

PhD DISSERTATION

**The use of Language Learning Strategies among adult and senior learners of English
as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the Basque Official Language Schools: A mixed
comparative analysis**

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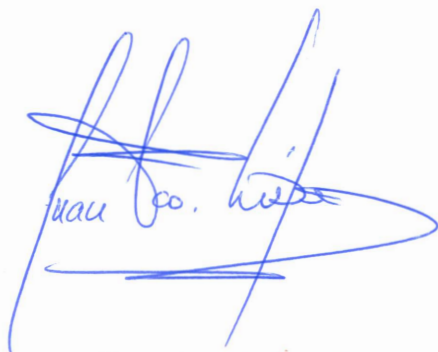
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“Amai eta atei, dana
eman diabelako, onena
merezi debelako”

“A cada cuál según sus
necesidades, de cada cuál
según sus capacidades”
(Anonymous)

ABSTRACT

The present study aims at giving insights into the use of Language Learning Strategies among adult and senior learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) of the Basque Official Language Schools, learning at levels A2 and B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In a moment in which adult and older adult learning of foreign languages is becoming more popular and gaining social recognition, making research addressing this issue was deemed necessary, as there was not much research on the area in the past. A quantitative and qualitative research methodology was employed in this study. 71 participants answered a language learning context questionnaire and 70 among them the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990), as a quantitative questionnaire. Moreover, 7 semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants of the same sample. The analysis of the data revealed that metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used ones. At the same time, there was a pattern of a higher use of strategies in the B2 English level and among high educational level learners, with statistically significant mean differences in the case of cognitive strategies in the B2 level and compensation strategies among high educational level learners. Strategy use remained moderate or medium overall. An intrinsic learning motivation oriented towards self-esteem improvement prevailed among the participants. English learning was generally connected to daily life practical improvements. Certain difficulties associated with vocabulary learning and listening/speaking skills development were also found. Participants generally focused more on reading comprehension and oral communication abilities. It can be stated that the learners engaged in frequent reflections on the learning process. Finally, strategy teaching/training in the classrooms is suggested, as well as taking into account more the needs and problems of older adult learners.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, Second Language Acquisition (SLA), lifelong learning, adult language learning, Official Language Schools (EOI).

RESUMEN

La presente investigación pretende ofrecer información sobre el uso de Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Lenguas entre alumnos adultos y adultos mayores de Inglés como Idioma Extranjero (EFL) de las Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas vascas, los cuales aprenden en los niveles A2 y B2 del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas (MCERL). En un momento en el cual el aprendizaje de lenguas en personas mayores se está volviendo más popular y ganando reconocimiento social, realizar una nueva investigación en relación a este tema se consideró necesario, puesto que no había sido abordado de manera frecuente en el pasado. En el presente estudio, se utilizó una metodología de investigación tanto cuantitativa como cualitativa. 71 participantes contestaron a un cuestionario sobre el contexto de aprendizaje y 70 entre ellos el Inventario de Estrategias para el Aprendizaje de Lenguas (*Strategy Inventory for Language Learning*, en Inglés) (SILL) (Oxford, 1990) como cuestionario cuantitativo. Además, se realizaron 7 entrevistas semi-estructuradas entre participantes de la misma muestra. El análisis de los datos reveló que las estrategias metacognitivas eran las usadas con mayor frecuencia. Al mismo tiempo, se encontró un patrón de mayor frecuencia de uso de estrategias en el nivel de Inglés B2 y entre los alumnos/as de nivel educativo alto, con diferencias de medias estadísticamente significativas en el caso de las estrategias cognitivas en el nivel B2 y entre las estrategias de compensación entre los participantes de nivel educativo alto. En general, el uso de estrategias tuvo una frecuencia media o moderada. Una motivación intrínseca, orientada hacía la mejoría de la autoestima prevaleció entre los participantes. El aprendizaje del inglés estaba generalmente relacionado con la mejoría de cuestiones prácticas en la vida cotidiana. También se encontraron algunas dificultades relacionadas con el aprendizaje de vocabulario y el desarrollo de las habilidades de listening/speaking. Los participantes, en general, se centraron más en la habilidad de comprensión lectora y en el desarrollo de habilidades de comunicación oral. Se puede decir que los alumnos/as realizaban frecuentes reflexiones sobre el proceso de aprendizaje. Finalmente, se recomienda incorporar la enseñanza de estrategias en el aula, así como tener más en cuenta las necesidades y problemas de los aprendientes adultos mayores.

Palabras clave: Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Lenguas, Second Language Acquisition (SLA), aprendizaje durante toda la vida, aprendizaje de idiomas en adultos, Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas (EOI).

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ACRONYMS OF THE STUDY

AO: Age of Onset

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CPH: Critical Period Hypothesis

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EOI: *Escuela Oficial de Idiomas* (in Spanish), Official School of Languages/Official Language Schools

ESL: English as a Second Language

FDH: Fundamental Difference Hypothesis

L1: Native language or mother tongue

L2: Second language or target language

H1, H2: Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2

O1, O2: Objective 1, Objective 2

SILL: Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SLS: Seattle Longitudinal Study

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.INTRODUCTION	16
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	22
2.1. Adulthood and Developmental Psychology.....	22
2.2. Adulthood and Learning.....	30
2.3. Adulthood and Second Language Learning.....	39
2.4. Language Learning Strategies.....	47
2.4.1. Definition and characteristics of Language Learning Strategies.....	48
2.4.2. Ehrman and Oxford's 1990 classification.....	51
2.4.3. Language Learning Strategies and Language Learning self-regulation....	60
2.4.4. Language Learning Strategies and Communicative Competence.....	62
2.4.5. Language Learning Strategies and Language Skills.....	64
2.4.6. Language Learning Strategies and Speaking Language Skills.....	65
2.4.7. Language Learning Strategies and Teaching Methodologies.....	66
2.4.8. Relationship between Language Learning Strategies and other individual variables in Second Language learning.....	67
2.4.9. Language Learning Strategy Instruction.....	74
2.4.10. Oxford's Strategic Self-regulation Model of Language Learning and New Paths of Research on Language Learning Strategies.....	75
2.4.11. Theoretical Considerations on research instruments.....	77
3. METHOD	81
3.1. Objectives.....	81
3.2. Methodological Design.....	82
3.3.Participants.....	82

3.4. Instruments and variables.....	86
3.5. Data collection proceedings.....	88
4. QUALITATIVE FINDINGS.....	90
4.1. Semi-structured interview findings.....	92
4.2. Questionnaire Answer Findings.....	109
5. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS.....	121
5.1. Characteristics of the Quantitative Research Sample.....	121
5.2. Descriptive Statistics.....	122
5.3. Inferential Statistics.....	137
5.4. Hypothesis testing and confirmation.....	154
6. DISCUSSION.....	156
7. CONCLUSIONS.....	174
REFERENCES.....	177
APPENDICES.....	217

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Language Learning Strategies and adult Learning Self-Regulation abilities.....	61
Figure 2. A representation of Oxford's S2R model, emphasizing metastrategies and strategies.....	76
Figure 3. Data distribution Histogram-Total/Overall Strategies.....	124
Figure 4. Data distribution Histogram-Memory Strategies.....	124
Figure 5. Data distribution Histogram-Cognitive Strategies.....	125
Figure 6. Data distribution Histogram-Compensation Strategies.....	126
Figure 7. Data distribution Histogram-Metacognitive Strategies.....	127
Figure 8. Data distribution Histogram-Affective Strategies.....	128
Figure 9. Data distribution Histogram-Social Strategies.....	129
Figure 10. Frequency of strategy use according to strategy category in the complete sample.....	137
Figure 11. Differences in frequency of strategy use according to Age.....	141
Figure 12. Differences in frequency of strategy use according to Gender.....	145
Figure 13. Differences in frequency of strategy use according to English Language Level.....	149
Figure 14. Differences in frequency of strategy use according to Educational Level.....	153

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Chronology on the Major SLA theories regarding Age.....	46
Table 2. Language Learning Strategies according to Ehrman and Oxford's 1990 classification.....	57
Table 3. Characteristics of Interviewed Participants.....	85
Table 4. Language Learning Strategies reported in the semi-structured interviews.....	94
Table 5. English learning strengths and difficulties.....	105
Table 6. English Learning self-regulation and evaluation.....	107
Table 7. Learner perceptions regarding the four Language Skills.....	110
Table 8. Motivational orientations for learning English.....	113
Table 9. Perceptions on age and learning of English.....	117
Table 10. Characteristics of the Research sample according to different variables.....	122
Table 11. Descriptive Statistics for the Overall/Complete Sample.....	123
Table 12. Frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)	132
Table 13. Normality test for the Age variable.....	138
Table 14. Levene test for the Age Variable.....	139
Table 15. Differences in the frequency mean of strategy use according to Age (independent samples t-test).....	140
Table 16. Normality test for the Gender variable.....	142
Table 17. Levene test for the Gender variable.....	143
Table 18. Differences in the frequency mean of strategy use according to Gender (independent samples t-test).....	144
Table 19. Normality test for the English Language Level Variable.....	146
Table 20. Levene test for the English Language Level Variable.....	147
Table 21. Differences in the frequency mean of strategy use according to English Language Level (independent samples t-test).....	148

Table 22. Normality test for the Educational Level Variable.....	150
Table 23. Levene test for the Educational Level Variable.....	151
Table 24. Differences in the frequency mean of strategy use according to Educational Level (independent samples t-test).....	152
Table 25. Hypothesis testing/confirmation.....	154

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Literal Quotes of the Qualitative Findings.....	217
Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Questions.....	247
Appendix C: Translated and original Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), English Learning-context related Questions and Demographic variables.....	251
Appendix D: Informed Consents.....	269
Appendix E: Rebecca Oxford's permission to use the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL).....	275
Appendix F: Frequency of Individual Strategy use according to the Quantitative Variables.....	276
Appendix G: Complete Levene tests for Equality of Variances.....	302

TABLES OF THE APPENDICES

Table A1. Literal Quotes on Language Learning Strategies reported in the semi-structured interviews.....	217
Table A2. English learning strengths and difficulties.....	231
Table A3. English Learning self-regulation and evaluation.....	234
Table A4. Learner perceptions regarding the four Language Skills.....	237
Table A5. Motivational orientations for learning English.....	240
Table A6. Learner perceptions on age and learning English.....	243
Table F1. Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)- Men.....	276
Table F2. Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)-Women.....	280
Table F3. Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)- 35 to 50 years old.....	285
Table F4. Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)- Older than 50.....	289

Table F5. Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)- English Level A2.....	293
Table F6. Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)- English Level B2.....	297
Table G1. Levene test (Age).....	302
Table G2. Levene test (Gender).....	304
Table G3. Levene test (English Language Level).....	306
Table G4. Levene test (Educational Level).....	308

1. INTRODUCTION

This research paper aims to look at the use of Language Learning Strategies by adult and older adult learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning at the Basque Country Official Language Schools. It is presented in the context of the University of Deusto Phd Program in Education. As a starting point to this study, it should be stated that the aspects or factors that contribute to second language learning have long been studied in academia. In fact, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) developed as an area of studies beginning in the 1970s mainly in Anglo-Saxon countries with ideas coming from authors like Chomsky (1986), Krashen (1974) and Dornyei (1990). Over time, linguists and experts in language teaching/learning have been interested in this area of studies. It is an area of knowledge that tries to apply information about language acquisition and linguistics to the area of language teaching/learning, having an important practical and pedagogical sense. English has been one of the most studied languages in this discipline. Since Lenneberg (1967) stated his Critical Period Hypothesis favoring child language learning over adult up to the age in which biological maturation is completed, around puberty, attention has been given to both younger and older SLA. Lenneberg's theory concurs with the popular wisdom idea that "earlier is better in language learning", creating doubts about the possibility of success of older language learning. In contrast to this frequently mentioned idea, authors like Marinova-Todd et al. (2000) and Bialystok (1994) have clearly supported the idea that adult starters can achieve a proficient level of mastery in a new language, if the appropriate circumstances and conditions are met, as for instance, by having an adequate learning context, good levels of motivation, positive affectivity and using varied as well as appropriate learning strategies. Moreover, other authors like Gómez (2016) have explained that Second/Foreign Language Learning can help to improve cognitive, emotional and social aspects in an adult person, helping them to have an active and healthy lifestyle, particularly in the case of older adults. As Language Learning Strategies are considered to be significant tools to improve adult and older adult second language learning (Griffiths, 2010; Lee & Heinz, 2016; Zhang, 2009), understanding their use among adult and older adult learners of EFL at various Basque Official Language Schools has been the primary focus of this study.

In the context of studies regarding the Second Language Acquisition processes of different people, authors like Grofčíková and Határ (2016) and Kliesch et al. (2022) have explained that, although there have recently been some new contributions, there has been, and there still is, a scarcity of articles and studies dealing with the second (foreign) language

learning processes of senior adults. It is an area of studies that is currently beginning to develop and needs new and varied theoretical as well as empirical contributions. In this sense, Hakuta et al. (2003) explained that few studies have investigated the specific second language learning circumstances of learners over 50 years of age. Moreover, authors like Klimova and Pikhart (2020) have also stated that there is still a significant lack of studies addressing the motivations older adult learners have in order to start learning a new language and the social and cognitive benefits this activity may bring to them. This study aims to lessen this gap of knowledge by providing insights into the language learning circumstances of adult and older adult learners of English as Foreign Language (EFL) in the context of the Basque Official Language Schools, particularly regarding their use of Language Learning Strategies as examples of their active language learning habits and tools for learning self-regulation, which are influenced by a variety of issues ranging from learning context and learner beliefs to cognitive, affective, and motivational issues. They are considered to be particularly significant or important in a second language learning process (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Griffiths, 2010; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). Moreover, the importance of the use of self-regulated learning strategies and activities by the language learner has been remarked by the recent revision (2020) of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

According to Lee and Heinz (2016), there is a relevant difference between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) learning contexts. In the former context, English is not the primary means of social communication in society. The learners who are learning a second language are exposed to a limited amount of language input and interaction, usually a few hours a week in the context of a formal instruction classroom with varying degrees of input quantity and quality. In the latter context, English is the primary means of social communication and learners, in many cases, immigrants trying to integrate into the target language community, are usually exposed to abundant language input (it is an immersion context). López Medina (2010) explained that Spanish Official Language Schools (alternatively, Schools of Languages) are set in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning context as English is not the primary means of communication in Spain, but rather a foreign language which has become an international communication language or lingua franca with prestige and importance in different areas such as business and tourism. In this sense, Kuklewicz and King (2018) noted that, until the present day, few studies have reflected the reality of older adult learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and there is a need to have more research regarding this issue.

According to López Medina (2010), the Official Language Schools (Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas, in Spanish) are public and formal education centers within the category “Enseñanzas de Régimen Especial” (Special Education Programmes) particularly oriented to and mainly frequented by adult learners (the minimum age of enrollment being 16) who want to learn or improve their command of one/various modern languages. Different languages like German, English, Spanish, Basque, and French (among others such as Portuguese, Italian, and Japanese) are taught in a range of levels starting from A1 up to C1 (C2, in some cases), according to the Common European Framework for Languages. In fact, the development of the Communicative Competence in the target language among the learners is the main aim of the Official Language Schools. It is understood as the ability to communicate successfully in the target language using the linguistic structures appropriately depending on social context and different communicative situations or needs (López Medina, 2010; EOI de Granada, 2017). The teaching methodology remains relatively traditional, following the Presentation, Practice, Production, (PPP) scheme and the textbook to some extent, but with many activities that have a communicative focus (EOI de Granada, 2017). The non-compulsory nature of these education centers makes them an interesting place to study the different motivations the students may have in order to learn a language. Moreover, they can be appropriate places to study students’ attitudes regarding a language and their preferred ways of learning it (Alonso & Fontecha, 2014). The important diversity of these education centers regarding the learners’ age (with learners of very different ages sharing the learning classroom), gender, social status, cultural and educational level, and so on, also makes them an interesting place to research differences in language acquisition (Hernández et al., 2015). López Medina (2010) also explained that developing sociocultural mediation and understanding is one of the aims of the Official Language Schools, as well as promoting the learners’ autonomy and strategic learning abilities. They promote the presence of native language teachers that give sociolinguistic and sociocultural insights regarding the target language. In the case of the Basque Autonomous Community, there are 15 schools of this type situated respectively in Vitoria-Gasteiz in Araba; in Bilbao, Barakaldo, Basauri, Bermeo, Durango, Getxo, Santurtzi, and Zalla in Bizkaia; and in Donostia-San Sebastián, Eibar, Irún, Ordizia, and Tolosa in Gipuzkoa. This study in particular is set in the Official Language Schools of Donostia-San Sebastián, Vitoria-Gasteiz, and Éibar, as representative samples of the different centers of the Basque Country. Authors such as Alkalde and Uría (2010) have explained that the issue of language learning is important in the Basque context, as this autonomous community has two official languages, Basque and Spanish, with dissimilar levels of language knowledge and use.

Authors like Lee and Heinz (2016) have noted that the use of Language Learning Strategies in an EFL learning context becomes important, as the learners have to optimize the relatively small amount of contact they have with the target language because of the usual scarcity of language input by self-directing or self-regulating their learning process in order to have more learning autonomy and better possible learning outcomes. This means that learners have to select their preferred ways of learning the second (foreign, in this case) language according to their personal objectives as well as find opportunities or means to have more contact with the target language. In fact, authors such as Muñoz (2010) have stated that adults are cognitively developed individuals who can be reflective about a language learning process and self-regulate it to a certain extent.

In the process carried out to complete this research, no previous study or literature has been found that reflected the older adult EFL learners' use of Language Learning Strategies and learning motivation in the Basque Official Language School context. For instance, several studies have been found on EFL learning motivation among the adult learners of Official Language Schools (EOI, in Spanish) in Murcia and La Rioja (Alonso & Fontecha, 2014; Pérez et al., 2015) as well as regarding the use of compensation Language Learning Strategies in an Official Language School in Moratalaz (Madrid) among EFL learners (López Medina, 2010), but so far none regarding the Basque EOI context and adult/older adult EFL learners. At the same time, there are several studies regarding EFL learning among Basque University students (Ardeo, 2012; Etxebarria et al., 2012) and the use of Language Learning Strategies among adults learning the Basque language in specialized centers (Perales & Cenoz, 2002). Moreover, García (2017) explained that, until the present moment, few investigations have approached the issue of age and the second language learners' use of Language Learning Strategies, particularly in the case of older adults. Similarly, Pawlak (2021) explained that, in a moment in which second or foreign language learning is becoming more popular among seniors, there is a need to address the Language Learning Strategy use pattern of older adult learners of second languages as this issue has so far been underexplored. This is the reason why it is of interest to approach the topic of adult and older adult EFL learner use of Language Learning Strategies and the varied aspects that influence their use in the Basque Official Language School context by carrying out new research that addresses this issue.

This study presents a mixed methodological research approach, combining qualitative: a series of semi-structured interviews with adult and older adult language learners about their second language learning motivations, experiences and learning habits and a language learning background questionnaire; and quantitative instruments: SILL, a

questionnaire regarding self-reported Language Learning Strategy use frequency. According to Gorard (2004), combined methods research has been identified as an important element in the improvement of social science and educational research and has often a greater impact. In this sense, authors like Rose (2015) have explained that using mixed research methods can help to have a broader scope and knowledge of complex human phenomena in which many aspects have to be taken into account such as second language learning. Indeed, Pawlak (2021) explained that research addressing learner use of Language Learning Strategies often benefits from mixed research methods. A similar idea was pointed out by Oxford and Amerstorfer (2018). Moreover, from the perspective of Developmental Psychology, this research presents a cross-sectional methodology in which various groups and individuals which are adult and older adult learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have been studied and data collected at a certain point in time (Baltes et al., 2006). A series of pedagogical implications regarding adult language learning and adult language learning in the Basque Official Language School context are derived from the different results of this study.

This research has analyzed the language learning circumstances of several adult and older adult students attending EFL learning lessons at two different language levels: levels A2 and B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). A2 is a starter level in which students are expected to have a basic command of the language. For instance, by following and creating everyday conversations on simple and familiar matters, such as explaining what one likes and dislikes, giving simple personal information, asking for and giving directions, talking about food, and so on. B2 is an upper-intermediate level in which the student is able to understand and produce more complex language, including technical and abstract issues. For example, by giving opinions and using arguments, following interactional language and expressing the emotional significance of particular situations. At this level, it is possible to have a successful communication between a native speaker and a non-native learner of that language (Council of Europe, 2001). The contrast between two very different English proficiency levels has been considered, in the case of this study, as an interesting and appropriate way of analyzing the learner strategies used to improve language acquisition and the differences in their use. Other variables in which language learner strategy use has been compared and contrasted are age, gender, and educational level.

This research paper could be placed within the interactionist theoretical paradigm in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Norris and Ortega (2003) explained that the interactionist paradigm gained relevance in the 1980s and is currently one of the main

approaches to SLA. This paradigm is not focused on the linguistic level of analysis, but rather on the relationship (interaction) between the language learner, his/her cognitive abilities, and the surrounding social and educational context. The relevance of social, affective, as in the theories regarding second language learning motivation, and cognitive, for instance, the Language Learning Strategies theoretical area are factors in SLA which are considered in this research (Norris & Ortega, 2003).

This academic paper presents a general Theoretical Framework first, consisting of four sections. In the first one, the social and psychological development of adults and older adults will be analyzed from the perspective of Developmental Psychology and Life Span theory, taking into account the possible social and cognitive benefits that second language learning can bring to them. In the second section, the issue of adulthood and learning will be developed. In the third one, the issue of the influence of biological/chronological age on second language learning will be explained. Finally, in the fourth section, the issue of Language Learning Strategies, which is the main focus of this study, will be developed. After the Theoretical Framework, the main hypothesis and objectives of the study will be explained as well as the characteristics of the sample and research methodology. Then, the original results of the study will be presented, distinguishing between qualitative findings and quantitative results, followed by a discussion of the main findings. Finally, some conclusions will be provided remarking the main findings of the study as well as the pedagogical recommendations/implications derived from it and its limitations and possible future research topics.

This study wants to bear in mind the important relationship between language and society. Language is, above all, a communication instrument for a social context (Pérez et al., 2015). This research wants to be helpful in giving insights into the use of Language Learning Strategies by adult and older adult language learners learning EFL in the Basque Official Language School context and the different variables and circumstances that influence their use. In a moment in which second language learning is gaining relevance and social recognition among seniors, it is of interest to approach this topic in a deep way to gain more knowledge about the second/foreign language learning processes of adults and older adults.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There has long been speculation about whether adults are able to learn a second language successfully. As was explained in the introduction, there is a typical popular idea that earlier is better in language learning. However, this does not necessarily need to be true. Adulthood is an important moment of life in which many new skills and abilities are acquired and developed and it can be an era of important changes. This could include learning a second (foreign) language like English and even achieving a proficient level, if the right conditions and circumstances are met, including a tailored use of different Language Learning Strategies.

The first three sections of the present theoretical framework focus on adulthood development, learning, and second language learning. To begin with, it presents a general perspective on what being an adult means according to different definitions and a mention of major psychological developmental theories. Afterwards, it gives the perspective of developmental psychology, particularly, the one coming from Life Span Theory, regarding the social and cognitive development of adults and older adults and explains the concept of active adulthood as well as the benefits second language learning can bring to adult development. Then, it will present the major traits or characteristics of adult learning, following what the theory of Andragogy mentions about it. Furthermore, it will examine the issue of adulthood and Second Language Acquisition (SLA), including a critique of the controversial Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH)¹. Finally, the final fourth section of this theoretical chapter develops the concept of Language Learning Strategies, which is the main focus of this study.

2.1. Adulthood and Developmental Psychology

Some years ago, Knowles et al. (2005) explained in their work on adult education what being an adult means regarding four aspects or areas of life: biological, legal, social, and psychological. Biologically, being an adult is related to maturity and the ability to reproduce. Legally, it is associated with the time in which a human being can legally enjoy certain rights or freedoms and has to fulfill certain obligations. It is usually placed around the age of 18 or 21 in most countries. Socially, it is related to the time in which certain roles are assumed in society, such as parenting or working in different areas. Finally, psychologically,

¹ Certain parts of the first three sections of this theoretical framework were published in a theoretical review article written by the author of this study (Arenas, 2024). Both the article and the theoretical framework of the thesis were elaborated simultaneously.

adulthood is reached when a person becomes fully responsible for his or her own life, including what one decides to learn.

As stated by Martínez (2006), Developmental Psychology studies all the changes and transformations of thought, conducts, and attitudes that occur during the different eras of human life. Overton (2010) mentioned the fact that perception, memory, thinking, language, affect, motivation, and consciousness are universal psychological processes, which are characteristic of the human species as a whole. Overton sees the development process of a human being as a unity in which biological and sociocultural influences are intertwined. Psychological processes are influenced by both factors. The person emerges as a result of those influences and also coordinates them by engaging in the self-regulation of cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and motivational processes. In a similar way, Baltes et al. (2006) described development as a process of selective adaptation.

