of alleviating it.
- To create a more relaxed and comfortable classroom atmosphere, song activities may be introduced into the lesson.

Renée Von Wörde (2003)

- create a low stress, friendly and supportive learning environment;
- foster a proactive role on the part of the students themselves to create an atmosphere of group solidarity and support;
- be sensitive to students' fears and insecurities and help them to confront those fears;
- use gentle or non-threatening methods of error correction and offer words of encouragement;
- make judicious use of purposeful group work or collaborative activities;
- use relevant and interesting topics for class discussions and exercises;
- consider decreasing the amount of new material to be covered in one semester;
- consider ways to layer and reinforce the material in an attempt to aid acquisition and retention;
- give written directions for homework assignments;
- speak more slowly or consider using English to clarify key points or give specific directions;
- attend to the learning styles or preferences of the students; and
- hear and appreciate the voices of students for valuable insights, ideas and suggestions.

## **MOTIVATION**

Dörnyei (1998, p. 131) suggests "Ten Commandments for Motivating Language Learners"

- Set a personal example with your own behavior.
- Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
- Present the task properly.
- Develop a good relationship with the learners.
- Increase the learner's linguistic self-confidence.
- Make the language classes interesting.
- Promote learner autonomy.
- Personalize the learning process.
- Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
- Familiarize learners with the target language culture.

Oxford & Shearin (1996:139) also offer Practical Suggestions for Teachers:

1. Teachers can identify why students are studying the new language. Teachers can find out actual motivations (motivation survey). Information on motivation

can be passed on to the next class in a portfolio. Teachers can determine which parts of L2 learning are especially valuable for the students.

2. Teachers can help shape students' beliefs about success and failure in L2 learning. Students can learn to have realistic but challenging goals. Teachers can learn to accept diversity in the way students establish and meet their goals, based on differences in learning styles.

3. Teachers can help students improve motivation by showing that L2 learning can be an exciting mental challenge, a career enhancer, a vehicle to cultural awareness and friendship and a key to world peace.

4. Teachers can make the L2 classroom a welcoming, positive place where psychological needs are met and where language anxiety is kept to a minimum.

5. Teachers can urge students to develop their own intrinsic rewards through positive self-talk, guided self-evaluation, and mastery of specific goals, rather than comparison with other students. Teachers can thus promote a sense of greater self-efficacy, increasing motivation to continue learning the L2.

## **ACTIVITIES**

Numerous authors (e.g., Oxford, 1990, Campbell & Ortiz, 1991; Hooper Hansen, 1998; Rinvolucri, 1999; Medgyes, 2002;) have described activities for enhancing L2 learners' cognitive and affective experiences:

- discussion of the ideal language learner,
- cooperative learning activities,
- an 'agony column' (in which learners reply to letters expressing language learning difficulties),
- use of learner anxiety graphs,
- visualization,
- humour,
- cartoon story telling, and
- rhythmic breathing exercises.

Teacher-initiated

humour, music, visualization, and relaxation in the classroom

Student-regulated

Self-talk, risk-taking, and monitoring

## **HOW TO WORK WITH AFFECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS**

Leng (2002)

Assessing learners' affective characteristics:

- an on-going process

- constantly interacting with the learners prior to, during and after instruction.

Draw affective characteristics informally:

- non-confrontational conversations,
- diaries,
- incidental encounters,
- one-to-one chit-chats,
- social gatherings
- interacting with colleagues who know the learners.
- extracurricular activities,
- peer groups,
- field trips and outings

Some formal approaches:

- administering a simple questionnaire,
- group therapy,
- discussion in support groups,
- counseling sessions
- instructional activities using videos, games, role playing and simulations to determine the learners' levels of commitment to the affective objectives.
- sharing of success stories,
- conversational pieces,
- news highlights,
- meeting with actual role models,
- case studies
- autobiographies
- testimonies from invited speakers to depict the desirable choices of affective characteristics.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH TO TEACHING AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES**

First three levels in Krathwohl's taxonomy of affective objectives:

1. Receiving: aware and attending to what surrounds the learners and their willingness to take heed of the stimuli
2. Responding: respond and show interest by participating and asking some questions
3. Valuing: accept and believe by debating over the issue or making a personal stand on certain value systems

Language teachers can describe the desired affective changes in the form of instructional objectives.

From these objectives, lessons can be designed to include:

- what to teach,
- when and how to teach it,
- methods or techniques to adopt and
- the forms of assessment to implement in order to measure the extent of the desired affective changes

## **A NON-THREATENING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Finch (2002)

Language teachers can:

- develop a stress-free climate;
- develop peer-support networks;
- promote self-confidence without focusing on competence or performance;
- examine hidden agendas (our own and those of the students);
- offer unconditional trust, inspiring confidence, motivation and independence;
- reflect on our assumptions;
- reflect on counseling skills and management of affect;
- reflect a holistic, affective, student-centered view of language learning;
- act as learning resources.