Addressing the issue of social and psychological development during adulthood, Bee and Bjorklund (1996) identified the different stages or eras of adult life. They distinguished between young adulthood (18-25 years of age), early adulthood (25-40), middle adulthood (40-65), late adulthood (65-75) and very late adulthood (those over 75). Each stage has its own characteristics, problems, and challenges. It is important to bear in mind that this classification of the stages of adult life is one of the many that actually exist. There is not a consensus in the literature regarding this aspect. Some support a classification based on chronological age like this one, while others associate different life stages to taking part in various social roles or having certain psychological/biological traits. These authors explained that there are two important clocks in someone's lifetime: the social and the biological one. The former has to do with fulfillment of social roles such as friendships, work obligations, family and children, among others. The latter deals with the issue of failing health conditions and physical impairments. Young and early adulthood are heavily influenced by the social clock while late adulthood and, especially, very late adulthood are notably influenced by the biological clock with fewer, and usually, less important social roles being completed. Middle adulthood is placed in an intermediate position, with a balance between both clocks. This period is seen as a transition period in human life, with an usual stabilization of life circumstances. This allows for greater individualization of the human being and is also a common period to try new things in life. According to Hechhausen (2001), for many, midlife tends to be the last chance to fulfill ambitious goals and challenges. Later adulthood is usually characterized by a certain degree of disengagement from certain social roles or activities. The older adult may concentrate more on close friends or family, that is, those

social relationships which are emotionally more relevant, and which are known as practicing selection, as pointed out by Baltes, 1990.

Older adulthood is seen by Baltes et al. (2006) as an era of life in which the biological and cognitive downturn can be compensated by providing adequate cultural resources: social, psychological, material, economic, and educational. These authors argue that older adulthood is sometimes characterized by a gap between mind and body. Cognitive functions may be optimal, but the physical condition may have deteriorated. Alternatively, physical health can be good, but intelligence and memory may be experiencing a downturn. Therefore, it is important to provide good cultural resources to compensate for this possible gap. However, this is not usually an easy task as the concept of later adulthood is relatively new (demographically and historically) and it still needs important developments. Martinez (2006) also addressed this topic, explaining that older adulthood is sometimes characterized by a certain amount of mental rigidity, understood as the difficulty to change old habits and ways of thinking. This author points out that it is important for older adults to have a certain amount of thought flexibility by having a sense of openness to new experiences and also to have a sense of thought and personality integrity to transcend the biological downturn of the physical body. Baltes et. al (2006) pointed out that senior people tend to think more often about the past than younger adults. They can think about past achievements and successes as a way of creating positive motivation to face present problems and challenges. Moreover, older adults are said to have a better understanding of themselves or their personalities and are usually more reflexive and have more realistic life expectations than younger adults.

Reflecting on the presence of older adults in contemporary societies, Findsen and Formosa (2011) pointed out that demographically the number of older adults is growing in all western societies, as life expectancy is becoming higher. At the same time, retirement ages are becoming higher. Senior citizens still contribute to the workforce on some occasions. Moreover, they can still contribute to society by engaging in social and community activism and are often caretakers within their families. This means that the concerns of older adults are becoming increasingly important in our societies. Mühlig-Versen et al. (2012) explained that it is important to provide resources and opportunities to guarantee that adults and, especially, older adults can still participate actively in society. They can still learn new skills and knowledge so as to apply them to new areas or aspects in life. Furthermore, they stress the fact that it is important to train adults in the development of those new abilities and skills, providing incentives for them to enroll in new learning activities. In the case of Spain, Celdrán and Villar (2013) explained that older adults are not as engaged in educational activities as seniors are in other European countries because older age has been considered

as a period for rest and leisure in this country. Moreover, Spanish grandparents tend to take responsibility for childcare while parents are at work. However, this trend would be slowly changing towards a higher engagement in learning activities, as a new generation of people, which are generally better educated, reach older adulthood.

Regarding older adult engagement in different areas of life, Ruiz and Valdevieso (2002) explain that social psychology states that social perceptions can influence human behavior notably. Older adulthood has traditionally been characterized socially as a period of both a cognitive and a biological decline. A period in which to retreat from life. This has, in some cases, grown into a generalized stereotype of considering older adults as being less capable of doing certain activities. This can harm and lower the self-esteem and self-perception levels of older adults, preventing them from engaging in certain activities or leaving them earlier, and specially, those which are more challenging, like second language learning. Grusec (1994) explained in a review of Bandura's self-efficacy theory that the beliefs a person holds about his or her capabilities regarding a certain task or area are usually influenced by the surrounding social environment. It is important to say that this negative stereotype of considering older adults as being less capable of doing different activities, although still present, is progressively becoming less permanent as social attitudes regarding older adulthood change and the concept of successful or active aging takes importance. Regarding this aspect, Benjamini and Wurn (2014) explained that adults can cope with this negative stereotype by refusing to internalize it and being optimistic about their capabilities. Hess (2014) stated that this would, in turn, lead to greater engagement in different areas including complex cognitive activities. Finally, Andrew (2012) pointed out that society is increasingly expecting older adults to be active, productive, and as independent as possible.

Also addressing the issue of engagement, Parisi (2010) noted that adults who have a higher previous educational attainment level tend to be more eager to engage in new complex intellectual, and educational activities. Bryan (1993) pointed out that the socioeconomic status of the learner can also have an impact on the decision of learning during adulthood. Lower income populations are often less present in learning activities. Moreover, Villar and Celdrán (2013) explained that the older an old adult is, the less likely he or she is to participate in a learning activity, especially in formal contexts. Some theories question and want to change those circumstances. According to Ramírez Gómez (2016), Critical Educational Geragogy questions the negative stereotypes that surround learning in older adulthood, stereotypes that affect both teachers and older learners, usually having less ambitious learning goals and more negative attitudes. This theory states that learning is

possible during any life period and calls for older adults to self-question ageist stereotypes and discrimination. Indeed, Villar and Celdrán (2013) explained that, in the case of Spain, older adult learning has an important potential for growth.

Baltes et al. (1993) remarked that the balance between gains and losses, regarding physical, cognitive and social abilities, changes in older adulthood in favor of the latter. There could still be some gains, but losses are more prevalent. The fact that there could still be some gains favors the idea of an active later adulthood. In fact, Greve and Staudinger (2006) defend that most senior individuals are usually able to maintain satisfying levels of functioning, including cognitive functioning, and their basic social networks, which in turn leads to maintaining self-esteem levels and the sense of identity.

As a precursor to the concept of active adulthood, some decades ago Neugarten (1964) pointed out that older adults need to continue doing their typical daily activities as long as they can. They would also need to engage in new activities to compensate for the activities they cease doing because of their age. For instance, it would be important for seniors to try new hobbies and educational activities after retirement from work, in order to stay focused and still have a sense of purpose and challenge in life. According to Lodi-Smith and Roberts (2010), those new activities can define a new sense of identity for the older adult. Insisting on the same idea, Baltes (1990) argued that new resources and skills can be acquired in older adulthood, particularly those regarding the accumulation of experience and wisdom. The process of disengagement, which is understood as retiring progressively from various social roles and responsibilities, can be overcome by engaging in new contexts or activities. Research has shown that it is important to maintain both high quality and quantity social relationships in order to have a healthy life in old age (Fratiglioni et al., 2004). Moreover, Narushima et al. (2018) explained that lifelong learning courses can improve an older adult's sense of belonging to a community. In a similar manner, Baltes (1990) argued that adults can use optimization strategies to reduce or avoid the impact of loss in their lives, for example, focusing on maintaining a certain level of cognitive and physical skills to avoid atrophy of those skills. For instance, reading the newspaper regularly, doing crossroads or engaging in various fitness activities to sustain physical and cognitive skills. A reserve capacity would allow the older adult, once training intervention is provided, to maintain those capabilities or even restore previous levels of functioning in the case of loss which is known as having an ability for resilience (Fratiglioni et al., 2004). Finally, compensating for certain difficulties associated with biological decline is also common, for example, wearing glasses for sight difficulties or an earphone for hearing difficulties. Regarding all these aspects, it can be said that engaging in learning a new language in a formal context could be considered as

starting a new cognitive task or activity in a socially diverse and active environment, that is, one that provides new opportunities for socialization. In fact, some authors, although it remains a disputed statement, like Pot et al. (2019) claim that older adults tend to approach second language learning with socialization, enjoyment and time fulfillment goals rather than with specific language achievement goals.

Continuing with the topic of older adult engagement in language learning, Słowik-Krogulec (2019) explained that the motivations of older adults in order to learn a new language rarely include passing exams or tests to have official certificates of achievement or achieving a very high level in the target language although there are certain exceptions, but rather communicating with foreign friends or relatives which are, in many cases, their children's spouses or grandchildren born abroad, understanding the language in order to read books or watch movies, understanding the presence of the foreign language in their societies or everyday lives, browse the internet, and engage in socializing with other people by engaging in a brain stimulating activity. Moreover, authors like Pikhart et al. (2021) have explained that being able to communicate effectively while traveling to a foreign country is also a frequent source of motivation in the case of older adults learning a second language.

The language learning classroom can also be a space for intergenerational learning, as learners of different ages share the learning experience and try to understand each other better. Newman and Hatton-yeo (2008) explain that the young can benefit from the wisdom and life experience of the older learners while the elderly can benefit from the insights the younger learners can give them about the novelties of the contemporary world, particularly, regarding the new technologies and new social insights. However, authors like Bryan (1993) explain that some older adults may feel uncomfortable about "competing" with younger adults, as they may feel that their younger counterparts are faster and more able learners. In this sense, Ramirez Gómez (2016) pointed out the possibility of creating specific language learning classrooms according to different age groups, especially regarding older adults and their needs.

Intelligence and cognitive abilities are central to a complex learning process such as language learning. Regarding those abilities, Bee and Bjorklund (1996) stress the fact that, according to longitudinal studies, intellectual abilities usually peak around the age of 30. However, they continue with remarkable stability even after middle adulthood, in the case of healthy individuals. Only roughly after the age of 75 there seems to be a relevant decline in general, which accelerates after the age of 80, principally, short-term memory-related abilities seem to be affected. This could harm the ability to learn a new language at a very

old age, that is, when someone is over 80. Schaie (2010) also considers that intellectual abilities tend to remain stable until the sixth or seventh decade of life. It is important to bear in mind that this trend would be possible as long as the adult person remains in healthy conditions. For instance, cognitive decline can happen earlier and is usually very relevant in the case of people who suffer from Alzheimer's disease or dementia (Bee & Bjorklund, 1996).

Also focusing on this issue, Kemper (2006) stated that adults over 75 tend to have a cognitive slowing, that is, a slowing of their processing speed and some difficulties with their working memory. This would make their reaction to stimuli slower, and thus, slowing down their language comprehension and production and may create some difficulties with new vocabulary retrieval. However, Hertzog et al. (2008) remarked that there is an important interindividual variability in cognitive ability among older adults, with some of them performing as well as or even better than younger adults while others showing marked decline. In the case of intelligence development during adulthood, it is important to say that there are relevant cohort or generational, cultural, and individual context-related differences (Schaie, 2010). However, Schaie (2010) found relatively important intellectual decreases after age 60 in some of the subjects studied in the Seattle Longitudinal Study (SLS). Those decreases became more general and remarkable after age 74. At the same time, as stated by Cox (2013), older adults tend to have more relevant declines in declarative memory (facts, data) than in procedural memory, which is related to learning certain behaviors and how to do particular tasks.

Later adulthood is usually seen as a period of intellectual decline. This vision comes from a neurobiological perspective of intelligence. However, other visions have emerged with time. The Life Span Theory of development sees human intelligence as something heavily dependent on both neurobiological and sociocultural factors. According to Baltes et al. (2006), there are two types of human intelligence or cognition. Mechanical or fluid cognition, which includes working memory, attention, spatial orientation, adequate, and rapid response to stimuli etc., and which is guided by neurobiological forces. It tends to decline with higher ages, particularly in older adulthood. Pragmatic or crystalized cognition, which includes professional skills and domain-specific expertise, writing skills, verbal knowledge as well as having wisdom or knowledge about the self and the meaning of life, in contrast, is guided by cultural and educational knowledge which is socially transmitted and already crystallized and can remain stable or even increase during later adulthood. Only after the age of 80 can some aspects of pragmatic intelligence show signs of decline, influenced by a marked decline of mechanical cognition abilities, especially, when they fall below the levels needed

for functionality. It is said that pragmatic intellectual abilities can compensate for a decline in mechanical abilities during later adulthood.

Also addressing the issue of intelligence development during adulthood, the Seattle Longitudinal Study (Schaie, 2010) has shown that cognitive interventions of various kinds can help an older adult who has decreased his/her intelligence levels with advancing age retain previous levels, at least in some cases. Moreover, providing or having an intellectually stimulating and complex environment is said to reduce the risks of cognitive decline. For instance, Park et al. (2014) found that engaging in a cognitively demanding novel task in a sustained way was beneficial for the memory during old age, and especially, for episodic and semantic memory. This means that it is worth trying new cognitive activities like language learning even during later adulthood. In fact, second language learning has been proposed as a possible cognitive intervention during adulthood and older adulthood (Antoniou et al., 2013). For instance, Bialystok et al. (2016) found out that second language learning during adulthood can delay the onset of cognitive decline in later life by 4.5 years. In a similar manner, Klimova and Pikhart (2020) found in a systematic review of articles regarding this issue that second language learning tends to help in either maintaining or even increasing cognitive functions during any life period. Antoniou et al. (2013) suggested that foreign language learning can be especially valuable for general cognitive improvement as it engages a large brain network consisting of both executive functions and memory abilities. They also pointed out the beneficial aspects of bilingualism in order to reduce and delay cognitive decline and as a way to prevent the development of dementia. Regarding language abilities, Bak et al. (2014) explained that foreign language learning contributes to improving native language verbal fluency and reading levels. Swain (2013) explained that cognitive impairment in older adults may be caused by a lack of appropriate language use and that active language use, among other things, speaking about personal experiences and answering questions, could foster cognitive abilities and create a positive affectivity. Following the same idea, environmental and cognitive stimulation is said to produce new neurons in different regions of the brain even in late life. Moreover, avoiding isolation by means of having a rich and varied social environment, as can be a socially active lifestyle with an important number of social networks, can improve both cognitive abilities and overall health well-being in the adult person (Fratiglioni et al., 2004). In fact, high quality and quantity social relationships are associated with lower levels of anxiety and stress which are necessary to internalize learning processes better (Fratiglioni et al., 2004).

Regarding another important aspect of adult development, Ruiz and Valdevieso (2002) point out that aging is a process of progressive differentiation. This means that there is a greater interindividual variability as human beings get older. Diversity of interests, professions, personalities, knowledge, intellectual performance, and cultural background. is more important in adulthood and later adulthood than in previous life stages. This is consistent with the idea of greater individual differences in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) during adulthood. Differences between individuals seem to be more remarkable during this life stage when talking about the use of Language Learning Strategies, proficiency level, or motivation (Birdsong & Mollis, 2001). Regarding this issue, Greve and Staudinger (2006) explained that having high levels of developmental interindividual variability is a characteristic of contemporary western societies. In a similar way, Dominicé (1996) explained that human biographies are becoming increasingly individualized and complex in contemporary societies, becoming more autonomous and self-willed.

All this information gives the idea that adulthood is a moment in which life continues its development process, with many changes occurring. Those changes usually represent the major landmarks of someone's lifetime. Adulthood is the moment in which a human being becomes individualized, developing his/her own personality and autonomous way of living. Furthermore, both new skills and knowledge are acquired during this life stage. In the case of older adults, the loss in biological-physical and cognitive resources can be compensated by providing help and cultural resources. Learning processes become important for that matter. As Gómez (2016) explained, Second/Foreign Language Learning can help to improve cognitive, emotional, and social aspects in an adult person.

2.2. Adulthood and Learning

The literature has addressed the issue of adulthood and learning on considerable occasions. For instance, Martínez (2006) explained that adults can become competent learners. However, they usually need more time and practice than younger learners. This could be due to a lack of sufficient or adequate previous education and a general cognitive deceleration. They generally benefit from methods in which they can decide by themselves the speed of learning and the speed of response to various stimuli. Tukiainen (2003) remarked the importance of being patient with adult learners, as the speed of learning tends to decrease with age, but its depth tends to increase. Schaie (2005) insisted on the idea of adults being competent learners saying: "According to longitudinal studies, most normal, healthy adults can be effective learners well into old age". (p.37). In a similar way,

Wlodkowski (2008) stated: "There is evidence that the brains of adults in their seventies and eighties continue to produce new neurons for cognition" (p. 86).

As can be seen, Life Span Theory considers older adulthood as a period in which new skills and knowledge can be acquired. The Nairobi conference on adult education (as cited in Vargas et al., 2016), among other aspects, established that an adult can progress and improve during their whole lifespan, contributing to both personal and social development. Buiza et al. (2008) also explained that there is a general consensus about the potential adults have to learn during their whole lifespan. Lifelong learning is a concept related to this issue. It is seen not only as a way of avoiding cognitive obsolescence in a society based on knowledge, but also as an effective tool to contribute to social, economic, and cultural development of different human beings during their whole lifespan (Martinez, 2006). Dominicé (1996) explained in a similar way that continuing education becomes important to adapt a person's skills to the rapidly changing social, economic, and cultural circumstances of contemporary life. Moreover, the UNESCO (2000) remarks the high potential of learning as adding value and meaning to human life as well as being a tool for personal empowerment by helping to improve someone's opportunities in life. Similarly, the United Nations remarked in 1983 that education must be considered a basic human right and that it must be made available to senior citizens without discrimination. Regarding the importance of learning for adults, Cabeza et al. (2018) explained that taking part in learning activities during young and middle adulthood can increase cognitive reserve capacities in old age. Ihle et. al (2015) similarly noted that those people with lower educational levels during middle adulthood can still create cognitive reserve capacities for old age by engaging in cognitively demanding leisure activities. Finally, according to Baschiera and Marcinkiewicz (2016), the European Council established in 2006 that being able to learn and use foreign languages to face a globalized, multilingual, and multicultural context is one of the key competences of lifelong learning. This idea has recently been reinforced by European institutions, testifying to its importance (European Commission, 2019). Moreover, English is a language particularly associated with the idea of gaining cultural capital and social prestige in today's globalized world (Bourdieu, 1977).

Once it has been explained that adults can learn new skills and concepts it is important to know which are the most convenient ways in which they can learn. With this consideration in mind, Finn (2011) cites the theory of Andragogy, first explained by Knowles in 1980. It was defined by him as the "art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles, 1989, p. 38). Its relevance has been considerable in adult education and learning over the

last few decades. It consists of six basic principles or assumptions (the final two were added later on, in the early 1990s):

1. Adults tend to be more self-directed and autonomous in their learning process, which is a fact that favors learning self-regulation.
2. Adults accumulate important life experiences that can be used in their learning activities. They tend to connect new to past knowledge.
3. The social and professional roles completed by the adult learner influence the expectations he or she has in the learning process.
4. Adults change their perspective from the future application of the learned knowledge to immediacy of application. Applicability to their real life context becomes important.
5. Adults tend to be learning voluntarily and, therefore, are motivated to learn.
6. Adults need to know the reasons/importance for learning something.

The relationship between teacher and student becomes more horizontal than vertical in the andragogical model. This means that the teacher is not only a mere transmitter of knowledge as may be in the traditional pedagogical model, but rather a facilitator of the learning process. It acts as an active figure that interacts with the learner, providing help and resources. Those resources could be used as tools for self-directed learning outside the classroom. Moreover, the teacher has to be open to the learner's experience and knowledge. This means that the teacher may actually learn some knowledge coming from the students or that, at least, he or she has to be open about it. All this means that Andragogy is conceived as learner-centered education, in contrast with a teacher-centered pedagogy (Conner, 2004).

Several criticisms have been made to the andragogical model of adult education over time. Among them, the fact that it is a theory based on assumptions rather than empirical evidence has been the most prominent one (Ostrowska, 2014). Other criticisms have focused on the fact that it is based on a generical individual learner, without referring to the social context in which learning takes place. Moreover, Andragogy is considered to be too centered around the western values and ways of learning, without taking other cultures into account (Ostrowska, 2014). However, and despite the criticisms, Andragogy is currently still considered to be the most relevant and influential approach to adult education (Ostrowska, 2014).

Following with the characteristics of adult learning, Keinan (1996) explained that adult learners often return to school in transition periods of their lives and after experiencing some

triggering events such as loss of a job or a loved one, moving to a new place, the need of fulfilling an empty life, and so on. Adult learners generally tend to be people who thought they had learned enough, only to realize afterwards that more was desired or required as, for instance, by retaking a past interest. Ruiz Calatrava (2009) explained that adults usually learn to improve professional opportunities or to overcome personal frustrations and deficiencies. Although they are usually learning voluntarily, they may resist changing or renouncing their previously fixed ideas and values, as they give importance to stability. Ruiz Calatrava (2009) also pointed out that, in case learning methods and contents are changed, adults need to know the reason/s behind it. In a similar way, Alexander and Garner (1989) stated that moving adults from old thinking/acting routines to new ones is difficult and takes time. Adults need to see the effectiveness of the new routines in order to change. They are conscious about having limited time frames with some of them having family and work obligations to fulfill and usually establish specific objectives for the learning process. Adult learners may be impatient in some cases. This means that they may drop the learning process if they cannot clearly see its purpose or sense.

Hess (2014) argued that, especially, older adults tend to be selective while approaching a new task or activity. This means that they value the possible benefits the activity may bring to them and discard the activities they do not consider or perceive as beneficial or personally relevant. Regarding this aspect, Ennis et al. (2013) noted that having adequate motivation becomes increasingly important in order to start a new task during older age. Particularly, they noted the relevance of intrinsic motivation understood as the inner drive and enjoyment to take on a particular task, by having a sense of challenge and interest. In this sense, Mora and Abad (2016) pointed out that older adult foreign language learners tend to approach language learning activities to augment their self-esteem and self-satisfaction levels. Similarly, Teimouri et al. (2022) noted that, as human beings age, they tend to show more grit. That is, they tend to become more focused on achieving long-term goals and perseverating to achieve those goals. In this sense, Oxford and Khajavy (2021) remarked on the importance of grit for L2 learning. In the case of adult language learners, Cozma (2015) explained that adults can sustain their learning motivation levels during prolonged periods of time, ensuring the persistence of learning efforts, as long as their learning goals remain clear and they can see a path to fulfill their objectives. In fact, Ehrman and Oxford (1995) explained that, for motivation to remain strong, language learners need to see a match between the learning outcomes and the efforts made during the learning process. Wlodkowski (2008) explained that, in the case of adults, a lack of interest in the contents and materials of a learning process can hinder the capacity to process information. In the same way, Bryan (1993) explained that adults expect the contents of a

learning process to match their objectives and needs, increasing their motivation levels if that is the case. Indeed, McGilivry (2021) explained that older adults remember information better if they perceive it as important or relevant and interesting. In this sense, Mora et al. (2018) point out that older adults tend to use strategies related to metamotivation. This means that they tend to be aware of the reasons they have for learning a particular subject and keep those reasons in mind during the learning activities. Finally, Dominicé (1996) argued that the social and cultural context in which previous learning has taken place influences notably the mindset and values of the adult learner.

Focusing on the issue of adulthood and learning, Muñoz (2010) stated that formal explicit instruction can be processed better by adolescents and, specially, adult learners who are cognitively more developed or mature and can be more conscious as well as more reflective about a learning process, having higher levels of abstract and formal thinking as well as higher learning self-regulation abilities. Following this idea, Bialystok (1994) said that adults can make higher order associations and generalizations or abstractions in comparison to younger learners, being able to understand complex subjects and concepts. Harmer (1991) explained that adults can focus attention on a task for longer periods of time than children do, although this ability tends to decline again in older adulthood. According to Schleppegrell (1987), adult learners are better with and rely more on long-term memory than on short-term memory (working memory). They learn best by making connections between previously acquired and new knowledge. Therefore, memory drills and rote memorization activities are not effective with them. In this sense, Kurdziel et al. (2017) explain that adults usually have more difficulties retrieving new vocabulary as their working memory abilities tend to decline. However, they could still learn an important number of new words provided that they are presented in an adequate context, one that facilitates learning. In this sense, authors such as Eguz (2019) explained that it is necessary to be cautious about this issue, as some older adults may exaggerate their perceived memory problems. Moreover, Schleppegrell (1987) also suggested not to focus excessively on error correction and avoiding too fast or too competitive tasks in the case of adult learners, especially, regarding older adults. At the same time, Liu and Wen (2010) explained that repetition of certain structures, ideas, and concepts may be necessary in the case of older adults. Similarly, authors such as Osle (2020) found out that older adults learning a foreign language tend to have difficulties with listening and speaking abilities because of a deceleration of the processing speed as well as with timed exercises, phonetic coding, and new vocabulary retrieval. In this sense, Koutska (2024) explained that older adults' reaction times tend to be slower, but they have vast life and educational experience that can help in their abilities for communication and understanding of certain complex concepts. This author explained that

adults and, especially, older adults tend to be internally motivated to learn and, therefore, they can sustain their learning efforts during prolonged periods of time. They may have clearer ideas than younger learners on why they are learning something.

In the case of second language learning, Cyr and Anderson (2011) argued that adults learn best by actively practicing with the language system, using a trial-and-error approach. At the same time, Doughty (2003) explains that formal explicit instruction is usually of a beneficial nature for adult SLA. Principally, it can accelerate the speed and rate of learning. This author insists that implicit knowledge, for example, use of comprehensible input, can also be useful for them in certain cases, but to a lesser extent. In this sense, Van Der Ploeg et al. (2023) found in an experimental study that explicit teaching of target language grammar could be more beneficial for older adults' working memories than the use of implicit learning methods. Indeed, Bley-Vroman (2009) explained in his Fundamental Difference Hypothesis (FDH) that adults need explicit formal instruction and structure in order to learn a new language successfully and accurately, including grammar rule learning, as adults, in general, are more able to understand and apply grammar rules and have higher metalinguistic awareness because of their higher cognitive development. Finally, Kuklewicz and King (2018) found out in their study that older adult second language learners usually prefer to learn in formal language learning classrooms in which they can share the learning experience with other learners and be guided by expert language teachers.

Ruiz Calatrava (2009) explained that emotional aspects are of importance in this age group. For instance, fear of ridicule and frustration are important among some adults, especially among those who have a lower educational level and are older. This circumstance may cause a hesitance to make necessary communicative efforts in the language learning process, mainly, by showing a hesitance to engage in speaking activities. In fact, according to a study by Grasso (2017), listening and speaking skills tend to be particularly related to emotional and anxiety problems among adult language learners. Some of them may have had negative past learning experiences. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to actually help them to have confidence in themselves and try to counteract ageist stereotypes about learning to maintain adults' motivation. Following this idea, emotions are considered by MacIntyre (2002) a powerful element that influences learning motivation and success, even more than attitudes. These may be especially important among adults who have a sophisticated self-image and thought yet cannot express themselves beyond a basic level in the second language they are learning. They may feel in a child-like position, bringing negative and contradictory feelings to themselves. Indeed, Cohen and Norst (1989) explained that language use and sense of identity are closely related. For instance,

Lightbrown and Spada (1993) explained that adults, particularly, the older ones, tend to be worried about making mistakes and they are often embarrassed by their lack of mastery of the new language, sometimes refusing to actively participate in the classroom or to answer questions posted by the teacher. In this sense, Shao et al. (2020) explained that fostering positive emotions and affectivity in the classroom tend to support the process of learning a new language.

Also focusing on the affective aspects of a language learning process, according to Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005), the beliefs that learners hold about the nature of language learning influence this process. For instance, an adult who thinks that younger learners have an advantage for language learning may be less well predisposed for the learning process, possibly lacking the necessary motivation. Cognition and affect are seen by Arnold (2011) as inseparable to the point that affect becomes an integral part of cognition. Moreover, this author stresses that affective problems can severely hinder language acquisition, mentioning Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. In fact, this theory states that the motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety levels the students have can affect their acquisition levels. Indeed, a high affective filter can impede the acquisition of the input. Krashen (1982) criticizes classroom environments in which too much importance is given to correctness and error correction, something that can cause anxiety. Moreover, he says that spoken output cannot be forced upon the students until they feel ready for it. This author explains that it is important to respect the silent period some learners may have and calls for focusing on comprehensible input instead.

Also tackling the issue of emotions and older adult development, Baltes et al. (1993) mention that having a flexible personality and a certain degree of openness to change and having new experiences help dealing with unexpected issues and new challenges during adulthood. Once again, they insist on the idea that during this life stage the adequate management of emotions becomes very important, specially, during older adulthood as tragic events such as the loss of loved ones become more frequent. Finally, Braver et al. (2014) pointed out that older adults tend to approach tasks which are emotionally relevant to them and prefer activities that create a positive affectivity.

The awareness adults have about the nature of their learning process is considered to be an important factor as well. Dawson (2008) stated that metacognition is thinking about thinking. It is related to the management of a person's cognitive abilities and activities. In a similar way, Flavell (1979) described metacognition as the awareness and information individuals have about their own cognition. Sternberg (1986) described the use of

metacognition in learning processes as deciding what to do, figuring out how to do it, and finally revising if the task has been done correctly. Metacognition is related to self-regulation and the autonomy of the learner which is an important attribute of adult learning, according to Andragogy. It is a necessary way to activate the critical thinking and reflective judgment abilities of the learner. Zimmerman (1990) described the self-regulated learner as someone who is aware if he or she possesses a particular skill or not, is able to formulate different learning goals, tries to find new information, new ways of practicing something, regards learning as a controllable process, accepts responsibility for the learning outcomes, engages in self-correction, assesses the learning outcomes, and evaluates the effectiveness of learning methods or strategies. Dawson (2008) states that adults often fail to sufficiently monitor their learning and can benefit from metacognitive training. In this sense, the use of metacognitive strategies is considered to be an appropriate way of engaging in second language learning self-regulation in the case of the adult learner (Lee & Heinz, 2016; Oxford, 2003; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018).

Following this topic, Victory and Lockhart (1995) stated the importance of self-knowledge and metacognitive awareness for the successful language learner. They link those concepts to learner autonomy. However, they warned about the misconceptions a learner can have about the nature of the language learning process. For example, some students erroneously believe that being an extrovert and starting to learn as a child are the only way to achieve success in learning a new language. This is not necessarily true in all cases. Therefore, Victory and Lockhart argue that it is important for the teacher to correct those misconceptions students may have.

Regarding what the teacher can do related to adult language learners, Wlodkowski (2008) explains that it is important for learners to relate their learning process to their daily life experiences, problems, and interests. Therefore, the teacher should encourage class discussions and activities about those aspects. Moreover, the teacher can talk about his/her own life experiences and problems in order to help the learners emotionally relate and empathize with him/her. Furthermore, collaborative learning and group work can be an effective way for the learners to share different experiences and problems with their peers. Adults tend to be very diverse as learners as they have had very different life experiences and can benefit from mutual interaction. In this manner, they can see different perspectives. In this sense, Cozma (2015) explained that adults are generally more disciplined than younger learners and are ready to engage in different kinds of activities in the classroom. Although adults tend to be more self-directed in their learning processes benefitting from methods that stimulate their autonomy or internal locus of control, they usually still need an

external mediation to achieve success. Therefore, the role of the teacher is still considered to be important, understood as a facilitator or helper and coordinator of the learning process rather than a figure that directs all aspects of it (Wlodkowski, 2008). It is important to bear in mind, as Norlund Shaswar and Wedin (2019) explained, that adult learners tend to have more power in regard to the teacher in comparison to primary and secondary school students. Moreover, Oxford (1990) pointed out that the teacher can also engage in direct communication with the learners in the second language learning classroom.

Continuing with the issue of adulthood and learning, Tukiainen (2003) explained that some adaptations have to be made in the classroom in the case of adult learners. For instance, as problems with sight and hearing are common among them, especially in the case of adults who are over 50, it is important to adapt the facilities of the classroom to those needs such as making the screen words larger, increasing the volume of the audios, alternating the use of reading materials with audiovisual ones, presenting information at a slower pace when necessary, having the correct lighting and class distribution, eliminating external noise, and so on. Eguz (2019) pointed out that, in certain cases, language learning classroom materials and books are not adapted for older adult students. Learning topics and activities tend to be oriented towards younger learners. This author explained that it would be important to correct this aspect in classrooms with a majority of senior students, presenting learning materials that are adapted to their realities and needs. Finally, it is important to bear in mind, as Cercone (2008) said, that any adult is an individual shaped by his/her own personal and cultural context. Therefore, it is necessary for the teacher to make some adaptations to each individual learner. This author also suggested that the feelings, beliefs, imagination, memory of past and present experiences, conscious and subconscious mental processes, and the physical body (physiology) of each learner have to be taken into account during the learning activities.

Finally, it is important to mention another theory by Mezirow (1990) which explained that learning can help to change or transform the habits of mind or way of thinking of a human being. Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) points out that a challenging learning process that does not fit into the learner's previous beliefs and perspectives can help to create new ways of thinking and acting. This can help the adult learner to face new situations in life and apply the new knowledge to previously uncharted areas, forging new relationships. Moreover, a meaningful learning process can give sense and purpose to human life. Critical self-reflection by the individual regarding the previous beliefs and attitudes is seen as necessary to initiate a challenging learning process (Kitchenham, 2008). Mezirow (1990) sees adulthood as the moment of life in which a person can challenge and

redefine the belief systems acquired during childhood and adolescence, starting new paths. In this sense, Brown (2000) remarked that learning a new language is an opportunity to open to a different culture as well as to new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.

To sum up, all these theories show that adulthood can be a moment of life in which competent learning takes place, including learning a foreign language. Thus, to be aware of the strategies used in their learning process can be fundamental for the learning of a second/foreign language and motivational for the students. Therefore, taking into account the specificities of senior learners, in general, and each individual learner, in particular, becomes critical in order to sustain successful results.

2.3. Adulthood and Second Language Learning

Once it has been explained that the life journey of an adult can include the development of many diverse facets and activities, including continuous learning and the learning of a second language, another important aspect to consider is whether the chronological/biological age of the learner influences learning a second language in any significant manner. As the present thesis addresses how adults and older adults use different Language Learning Strategies, it is necessary to explain the issue of how learners past a certain age can learn a new language. With the turn of the century, Marinova-Todd et al. (2000) reviewed the major theories regarding adult second language acquisition and their criticism. The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) by Penfield and Roberts (1959) and Lenneberg (1967) states, based on neuropsychological assumptions, that the human brain is very plastic during childhood. This would favor language learning and acquisition during that period. However, this theory states that during puberty the brain is lateralized, becoming more rigid or losing plasticity. This would demonstrate that language learning becomes increasingly difficult as human beings age. Lamendella (1977) was one of the first to criticize this theory, by arguing that early age may be more favorable to language learning, but that it was not something impossible at later ages. He understood it as a *sensitive* period instead of *critical*.

The CPH has been considered as valid in the case of native or L1 acquisition. For example, there are a few rare cases of children growing up in nature without human contact until adulthood or deprived of normalized social contact developing, and who showed limited language abilities afterwards, as in the case of Genie as explained by Curtiss et al. in 1974. Genie was a feral child that was unable to correctly and completely acquire her native

language after she was rescued. However, there are more doubts about the reliability of the Critical Period regarding Second Language Acquisition (SLA). In fact, it is worth explaining that this theory was initially about the post-pubertal development of impaired L1 skills. Only later on was it applied to SLA, in a somewhat controversial manner (Abello-Contesse, 2009; Muñoz, 2012; Yi, 2021). For instance, Krashen et al. (1979) stated that the lateralization of the brain (the left hemisphere is responsible for language use) was already completed by the age of 5, contradicting Lenneberg's claim that it happens around puberty. Moreover, they stated that this lateralization would not prevent further language acquisition, but rather make it deeper and more complex. They stated that both children and adults are capable of acquiring a second language successfully and not only children as the popular belief says. Adults would be better and faster in the early stages of learning as their thought system is more complex and abstract, while children, who afterwards develop a life-long learning process or have frequent contacts with the target language, would have a superior ultimate attainment in the long term. In a similar way, Muñoz and Singleton (2011) suggested that there is a general consensus in the SLA literature regarding the short-term or rate advantage for older learners provided that time and amount of exposure are held constant and the long-term ultimate attainment advantage for younger learners, at least in naturalistic settings.

In 1989, Johnson and Newport support the idea of a critical period in SLA, although not the strong version of it which considers learning a second language as an adult very difficult. They tested a series of Chinese and Korean immigrants who had arrived in the United States with varying ages. In an English grammar test, which consisted in judging whether a particular sentence is grammatically correct or not, and which involved syntax and morphology, the younger students performed significantly better than the older ones, suggesting biological and maturational constraints in language learning. However, there were no major differences of performance in the case of word order, plurals and progressive -ing, suggesting that adult second language learning is not an unachievable goal. The authors also noticed that individual variables may have a greater importance among adult language learners. Finally, they also stressed the importance of variables such as motivation and attitudes towards the target language and its culture.

Following this topic, Birdsong and Molis (2001) replicated the study by Johnson and Newport (1989) using Spanish natives learning English in the United States. The results of the study showed that age of onset was negatively correlated with achievement/performance in the second language. Individual differences were found to be greater as participants age. Related to this issue, some late learners were reported to achieve a near-native level in the second language. The influence of the native language (L1) in the second language

learning/acquisition process was also reported to be significant. The similarities between English and Spanish regarding SVO order, similar word categories, and so on were identified as an explanation of the participants' better results in comparison to Chinese and South Korean natives in Johnson and Newport's 1989 study. The amount of use of the L2 was also considered as an important factor regarding proficiency in this study. In this case, it is an exogenous factor not related to age or native language, but with more use of the L2 predicting better proficiency levels.

In contrast to the previously mentioned theories, some authors point out that the CPH would only be applicable to L2 pronunciation and accent. For example, Young (as cited in Nikolov, 2000) said that native-like pronunciation was not possible to acquire when starting to learn a language after the age of 6. Dollmann et al. (2020) pointed out that foreign accentedness is more remarkable in the case of people having their first contact with a new language after the age of 10. However, this would not impede successfully acquiring other features of the language like grammar, vocabulary or the use of idioms (Young, as cited in Nikolov, 2000). In any case, there are authors that support teaching phonology/phonetics to adults, explaining that they can also be successful in this area (Pennington, as cited in Nikolov, 2000). For instance, Flege (1987) cites various studies in which adults were more accurate than children in reproducing L2 sounds in a controlled or formal learning environment.

Following the same topic, according to a study by Saito (2015), there is an advantage in proficiency for early learners of a second language regarding pronunciation and phonology. Apparently, they can come closer to the native-like model. However, there would be no significant age-related differences in proficiency in other areas of oral/speech production such as fluency and lexicogrammar (vocabulary and grammar) abilities. Regarding phonology, the study supports the existence of either a critical period or a cognitive downturn with increasing age, consistent with general consensus in the literature. The former theory defends that there is a sudden and significant decline in SLA abilities after puberty, that is, the moment in which maturation is completed, while the latter, known as the Cognitive Aging Theory, states that there is a linear decline in SLA abilities as human beings age because of cognitive and biological deterioration constraints. Similarly, Odlin (2003) argued that phonetics and phonology are more eager to cross-linguistic transfer than other areas such as morphology and syntax, for example. This would mean that the native language accent keeps being present while talking in the second language on considerable occasions.

Supporting adult second language learning, Marinova-Todd et al. (2000) argue that adult second language acquisition and learning is perfectly possible, citing various studies like the ones by Hoefnagel Hohle & Snow in the 1970s in which adults are consistently better than children in the early stages of SLA and, particularly, in the development of morphology and syntax. In fact, Cummings (1981) suggested that older learners of a second language tend to be better in linguistic aspects such as morphology and syntax acquisition as well as in the development of literacy-related skills (reading and writing skills). Their higher cognitive maturity and complexity is explained as the reason for this as well as the experience they already have with their L1 skills and their usual higher experience with formal education. Similarly, Ruiz Calatrava (2009) explained that adult learners of a second language usually need written materials and support in their learning process. In this sense, Muñoz and Cadierno (2021) explained that oral target language input can be combined with the use of audiovisual materials and subtitles.

Continuing with this issue, Marinova-Todd et al. (2000) explain that there has been a downplay of the cases of successful adult language learners in various studies, giving more importance to unsuccessful ones. They argue that the problems adults face with SLA are more due to psychological, social, motivational, affective and educational context/environmental factors rather than age-specific biological decline and neurological change issues. Regarding this, they explain that the popular wisdom idea “earlier is better in language learning” can be a demotivating factor for many adults that engage in language learning. For instance, Horwitz (1999) found in her study on student language learning beliefs the overwhelming presence of this belief among different groups of learners, affecting learner motivation and attitudes.

Marinova-Todd et al. (2000) also criticize the CPH theory, arguing that age effects in SLA continue well after puberty and probably continue during the whole lifespan. Language proficiency differences between adults are considered to be more important than between children, suggesting once again the importance of the individual differences in adulthood. They emphasize the fact that some adults, although not the majority of them, are highly proficient in a L2. For example, Birdsong and Molis (2001) noted that around approximately 5% of adult second language learners achieve a native or near-native level. Regarding the issue of social and psychological factors, Schumann (1976) argued that the case of Alberto who was an immigrant man whose L2 English was pidginized and incomplete in adulthood demonstrated that social and psychological distance from the target language and its community can cause an incomplete acquisition.

Following this idea, Abrahamsson and Hyltenstam (2003) point out that adult, or late second language learners, usually attain ultimate proficiency levels which are neither basic nor native-like. These authors suggest that most adult learners are usually placed between those two extremes, without belonging to either of them. They remark that human beings of any age are usually able to acquire large portions of a target language. They also insist upon the idea that there is not a consensus regarding the nature of biological age effects in second language learning. Regarding this aspect, Hinkel (2005) pointed out that scholars often give mutually incompatible and contradictory interpretations. Moreover, this author suggested that CPH in the case of SLA is currently a controversial theory that has both supporters and detractors with the possible exception of the Critical Period for pronunciation, where there seems to be more of a consensus. For instance, Granena and Long (2013) explained that there may be different critical periods or “opportunity windows” for each aspect of language acquisition. As they stated, this period would end around early childhood for pronunciation, a little later for vocabulary and collocation acquisition and around age 15 for morphosyntax. However, this is a disputed claim that has not reached consensus.

According to Abrahamsson and Hyltenstam (2003), alternative explanations to the CPH suggest the relevance of social and psychological factors in second language learning, particularly attitudinal, affective, environmental, and motivational variables. As long as they make a positive contribution, these factors could compensate for a possible linear decline in ultimate attainment levels and biological maturational constraints in the case of the learners with higher ages of onset or start which are adult learners. Having typological similarities between the learner’s native language and the second language that is being learned as adults tend to rely on their L1 in the early stages of SLA, as well as having higher language aptitude or talent, which are also considered to be compensating factors. Regarding language learning talent, DeKeyser (2000) found in his study that the adult learners who had a near-native level in L2 English had higher verbal analytic abilities, were engaged in formal instruction, and used explicit problem-solving mechanisms. Dollmann et. al (2020) also noted that adult language learners can benefit from both high quality and quantity contacts (both input and language use) with L2, particularly, by meeting native speakers. Pfenninger and Singleton (2019) argue that Age of Onset (AO) or start is a relatively weak predictor of Foreign Language (FL) learning outcome. Moreover, they explain that age effects are highly sensitive to learning contexts and socio-affective variables in the case of instructed foreign language learning. In this sense, Language Learning Strategies could become an important tool to overcome adult language learning problems, as long as an adequate use of them is made (Lee & Heinz, 2016; Zheng, 2009). Pfenninger (2020) also discussed the possible advantage bilinguals may have while learning a new language compared to monolinguals.

This author explained that there is ongoing debate regarding this issue, with conflicting views in the literature. More recently, Pfenninger et al. (2023) argued that, alongside cognitive, contextual, and socio-affective factors, age effects in SLA would also interact with variables such as gender, educational level, and socioeconomic status.

Continuing with this issue, Bialystok (1994) argued in favor of adult language learning. This author pointed out that adults can achieve a working ability to communicate in the second language, although they may make some mistakes, earlier than children or adolescents do. As this author stated, children use a relatively small range of vocabulary and grammar while speaking in a second language. In contrast to them, adults would have higher grammatical sensitivity, a higher ability to apply grammar rules deductively, and a better understanding of semantic relations. Similarly, Robinson (2003) stated that adult language learners have higher metacognitive awareness and metalinguistic capacities (an awareness about the nature and functions of the language system) than children, allowing them for greater self-regulation of a language learning process. Abilities that, according to him, adults can clearly bring to a L2 instruction classroom in order to be developed.

In a similar manner, Muñoz (2010) states that there is an important difference between learning a second language in a naturalistic setting and learning it as a foreign language in a formal instruction classroom. Most studies regarding the age factor in SLA have focused on immigrants being immersed in a L2 environment or community in which the target language is the primary means of communication in society. In those studies, early or young learners usually have an advantage over older ones in ultimate attainment proficiency levels in L2. The older ones are usually superior in the first stages of the learning process, known as learning rate. Muñoz argues that in formal instructed learning, such as in Foreign Language Learning classrooms, there is usually insufficient exposure to significant input in the target language. This can harm the learning process of early starters like children who are better with implicit knowledge development than adults. This fact would imply that an “earlier is better” approach cannot be applied to Foreign Language Learning, unless significant, varied and abundant input and interaction opportunities are provided to the younger learners, with immersion programs often being necessary to guarantee this, according to Muñoz (2010). Even in the case of immersion programs, Muñoz (2006) found that learners who had started at age 11 made faster initial progress than those who had started at 4. Moreover, it is necessary for children to continue with a life-long learning process if they want to achieve a good proficiency level in the second language. Muñoz argues that a good command of a second language cannot be guaranteed in children unless their learning effort or substantial contact with the target language is sustained over a

prolonged period of time. In a similar way, Lightbown (2000) remarked the importance of having both substantial and sustained second language exposure to achieve success in any age-range. Indeed, authors like Tukiainen (2003) explained that some facts about a language can be learned rapidly, but the whole process of Second Language Acquisition, understood as the process of mastering a new language, is relatively long. Therefore, the learner should be aware that it is a process that requires both time and effort; specially, in social contexts in which the target language is not the primary means of communication, as in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Regarding this issue, Montrul et al. (2008) explained that the majority of interlanguage grammars of both child and adult second language starters tend to be incomplete compared to natives and fossilize at a certain time. However, authors like Baildon (2018) do not see this circumstance as a problem, as having a reasonably proficient mastery of the second language is considered to be a more realistic and desirable objective for a non-native learner than sounding exactly like a native speaker as long as the learner is able to communicate successfully. The imperfections of the interlanguage are considered to be of lesser importance in this case.

Table 1 summarizes some of the most relevant studies regarding biological age and second language learning/acquisition, pointing to the fact that visions regarding this issue have evolved with time, without reaching a complete consensus in the literature. Early perspectives, such as the ones by Lenneberg (1967), pointed to a difficulty to begin learning a language after puberty. Afterwards, studies such as the one by Johnson and Newport (1989) explained that there is a negative correlation between Age of start and target language achievement. However, with the turn of the century, new theories emerged. These theories related adult second language learner problems to social-psychological issues (Marinova-Todd et al., 2000) as well as to mainly phonetic/pronunciation problems (Young, 2000; Dollman et al., 2020) (See Table 1):

Table 1*Chronology on the Major SLA theories regarding Age*

Dates/Chronology	Major SLA theories and authors on Age
1950s-1960s	Penfield and Roberts (1957) as well as Lenneberg (1967). Ideal age to learn a language ends around puberty (original for L1 acquisition). Critical Period.
Late 1980s	Johnson and Newport (1989) found lower language test scores with higher Ages of Onset (AO).
2000s	<p>Young (2000). Critical Period mainly applicable to the phonetic/pronunciation domain. Ending around age 6.</p> <p>Marinova-Todd et al. (2000). The problems adults face with SLA are more due to contextual, social and psychological factors. They pointed out the relevance of educational context, motivational and affective variables.</p> <p>Hinkel (2005). Lack of consensus in the specialized literature regarding biological age effects in SLA.</p>
2010s-2020s	<p>Saito (2015). There is an advantage for early learners of a second language in the phonetic domain. Dollman et al. (2020) explained that the Critical Period for pronunciation ends around age 10.</p> <p>Pfenninger et al. (2023) insist that, alongside cognitive, affective and contextual variables, other variables such as gender, educational level and socioeconomic status also interact with the age factor.</p>

In short, it could be said that, generally speaking, there is not a single ideal age for Second/Foreign Language learning. Research shows that both older and younger students can achieve a proficient level of mastery in a second language if the appropriate conditions are met. The individual differences of each student, among others, intelligence or cognitive abilities, language aptitude or talent, memory, motivation, affective state, learning styles and strategies used, time and resources devoted to the learning process, and amount of contact with the target language; and teaching/learning methodologies/styles/environments are considered as being as or even more important than age-related issues (Abello-Contesse, 2009). As a matter of fact, as Schleppergrell (1987) mentioned, the doubts about success in the minds of the older language learners and the language teacher could be the greatest obstacles for older second language learning.

As can be seen in the last 3 sections, adulthood is a relevant moment of life in which a human being continues its development process. This includes the acquisition of new abilities or skills and new information/knowledge. The stability of intellectual functions up into old age notably helps in this process. All this can be possible even in older adulthood, although it may be more complicated in certain cases. In fact, processes such as learning a new language can serve as a way of improving cognitive and social functions during this life stage. Adults are able to learn competently in both formally instructed and self-directed learning, benefiting from learning methods in which their own realities and needs are considered. A new learning process can transform the life of an adult, giving new perspectives and helping to create new habits and ways of acting which can be valuable in different areas. Moreover, older age itself does not seem to hinder the ability to learn a new language significantly in most cases. All these aspects mean that second language learning is an achievable challenge during adulthood and later adulthood, contradicting many typical stereotypes and popular ideas. The quality of the learning environments/methods/instruction, motivation/affectivity and learning strategies used seem to be the key to having unsuccessful or successful outcomes. This opens a promising path to study the complex nature of adult and older adult Second Language Acquisition. Precisely, the issue of Language Learning Strategies, which is the main focus of this study, will be developed during the following section.

2.4. Language Learning Strategies

Information on how learners learn a language and what influences their learning process can give important insights to improve both language teaching and learning, according to authors like Cook (2001) and Ehrman et al. (2003). The use of different Language Learning Strategies is one of the important individual difference variables in second language learning, alongside with other general approaches or preferences, such as learning motivation, language aptitude, learning styles, among others. Considered as being particularly significant for second language learning, their use has been linked to language achievement, interest, and research, which has grown significantly since the 1980s until nowadays (Lee, 2010; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). This section includes a series of general definitions on Language Learning Strategies as well as a description of their general characteristics, according to relevant literature on the issue. Then, it will focus on Ehrman and Oxford's 1990 classification of strategies and the relationship that Learning Strategies have with learning self-regulation, the Communicative Competence, different language skills, and different language teaching/learning methodologies. Afterwards, it will explain the major

relationships between Language Learning Strategies and other individual variables that are important in second language learning, for example, motivation and learning styles. Finally, it will comment on the issue of strategy instruction and will explain the most important research techniques within this theoretical area, focusing on the relevant Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire by Oxford (1990), as well as the theoretical foundations for the qualitative instruments used in the present study.