## **CONDITIONS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING**

Rogers (1951)

Conditions that facilitate learning:

- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere which encourages people to be active.
- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere that facilitates the individual's discovery of the personal meaning of ideas.
- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere that emphasizes the uniquely personal and subjective nature of learning.
- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere in which difference is good and desirable.
- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere that consistently recognizes the right to make mistakes.
- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere that tolerates ambiguity.
- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere in which evaluation is a cooperative process with emphasis on self-evaluation.
- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere which encourages openness of self rather than concealment of self.
- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere in which people are encouraged to trust in themselves as well as in external sources.
- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere in which people feel they are respected.



- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere in which people feel they are accepted.
- Learning is facilitated in an atmosphere which permits confrontation.
- The most effective teacher creates conditions by which he loses the teaching function.

## **FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR STRATEGIES TRAINING**

Wenden (1991)

Principle	Description
Informed	Strategy training should be informed. The purpose of the training should be made explicit and its value brought to the students' attention.
Self-regulation	Students should be trained how to regulate or oversee the use of the strategy, i.e. when it is appropriate to use it; the difficulties they have implementing it; and its effectiveness.
Contextualized	Strategies should be contextualized. Training should be in the context of the subject matter content and/or skill for which it is appropriate. It should be directed to specific language learning problems related to the learners' experience.
Interactive	Strategy training should be interactive. According to this mode of training, learners are not told what to do and then left on their own to practice. Rather, until they evidence some ability to regulate their use of the strategy, teachers are expected to continue to work with them.
Diagnosis	The content of the training should be based on the actual proficiency of the learners. Therefore, at the outset of any strategy training, information on which strategies students use and how well they use them should be collected.

## **EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT LEARNING/TEACHING STRATEGIES**

Stern (1992)

Type of strategies	Description and examples
A) The explicit teaching strategy	
1. Metacognitive counseling techniques	Advice to learners during class. Admonitions, encouragement, hints and specific suggestions on how learn more efficiently, respond to correction, and apply what has been studied.

2. Guided cognitive learning techniques	“Observation, conceptualization, explanation, mnemonic devices, rule discovery, relational thinking, trial and error, explicit practice, and monitoring.” (1992: 336)
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## APPROACHES TO TEACHING STRATEGIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Brown (2001)

Approach	Examples/ goals / techniques
Teach strategies through interactive techniques	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lower inhibitions</li> <li>2. Encourage risk-taking.</li> <li>3. Build self-confidence.</li> <li>4. Develop intrinsic motivation.</li> <li>5. Engage in cooperative learning.</li> <li>6. Use right-brain processes.</li> <li>7. Promote ambiguity tolerance.</li> <li>8. Practice intuition.</li> <li>9. Process error feedback.</li> <li>10. Set personal goals”</li> </ol>
Use compensatory techniques to overcome cognitive style problems or weaknesses	<p>“1. Low tolerance of ambiguity: brainstorming, retelling, role-play, paraphrasing, finding synonyms, skimming, jigsaw techniques to overcome.</p> <p>2. Excessive impulsiveness: making inferences, syntactic or semantic clue searches, scanning, inductive rule generalization.</p> <p>3. Excessive reflectiveness/caution: small-group techniques, role-play, brainstorming, fluency techniques.</p> <p>4. Too much right-brain dominance: syntactic or semantic clue searches, scanning, proofreading, categorizing, information-gap activities.</p> <p>5. Too much left-brain dominance: integrative language techniques, fluency technique, retelling, skimming.”</p>
Administer a strategy	Introduce a self-checklist for learner styles and/or

inventory	strategies inventory in the classroom, such as the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). Use the inventory to raise awareness of strategies, base assignments on, and as a reference for strategies to teach
Make use of impromptu teacher- initiated advice	Pass on the 'tricks of the trade' which helped you with your own language learning (e.g. using flashcards, reading, drawing pictures, etc).

## **AN ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE TO LEARNING**

Chou (2002)

- a learning situation that has a low affective filter (Krashen, 1987) whereby the learners learn to use the language in a non-threatening and fun environment,
- an environment where the teachers and the students are supportive and encouraging (Littlewood, 1995),
- having access to situations wherein students are able to use the language as a natural means of communication (Littlewood, 1995), and
- providing various types of input which are auditory, visual, sensory, verbal and non-verbal in nature and input which is comprehensible or a little beyond the level of the learner (i+1) (Krashen, 1987).

## **HOW TO EASE STUDENTS INTO ORAL PRODUCTION**

Arnold (2003)

A check list of some of the things we can do to make speaking easy might include, among others, the following suggestions:

- Let students begin to speak when they are ready. Then give them a chance to speak – less teacher talk that is obtrusive and unnecessary and more room for student talk. Similarly, let students have time to process what they want to say before having to speak in front of others.
- Aim for an appropriate level of difficulty and risk with speaking activities.
- Don't insist on perfect pronunciation, complete sentences, near native grammar. Leave most accuracy work for other moments.
- After any pre-communicative exercises needed to prepare learners, be sure to focus on real communication tasks, not excuses for language practice.
- Expect learners to be successful. Teachers' expectations can have great influence, positively or negatively, on learners.
- When students speak, listen to the person, not only to the language.