2.4.1. Definition and characteristics of Language Learning Strategies

Language Learning Strategies are defined as a series of specific actions, thoughts, and behaviors used by the students to facilitate the storage, retention, and use of new information while engaging in language learning (Chamot & O'Malley, 1990; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). That is, they help the learner make the learning process easier, faster, more enjoyable, more transferable to new situations, and more effective (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). They are often conscious and intentional techniques chosen and employed by the learner to reach a language learning-related goal (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990) and they relate to what the learners do to improve language learning. According to Tudor (1996), the short-term goal of the use of Language Learning Strategies is to help the learner to accomplish individual learning tasks, while the long-term goal is to improve language proficiency and foster the use of a second language outside the classroom. In a way different from learning styles, which tend to be fixed and are usually difficult to change, the strategies employed can vary considerably depending on the particular task the learner has to fulfill in each moment, denoting their flexibility (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990). They are considered to be goal-oriented (Oxford, 1990) or problem-solving oriented (Renato & McCormick, 1994) and relate to what the learners do in language learning. That is why they are usually defined with a verb in gerund: planning, evaluating, asking, summarizing, and so on. They are generally considered to be transferable between different situations and tasks (Griffiths, 2010; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). Willing (1988) stated that the use of Language Learning Strategies is a way for the learners to internalize and optimize the external language input by transforming it into personal language abilities or skills. Moreover, they are considered as particularly significant and relevant to a second language learning process by Ehrman and Oxford (1990) as well as by Oxford and Amerstorfer (2018). Griffiths (2010) also remarked on their potential for successful second language development. Finally, Hedge (2000) highlighted their importance to allow language learning to continue outside the formal instruction classroom, particularly in the case of adult learners.

According to Nunan (1991), being able to manage the second language learning process in an autonomous or self-regulated way, reflecting about it, and articulating the necessary strategies in order to achieve the learning goals, is an important attribute of successful second language learning. Although Language Learning Strategies are usually considered to be learner-internal and learner-chosen techniques, often, as Abed (2011) noted, they are influenced by learner-external variables such as the role and influence of teachers and peers, the needs of using a particular methodology, cultural issues, educational context, and so on. García and Ruíz (2005) noted that Language Learning Strategies can be directly observable in the case of physically-manifested learning behaviors and techniques, or not, in the case of thoughts and purely mental processes, although they all have a mental basis. Moreover, they explained that Language Learning Strategies can be taught by making the students aware of their existence and usefulness and that they have a far-reaching scope that goes beyond merely cognitive abilities, also including metacognitive, social, and affective aspects. At the same time, both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects related to the second language learning process are present within this concept. Oxford (2003) explained that learning strategies are not intrinsically good or bad, but rather their appropriateness depends on the context in which they are used and how they are employed. In fact, Ehrman et al. (2003) consider that, in order to be useful for learning, Language Learning Strategies have to relate to a particular L2 task, fit the learner's learning style in one way or another, and the learner has to be able to use them effectively as well as create appropriate links or chains between different strategies. Moreover, they also remarked on the idea that less successful learners use strategies in a random and uncontrolled way, while more successful learners use them in a targeted and carefully planned manner. Similarly, Ehrman and Oxford (1995) stated that successful second language learners tend to be aware about the learning strategies they use and why they use them. In the same way, Green and Oxford (1995) report that higher level language learners use a large and varied number of strategies more frequently and more skillfully than lower level learners. The possibility of helping to improve language competence levels is, therefore, another important aspect of Language Learning Strategies.

According to Chen (2014), research regarding language learning strategy use started in the 1970s, as language researchers became more interested in the individual characteristics, usually called individual differences, and learning behaviors or actions of each language learner as important aspects influencing the learning process as well as in the learning process and not only in the more general teaching/learning methodologies or the learning results. Researchers, such as Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975), wanted to know

the traits of successful language learners, including their preferred ways of learning the language. The idea behind it was that those characteristics could be shown and taught to less successful learners in order to benefit from them. Among other aspects, they explained that good language learners tried to find as many opportunities to practice the second language as possible, they had the goal of communicating successfully, revised the language lessons often, paid attention to both language form and meaning, frequently monitored their speech as well as the speech of others, and tried to use the second language as a separate reference system, thinking in the target language. Around the same time, Naiman et al. (1978) found out in a study that language success depends less on an innate language ability and more on constantly involving with the language and making a serious effort in order to learn it.

In the 1980s, authors like Rubin and Thompson (1982) and O'Malley et al. (1985) started to distinguish between strategies used for the mental processing of the target language, including memorization, reasoning, making inferences, and active language manipulation, those used for the management of the language learning process, for instance, planning, goal setting, monitoring and progress evaluation, and those used for active language use and communicative practice, for instance, seeking contact with native speakers or higher proficiency learners to practice and improve the command of the language). In 1990, O'Malley and Chamot classified language strategies regarding their functions. They distinguished between cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies. This led to many different classifications and studies on Language Learning Strategies, without a consensus in the literature, and their use, among which Ehrman and Oxford's classification (1990) became a prominent one owing to its comprehensive nature (Ellis, 1994). It is based on the different psycho-social approaches a learner can have towards second language learning, inspired by Anderson's Cognitive Theory (1985), rooted in cognitive psychology and various information processing theories which explain how learners select and manage information while engaged in learning. In fact, learning strategies influence the way the learner selects, acquires, organizes, and integrates new knowledge. In this sense, they are considered to be important for integrating new knowledge into previous schemata (Salinas, 2010). Ehrman and Oxford's 1990 classification's comprehensive nature and alignment with Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) as a quantitative research instrument are the reasons why it has been chosen in this study. It will now be described in detail below.

2.4.2. Ehrman and Oxford's classification

According to Ehrman & Oxford's 1990 classification, which classifies language strategies regarding their main function, Language Learning Strategies can be divided into direct and indirect. The first group deals with the direct manipulation and processing of the target language and it includes memory, cognitive, as well as compensation strategies. The second group deals with the management or support of what is being learned and its socio-affective aspects, sometimes without using the target language directly, and it includes metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. The former group of strategies would support language learning and use directly by engaging in input transformation and the creation of output, while the latter group would support language learning indirectly by creating practice opportunities, managing the process, and optimizing it, and thus, keeping motivation levels in order to persist in learning and improving cooperation with other people.

Memory strategies are the ones that help store and retrieve new information in one's memory, but without necessarily involving deep processing or understanding of the target language. Most of them are considered to be mnemonic techniques (Sedighi & Zarafshan, 2006). For example, using imagery (drawings, pictures, films) or familiar sounds to link them to concepts or vocabulary; using rhyming, making mental images of a word or of its meaning, grouping words into semantic fields, using keywords; grouping ideas or categories by using flashcards, for instance, creating mental linkages; repeating words or particular structures, for instance, by creating lists of vocabulary; linking physical movements to language commands and verbs, as in Asher's Total Physical Response methodology (1969); reviewing in a structured way, for instance, by revising periodically the learning content, and remembering particular words, phrases or concepts by their placement in a book, classroom site or on a street sign (Green & Oxford, 1995). Using a new word in the context of a sentence or story to understand and retrieve it better with the help of context is also considered to be this kind of strategy (Nemati, 2009). According to Oxford (2003), they are used frequently in initial stages of language learning when students lack vocabulary and grammar structure knowledge in order to learn these, but less often in more advanced levels when they already know basic structures and vocabulary. In this sense, García Herrero and Jiménez Vivas (2014) found that memory strategies were the least frequently employed ones among young adult learners of EFL in a Spanish university context. In a similar way, Nguyen and Godwyll (2010) found in their study of university majors learning English as a Second Language (ESL) in the United States that metacognitive and social strategies were

the most frequently employed ones among them and memory as well as affective strategies the least frequently used ones.

Cognitive strategies, which are also considered to be operational strategies, are described as the ones dealing directly with the active use and manipulation of the language being learned for both production or comprehension and they usually deal with the resolution of specific language tasks. They operate directly on incoming information, for example, creating structure for input and output by summarizing the most important aspects or main ideas of a text, note taking, finding patterns in a language, practicing with the language system, grammar rule learning, thinking in the target language, imitating native speakers and their way of talking, practicing with language sounds, for instance, by transcribing words phonetically, translating and transferring (using L1 as a cue for understanding or using the target language) from one language to another one, analyzing contrastively between two languages, by comparing two different language systems, reading out loud, reading for pleasure, recombining, that is, writing new sentences by placing together known expressions or words, practicing with real-life language materials, whether they are movies, tv shows, digital content, newspapers or magazines, highlighting main ideas or items in a text, for instance, words that belong to the same area, reading a text quickly to understand the most important information or general idea (known as skimming; for instance, by looking at titles or headings, words in bold, the first and last words of a paragraph or looking at pictures), reading a text quickly to find specific details (known as scanning; for instance, by finding a specific word that is considered important and the words that surround it), using resourcing materials such as dictionaries or a language syllabus and creating schemes or mind maps are considered cognitive learning strategies. Analyzing the language is another important cognitive strategy, for instance, by realizing that a mispronunciation can alter the meaning of a word. Deductive and inductive reasoning are also relevant cognitive strategies. For example, the former include checking and applying the previously learned grammatical rules while reading a text while the latter consist in creating or inferring possible rules for the language based on the input received by analyzing it and looking for patterns (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018).

Burry-Stock and Oxford (1995) stated that cognitive strategies are the ones that involve the deep processing and understanding of the target language, whether to transform or synthesize it. They are essentially mental processing strategies that allow long-term retention and structuring of valuable information. That is why, according to Oxford (1996), there are a higher number of cognitive strategy items in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire (a total of 14). According to Oxford (1990), they are

considered as essential in a language learning process and are very popular among many learners at different levels, as they contribute to learner understanding of the target language and the development of personal language skills. For instance, Palacios Martínez (1995) found that the use of cognitive strategies was particularly important among Spanish high school and university level learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Compensation strategies are the ones that help overcome limitations and difficulties in the language learning process and keep a conversation going despite having knowledge gaps. Those limitations may be related to vocabulary, grammar, communicative needs, and so on (Sedighi & Zarafshan, 2006). For example, using synonyms, circumlocution (trying to explain the meaning of unknown words or expressions in order to communicate), paraphrasing, adjusting the message or conversation topic according to language level, using time fillers to maintain the conversations until the precise word or expression is found (such as, using expressions like *I mean* or *you know*), coining words (creating words similar to those in the target language when the exact word is not known, sometimes integrating elements of the learners' native language), using the native language or code switching (alternating between both language systems), breaking down an unknown word into known elements and guessing/inferencing unknown meanings of words or phrases in reading and listening using context and previous knowledge about an issue as a cue. It could be a linguistic context or not, as in the case of body gestures or images or pictures that are placed alongside a text. At the same time, using mimes, facial expressions or gestures, which are part of non-verbal body language, are also common to convey meaning while speaking or to confirm comprehension (Green and Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018).

Recently, Papadopoulou et al. (2018) explained that compensation strategies are most often linked to direct language use and communicative practice and tend to be used more often in lower language levels, when learners lack sufficient knowledge of the target language and need to improve fluency in speaking and writing in order to communicate successfully. Authors like Rubin (1975) have explained that strategies, such as guessing intelligently unknown elements of a language based on context, are a characteristic of good language learners. On the other hand, López Medina (2010) stated that, in some cases, the use of compensation strategies can have negative consequences. For instance, when avoiding communication efforts and topics of discussion partially or totally because of fear of making mistakes, that is, by having an excess of inhibition or by relying to a great extent on non-verbal gestures or using excessively the learner's native language. In the case of a group of B1 level learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in a Spanish Official

School of Languages in Moratalaz (Madrid), López Medina (2010) found out that starter-to-intermediate level learners used an important amount of compensation strategies with notable frequency as a way of compensating their target language knowledge gaps. In this sense, authors like Villanueva and Navarro (1997) have explained that the use of most compensation strategies require having self-confidence and being imaginative.

Metacognitive strategies, also known as strategies for the management of executive control functions or strategies for the management of the language learning process, are explained as the processes of thinking/reflecting about the language learning process, for instance, by writing a language learning diary or classifying information in a personal portfolio; identifying one's own learning style preferences and learning needs; arranging time and space for language learning, for example, by organizing timetables and finding an appropriate and comfortable learning space; finding out information about language learning; planning for learning by understanding the requirements and needs of specific tasks; setting specific goals, for instance, improving certain skills, focusing on fluency instead of accuracy or learning certain grammar structures or vocabulary; organizing learning materials; finding difficulties or problems in language learning; finding particular aspects or areas in which improvement is needed; paying attention to new language input; seeking input and practice opportunities, for instance, by finding native speakers; using selective attention to find specific or the most important aspects of a text; delaying spoken output to focus on listening; monitoring during production or comprehension, such as, self-correction of errors and self-questioning, while the learning activity itself is taking place; and self-assessment to check whether the learning objectives have been fulfilled and where to improve and how once the activity is finished, for example, by using checklists or external blueprints or answer keys (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). Those strategies are usually expected to arouse relationships between previously acquired and new knowledge (Chiquito, 1995). They are considered to be important in fostering learner autonomy (Tajima & Waldhoff, 2010) and self-regulating learning (Wenden, 1998). In fact, Lee and Heinz (2016) explained that in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning contexts the use of metacognitive strategies becomes important in order to plan learning and find more opportunities for target language input as there is usually a scarcity of it. In the Spanish EFL learning context, Risueño et al. (2015) found out that adult learners aspiring to become teachers, learning English in intensive courses, used metacognitive strategies more frequently than other types of strategies. Similarly, García Herrero and Jiménez Vivas (2014) found that metacognitive strategies were the most frequently employed ones among young adult learners of EFL in a Spanish university context.

Authors like Livingston (2003) have explained that metacognition is considered to be a higher order thinking process, enabling the active control of cognitive processes. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) give special emphasis to the metacognitive strategies stating that "students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to plan their learning, monitor their progress, or review their accomplishments and establish future learning directions" (p.8). Cohen and Dornyei (2002) also remarked on the relevance of metacognitive strategies in a language learning process. However, Green and Oxford (1995) explained that they are less frequently used than cognitive strategies among many learners and, in some cases, they are used unconsciously. Particularly, among metacognitive strategies, the use of planning strategies seems to be more present than the use of monitoring and evaluation strategies, error correction, and evaluation being typically considered to be teacher-directed activities by some learners. Finally, Macaro (2006) stated that metacognitive strategies contribute to the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the use of other Language Learning Strategies, for instance, by deciding to select the most appropriate strategies for a particular task, helping in the development of strategy clusters or chains, when various strategies are used at the same time by the language learner, and strategy sequences, which is when a series of strategies are used in a particular order.

Affective learning strategies make learning easier through the management of emotions, attitudes, and motivation (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). Emotional self-regulation, encouraging oneself, using music or laughter for anxiety reduction, giving self-rewards to acknowledge positive performance, valuing one's efforts in positive terms, knowing about one's feelings during the learning process, making efforts to maintain motivation and persist for longer periods of time, taking the risk of making mistakes while using the language, writing a language learning diary to discuss feelings, and sharing affective issues with other learners are considered affective Language Learning Strategies (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). According to Oxford (1992), successful second language learning implies having a certain tolerance of ambiguity, not seeking immediate closure, and taking some moderate risks in order to practice and learn the second language. Having a balanced affectivity, without an excess of anxiety, is seen as necessary to guarantee this. In this sense, Oxford (2003) explained that affective strategies may be important among lower level learners, but their importance tends to lessen as learners achieve a higher proficiency level and usually gain more confidence.

Finally, social strategies are the ones that understand language as a social behavior and involve learning with other people. For example, having contact with native speakers of English to practice the language and empathizing with them, understanding their culture and

way of living. Asking other people (teachers, other students, higher proficiency learners, natives, and so on) for clarification, verification, repetition, practice, help or error correction are also this kind of strategy. Finally, becoming aware of other learners' feelings and concerns (empathizing) during the language learning process is another relevant social strategy (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). They are considered as particularly valid to improve feedback on error correction as well as having greater opportunities to practice the language communicatively, improving listening and speaking skills, increasing cooperation in the classroom, and improving consideration or respect towards the teacher, classmates or native speakers and their culture. Social interactions can also shape a learner's self-esteem and self-confidence levels (Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). In this sense, Tukiainen (2003) explained that social strategies, such as team work, may not be easily accepted by some older students as team cooperation was not very common in the past. Learning was considered to be something to be done individually. Therefore, it would be necessary to encourage this aspect in the classroom to promote cooperation rather than competition, which is considered to be a facilitator in learning. Finally, Lorenzo (2002) explained that social strategies are often used outside of the formal instruction classroom in everyday communication or in informal language practice meetings or encounters. In this sense, Oxford (1990) noted that, in contrast to many cognitive and metacognitive strategies, social strategies are generally observable learning techniques.

Table 2 summarizes and classifies the most relevant Language Learning Strategies, according to Ehrman and Oxford's 1990 classification. It also relates each kind or category of Language Learning Strategy with its characteristics and the language level or stage in which they are more frequently used:

Table 2*Language Learning Strategies according to Ehrman and Oxford's 1990 classification*

Language Learning Strategies (categories according to their function)	Individual Strategies	Characteristics; Language Levels and stages in which they are employed
Memory Strategies (direct)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Linking images to vocabulary ● Linking sounds to vocabulary ● Using flashcards to group ideas or categories ● Creating lists of vocabulary ● Placing new words in the context of a sentence or story to retrieve them better ● Linking verb commands with physical actions ● Acting out new vocabulary words 	Used more frequently in initial stages of language learning in order to build basic grammar structures and vocabulary; less often in more advanced levels (Oxford, 2003).
Cognitive Strategies (direct)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summarizing the main ideas of a text ● Taking notes ● Highlighting the principal aspects of a text ● Analyzing the language ● Analyzing contrastively (comparing two or more language systems) ● Using mind maps ● Practicing with the language system ● Practicing with the sounds of language ● Practicing naturalistically (by having contact with real-life language coming from mass media) ● Recombining language elements ● Using dictionaries, grammar books, language syllabuses ● Translating ● Transferring ● Skimming ● Scanning ● Deductive reasoning 	<p>Considered to be essential in a language learning process and linked to the deep processing of the language (Burry-Stock, 1995; Oxford, 1990).</p> <p>Considered to be important for the development of higher level or academic language skills (as they contribute to the improvement of language form and accuracy) (Chamot, 2004).</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inductive reasoning 	
Compensation Strategies (direct)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guessing unknown words or expressions based on context (whether it is a linguistic context or not) ● Coining words ● Using synonyms or paraphrases ● Using time fillers ● Turning into the native language (code-switching) ● Adjusting the topic or message according to language level ● Using non-verbal mimes or gestures to convey meaning 	Usually more present in lower language levels as a way of overcoming target language gaps and shortcomings and keep communication going as well as improving language fluency (López Medina, 2010; Papadopoulou, 2018).
Metacognitive Strategies (indirect)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishing goals and objectives ● Planning for learning by organizing timetables ● Finding opportunities for language input and practice ● Monitoring language comprehension and production ● Evaluating the learning process (for instance, by using checklists) ● Reflecting about the language learning process (for instance, by keeping notes or writing a language learning diary) 	<p>They are considered to be important to foster learner autonomy (Tajima & Waldhoff, 2010) and learning self-regulation (Wenden, 1998).</p> <p>Their use tends to increase as students enroll in higher level courses or achieve a higher proficiency in the second language (Wu, 2008).</p> <p>Older adults learning EFL in Brazil and Ecuador would prefer their use (García, 2017; Mora et al., 2018).</p> <p>Adults would have an advantage to use support and learning management strategies such as the metacognitive ones because of their higher intellectual development and usual higher experience with formal learning (Macaro, 2001).</p>
Affective Strategies (indirect)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding one's own emotions during language learning ● Giving self-rewards ● Using laughter or music for anxiety reduction. ● Making efforts to maintain motivation and persist in the language learning process ● Taking moderate risks in order to learn and practice the target language ● Discussing the emotions related to the learning process with other people 	They are considered to be important among lower level or starter level language learners in order to manage emotions and sustain motivation. Their importance tends to decrease as students achieve a higher level and gain more confidence regarding the second language (Oxford, 2003).

Social Strategies
(indirect)

- Asking for help and error correction
- Asking for clarification or verification
- Engaging in conversations with others
- Empathizing with other people
- Empathizing with native speakers of the target language and understanding their culture and way of living

Often used outside of the formal instruction classroom in everyday communication or in informal language practice meetings (Lorenzo, 2002).

The use of socially-oriented communicative practice strategies tends to increase as students gain more level and experience with the target language, feeling more confident about using and practicing the language with others (Nyikos & Oxford, 1989).

Language Learning Strategies are also related to other important aspects in second language learning such as learning-self-regulation (Cohen, 2010; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018), the development of different language skills and Communicative Competence (Oxford, 1994; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018), and the use of certain teaching/learning methodologies (Griffiths & Parr, 2001). Those connections will be briefly explained below.

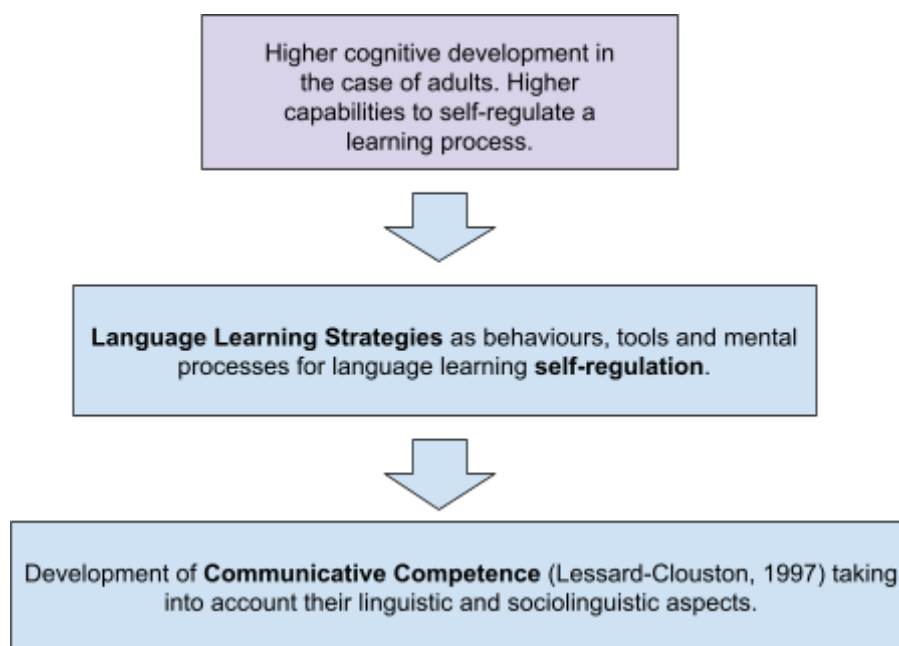
2.4.3. Language Learning Strategies and Language Learning Self-Regulation

Regarding Language Learning Strategies, the related concept of self-regulation, which is one that comes from educational psychology, is defined as how a student controls directly his or her emotions, thoughts, actions, and motivations, by means of a series of strategies, in order to achieve certain objectives or goals (Alonso-Tapia & Panadero, 2014). According to Nunan (1991), using Language Learning Strategies is a powerful way of self-regulating language learning. They help in the process of placing the locus of control in each learner, helping in the development of learner autonomy, as each learner can decide by him or herself the most convenient way of learning a second language, and are usually part of learner-centered approaches to language learning. That is, Language Learning Strategies help the learners to systematically plan, construct, and control their own language learning (Nunan, 1991). Cohen (2010) understands them as tools for the active and creative participation of learners in their language learning process, making language learning an essentially cognitive process. They also help the learner to have a responsible and proactive role as well as persisting for longer periods in language learning. Moreover, Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1992) explained that effective strategy use can give a sense of control and personal agency to the learners. Lessard-Clouston (1997) linked their use to the development of the Communicative Competence, taking into account their linguistic, non-linguistic, and sociolinguistic aspects. Finally, Cohen (2010) linked language learning strategy use, alongside motivation; and language aptitude, with learning success. In fact, Dickinson (1995) states, in the context of his Attribution Theory, that learners who attribute their failures to not having made sufficient efforts or not having used the right strategies, while believing they are in control of their own learning, tend to persist much more than those who believe that the failure happened because of an innate lack of ability, which is something that cannot be changed. Dickinson mentions that those who believe they are in control of their own learning, for instance, by using different types of learning strategies and making more efforts, persist for longer periods of time, keeping their motivation levels high, and tend to have higher degrees of success.

Figure 1 links the higher cognitive and self-regulation abilities of adult language learners (to which reference was made in the previous chapter) with the concept of Language Learning Strategies as tools to enhance language learning autonomy or self-regulation and, ultimately, improve Communicative Competence in a second language:

Figure 1

Language Learning Strategies and adult Learning Self-Regulation abilities



According to Borkowski et al. (1990), learners need to be aware of their own cognitive or intellectual processes and abilities, which is known as having metacognitive awareness, and be willing to be introspective or self-reflective in order to self-regulate a learning process better. In this sense, Oxford (1986) argued that language learners can write notes and keep learning diaries to themselves reflecting on their learning habits and strategies. In fact, Stevick (1980), a strong proponent of humanism in language teaching, argued that "... (language learning) success depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom" (p. 4). Finally, Reinders and White (2016) stated that currently the new technologies are enhancing autonomous and self-regulated language learning, giving learners more control over their own learning and generally making learning situations less formal.

2.4.4. Language Learning Strategies and Communicative Competence

With regards to how language competence is developed, authors like He and Young (1998) explained that the concept of language proficiency or mastery dates back at least to Robert Lado's 1950s structuralist theory. This author remarked that knowledge of a second language consisted of five different parts: comprehension of the written language, comprehension of the spoken language, the ability to write it, the ability to speak it, and having an understanding of the culture of the target language community. This theory is credited as having first presented the four language skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. In each of those four language skills, language was further broken down to include the traditional linguistic categories of phonology, morphology, lexis, and syntax. This approach has been very influential in second language learning and is still in use.

In the 1980s, Canale and Swain developed a new approach to this concept. They viewed language proficiency as the relationship between an individual's linguistic ability and its social context. That is, what a person needs to know and do in order to communicate successfully using a second language in a given context. For instance, whether the register of the language used should be more formal or colloquial. In their explanation of the Communicative Competence, these authors distinguished between strategic, grammatical or linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competences. Strategic competence is related to the verbal or non-verbal strategies used to facilitate communication while having knowledge gaps. Grammatical or linguistic competence is related to the mastery of the language system with its syntactic, lexical, morphological, and phonetic components. Sociolinguistic competence relates to appropriate language use-in-context. Finally, discourse competence relates to the coherence and cohesion of the language used above the level of the sentence. They defended paying more attention to meaning than to form in language learning, even understanding making mistakes as a valuable way, specially, in the early stages, of learning or communicating and valuing the use of authentic language coming from real life events and situations. They also defended learning the target language in a natural way by focusing on listening and speaking abilities, but without neglecting the rest. The concepts of the Communicative Competence and the Communicative Language Teaching methodology are strongly connected (Oxford et al., 1989). Authors like Dinçar (2010) have also supported the idea of integrating the teaching of linguistic structures within communicative needs. This idea was the starting point of the concept of Communicative Competence and is the basis of language passports like the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001), developed by the Council of Europe. It is an instrument used to learn, teach, and

assess different languages spoken in the European Union. It basically combines the concept of the four language skills developed by Lado (1957) with linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural competences. The assessment grid of the framework includes listening, reading, spoken interaction and production, as well as writing skills. All of them are classified in a level-system, consisting of A1 (beginner), A2 (elemental), B1 (intermediate), B2 (high intermediate), C1 (advanced) and C2 (proficiency).

According to Bagarić and Djigunović (2007), the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) understands the Communicative Competence as having both adequate language knowledge and ability to apply it appropriately to real life situations. Linguistic ability (lexico-grammatical ability) is defined as the ability to use language structures to form understandable messages. Sociolinguistic competence is defined as the ability to use language skills appropriately depending on social context. Pragmatic competence is also included and is defined as the ability the listener or reader has to understand the intended message, which may vary depending on the context of the speaker or writer. Finally, sociocultural competence relates to the cultural characteristics of the target language community in terms of way of living, customs, values, and so on, and having an awareness about them and how they are expressed through the target language.

The use of Language Learning Strategies is understood by Oxford et al. (1989) as an important way of contributing to the development of the Communicative Competence. For instance, cognitive and memory strategies, such as linking images to new words, translating, analyzing the language, repeating, practicing, and so on can contribute to the development of the grammatical competence; social strategies, such as practicing with other people, becoming culturally aware about the target language community, and so on may contribute to the sociolinguistic-sociocultural competence, and compensation strategies, such as guessing the meaning of unknown words or expressions based on context as well as using synonyms or gestures when a word or expression is not known in order to communicate can contribute to strategic competence development. Other authors like Lessard-Clouston (1997) have also supported the idea that Language Learning Strategies can significantly contribute to Communicative Competence development in the target language, as they combine linguistic, sociolinguistic, and non-linguistic aspects. In this sense, the complementary revision of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2020) considers the value and importance for the Communicative Competence development of language learning activities and strategies self-regulated by the language learner.

2.4.5. Language Learning Strategies and Language Skills

Regarding learning strategies and the development of language skills, Oxford (1994) explained that L2 speaking and writing skills often benefit from metacognitive strategies such as planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation, as well as compensation strategies used to compensate missing knowledge, such as circumlocution, using synonyms, and paraphrasing. Listening comprehension would be enhanced with metacognitive strategies by paying selective attention to certain information or particular aspects of a text, self-monitoring, and inductive inference, which is a cognitive strategy; while reading comprehension would be improved by compensation strategies, as may be guessing unknown meanings from context or by cognitive strategies, as for example, deductive reasoning and summarizing the main aspects or ideas of a text. Moreover, Hashim et al. (2018) explained that contact with real-life mass media audiovisual materials like TV or radio shows and movies, which is considered to be a cognitive strategy, is a way of improving listening and speaking skills for many second language students.

Regarding the use of Language Learning Strategies and the development of listening skills, Vandergrift (1999) remarked the importance of metacognitive strategies. For instance, by using them in a cloze test in which the learners have to fill in the gaps of the text according to what they listen to. The learners could use metacognitive strategies like paying selective attention to the listening task to look up for the missing words and self-monitor if the words written on the missing gaps are the correct ones while listening to the audio recording again. At the same time, the use of compensation strategies such as guessing (inferencing) the possible missing words based on text context are also present. Metacognitive strategies are also considered as important for writing skills development, as a written text produced by a language learner is frequently self-monitored and self-evaluated by reading it, as well as checking for errors and possible improvements before it is completed. Moreover, cognitive strategies such as translation for instance, by translating from the native language into the target language, are frequently employed by starter and intermediate-level learners while engaging in writing (Bailey, 2019). Therefore, it can be concluded that Language Learning Strategies can suit different language learning tasks related to different language skills.

2.4.6. Language Learning Strategies and Speaking Language Skills

Regarding the specific issue of the development of Speaking Skills, authors like Oflaz (2019) have explained that a frequent use of Language Learning Strategies can contribute to the improvement of English speaking skills. According to Gani et al. (2015), speaking is an ability that involves using oral verbal utterances to construct and express meaning. It is a way of orally expressing facts, feelings, thoughts, and opinions to other human beings, to certain animals and to oneself. According to Kehing and Yunus (2021) speaking skills are considered to be productive language skills that often involve real-time interaction with others and are regarded as being particularly important to demonstrate a good command of a second language, specially at higher or academic language levels, and thus, their difficulty of learning and use. Nunan (1991), explained that mastering Speaking Skills is important for many second language learners, as success in a target language is measured by many in terms of the ability of carrying out an effective conversation in that language. It is considered to be a complicated language skill to master, as it requires both language knowledge and having courage or low levels of anxiety that would allow a learner to engage actively in various conversations. Moreover, the concept of the Communicative Competence gives special importance to the development of Speaking Skills as a way of demonstrating a functional command of a target language by engaging appropriately in contextualized and meaningful spoken communication. Maintaining appropriate levels of accuracy and fluency as well as having a reasonable or intelligible pronunciation in the target language are considered to be important in order to sustain good spoken communication.

In a systematic review of studies regarding the relationship between Language Learning Strategies and speaking skills, Kehing and Yunus (2021) found out that metacognitive, cognitive, and compensation strategies were the ones mostly related to speaking skills. For instance, metacognitive strategies, such as planning or revising an activity as well as trying to find opportunities or means for language practice and having conversation partners; cognitive strategies, such as imitating the accent and way of talking of native speakers of a target language or practicing vocabulary and compensation strategies such as using mimes, symbols or gestures, and synonyms to convey meaning. To a lesser extent, certain social strategies, such as asking for clarification, help or error correction are also considered to be important. Similarly, in the Malaysian context, Zakaria et al. (2018) explain that strategies such as asking for clarification or support by a peer or using gestures are important to overcome difficulties in spoken communication. Gani et al. (2015) also explain that looking for new words and their phonetic transcriptions in the dictionary to

practice out loud is a relatively common strategy used to improve speaking skills. All in all, it can be argued that Language Learning Strategies can sustain a development of Speaking Skills, if appropriately used.

2.4.7. Language Learning Strategies and Teaching Methodologies

Taking on the issue of learning strategies and teaching methodologies, Griffiths and Parr (2001) noted that in a language teaching/learning field dominated by eclectic approaches to the use of methodology, Language Learning Strategies can suit a variety of methodologies. For instance, the use of memory and cognitive strategies is typical in the context of grammar-translation and audio lingual methods, which are based on learning and repeating language rules and structures. Metacognitive strategies are important in methods that involve learning from errors to improve (interlanguage methods); affective strategies are important in methods that deal with language learner emotions such as Suggestopedia; and social and compensation strategies can be assimilated into communicative language learning theories that focus on functional or communicative learning and practice of the second language. For instance, Chamot (2004) explained that memory strategies can be valuable for learning to pass a test in which memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules is important and affective strategies can be valuable to reduce test anxiety. Moreover, she explained that cognitive strategies are usually effective for the development of academic language skills, as they help improve accuracy and the form aspects of a language, for instance, grammatical and orthographic accuracy. Therefore, the relevance of educational and task context is considered important for strategy use and development. For instance, Hashim and Sahil (1994) explained that the teaching methodologies employed in a certain classroom usually affect the learner's strategy choices. In fact, Oxford (2001) argued that it is important that the learning style and strategy preferences of each learner match the teaching methodologies or techniques that are employed in each classroom for the learner to learn appropriately, feel confident, and maintain learning motivation.

After the major attributes of Language Learning Strategies, according to Ehrman and Oxford's 1990 taxonomy, have been explained as well as their relationship with learning self-regulation, language skills, and language teaching methodologies, it is now important to explore the links between some important individual variables in second language learning and the concept of Language Learning Strategies.

2.4.8. Relationship between Language Learning Strategies and other individual variables in Second Language Learning

Over the last few decades many studies have tried to link the use of Language Learning Strategies to different variables. Macintyre (1994) explained that Language Learning Strategies are part of a larger system, with many variables conditioning their use and effectiveness. Lee (2010) as well as Oxford and Amerstorfer (2018) stated that age, learning style, proficiency level, gender, cultural influences, motivation, personality type, as well as the beliefs and attitudes regarding language learning are among the most prominent of those variables.

In 2010, Fewell remarked that individual learner characteristics have been an important part of SLA research since the 1970s. Among those individual differences, the use of Language Learning Strategies has been considered as significant. This author's research was carried out among Japanese college students of EFL. The Strategy Inventory in Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire was used to measure self-perceived strategy use. Moreover, a written test was carried to measure the student's proficiency levels. A series of in-depth interviews were carried out with the top and bottom proficiency level students. There were generally low levels of learning strategy use. One of the conclusions of the research was that Japanese students used rote memorization to a high degree. Apparently, it was encouraged by the teachers as a strategy aimed towards standardized testing. The particular aspects of Japanese L1 writing are also mentioned as a factor promoting this fact. Those few students who tried to find their own learning strategies without following the teacher's recommendations were found to be more successful in learning English. Most studies over the decades have shown that those students who use more Language Learning Strategies tend to have higher proficiency levels, as was pointed out in the theoretical review by Nunan and Wong (2011). However, in this study those with a lower proficiency had a higher score in strategy use. The article explains this finding by referring to the necessary trial and error process of learning. That is, trying the use of different strategies to see if they work or not to achieve certain goals. Finally, the article also mentions the importance of motivation and attitudes as shaping language learning strategy use. Questions about those aspects were asked during the interviews that were also carried as part of this study.

Ho and Peacock (2003) reviewed different studies on language learning strategy use that have used the SILL as a questionnaire. The findings suggest a relationship between higher frequency of strategy use with a wider use of different types of strategies and higher levels of language proficiency. Strategy use is also reported to be higher among females.

Also, frequency of strategy use was found to be higher among humanities or social sciences students than among science/engineering students. In the authors' study, the factor of age was also taken into account. Older students were found to use more social and affective strategies. Regarding gender, females were found to use more strategies in general and, particularly, metacognitive strategies. Finally, the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies were linked to higher proficiency. The learners' beliefs and attitudes towards learning the language seemed to influence their strategy choices. As the SILL questionnaire does not provide answers to why the students use certain strategies and whether they are perceived as being effective or not, but rather it only gives information about the type and frequency of use, a series of interviews were carried out to know about these aspects.

According to Wu (2008), the use of metacognitive Language Learning Strategies tends to increase as students enroll in higher level language courses or acquire a higher proficiency in their L2. They tend to be more self-directed, conscious about the learning process, and independent as they progress in their learning experience, thus increasing their metacognitive strategy use levels. In a similar way, Risueño et al. (2016) found out that metacognitive strategies were also frequently employed among Spanish adult learners of intensive English language courses who were, in many cases, aspiring to become teachers. Therefore, they seemed to be more conscious and self-regulate more their learning processes. Wu (2008) also found out in his study that both higher and lower proficiency students use compensation strategies to a high degree. This author explains this fact by arguing that they are probably the easiest strategies to be used immediately, for instance, while having a communication breakdown that needs to be repaired. Finally, the higher use of cognitive learning strategies was considered as a predictor of higher language achievement. Saks and Leijen (2018) reached the same conclusions regarding cognitive strategies. For instance, the importance of cognitive strategies among higher level learners was found by Risueño et al. (2016) in the Spanish EFL context. In 1995, Ehrman and Oxford found in a similar way that the cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies of the SILL questionnaire correlated strongly with higher language achievement. Another study made in an EFL context in Turkey by Judd et al. (1998) also reached the same conclusions in the case of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In fact, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) explained that cognitive and metacognitive strategies are often used together, supporting each other. In a recent study, Bouirane (2015) found out that Algerian EFL learners' use of metacognitive learning strategies was positively correlated to higher English language success. Finally, Green and Oxford (1995) found out that the more successful second language learners used more naturalistic language practice strategies, which involve practicing with real world materials and people.

Regarding older adult learners, García (2017) observed that older adult learners of EFL in Brazil preferred the use of metacognitive Language Learning Strategies. However, this author explained that few studies have dealt with the issue of age and the use of Language Learning Strategies, principally in the case of older adults. This author points out a need to address this issue in further studies. Mora et al. (2018) also realized the prevalence of metacognitive strategies among senior EFL learners in a language school in Ecuador. Precisely, Khezrlou (2012) explained that the conscious use of Language Learning Strategies, especially, the more complex and sophisticated ones, is more prevalent among adults than among children and, particularly, among those learning in formal educational contexts and with past formal education experience. Their higher cognitive maturity and development as well as their higher learning experience are explained as the reasons for this. Other authors, like Zhang (2009), have reached the same conclusions. Adults are also considered to be more accurate reporters of their learning habits. In this sense, Macaro (2001) explained that adults have an advantage to use support and learning management strategies such as the metacognitive ones. Other authors like Risueño et al. (2016) also support this idea, in this case, in the Spanish EFL learning context. Moreover, authors, such as Swain and Lapkin (1989), have explained that adults can incorporate in some occasions the learning strategies used in the development of their L1 skills into second language learning, taking advantage of their previous experiences with texts and language structures as long as there are typological similarities between both languages. Finally, Zhang (2009) explained that the use of learning strategies alongside adequate teaching methodologies may be a way of overcoming the possible shortcomings and problems adults face when learning a new language. In this sense, McGillivray (2021) mentioned that the use of metacognitive awareness and metacognitive strategies could help to overcome or compensate for deficits related to age in memory abilities in the case of older adults.

Oxford et al. (1988) concluded in a review of four studies regarding gender differences in Language Learning Strategy use that women tend to use a wider range and more strategies in general and, especially, more social learning strategies, which are considered as especially relevant in order to develop Communicative Competence, than men. These authors believed that the greater social and verbal-communicative orientation of females could explain this finding. Moreover, women would tend to give more importance to the affective or emotional aspects in a learning process than men. In contrast, men are described as being more logical or rational (more analytical) and individually-oriented. Green and Oxford (1995) also reached similar conclusions in their study. Zimmerman and Pons (1990) found out that females employed metacognitive strategies such as goal setting,

monitoring, planning, and record keeping more often than males. According to Bernat and Lloyd (2007), these findings would generally be true in Western cultures. However, for instance, in Confucian-dominated Oriental cultures, the use of social learning strategies tends to be less frequent in both men and women as learning is generally considered to be an individual task directed by a teacher or similar authority figure. However, in the case of affective Language Learning Strategies, Foong and Goh (1997) found that female students were more eager to use them than their male counterparts in a Chinese EFL learning context. Similarly, Sison (2022) found out that the use of affective strategies was more prevalent among female learners in the Philippines English as a Second Language (ESL) learning context. Nevertheless, Griffiths (2010) explained that there is usually far greater variation between individuals than between genders in language learning. In this sense, MacIntyre (1994) noted that being aware of a learner's gender serves only to take into account the possibility of having certain general learning tendencies, which may or may not be true depending on learning context and the vast individual differences that actually exist between different learners.

As has been explained, cultural and nationality issues are also said to influence language learning strategy choices. For instance, Oxford (1990) reported that students in Asian contexts tended to use metacognitive Language Learning Strategies more frequently as well as more rote memorization strategies in comparison to students in western contexts. In contrast, Politzer (1983) found that Latinos in the United States generally preferred to use more social and interactive strategies. For instance, Oxford (1996) explained that, although there are certain exceptions, students in eastern contexts tend to interrupt the teacher for clarification less frequently than learners in western contexts. Moreover, she added that, on certain occasions, cultural mores and beliefs may make a learner reluctant to use certain kinds of strategies. In any case, it is important to bear in mind that individual differences also interact with cultural aspects.

Nyikos and Oxford (1989) showed that the use of socially-oriented communicative practice strategies increases as students achieve a higher language level and gain more experience, feeling more confident about using and practicing the language with others. At the same time, they found that learners who had been studying one or more foreign language for four years had significantly higher strategy use scores than novice language learners. This finding may mean that more language learning experience promotes learning strategy use. In a similar way, Palacios Martinez (1995) found that Spanish university level students of EFL used a wider range of Language Learning Strategies and used them with a higher frequency than high school level learners of the same language. Regarding the

awareness and use of socio-affective strategies, Fandiño Parra (2010) discovered that students of a beginner course of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Colombia were more aware about the use of grammar-related and memory strategies than about socio-affective and language learning management strategies. Students reported benefits from the training in the use of socioaffective strategies. In fact, Oxford (1994) explained that the social and affective strategies are powerful for learning, becoming more important and popular in language learning since the Communicative Teaching methodology popularized in the 1980s, yet students tend to be less aware about them than about other strategies. Some learners do not seem to pay enough attention to their feelings and social surroundings when learning a second language. Regarding the relationship between educational level and learning strategy use, Agustin et al. (2021) found in the Indonesian EFL learning context that there was a positive correlation between Language Learning Strategy use and academic achievement in their learning context. However, not many studies have addressed this issue clearly over time.

According to Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005), the use of Language Learning Strategies is influenced by the beliefs the learners hold about the nature of language learning, understood as their individual subjective theories or opinions on language learning. Learners create their own theories about language learning and the way they think they can learn best, taking into account the metacognitive awareness they have about their learning capabilities and needs. Beliefs are said to be influenced by both personal-cultural background and personality traits. Regarding the reasons for strategy choice, MacIntyre and Noels (1996) explained that the self-perceived effectiveness to reach a goal of a particular strategy was the main reason to use a certain strategy and discard others. Self-perceived effectiveness was also considered to be important to continue using a strategy. Knowing how to employ a strategy correctly was deemed to be important for using it as well. In this sense, Barrios and Montijano (2017) explained that there may be a lack of awareness about the existence or correct use of certain strategies among some learners and that would ultimately influence strategy use and its frequency. MacIntyre and Noels (1996) explained two prevalent reasons among learners not to use a certain strategy: its perceived difficulty of use and the possibility of causing anxiety or unpleasantness. The possibility of receiving sanctions and negative feedback as a result of the use of a certain strategy is also mentioned as a possible reason not to use it. Moreover, they explained that more motivated students tend to make more efforts in the language learning process, including having a higher level of Language Learning Strategy use. This suggested an important link between motivational intensity, motivational orientations, and learning strategy use. Having important levels of integrative motivation, which is understood as a desire to be part of or know about

the target language community and its culture, were linked to higher levels of social strategy use as they include being in contact with native speakers of a second language and trying to understand or approach their culture. On the contrary, language anxiety, which is a type of social anxiety, was negatively correlated to social learning strategy use. Regarding language anxiety, García and Ruiz (2005) explained that having higher levels of anxiety may be related to higher levels of affective learning strategy use as a way of managing learning-related emotions and lower levels of overall language proficiency.

Regarding language learning motivation and the use of learning strategies, Nikoopour et. al (2012) realized in a study of Iranian EFL learners that those with an intrinsic motivation to learn the second language, that is, the most autonomous and internalized type of learning motivation, valuing learning in itself, without seeking external benefits or rewards, tended to use significantly more cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies. Other authors, such as Lorenzo (2002), have also insisted on the same idea. Ushioda (2008) explained that those learners with intrinsic learning motivation tended to use a wider range of learning strategies and had stronger information retention abilities. For instance, in the Spanish EFL learning context, Risueño et al. (2015) observed that the learners with intrinsic learning motivation used significantly more cognitive and metacognitive as well as social and affective strategies. Finally, Yang (1999) explained that having higher levels of overall Language Learning Strategy use, specially, with a higher use of communicative or functional practice-related strategies, usually means having higher self-efficacy in second language learning. Self-efficacy is understood by Bandura (1997) as having a sense or perception of being capable of doing a certain task or mastering in a certain area and having a sense of being able to control the process as a result of it. This would, in turn, increase language learning motivation further.

Regarding research dealing with learning styles and Language Learning Strategies, Pei-Shi (2012) noted that those learners with an auditory tendency tend to use more social Language Learning Strategies, as those strategies usually involve the development of listening and speaking skills. Ehrman and Oxford (1990) linked the psychological characteristics (personality type) of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) with the use of Language Learning Strategies. They found that Thinker learners were more eager to use cognitive strategies, for example. Feelers and Extraverts were more inclined towards social and affective strategies. Intuitive learners reported high levels of compensation strategy, among others, using a set of strategies in which guessing is included. Finally, Introverts were found to prefer metacognitive learning strategies, as they preferred to control the learning process internally and in private. In a related study regarding learning styles, Oxford (1994)

discovered that analytic learners preferred to focus on the form in language learning, valuing grammar and the use of language structures, while global learners preferred strategies dealing with functional communication practice, focusing on the meaning, for instance, by using guessing, gesturing, or paraphrasing. Regarding this issue, authors like Rubin (1975) explained that a good language learner tries to pay attention to both language form and meaning, both of those aspects being present in the concept of Language Learning Strategies. Indeed, Long (1991) proposed focusing on fluency and communication abilities in the early stages of second language learning, while focusing on language form and accuracy in higher levels.

Regarding the relationship between strategy use and target language proficiency, a relevant proportion in the variance of L2 proficiency was explained by the use of Language Learning Strategies in the studies carried out by Dreyer and Oxford in 1996 (53% of the variation) and Ehrman and Oxford in 1995 (40% of the variation) which used Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) as an instrument. In fact, authors like Nunan and Wong (2011) have explained that most of the studies carried over the years have demonstrated a positive and statistically significant relationship (correlation) between the use of Language Learning Strategies and second language achievement or level. However, this has not always been the case, with rare negative relations reported from time to time, and more frequently, positive correlations that do not reach statistical significance. For example, authors like Rao (2006) have explained that middle proficiency language learners have been found to use more strategies than initial and advanced level learners in some cases. In fact, Crockall and Oxford (1989) did acknowledge that the relationship between strategy use and language proficiency is complex. In this sense, Herrero (2013) explained that the results of the studies have differed greatly depending on the characteristics and learning context of the samples as well as on the different instruments used to measure strategy use and language achievement. At the same time, Song and Cheng (2006) consider that strategy use and language achievement may both be cause and consequence of each other, with higher strategy use promoting language proficiency and vice versa.

2.4.9. Language Learning Strategies Instruction

Language Learning Strategies and their use can be taught and learned, unlike other individual differences of the language learner, such as language aptitude, attitude, motivation, learning styles, and personality, as authors like Oxford and Nyikos (1989) have noted. Regarding the teaching of Language Learning Strategies, Chamot (1990) explained that teachers can choose whether to teach them in specifically designed lessons or embedded in the regular classroom syllabus. The latter option is generally considered to be

more convenient, provided that enough time is devoted to strategy instruction. Making the learners aware of the different strategies they are using or can use is considered to be necessary in order to encourage their learning self-regulation abilities and help in the development of learner autonomy, as well as trying to improve their motivation and language competence levels (Chamot, 1990). Research indicates that learners at all language levels use strategies and can talk about them, but some learners are not fully aware about the strategies they use or the strategies that are most convenient or helpful in each case (Chamot & Kupper, 1989). Chamot and O'Malley (1987) explained that the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) aims to instruct learners in the awareness and use of Language Learning Strategies. These strategies would be first stored in the declarative memory and would later be stored in the procedural memory as their use becomes more automatic with time and practice. Oxford (1994) explained that it is necessary to adapt strategy training to the goals and needs of most students in a classroom. Moreover, she also remarked on the importance of addressing the factors that influence strategy choice, such as the learner's beliefs, motivation, learning styles, culture-related issues, and so on. O'Malley (1987) warned that some learners may tend to frequently use strategies they are already familiar with, as most adult learners tend to have a repertoire of familiar strategies and resist adopting new or unfamiliar strategies, creating a challenge for language teachers to promote new strategies among their learners. Indeed, Oxford (2003) explained that language teachers can sometimes teach their students strategies that are outside their primary learning styles in order to broaden their scope in language learning. More recently, authors such as Oxford and Amerstorfer (2018) as well as Plonsky (2011) have remarked upon the need and positive outcomes of teaching Language Learning Strategies in the language classrooms.

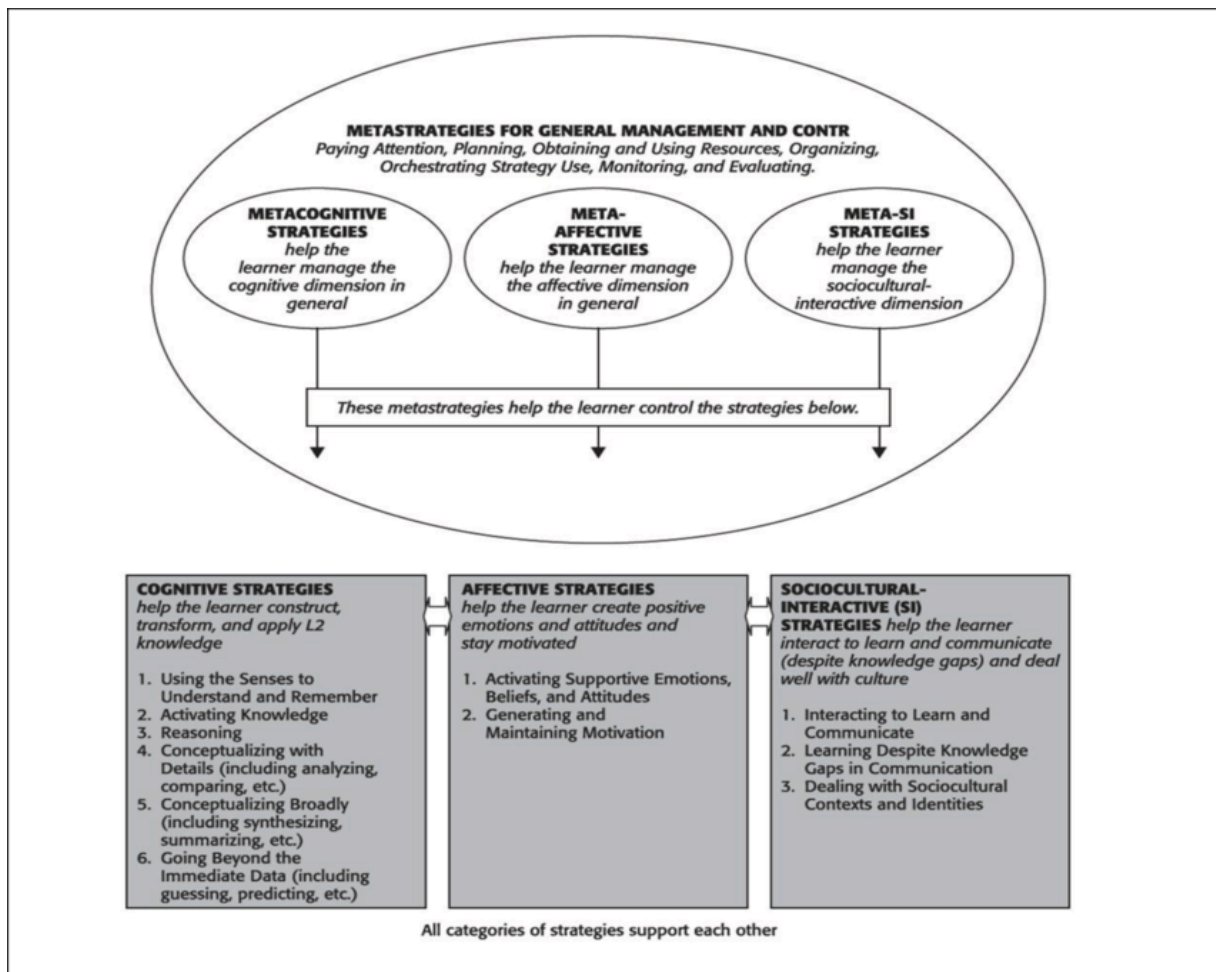
Authors like Macaro (2001) have explained that the strategy instruction process starts by raising awareness about the strategies that exist and the strategies the learners are currently using. Then, the teacher can teach a selected number of new strategies and the learners can practice with them. Learners can use those new strategies to fulfill certain learning goals related to areas in which improvement is needed. Finally, an evaluation is made regarding the effectiveness of the new strategies in order to fulfill the learning goals.

2.4.10. Oxford's Strategic Self-regulation Model of Language Learning and New Paths of Research on Language Learning Strategies

Within the field of educational psychology, Zimmerman (2000) argued that self-regulation of learning involves the personal, behavioral, and environmental dimensions. The thoughts, feelings, and actions of an individual engaged in learning are constantly evaluated and changed within a self-reflexive framework. Zimmerman proposes a cyclical system of self-regulated learning consisting of forethought, performance, self-reflection, and evaluation. Each of those phases would entail the use of certain specific strategies. This model has been adapted to second language learning by Oxford (2011) in her Strategic Self-regulation Model of Language Learning. In each phase of the learning process, Oxford proposes a certain number of strategies incorporating learning attitudes, beliefs, cognitive, affective-motivational, and sociocultural aspects. This author proposes a model with three dimensions: cognitive, affective-motivational, and sociocultural-interactive strategies. In each of those dimensions there are a certain number of strategies and eight metastrategies. reflecting on the metacognitive or self-regulatory aspects of each dimension: planning, paying attention, organizing, implementing plans, obtaining and using resources, orchestrating strategy use, monitoring, and evaluating (Oxford, 2017). In this new model, cognitive strategies consist in helping the learner construct, transform and apply second language knowledge. Affective strategies help the learner create positive emotions and attitudes and stay motivated. Finally, sociocultural-interactive (SI) strategies help the learner interact with others to practice and learn the second language as well as to deal with culture and identity-related issues (see figure 2).

Figure 2

A representation of Oxford's S2R model, emphasizing metastrategies and strategies



Note: Teaching and researching Language Learning Strategies: Self-regulation in context (1st edition) (p.24), by R. Oxford, 2011, Pearson/Longman.

Recently, Dr. Oxford has been working on a new self-report questionnaire type instrument that would reflect her new framework. This questionnaire is called the Diagnostic Inventory for Self-regulated Language Learning (DISLL) (Oxford, forthcoming) and is currently under a validation process involving expert reviewing and pilot testing. It is a questionnaire designed for learners at intermediate and higher or advanced language levels that could bring new knowledge about the use of Language Learning Strategies and language learning self-regulation. In fact, authors such as Hajar and Karakus (2025) have stated that the most recent research on Language Learning Strategies links their use with language learning self-regulation and different sociocultural issues, understanding strategy

use as a complex and a dynamic system. Similarly, Pei (2022), in a systematic review of recent Language Learning Strategy research, found that the latest research interest has shifted to language learning self-regulation and technology-mediated strategy use.

2.4.11. Theoretical considerations on research instruments

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Oxford (1999) noted that the English as a Foreign/Second Language (EFL/ESL) learning version 7.0 of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (1990) is a validated and reliable questionnaire-type quantitative instrument. In fact, it is a widely used Language Learning Strategy use assessment tool (Oxford, 1999), with a broad scope of applications. It has been used in both different PhD Thesis and many academic articles (Franco et al., 2012; Risueño et al., 2016; Saks et al., 2015 ;Yang, 1999; Yin, 2008). It has successfully been adapted to different learning contexts and cultures such as the Chinese (Rao, 2006), Greek (Papadopoulou et al., 2018), Spanish (Franco et al., 2012; Risueño et al., 2016), and Estonian (Saks et al., 2015). Moreover, authors like Ellis (1994) consider that SILL contains a systematic and comprehensive classification of Language Learning Strategies. In its EFL learning version, it consists of 50 items with each item referring to the student's self-perceived use of a particular learning strategy. The strategies are grouped into 6 categories: 9 memory, 14 cognitive, 6 compensation, 9 metacognitive, 6 affective, and 6 social items, in this order. Each item is measured in a Likert-type 5 point scale in which students rate self-perceived strategy use ranging from "never or almost never true for me" to "always or almost always true for me". A range of use between 1 and 2.4 is considered to be a low frequency of use, between 2.5 and 3.4 moderate and between 3.5-5 a high frequency (Franco et al., 2012; Risueño et al., 2016; Oxford, 1990). Recently, Amerstorfer (2018) explained that SILL is still a valuable research instrument, especially, when combined with other research tools such as qualitative ones. Griffiths (2018) also supports the reliability of the SILL and explains that it has contributed to provide important amounts of valuable data coming from large samples of individuals. Moreover, as Ardasheva and Tretter (2013) explained, SILL is an instrument mainly oriented to adult language learners. In the case of the individual strategies of SILL, authors such as Barrios and Montijano (2017), Risueño et al. (2016), Barrios (2015) and Cheng (2011) found in their respective studies with adult English language learners that noticing input in English was the most frequently used individual strategy. Similarly, strategies such as understanding unknown elements of the target language with the help of context, asking conversation partners for clarification or

verification and reviewing lessons regularly were also among the most popular individual strategies.

Burry-Stock and Oxford (1995) noted that there is some controversy regarding the self-reported nature of SILL results. Criticism includes the fact that social desirability concerns may make the students give false answers in order to cope with positive expectations about them. A presence of possible over-subjectivity in the answers is also a frequent source of criticism. The possible overlapping of some categories, like the cognitive and memory ones, which would be better classified in an enlarged cognitive strategy category, in their opinion, is also pointed out. Chamot (2004), explained that some learners may have difficulties identifying and communicating their inner thoughts and learning habits in a reliable way, especially, in the case of children. However, Burry-Stock and Oxford pointed out that in adult language learning contexts in which there is no pressure placed on the students regarding grades and possible sanctions, as SILL states that there are no right or wrong answers to the questionnaire items and research results are kept confidential, the learners can give reasonably objective and accurate answers regarding their language learning strategy use preferences. Moreover, they explained that no significant bias has been found in the answers to the SILL questionnaire in different studies. Furthermore, Chamot (2005) explained that using self-reports is currently the only way to know about the learner's thoughts and mental processes, as they are not directly observable. Moreover, Burry-Stock and Oxford (1995) explained that taking questionnaires like SILL can be useful for the learners to discover and reflect on their language learning habits. At the same time, Oxford (1990) did acknowledge that there are many different definitions and classifications regarding Language Learning Strategies as well as other less well-known questionnaire-type instruments, as a complete consensus has not been achieved yet on the issue. Indeed, Chamot (2004) explained that different sets and classifications on Language Learning Strategies can coexist and contribute to the enrichment of this theoretical field. At the same time, Chamot and O'Malley (1990) explained that the main objective of strategy research is to know the strategies the learners use and how/why they use them. All in all, it could be stated that Language Learning Strategy research builds on different approaches and theories, with SILL having had a historical central role as a research instrument.

Semi-structured interviews and open-ended qualitative questionnaire

Aside from the use of validated quantitative questionnaires, there are other ways of knowing about language learner strategy use, which are qualitative research techniques. In qualitative research, the behaviors, opinions, perceptions, and attitudes of a certain number

of people are observed and analyzed on an individual basis, but without making statistical generalizations regarding a certain population, based on the results of a certain sample, as in quantitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2016). For instance, Chamot (2005) explained that language learning diaries, face-to-face interviews, think aloud protocols, and direct classroom observation are also often used in learning strategy research. Griffiths (2010) explained that interviews can add a qualitative dimension to the quantitative data by refining the information, for instance, by knowing why a particular strategy is chosen and if it is perceived as being effective for fulfilling the learning goals, and giving rich details about the learning experience of several particular learners. In this sense, Merriam (1998) sees the semi-structured retrospective interviews, in which the researcher can post new questions spontaneously as the conversation is in progress, as a way of understanding Language Learning Strategy use in a wider context which would include learner characteristics and learning context, motivation, beliefs, and affective issues.

Interviews are considered by authors like Naiman et al. (1978) and O'Malley et al. (1985) an adequate research technique that can give reasonable insights into the learner's Language Learning Strategy use. According to Griffiths (2010), considering that second language learning is a distinctively personal experience, the interviews can give insights into the individual characteristics of each learner. According to Merriam (1998), the interviews would also help to clarify ambiguities or complex issues, something that is not possible to obtain by merely using quantitative questionnaires. Amerstorfer (2020) explained that the retrospective interviews can reveal details about learners' strategic learning that cannot be detected during observations. In particular, they can give access to the learners' opinions and personal views, giving important details about the learning context. Indeed, authors like Rose (2015) have explained that in Language Learning Strategy research, quantitative methods of data collection are usually accompanied by at least some qualitative research, as a way of contextualizing and gathering more information.

As can be seen in this section, Language Learning Strategies are quite powerful instruments for second language learning and language learning self-regulation. They are tools employed by the learners for their own learning and their use can vary considerably depending on context and learner preferences and abilities. Moreover, researching strategy use can give important insights into the learners' language learning habits and learning circumstances. Adult language learners are said to be particularly prone to learning self-regulation and strategy use, including reasonably accurate strategy preference reporting. Moreover, authors like Griffiths (2018) and Pawlak (2021) still see the area of Language Learning Strategies as a research area that can give interesting and valuable

insights into second language learning. This fact makes adult language learning strategy research an interesting topic that can be useful for second language learning research in general and adult second language learning research in particular.

Once the issue of Language Learning Strategies has been explained as well as the topic of strategy instruction, it is important to address the main hypothesis of this dissertation as well as the topic of the methodology used to carry out this study, and thus, fulfill the objectives of the study and prove whether the hypothesis are correct or not.

Hypothesis 1 (hereafter H1): There is a statistically significant higher use of Language learning strategies among women than among men.

Hypothesis 2 (hereafter H2): There is a statistically significant higher use of Language Learning Strategies among learners at level B2 than among learners at level A2 of the Common European Framework for Languages.

Hypothesis 3 (hereafter H3): There is a statistically significant higher use of metacognitive Language Learning Strategies among older adult learners (learners over 50 years of age) than among adult learners below this age range, which are the ones situated in the 35 to 50 age range.

3. METHOD

The following chapter will explain the methodology employed to fulfill the objectives and verify the hypothesis of this research study. Hence, the process followed to carry out the research project will be described, by enumerating the main objectives of the investigation, describing the methodological design used, explaining the characteristics of the research sample, the characteristics as well as the validity of the qualitative and quantitative research instruments employed to reach the study objectives and explaining step-by-step the process followed to collect all the data.

3.1. Objectives

Taking into account its context and scope, this study has the following main objectives:

Objective 1 (hereafter O1): To analyze the reported type and frequency of use of Language Learning Strategies by adult and older adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners of the Basque Official Language Schools, learning at language levels A2 and B2, taking into account the individual items (strategies) of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire and its subcategories or dimensions (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies).

Objective 2 (hereafter O2): To compare strategy use frequency across levels A2 and B2 of the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFL) to analyze whether there are significant differences.

Objective 3 (hereafter O3): To compare strategy use frequency across adult (35 to 50 years of age) vs older adult (over 50) students, gender and educational level to analyze whether there are significant differences.

Objective 4 (hereafter O4): To analyze the main variables that may influence the learners' use of Language Learning Strategies to understand strategy use-in-context (as can be motivation, beliefs, affective aspects, age, learning experience, learning context, learning styles, as well as ability to self-regulate and evaluate the learning process).

Objective 5 (hereafter O5): To analyze the perceptions of adult and older adult learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) regarding their learning motivations, learning objectives, learning benefits, as well as learning strengths and difficulties.

3.2. Methodological Design

This study presents both a qualitative and a quantitative methodological design, in which the Language Learning Strategy use pattern of adult and older adult (aged over 35) learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the Basque Official Language School context was studied and data collected at a particular point in time, during 2023 and early 2024. The qualitative part has a descriptive approach, by trying to understand the individual learner characteristics and language learning context behind strategy use and their influence over it. The quantitative part of the study has a cross-sectional and descriptive design. The quantitative data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics, by looking for statistically significant mean differences regarding frequency of strategy use in the case of four variables: gender, age, language levels A2 and B2 according to the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFL), and educational level. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time and analyzed separately.

3.3. Sample Participants

A total of 71 subjects participated in the study, by answering the Informed Consent and the questionnaire. 71 subjects participated in the qualitative part and 70 in the quantitative one (as one answer was discarded). The questionnaire included the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) as a quantitative instrument, various demographic, English level and educational level variables as well as some qualitative learning context-related questions. The convenience sample method was used to collect the data. The inclusion criteria of the study included being an adult over 35 years old learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the Official Language Schools of the Basque Country in language levels A2 and B2 of the Common European Framework of Languages (CERFL). The exclusion criteria took into account that those who had been learning at the Official Language Schools for less than a year were not part of the study. Moreover, 7 semi-structured interviews were carried out for the qualitative section, using participants from the same sample that had completed the questionnaire before and the same inclusion/exclusion criteria. As the interviews were carried out after the collection of the

questionnaire data, certain interviewed participants were learning language levels other than A2 and B2, but had been learning those levels in the previous academic year in all cases.

The population of the study were adults (over 35 years of age) and older adults (over 50) learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the Official Schools of Languages of the Basque Country learning at levels A2 and B2 of the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFL). A sample from that total population was extracted. The study was carried out among learners at the Official Language Schools in Donostia-San Sebastián, Vitoria-Gasteiz, and Éibar. The participants were learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in six A2 level classrooms, three B2.1. level classrooms, five B2.2. level classrooms, and in an intensive learning classroom consisting of both B2.1 and B2.2 language level learners.

Learners over 50 years old were considered as older adults for this study, taking into account that authors such as Klimczak-Pawlak and Kossakowska-Pisarek (2019) consider that learners over this age range usually have specific second language learning peculiarities in terms of motivation, learning objectives and needs, and so on. Similarly, Pikhart et al. (2021) considered second language learners over 55 as older adult learners in their study. The age range of those who answered the study is situated between 35 and 69 years old. A total of 25 people (35.21%) were in the 35 to 50 age range and most of them (46 people, 64.79% of the sample) were situated in the +50 range of older adults. At the same time, most participants in the study were female: a total of 47 people, representing 66.2% of the sample. There were 24 men, representing 33.8%. This data seems to be in line with the usual higher presence of female learners in the classrooms of the Official Schools of Languages in Donostia-San Sebastián and Vitoria-Gasteiz. Regarding language level, there were a total of 35 learners enrolled in the A2 language level (49.3% of the sample), 15 in B2.1 (21.1%) and 21 enrolled in B2.2 (29.6%). Finally, among those who answered the study, 39 subjects (54.92% of the sample) attended the Official Language School in Donostia-San Sebastián, 28 the Official Language School in Vitoria-Gasteiz (39.43%), and 4 the Official Language School in Éibar (5.63%).

In the research sample, a total of 42 learners (59.2% of the sample) had university-level studies (high level studies). Only 27 learners (38% of the sample) had intermediate-level studies (understood as those who completed “Bachillerato” or its equivalent in Spain, that is, Secondary Studies, and those who learned in Professional Training) and two participants had basic-level studies (understood as those who completed basic compulsory education) (2.8%).

Most of the learners reported Spanish as their native language (49 people, 69% of the sample), with some learners reporting both Spanish and Basque as their native languages (11 people, 15.49 %), and a few as Basque as their native language (6 people, 8.45 % of the sample). There was one person who had Portuguese (1.4%) as his/her native language and another one that mentioned Arabic as his/her native language (1.4%). One person mentioned that both Spanish and Galician were his/her native languages (1.4%). Another one said that he or she was unsure about what to answer.

Moreover, for the qualitative section, as previously mentioned, seven semi-structured interviews were carried out during the process of this investigation: a total of 4 women and 3 men were interviewed. 6 among them were in the older adult age range and one of them was in the adult range. 4 of the interviewees could be considered to have an upper-intermediate language level (either having passed or learning at level B2) and 3 of them a basic English level (learning at level B1 or below). Six of the interviewees were learning at the Official Language School in Donostia-San Sebastián and one of them in the centre in Vitoria-Gasteiz. Finally, most of them had a high educational level (see Table 3).

Table 3*Characteristics of Interviewed Participants*

Interviewed Participants	Age	Gender	English Language Level	Official School of Languages attending	Educational and Professional background
Participant 1	62	Male	Passed B2	Donostia-San Sebastián	High educational level, retired teacher of primary school.
Participant 2	60	Female	Learning B2	Donostia-San Sebastián	High educational level.
Participant 3	65	Male	Passed A2, starting to learn B1	Donostia-San Sebastián	High educational level.
Participant 4	66	Female	Passed B2, starting to learn C1	Donostia-San Sebastián	High educational level, retired teacher of the Basque Language in secondary education.
Participant 5	52	Female	Learning A2	Vitoria-Gasteiz	Administrative worker at secondary school. High educational background.
Participant 6	63	Male	Passed A2, learning B1	Donostia-San Sebastián	High educational background, university studies in History.
Participant 7	48	Female	Learning B2	Donostia-San Sebastián	Administrative worker at Osakidetza (Basque public health service). Intermediate educational level.

3.4. Instruments and variables

A semi-structured interview and a language-learning context questionnaire with open questions regarding Language Learning Strategies and language learning context were used to partially complete O1, which also relies on quantitative data, and completely fulfill O4 and O5. The qualitative instruments of the study aimed at understanding the use and importance of different Language Learning Strategies as well as understanding the individual and contextual characteristics that influence strategy use.

The semi-structured interview questions included the following topics:

- The learners' language learning experience
- Learning context
- Motivation to learn
- Learning objectives
- Personal benefits as a result of learning English
- Aspects that influence their learning
- Ability to self-regulate and self-evaluate the learning process
- The issue of age in second language learning
- Level of interest and enjoyment in the second language learning process
- Use and importance of various Language Learning Strategies

The interview questions were mainly adapted from those used by various authors in different language learning/acquisition studies. Specifically, studies by Muñoz (2010), Yin (2008), and Paredes (2010). The questions by Muñoz (2010) were mainly related to learning context and learning motivation. Meanwhile, the questions by Yin (2008) and Paredes (2010) were related to learning objectives and the use of various Language Learning Strategies.

Alongside a Spanish-language version of SILL and the semi-structured interviews, a learning-context questionnaire in Spanish based on Oxford's (1990) study was used to elicit the demographic, educational, and language level variables as well as to gather more information to contextualize the results of the quantitative part. The background questionnaire was presented and completed alongside SILL by the participants. The questions in the language learning-context questionnaire included:

- The learners' age

- Gender
- Language level enrolled at the Official School of Languages
- Educational level (distinguishing between basic, intermediate and high-level studies)
- Official School of Languages location
- Experience learning English and the significance of that experience.
- Knowledge and level in other foreign languages
- Time of instruction in the formal classroom during a week and time devoted to learning or practicing the second language outside the classroom during a week
- Language learning style preferences
- Self-perceived level of difficulty of learning the English language
- The English language skills in which they feel more and less confident
- The native language or languages of the learners
- The importance learners give to learning English
- The motivation to learn English
- Possible benefits of learning English
- The influence of their age in the learning process
- Possible learning self-regulation abilities
- Level of enjoyment while learning English
- Importance of effort vs innate ability in a language learning process
- Other Language Learning Strategies that may be used by the study participants (aside those listed in SILL)

Regarding different research techniques on Language Learning Strategies, self-report quantitative questionnaires have been of particular importance in this field (Oxford, 1999). Version 7.0 of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) for students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) by Oxford (1990) is a validated and reliable questionnaire-type quantitative instrument, with Cronbach Alpha measures between 0.93 to 0.98 for the instrument as a whole (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002), which means that the various items of the questionnaire measure similar properties regarding Language Learning Strategies. Correlations between its constructs are considered to be statistically significant (Park, 2011). Moreover, Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) found a linear correlation between SILL strategy frequencies and TOEFL test scores, demonstrating its ability to predict language achievement.

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford (1990) was used to fulfill O1, O2 and O3 as well as contrast the 3 quantitative Hypothesis previously mentioned. The quantitative instrument (SILL) of the study aimed at statistically analyzing the frequency

of Language Learning Strategy use, both regarding individual strategies (individual questionnaire items) and different strategy categories or dimensions: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, as well as affective and social strategies. The quantitative variables of the study were the learner's age (adults and older adults), language level, according to the Common European Framework for Languages (A2 and B2), gender (female and male) and educational level. Age and gender are two demographic variables while language level is not. General educational level was asked to understand better the characteristics of the study sample regarding the educational and cultural background of the participants, distinguishing between basic, intermediate, and high level studies. Although educational level was not initially considered to be a quantitative variable, it was finally included as one. Therefore, an hypothesis regarding educational level and strategy use was not formulated.

A Spanish-language validated translation by Risueño et al. (2016) of version 7.0 of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire for students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) by Oxford (1990) was used in this study to ensure that all items could be understood properly by the research participants, as most of them were native speakers of Spanish. As the study by Risueño et al. (2016) was an adaptation of the original questionnaire by Oxford (1990), certain items of it were not included in the present investigation, which was based on the original questionnaire. Moreover, original SILL item Number 9, 14, 43 and 49 were translated into Spanish from the original questionnaire, as they were not included in the adaptation study by Risueño et al. (2016). In these cases, the translations were checked with the thesis supervisors to ensure their validity and correct comprehension. Moreover, the reliability data for the complete questionnaire and each of its dimensions were calculated using Cronbach's Alpha and are available in the Quantitative Results section of this study.

3.5. Data Collection Proceedings

To begin with, during February 2023, a series of questions in Spanish to ensure their correct comprehension, were used to contextualize the results of the SILL questionnaire, as well as to gather more information regarding the second language learning experience of each learner. Both the language learning context-related questions and SILL were completed in the same questionnaire by the participants. After the 50-item SILL questionnaire, there was an open-ended question to ask the students about other strategies

they may use in their learning besides the ones listed in SILL and if that were the case, their frequency of use.

The Official Schools of Languages of the three capital cities of each province of the Basque Autonomous Community (Comunidad de Euskadi) were contacted in late February and early March of 2023. The head of the Department of English of the School of Languages in Donostia-San Sebastián was the first one to respond, explaining their interest in the research project and their availability to carry out the study among the learners at their center. The researcher was twice present at the School of Languages in Donostia. The research project was explained to the adult and older adult learners at two A2 level classrooms, two B2.1 level classrooms and three B2.2 level classrooms. Email contacts of those interested in the study were also collected. The number of students present at each one of those classrooms was variable, with important variations in the number of adult learners over 35 and, specially, over 50 present. In late March 2023, after a pause of several weeks, the Head of the English Department of the Official Language School in Vitoria-Gasteiz responded explaining their interest and availability to carry out the research among the learners at their center in certain classrooms. In this case, the research was carried out among B2.1 and B2.2 level learners of an intensive EFL classroom, following the same procedure. In September 2023, after the summer holiday period was over, the Heads of the Departments of English of the Official Language Schools in Vitoria-Gasteiz and Bilbao were again contacted to continue carrying out the study among the learners at their centers. In the case of the center in Vitoria, the researcher was present in November 2023 at four A2 level classrooms, a B2.1 level classroom and a B2.2 level classroom. Response from the Language School in Bilbao was significantly delayed and it was decided to find a different center to continue with the study. In early January 2024, the director of the Official School of Languages in Éibar was contacted, explaining to her the main aspects of the study. Although it was not possible for the researcher to make presentations at the school classrooms because of the Language School's time constraints, several students learning at B2.2 language level were told about the study and agreed to participate in the investigation.

The adult and older adult learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) responded to the questionnaire by email by filling in two Google Forms documents: the Informed Consent and the Questionnaire itself, including SILL, the demographic variables and the background questions. Google Forms was chosen as a way of gathering the data. The Informed Consent, following standard ethical guidelines for academic studies, detailed the principal aspects and aims of the research project as well as the procedures to ensure confidentiality of the data. Research participants were reminded that their participation in the

study was entirely voluntary, being free to withdraw from it at any moment or not to answer certain questions or items. Participants gave consent by writing down their names, surnames, and their National Identity Document (*Documento Nacional de Identidad*) number.

A series of semi-structured interviews were also carried out as part of the study to gather more information and contextualize the results of the questionnaire. All of the interview questions were translated into Spanish and checked with the Thesis supervisors to ensure their validity and understandability. The interviewed participants were volunteers contacted among the larger study sample. A balance was maintained between different language levels, genders, and age groups in the interviews that were carried out. The Informed Consents for the semi-structured interviews were also collected among those interested in taking part following the same procedures, explaining the same information, and pointing out that the interviews were going to be video-recorded via Google Meet. Each interview lasted around an hour, approximately. The real names of the interview participants have been concealed by using codes in the case of this study (Interviewed Participant 1, 2...). The interviews were conducted during the period of time starting in November 2023 until February of 2024. The interviews were later on transcribed in their integrity and categorized according to the objectives of the study to help interpret their content (literal quotes are available in Appendix A). The qualitative data of the study was gathered and analyzed in Spanish and was later on translated into English. The translations were checked with the Thesis supervisors.

Rebecca Oxford was contacted at various points during 2023 to ask for permission to be able to use the EFL learning version of her questionnaire Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) in this study. Permission was granted by the author and she also expressed her availability to share the new questionnaire Diagnostic Inventory for Self-regulated Language Learning (DISLL) once the final version was available. It is a new instrument that reflects the latest developments in the areas of Language Learning Strategies and language learning self-regulation.

The original English-language version of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (1990) by Rebecca Oxford as well as the translated Spanish version and the learning context-related questions, interview questions, and demographic variables are available in their complete form in Appendix B and C. The Informed Consents are available in Appendix D and Rebecca Oxford's permission to use SILL is available in Appendix E.

After the method has been explained, this study will now present its empirical data. The analysis of the data will be twofold: qualitative and quantitative. Thus, the findings will be introduced, beginning with the qualitative data.

4. QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The qualitative data was divided into two parts in the present study. First, data gathered from the 7 semi-structured interviews is presented. It includes a summary of the Language Learning Strategies reported by the interviewed participants (classified according to Oxford's 1990 taxonomy) as well as information regarding issues such as foreign language learning experience, difficulties and strengths while learning English, English learning objectives, abilities to evaluate and self-regulate the learning process, learning recommendations, time devoted to learning/practicing the language, beliefs about the learning process, learning motivation, and the influence of age on language learning. Moreover, Language Learning Strategies reported by the study participants in the questionnaires, aside from the ones included in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), are also part of this section, as it is information related to O1. In a second section, data gathered from 71 questionnaire answers is presented. It includes information on foreign language learning experience, native language, difficulties while learning English, beliefs about the learning process, learning motivation, and the influence of age on language learning. Qualitative data was gathered and analyzed in Spanish to ensure that a wide and appropriate amount of information could be collected and was afterwards translated into English. Data was codified and analyzed following the recommendations given by Dornyei (2007), which established a first round of codification to find out the more general topics that can appear in a qualitative text and a second round in which the text is recodified according to the specific objectives of the study. Therefore, the first round consisted of inductive coding and the second one was deductive. Different themes and subthemes emerged as a result of the coding and analyzing process. Thus, it can be stated that a Thematic Analysis (TA) of the data was conducted. A summary or paraphrase of the original data was conducted in this section. The original data in its literal version in Spanish can be found in Appendix A.

4.1. Semi-structured interview findings

The following table (Table 4) illustrates and classifies the different Language Learning Strategies mentioned by the participants during the semi-structured interviews according to different strategy categories. A total of 33 strategies belonging to all 6 categories of the SILL were identified: 3 memory, 10 cognitive, 6 compensation, 4 metacognitive, 4 affective and 6 social strategies. Many of the strategies gathered in the semi-structured interviews are identical or similar to the ones described in the SILL questionnaire, while others are different,

particularly those related to the use of digital technologies to enhance English learning. For instance, using electronic translators, using artificial intelligence-based apps for speaking skills practice, using the dictionary to understand vocabulary meaning and its pronunciation, listening to podcasts about current affairs, watching videos on tips regarding grammar, vocabulary and culture-related issues, combining reading and listening to a text simultaneously, taking breaks to avoid excessive frustration while learning, creating a pleasant learning environment as well as using songs for English learning are strategies not included in SILL that were mentioned by the interviewed participants. They are illustrated below (Table 4):

Table 4

Language Learning Strategies reported in the semi-structured interviews (O1)

Language Learning Strategy category	Individual Strategies (O1)
(O1)	
Memory Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Repeating words Writing down a word several times to retain it (Interviewed Participant 4, Age 66, Level C1) (Similar to SILL item Num. 10).● Using flashcards Using cards to retain words and putting them aside once they are learned (Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2) (Similar to SILL item Num. 6).● Contextualizing new words in sentences Creating a sentence containing a new word in order to internalize its meaning and use (Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2). (Same as SILL item Num. 2).
Cognitive Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reading comprehensible input materials (the news, information about topics of interest and self-relevance) Important to choose reading materials adapted to level and one's own interests. (Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2) (Similar to SILL item Num. 16). Reading short texts and the news is preferred to reading long texts and novels. (Interviewed Participant 4, Age 66, Level C1).● Reading without using the dictionary Using the dictionary as little as possible. (Interviewed Participant 1, Age 62, Level B2) (Similar to SILL items Num. 22 and 27).● Using electronic translators Using electronic translators to clarify meaning while reading is preferred to using paper dictionaries. (Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Level B1).

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- **Using the dictionary to understand vocabulary meaning and its pronunciation**
Checking for synonyms and pronunciation of a word in the dictionary (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).
 - **Writing to compensate for listening and phonetic coding problems**
Writing frequently (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1) (Similar to SILL item **Num. 10**).
 - **Using artificial intelligence-based apps for speaking skills practice**
The artificial intelligence app Elsa Speak gives a wide variety of options to practice Speaking and improve pronunciation. (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).
 - **Listening to podcasts/ the news**
Reports listening frequently to the news in English (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2).
 - **Watching videos on tips regarding grammar, vocabulary and culture-related issues**
Watching videos on social media regarding grammar and culture-related issues. (Relatively Similar to SILL item **Num. 15**). (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).
 - **Using colors to highlight different language aspects**
Using certain colors to highlight difficult aspects of the target language and others to mark those issues that are clear. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1) (Relatively similar to both SILL items **Num. 20 and 21**).
 - **Making a contrastive analysis (comparing the grammar structures of various languages)**
Contrasting the structures of English with those of other languages he knows such as French or Basque, checking for differences and similarities. (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 19**).

Compensation Strategies

- **Guessing unknown meanings with the help of context (very common).**
Tries to understand unknown English words using familiarities in the context (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2) (Similar to SILL item **Num. 24**).
 - Tries to understand using context (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1) (Similar to SILL item **Num. 24**).
-

- **Using gestures**

Tries to use different words or paraphrases when a certain English word is not known. Uses gestures as a final resource to convey meaning, in case other methods do not work. (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Language Level B2). (Same as SILL item **Num. 25**).

Uses gestures to compensate for lack of knowledge both when producing language and when asking about doubts in a conversation. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Language Level B1). (Same as SILL item **Num.25**).

- **Combining reading and listening to a text simultaneously**

Uses books and articles that can be listened to and read simultaneously. (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

- **Using shorter and simpler utterances to convey meaning**

Uses simpler and shorter utterances while facing difficulties when writing (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 29**).

- **Coining words in the target language that are similar to the learner's native language**

Creates words in English that may be similar to the learner's native language words. (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2 (Similar to SILL item **Num. 26**).

- **Code-switching between English and the learner's native language**

Tries to start talking in English, but usually finishes in Spanish because of a relatively low language level (**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 65, Language Level B1).

Metacognitive Strategies

- **Reflecting on the progress made during the learning process and about its sense**

He has reflected about not starting to learn at the highest language level at the EOI (C1) because it may be more time consuming and complex (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Language Level B2). (Very similar to SILL item **Num. 38**).

Tends to be undecided about the possibility of continuing with the learning process, reflecting on its pros and cons. (**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 65, Language Level B1). (Very similar to SILL item **Num.38**).

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- **Self-correction of certain mistakes**
Realizes more about the mistakes she makes during oral production than when writing. (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2) (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 31**).
 - **Reflecting on feedback given by experts.**
Revises expert feedback and error correction frequently in order to learn from it. (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 31**).
 - **Noticing the presence of the target language in their environment**
Tries to pay as much attention as possible every time he hears or encounters input in a foreign language in his everyday life. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1). (Very similar to SILL item **Num. 32**).

Affective Strategies

- **Maintaining a pleasant and enjoyable learning environment, especially, regarding classmates**
Tries to create an emotionally positive learning environment taking into account the emotions of the other classmates. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1).
- **Taking breaks to avoid excessive frustration**
When encountering difficulties with English, she usually prefers to start doing other activities and return to English later, to avoid excessive frustration. Her motivation withstands the affective problems. (**Interviewed Participant 5**, Age 52, Level A2).
- **Making positive affirmations to oneself**
Remarks the importance of participating in the classroom, even when encountering difficulties or having insecurities. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2). (Similar to SILL item **Num.40** and relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 39**).
- **Using songs for learning while having fun**
Uses familiar songs to retain certain vocabulary and grammar structures. (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).

Social Strategies

- **Practicing with family members and classmates (very common)**
Remarks the importance of the support given by family, friends or classmates during the learning process, specially, by those with a proficient mastery of the English language. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 44**).
-

Values in positive terms the different perspectives other classmates can give on how to learn English and be interested in the target language (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).

Importance of practicing and communicating with the people closest (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 47**).

- **Practicing with native speakers (rare)**

She wants to find a group of native English speakers to practice regularly. (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 48**).

He plans to practice with several native English speakers he knows once he has a higher level and feels more comfortable about practicing with them. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1) (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 48**).

He complains about the lack of opportunities to talk to natives. (**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 65, Level B1).

- **Using informal conversation groups to improve naturalistic practice of the target language**

He has decided to take part in an informal practice group of the English language, as his English practice has been limited in the past. (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2). (Same as SILL item **Num. 47**).

He tried to create an informal conversation practice group in the past, but his classmates were reluctant to participate, possibly due to a relatively low language level (A2). (**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 65, Level B1).

- **Using class groupal Whatsapp chats**

He tries to share and write as many features as possible in the class group chat. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1). (Relatively similar to SILL items **Num. 47** and **49**).

- **Creating cultural understanding**

When traveling to a foreign country, trying to find out about its history, culture and so on. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2). (Similar to SILL item **Num. 50**)

- **Asking conversation partners to slow down, repeat or clarify messages**

When she does not understand something in a conversation, she asks the other person to repeat it or write it down.(**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1) (Similar to SILL item **Num.45**).

Asks short questions to conversation partners in order to clarify messages (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 45**).

After the SILL questionnaire, there was an open-ended question so that learners could include other possible learning strategies or techniques that they may use, not included in the SILL questionnaire and their possible frequency of use (O1). Among those, the following were mentioned by the language learners:

- Contrasting the grammar and syntactic aspects of English with the grammar of other languages (making a Contrastive Analysis).
- Watching movies in English with subtitles in English or Spanish.
- Listening to and reading Audiobooks.
- Listening to various songs while reading their lyrics simultaneously to practice vocabulary, language structures and pronunciation.
- Practicing the language with family members and friends.
- Having Spanish-English exchanges with native speakers (already included in SILL as “asking natives for help”).
- Listening to radio podcasts in English various times a week.
- Creating monologues (“self-speech”) in English about various topics while checking in the dictionary for help.
- Playing board games such as “Tabú”, in which someone describes the meaning of a particular word without using the word itself and other related words directly and the players have to guess the word correctly.
- Thinking and living in English as much as possible.
- Using online resources and apps such as Duolingo, Elsa Speak, BBC Learning, Anki, Lingo Clip, DeepL translator, and so on.
- Reading books created or adapted for language learners and adapted to language level (present at the libraries of the Official Schools of Languages).
- Watching Youtube videos on tips regarding grammar, vocabulary, culture-related issues, and so on.
- Making more grammar exercises apart from those of the classroom.
- Making schemes about various language aspects such as grammar and vocabulary, which is considered to be a cognitive strategy.
- Repeating the listening classroom exercises at home, as a way of practicing and improving the command of a language skill in which many have difficulties.

The following data will address the variables that influence English language learning and Language Learning Strategy use as they were mentioned during the semi-structured

interviews. Those variables include: English learning experience, learning motivation, influence of age, English learning strengths and difficulties, learning recommendations, learning objectives, English learning evaluation and self-regulation, the EOI learning context, the influence of affective issues, the difference between the present and past English learning experiences of the learners, as well as the professional and educational backgrounds of the study participants.

The English learning experience of the learners (O4) was an issue mentioned in most of the answers by the interviewed participants. Most of them had a certain experience learning both English and other foreign languages. They considered that, as older adults, they now had enough time to fulfill this activity. For instance, Interviewed Participant 1 (Age 62, Level B2) felt an intellectual curiosity for learning English in the same way he had learned other languages during his lifetime. Interviewed Participant 2 (Age 60, Level B2) had been learning languages like Basque and English throughout her life and valued deepening her knowledge of English after retirement. Similarly, Interviewed Participant 4 (Age 66, Level C1) learned French while a child. For her, English was a pending subject that could be fulfilled after retirement without job-related pressure. Interviewed Participant 7 (Age 48, Level B2) Learned English in the past because of work-related reasons, but not in a stable manner. For her, the present time was the right time to continue learning with intrinsic motivation. In certain cases, learning English at this age was a way of withstanding the intellectual deficiencies of the past. In the case of Interviewed Participant 3 (Age 65, Level B1), he worked in a multinational company for many years without knowledge of English, something that caused him frustration and a desire to learn.

There were varied reasons or motivations to start learning English among the interviewed participants (O4 and O5). Among others, to gather more information and access to sources of entertainment, as a space for new socialization, as a way of helping while travelling to foreign countries, to meet new and varied people, as a way of keeping track of the novelties of the contemporary world, and so on. Only two participants mentioned learning English as helpful in their working environments, although it was not the main source of motivation in those cases either. For instance, Interviewed Participant 1 (Age 62, Level B2) expressed an intellectual curiosity to know about a foreign language that is valued as relevant and useful. Similarly, Participant 2 (Age 60, Level B2) considered English as a *lingua franca* of the present time as it gave access to more information on personal interests and more sources of entertainment. Participant 3 (Age 65, Level B1) realized that English is a worldwide communication language while walking the “Camino de Santiago” and decided to learn it. In a similar way, Participant 6 (Age 63, Level B1) understood the knowledge of

English as a way of expanding relationships and thinking differently. The value of learning this language regarding cognitive stimulation was remarked by Participant 4 (Age 66, Level C1). This same participant considered that English can be useful while solving practical problems when travelling and found socializing in the classroom with varied people more positive than expected. Participant 7 (Age 48, Level B2) pointed out that various close family members of hers have a high level of English, which served as motivation for her to learn as well. Finally, two participants (5 and 7) explained that English can be a useful tool in their work environments. Participant 7 remarked that, although it was not the principal source of motivation, English could be useful to understand certain texts at her job. Similarly, Participant 5 (Age 52, Level A2) valued it as positive for work-related issues in her case.

Regarding the issue of age and its influence over English language learning (O4), there were different perspectives among the interviewees. Older age tended to give more time available to learn as well as an intrinsic motivation to take on the task. It also gave more educational experience and life perspective, which could be helpful in certain aspects of the learning activity. However, at the same time, there tended to be a slowing or deceleration of the processing speed and a deterioration of memory capacities. The increasing relevance of active aging and the activity of learning languages among seniors was remarked by some of the participants. There were opposite opinions regarding the value of intergenerationality in the classroom. According to Interviewed Participant 1 (Age 62, Level B2) older age was a positive factor for communicating and structuring ideas as a result of a longer life, more educational experience, and the intrinsic motivation that characterized learning at this life stage could be more important than having language ability. Similarly, Interviewed Participant 2 (Age 60, Level B2) remarked that young people tend to be more interested in learning for utilitarian reasons, while adults valued the learning process in itself and tended to have more time available and motivation. A similar idea was pointed out by Interviewed Participant 7 (Age 48, Level B2) who believed that older age gave more perspective in order to establish and achieve goals. Participant 4 (Age 66, Level C1) remarked that the lack of pressure and the time available are key to learning successfully at this age. Regarding the difficulties associated with age, Participant 2 reported problems with hearing and retention/memory abilities as well as the fact that young people reacted faster in class and had better phonetic abilities. Similarly, Participant 3 (Age 65, Level B1) remarked that languages are learned better in the early years of life and reported learning/cognitive difficulties with increasing age. Participant 4 pointed out that retaining vocabulary successfully and understanding spoken English was a frequent problem. Participant 6 (Age 63, Level B1) reported attention problems in the classroom if contents were not of his interest and Participant 7 (Age 48, Level B2) said that she had a tendency to become tired reading in front of the computer.

Pointing out the increasing relevance of active aging, Participant 6 felt that keeping active as an older adult was becoming almost mandatory. Expressing a similar point of view, Participant 7 explained that language learning was becoming more popular among seniors and, particularly, English learning. In contrast, Participant 5 (Age 52, Level A2) explained that, in her experience, learning as an older adult was much more common in the educational world than in other areas. There would be more hesitance to learn at this age among people in other areas of society. Finally, there were marked differences of opinion regarding the value of intergenerationality in the classroom. While Participant 2 valued intergenerational contact in class in positive terms as a way of gaining more knowledge of the novelties of the world, Participant 7 asked the EOI to create specific classrooms according to age, as she preferred sharing the learning activity with people of a similar age.

The interviewed participants gave many different recommendations to enhance the English learning process (O4 and O5). These included having frequent contact with English, communicating frequently with others, going to English speaking countries, learning according to one's own pace, and establishing realistic short term objectives, among others. For instance, Participant 1 (Age 62, Level B2) remarked the importance of communicating and practicing frequently in the target language as well as having one's own learning pace according to one's own objectives. Similarly, Participant 2 (Age 60, Level B2) explained that some older adults decided to repeat language courses in order to consolidate knowledge. She also pointed out the importance of sharing the learning process with others and asking doubts to experts. This participant also remarked the importance of being patient and setting realistic objectives in a second language learning process. In a similar way, Participant 6 (Age 63, Level B1) said that language learning is a life-long learning process that demanded patience and taking small steps. Participant 3 (Age 65, Level B1) emphasized the need of practicing with native speakers or competent learners. Participant 4 (Age 66, Level C1) remarked on the idea of learning to fulfill one's own needs or interests, by making more efforts in the skills or language aspects that may be more interesting or rewarding for the learner. Participant 6 insisted on the relevance of revising learning materials from previous language levels to consolidate vocabulary and basic grammar structures. Finally, Participant 7 (Age 48, Level B2) expressed the positive value of traveling to English-speaking countries for English learning.

The learning objectives of the interviewed participants (O5) tended to remain realistic, as they preferred to take small steps in order to advance in their English learning process. They were conscious about the fact that a complete mastery of the English language demanded an important amount of both time and effort. Oral communication

abilities and having knowledge that could be applied to their everyday circumstances were preferred. For example, Interviewed Participant 2 (Age 60, Level B2) expressed less interest in Writing skills than in the development of other language skills that were considered to be more relevant for her interests and everyday life. Participant 3 (Age 65, Level B1) preferred to focus on oral skills development. In a similar manner, Participant 4 (Age 66, Level C1) remarked the importance of developing listening skills, which were considered to be complicated, and speaking skills. Participant 5 (Age 52, Level A2) insisted on the relevance of applying knowledge of English to daily life, by being able to understand a song or respond to someone in English if the occasion arrived. Similarly, Participant 6 (Age 63 Level B1) wanted to be able to speak a few words in English with everybody, by learning to communicate with others in a basic or average way. The learning objectives were relatively similar across the different language levels.

The English learning strengths of the interviewed participants (O5) were mainly oriented towards the development of reading and writing skills as well as the understanding of grammar rules. There were more difficulties reported regarding the development of speaking and listening skills, especially, regarding a lack of opportunity for active communicative practice. Some participants expressed frustration regarding this matter, as they valued oral communication as a key English learning objective. Difficulties to learn and retain vocabulary were also pointed out. (See Table 5):

Table 5*English learning strengths and difficulties (O5)*

English learning strengths and difficulties (O5)	English learning strengths	English learning difficulties
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He makes more progress regarding Reading and Writing than with the oral aspects of the language because of a lack of an English-speaking environment. (Interviewed Participant 1, Age 62, Level B2). • Reading gives time to reflect as well as the use of dictionaries can help in case something has not been properly understood. (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2). • Reading texts, such as travel books, does not show difficulties at her language level. (Interviewed Participant 4, Age 66, Level C1). • She has been a teacher of Basque and understands and values grammar while learning. (Interviewed Participant 4, Age 66, Level C1). • Understanding grammar and Reading is easier than expected. (Interviewed Participant 5, Age 52, Level A2). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening demands a rapid reaction to stimuli. Considered to be the most difficult skill to master. (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2). • Difficulty to understand audiovisual materials in which input is presented in jargon or it is too fast. (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2). • Difficulty learning long lists of vocabulary. (Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Level B1). • He expresses a desire to practice oral skills more frequently in small groups. (Interviewed Participant 3, Age 52, Level B1). • Difficulty for oral skills practice, unless one has a private teacher or travels to a foreign country. (Interviewed Participant 4, Age 66, Level C1). • Oral language comprehension is more complicated than production. (Interviewed Participant 6, Age 63, Level B1).

The EOI learning context (O4) was generally considered to be an adequate one to ensure a complete and systematic learning of the English language. However, it was also perceived as being intellectually and academically demanding, being necessary to devote important amounts of both time and resources to the learning activity. For example, Interviewed Participant 2 (Age 60, Level B2) positively valued the knowledge of the teachers and the fact of sharing in-person lessons with diverse people. In this sense, Participant 4 (Age 66, Level C1) highlighted that teachers usually encouraged participation by all classmates in the classroom. Participant 3 (Age 65, Level B1) pointed out that the EOI context was appropriate for systematic and complete English learning. On this matter, he established a comparison with the leisure-oriented English lessons taught at the centers for retired people which, in his opinion, would not be as appropriate for a comprehensive learning of English. He also considered the EOI to be an economically accessible learning institution. Similarly, Participant 6 (Age 63, Level B1) considered it to be an intellectually demanding learning context, a fact that would be necessary because of the complexities of language learning. Finally, Participant 7 (Age 48, Level B2) pointed out that the official exam formats increasingly required teaching more material, something that required doing frequent homework and organizing the studies on the part of the learner.

Regarding the self-regulation and self-evaluation capabilities of the interviewed participants (O4 and O5), most of them explained that they valued engaging in self-reflections regarding the learning process. However, they did remark that they needed expert support and guidance during the learning process, especially regarding error correction and evaluation. (See Table 6):

Table 6*English Learning self-regulation and evaluation (O4)*

English Learning self-regulation and evaluation (O4)	English learning self-regulation	English learning evaluation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The EOI methodology is not very personalized. Therefore, there is a need to do personal work and reflection. (Interviewed Participant 1, Age 62, Level B2).• Tries to combine autonomous involvement in the learning process with following teacher direction. (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2).• Difficulties to self-regulate the learning process because of a low language level. Prefers to follow the learning materials presented by the teacher. (Interviewed Participant 5, Age 52, Level A2).• Need to learn with others because of a low language level. (Interviewed Participant 6, Age 63, Level B1).• Need to combine classroom participation with personal work. Also, there is a need for having some external support. (Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a need to go further from the official evaluation at the EOI and make a personal reflection. (Interviewed Participant 1, Age 62, Level B2).• Need of teacher/expert evaluation because of a lack of knowledge about how to evaluate oneself. (Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Level B1).• Relays on the intuitive perception of being able to read more easily, understanding the target language more clearly, but without systematizing (Interviewed Participant 4, Age 66, Level C1).• Evaluation has to be given by experts in English teaching/learning (Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2).

There were markedly different points of view regarding the affective aspects of English learning (O4). Some participants reported satisfaction by making progress in English learning and recovering a student role at their age. In contrast, other participants focused more on the difficulties of the learning process, with its affective complexities. Lower level learners tended to report a more negative or ambivalent affectivity. For instance, Interviewed Participant 1 (Age 62, Level B2) did not like the position of English as a dominant or “colonial” language. He preferred to see it just like any other language that could be interesting and valuable to learn, but not necessarily more important. Participant 2 (Age 60, Level B2) valued learning English as a return to childhood, by being able to learn again. Similarly, Participant 4 (Age 66, Level C1), who used to be a teacher, reported satisfaction by recovering a student role and keeping up with the rest of her classmates. In contrast, lower level learners revealed a more complex affective state. Participant 3 (Age 65, Level B1) reported a lack of positive affectivity related to his current low language level. For him, learning English was a costly process in which efforts and results did not always match. In a similar manner, Participant 5 (Age 52, Level A2) described second language learning as an affectively complex process. For her, satisfaction came with successes, but anger erupted with failures. Finally, Participant 7 (Age 48, Level B2) also characterized language learning as a complex process that required an affective balance and support from close people. She pointed out that she reflected on the level of participation of the rest of the classroom and the dynamics created with the teacher in order to participate less or more.

Some interviewed participants established a comparison between their past English learning experiences and the present one (O4 and O5). They acknowledged that the learning materials and books had significantly improved over time. Moreover, the presence of videos and digital learning resources was now widespread, requiring an adjustment on the part of the learners. Only two participants mentioned this issue during the interviews. For example, Interviewed Participant 6 (Age 63, Level B1) explained that books were now better than those used in his childhood. He also valued in positive terms the novelty of visualizing learning materials on the screen, use of videos, and so on. Similarly, Participant 7 (Age 48, Level B2) pointed out that the learning methodologies of the past were based on written materials and the use of memory, which would be a contrast with today's use of computer-generated materials, explanatory videos, and so on. She also remarked that nowadays there were many opportunities for having target language input. However, she said that the frequent use of the new technologies created some difficulties for older learners.

Regarding the professional and educational background of the interviewed participants (O4), it could be stated that most of them had a high educational background and some among them had been teachers in different educational institutions. Not all of them gave extensive details about their professional trajectories. For instance, Interviewed Participant 1 (Age 62, Level B2) had been a primary school teacher in the past and Participant 4 (Age 66, Level C1) a teacher in secondary education. In the case of Participant 5 (Age 52, Level A2), she was an administrative worker at high school, her life being closely tied to the school environment, as her mother used to be a teacher. Regarding the educational background of the interviewees, Participant 6 (Age 63, Level B1) explained that he studied Geography and History of the Basque Country and, later on, prepared people for public employment exams.

4.2. Questionnaire Answer Findings

The following section addresses the main findings of the questionnaire answers, focusing on their perceptions regarding the four language skills, the main motivational orientations in order to learn English as well as the difficulties and benefits brought to the learning activity by the variable of age.

Regarding the issue of the easier and more difficult English language skills (O5), 71.8% of the learners that responded to the questionnaire considered Reading as the language skill in which they were more competent, followed by Writing (12.7%), Speaking (9.9%) and Listening (5.6%). Reading was particularly considered to be easier among older adults. They explained that they could return to the text each time they considered it as necessary to confirm comprehension and use support resources such as a dictionary for help. Some older adults also explained that Writing is another skill that allowed more time to complete an activity, by allowing time to check for mistakes, self-correction, revision and improvement of the text. In contrast, Speaking and Listening were considered to be activities that required a rapid response to stimuli, something that did not seem to be easy for older adults in general. Moreover, some pointed out that they feel embarrassed or not confident enough while practicing Speaking, often because of phonetic or pronunciation problems. Those who had more difficulties with listening/speaking abilities tended to be older learners and usually had a lower language level. Regarding writing skills, various participants mentioned the fact that they had vocabulary and grammar knowledge limitations that made it difficult to create extensive writings. Table 7 below summarizes and illustrates the main perceptions regarding the four English language skills that were reported by the study participants:

Table 7*Learner perceptions regarding the four Language Skills*

Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It allows the learner to control the time and pace of understanding (Age 60, Level B2.2).● It allows for the use of dictionaries to understand better (Age 62, Level B2.2).● Words are read as they have been learned in grammar (Age 50, Level B2.1).● Easiest language skill while not in an immersion context (Age 67, Level B2.2).● Most of the content can be understood, even though it cannot be translated completely (Age 50, Level A2).● Tends to be a regular reader in the native language. Reading helped to get started with other languages (Age 64, Level A2).● Likes reading in the native language. Media, the internet and traveling have made many words familiar (Age 52, Level A2).● Values positively reading and listening to a text at the same time (Age 45, Level A2).
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It allows for time to express oneself as well as to revise and correct mistakes (Age 62, Level A2).● Allows for more time to think (Age 54, Level A2).● Lack of imagination to develop a topic (Age 55, Level A2).● Lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge to make extensive writings (Age 36, B2.1).
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Complex skill that requires keeping attention levels high (Age 62, Level A2).● A language skill that goes fast and demands immediate translation into the native language (Age 65, Level A2).● Difficult to distinguish the different words.(Age 64, Level A2).

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- Difficult to understand the pronunciation. (Age 50, Level A2).
 - Lack of experience with listening activities in the English learning of the past (Age 56, Level A2).
 - Nervousness caused by a frequent lack of understanding (Age 67, Level A2).
 - Complex skill that depends on each person's intonation and speed of talking (Age 58, Level B2.2).
 - Most frequently practiced skill, by watching movies and listening to the radio (Age 42, Level B2.2).

Speaking

- Affective problems caused by difficulties with the pronunciation (Age 45, Level A2).
 - Insecurities caused by difficulties (Age 47, Level B2.2).
 - It is a skill that often requires rapid responses to stimuli, making it complex to master (Age 67, Level B2.2).
 - Difficulties to start an utterance or communication exchange (Age 67, Level A2).
 - Lack of fluency (Age 42, Level B2.1).
 - Confidence in making oneself understood by using different resources (Age 65, Level A2).
 - Frequent practice with English-speaking partner (Age 46, Level B2.2).
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Regarding the motivational orientations for learning the English language (O4 and O5), most learners reported that they were learning English for traveling purposes (31%), followed by learning it as an intellectual challenge (25.6%) and for socializing/entertainment purposes (15.5%), as the principal sources of motivation. In this question, there was an open-ended option classified as “other” in which learners could write-in other possible learning motivations. In this case, most of them reported a mix of motivational orientations, consisting mostly of all or some of the orientations mentioned above. Those motivational orientations were present among older adults in general, but among some middle-aged adults as well. Only a minority of learners reported learning English because of work-related reasons (8.5%) and academic reasons (2.8%), most of them being middle-aged adults, although there were certain older adults who had not reached retirement who mentioned this motivational orientation. In certain cases, learning English for work-related reasons was described as being a secondary motivation to learn. Some non-retired learners considered that English could be useful in their jobs to a certain extent or that it could be a way of improving their professional prospects. Only 1.4% of the sample mentioned meeting native speakers as their main motivation to learn English, although it was seen as a possible positive consequence of the learning process. Having access to new and varied sources of information and entertainment was also described as being a source of motivation. Among those learning English as an intellectual challenge, a distinction could be made between those learning it as a cognitive challenge to master a new area of knowledge or improving and fulfilling their previous knowledge, and those that saw it as a brain stimulating activity. In general, learning English was seen as something good and desirable, although not indispensable. It was generally considered to be a functional or useful language. This fact would justify the sense of the learning process in certain cases. Different motivational orientations tended to be transversal across different ages and language levels, except for the work-related motivation which was absent in the case of retired older adults. The following were the main motivational orientations of the study participants: learning as a way of overcoming intellectual frustrations or deficiencies that were present overtime, learning to engage in an intellectually or cognitively stimulating activity, learning English to have a new space for socialization, learning to improve communication and understanding while travelling to foreign countries, learning English to have access to more information and sources of entertainment (particularly, regarding the digital and audiovisual worlds), to open up to new and varied kinds of people and their cultures, learning to improve job or academic opportunities and, finally, learning English to extract benefits from the knowledge of a useful global language. In this sense, Table 8 shows the main motivational orientations of the study participants regarding English learning:

Table 8

Motivational orientations for learning English

Learning as a way of overcoming intellectual frustrations and deficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing self-esteem by covering an intellectual deficiency (Age 62, Level A2).• Fulfilling a pending subject (Age 51, Level B2.1; Age 69, Level A2).• Knowing English level (Age 52, Level B2.2).• Starting to understand a pending subject (Age 56, Level A2).• Retaking a past interest and being able to communicate in English if the occasion arrives (Age 46, Level A2).
Learning as intellectual stimulation and challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interest in languages without degree pressures (Age 66, Level B2.2).• Curiosity for languages, some knowledge of French in the past (Age 66, Level B2.2).• English learning as a personal challenge and useful tool in everyday life (Age 51, Level B2.1).• Curiosity for the target language and challenge of learning a foreign language as an older adult (Age 67, Level B2.2).• Keeping mentally active (Age 54, Level A2).• Cognitive enrichment (Age 38, Level A2).
Learning as a way of socializing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Value of sharing the learning process with diverse people of different ages (Age 67, Level B2.2).• Improving mental health and being in contact with people of a similar age (Age 48, Level B2.2).• Socializing in foreign countries (Age 48, Level A2).

Learning for traveling purposes

- Communicating while travelling to certain foreign countries (Age 57, Level B2.2).
- Communicating while traveling to foreign countries without depending on a translator (Age 67, Level A2).
- Communicating while traveling is the main use of English learning (Age 42, Level B2.2).
- Main use of English learning is communicating during travels and understanding songs (Age 42, Level B2.2).

Learning to better understand the audiovisual and digital worlds

- Having access to readings, music and documentaries (Age 50, Level A2).
- Values learning in general as well as understanding songs and movies in English (Age 64, Level A2).
- English opens the doors in the field of computer science (Age 66, Level B2.2).
- Having access to more audiovisual content (Age 50, Level B2.1).

Learning to improve job and academic opportunities

- English helps to work in hostelry (Age 54, Level A2).
- Valuable at work (Age 58, Level B2.2).
- Necessary at work (Age 48, Level B2.2).
- English as a merit to improve in the workplace (Age 48, Level B2.2).

Learning as a way of knowing about new cultures and people

- Being able to communicate with another community of speakers and learn about a different culture (Age 56, Level A2).
 - Talking to natives from English-speaking countries (Age 67, B2.1).
 - Meeting new people by means of speaking a new language (Age 45, Level A2).
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Learning a useful global or international language

- The presence of English is growing in everyday life (Age 56, Level A2).
 - Having access to important amounts of information (Age 67, Level A2).
 - Values the utility of English (Age 38, Level A2).
 - English is understood as a valuable *lingua franca* or universal language (Age 65, Level A2).
 - English is understood as a language frequently employed (Age 45, Level A2).
 - English is considered to be the most important language (Age 40, Level A2).
 - Knowledge of foreign languages important in a globalized world (Age 57, Level B2.2).
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There were very different points of view regarding the issue of age and the learning of second languages (O4). 65.7% of the learners that answered the study did not see their age as a positive aspect in their learning process, while 34.3% did. In the answers to the “why” question, many explained that they had difficulties with their memories when learning long lists of new vocabulary. Moreover, they pointed out problems with the phonetic or pronunciation aspects of English, affecting their Listening and Speaking levels. At the same time, some older adults reported that focusing their attention on a task or activity for a prolonged period of time was complicated for them. Even some middle-age learners exposed the idea that learning languages was easier as a child and as a young person. General learning difficulties with increasing age were mentioned by some participants. On the other hand, other learners explained that their age gave them more maturity and perspective on the things they wanted to learn and considered as important that they had more time, motivation, and less pressure to devote to learning. The value of lifelong learning was reinforced in certain answers, by returning to a student role and being able to learn again as they considered English learning as a challenge. Specifically, English was seen as a useful subject that opened new possibilities, for instance, meeting new and varied people, and this could make their life easier. Learning this language was also seen as an opportunity to remain active in life, by trying a different activity that could stimulate the brain. There were a few students that did not see age as an important factor in a language learning process, most of them middle-aged adults. Some adults that had not yet reached the age for retirement tended to complain about their lack of sufficient time for learning English. Cognitive and learning difficulties were generally remarked more by older adult learners. Issues related to age tended to be transversal across the different language levels. Table 9 indicates the issue of age and English language learning, by distinguishing between the positive aspects and perceived benefits of this task for adults and older adults, and the difficulties or more negative issues they may experience:

Table 9

Perceptions on age and learning of English

Positive aspects, perceived benefits	More time available, more educational experience and intrinsic motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Values the experience with other languages and the lack of environmental pressure (Age 62, Level B2.2).• Learning English is a personal challenge (Age 49, Level B2.2).• Learning languages, when voluntary, is satisfactory (Age 67, Level B2.1).• More time available and mental relaxation than before (Age 67, Level B2.2).• Lots of time available to study after retirement (Age 66, Level B2.2).• After retirement, there is the possibility of choosing challenges freely (Age 65, Level B2.1).• Motivation and using learning strategies acquired during the life long learning process become important to compensate for memory problems during learning in this life stage (Age 47, Level A2). Active Aging <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Values the discipline of going to class, keeping the brain active and enjoys class context (Age 67, Level B2.1).• English learning as a source for brain stimulation (Age 61, Level B2.1).• Keeping the brain active in a different way (Age 48, Level B2.2). The positive value of lifelong learning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appreciates learning (Age 47, level A2).
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- Appreciates lifelong learning and sees English learning as a challenge (Age 65, Level A2).
 - Learning new things gives personal satisfaction (Age 57, Level B2.2).
 - There is no limit to intellectual knowledge. Improving English skills gives personal satisfaction (Age 62, Level A2).
 - Positive value of returning to a student role (Age 55, Level A2).

Opening new opportunities and creating new attitudes in life

- Learning English gives the opportunity to know about new people and their cultures (Age 56, Level A2).
- Learning languages as a way of understanding new cultures (Age 62, Level B2.2).
- Giving new perspectives to understand different people (Age 60, Level A2).
- Making think differently (Age 43, Level B2.2).

Negative aspects, difficulties

General cognitive deceleration and decline. Learning difficulties.

- Objectives are clearer when someone is mature, although there is physical and cognitive decline to a certain extent (Age 51, Level A2).
 - Memory and speed of learning are better and faster when someone is young (Age 64, Level A2).
 - Less ability to concentrate and learn with increasing age (Age 62, Level B2.2).
 - Less mental agility and audacity with increasing age (Age 51, Level A2).
 - Less ability to memorize words and more time required to learn with increasing age (Age 60, Level A2).
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- Young people in the classroom tend to have contents more recent and be faster (Age 48, Level B2.2).
 - Young people are more familiarized with the current study methods, making learning easier for them. (Age 56, Level A2).

Memory, phonetic and hearing problems

- Loss of hearing and memorization abilities (Age 48, Level B2.2).
 - Age gives more maturity and understanding of complex concepts, but memorizing is increasingly difficult (Age 60, Level B2.2).
 - Difficulties with listening, pronunciation and memorization (Age 67, Level A2).
 - Difficulties with vocabulary learning and listening skills (Age 62, Level B2.2).
 - Problems with vocabulary retention (Age 57, Level B2.2).
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Regarding the issue of the relevance of language ability vs effort in order to learn a new language (O4 and O5), most of the learners (87.1%) reported that making an effort to learn and practice a second language was more important than having an innate language ability or language aptitude (12.9%). Most valued having learning motivation and making serious efforts as important to learn a new language successfully. Having frequent contact with the target language was also considered to be important. Nevertheless, many learners acknowledged that ability could play a role, but to a lesser extent than effort. The answers tended to be transversal across different ages and levels. For instance, Questionnaire Participant 2 (Age 54, Level A2) pointed out the relevance of learning strategies in a language learning process as dynamic tools to engage with the target language in various ways. Questionnaire Participant 5 (Age 60, Level B2.2) believed that it was important to have a combination of both language ability and attitude to achieve success in language learning. Similarly, Questionnaire Participant 6 (Age 54, Level A2) remarked that languages are learned with effort and having frequent contacts with them, by speaking, listening, and so on. Questionnaire Participant 17 (Age 35, Level A2) highlighted the relevance of discipline in a second language learning process. In contrast, as a minority opinion, Questionnaire Participant 24 (Age 65, Level A2) believed that the family members around him made faster progress in English with lesser efforts than him. Therefore, he deduced that he may lack an ability for language learning.

The qualitative data of the present study showed that adults and older adults approach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning activities mainly as a source of intellectual training and curiosity as well as to improve their daily life opportunities and personal satisfaction in various ways. Practical knowledge and the development of oral skills were preferred, although these were not always easy to achieve a good level of the language. Moreover, the participants tended to reflect on their learning experiences, thinking about the significance it might have for them. Students tried to find ways to optimize and improve their learning process. Many different learning strategies were mentioned, with a relevant presence of digital learning resources. Finally, the participants valued making an effort and engaging in different ways in a second language learning process.

5. QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

A total of 71 study subjects answered the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire which was the basis for the statistical data of this study. However, questionnaire answer number 48 was discarded, as most of the SILL items had not been answered. Thus, the present data is based on 70 responses.

The quantitative data presents first of all the characteristics of the research sample, followed by the descriptive statistics for the complete sample and the inferential statistics. The descriptive part is completed by the histograms that visually show the distribution of the data for each dimension (strategy category), analyzing the normal distribution and by the mean frequency of all 50 strategy items of the SILL ranked from highest to lowest average of use. Afterwards, the inferential part of the data compares the mean frequency of strategy use according to age, gender, English language level, and educational level, using the independent samples t-test parametric statistic for that matter. Finally, the quantitative hypotheses are tested whether to confirm them or not. Statistical data was analyzed using both Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 30.0.0 software by IBM. All the data was checked to confirm its normality and homoscedasticity (equality of variances), as they are necessary conditions to be able to use parametric statistics.

5.1. Characteristics of the Quantitative Research Sample

The quantitative sample distinguished four quantitative variables: Age, Gender, Educational Level, and English Language Level in the Official School of Languages. 25 subjects were situated in the 35 to 50 age range, while 45 were older than 50. There were 23 male and 47 female participants, respectively. There were 2 participants that had a basic educational level, while 26 had secondary studies and 42 had a high educational level. Finally, there were 25 participants learning at the EOI English language level A2 and another 25 learners at language level B2. These are the variables that were taken into consideration for the descriptive part and, specially, for the inferential part and hypothesis testing (See Table 10 below for the characteristics and percentages).

Table 10*Characteristics of the Research sample according to different variables*

Age	N	%
35-50 years old	25	35.71
Older than 50	45	64.29
Gender		
Male	23	32.86
Female	47	67.14
Educational Level		
Basic Studies	2	2.86
Secondary Studies	26	37.14
High Studies	42	60.00
English Level		
A2	35	50.00
B2	35	50.00

5.2. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics show the means or averages for the overall frequency of strategy use in the complete sample and for each of the dimensions or strategy categories in SILL as well as the minimum and maximum punctuation, the Standard Deviation (SD), the Asymmetry, Kurtosis, Normality of the data using the non-parametric Shapiro-Wilk statistic and the reliability by using Cronbach's Alpha. The distribution and curve of the data are visualized in an histogram for each dimension and briefly described afterwards distinguishing the complete sample results, memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies.

In the total or overall distribution of strategies across the complete study sample, the average frequency of strategy use was 2.821 (a moderate frequency, according to Oxford (1990)), with a Standard Deviation (SD) value of 0.56, the minimum being 1.52 and the maximum 4.1. Regarding the form of the distribution of the data, a slight negative asymmetry (-0.274) and a slight negative kurtosis (-0.215) were observed, the curve taking a slightly platykurtic shape. The Shapiro Wilk (SW) test confirmed the normality of the data ($p= 0.618$). A very good reliability was obtained (Cronbach Alpha 0.935). The reliability for the complete study sample, taking into account all 50 items and all 70 participants, was similar to what was found by Hsiao and Oxford (2002) regarding the reliability of the original SILL. Metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used ones ($M=3.051$) and memory strategies the least frequently used ones ($M=2.583$). All six strategy categories had a

moderate frequency of use, as they were situated in between frequency means of 2.5 and 3.5 (Oxford, 1990) (See Table 11 below for the complete data).

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics for the Overall/Complete Sample (O1)

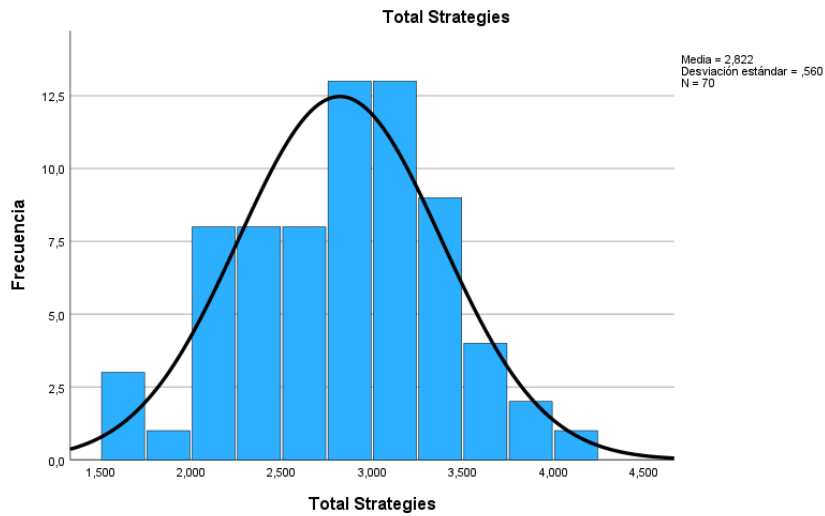
Descriptives	Min	Max	M	SD	Asy.	Ku.	p S-W	α
Memory	1.222	4.333	2.583	0.609	0.304	0.245	0.619	0.737
Cognitive	1.286	4.143	2.776	0.682	-0.237	-0.284	0.468	0.843
Compensation	1.5	5	2.969	0.732	0.198	-0.073	0.571	0.736
Metacognitive	1.111	5	3.051	0.771	0.043	0.011	0.722	0.86
Affective	1	4.5	2.643	0.76	-0.09	-0.23	0.786	0.684
Social	1.167	4.833	2.976	0.77	-0.261	-0.233	0.220	0.77
Total or overall use	1.52	4.1	2.821	0.56	-0.274	-0.215	0.618	0.935

Note:

Min: Minimum; Max: Maximum; M: Mean; SD: Standard Deviation; Asy: Asymmetry; Ku: Kurtosis; p S-W: P- value according to Shapiro-wilk normality test; α: Cronbach Alpha

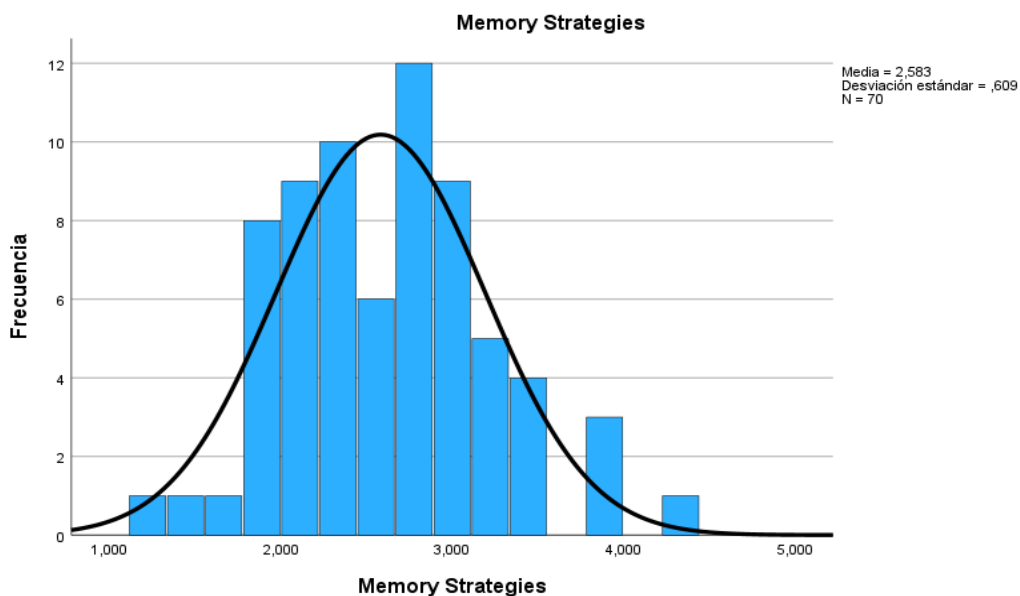
Regarding the form of the distribution of the data, a slight negative asymmetry (-0.274) and a slight negative kurtosis (-0.215) were observed for the complete sample, the curve taking a slightly platykurtic shape. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3
Data distribution Histogram-Total/Overall Strategies



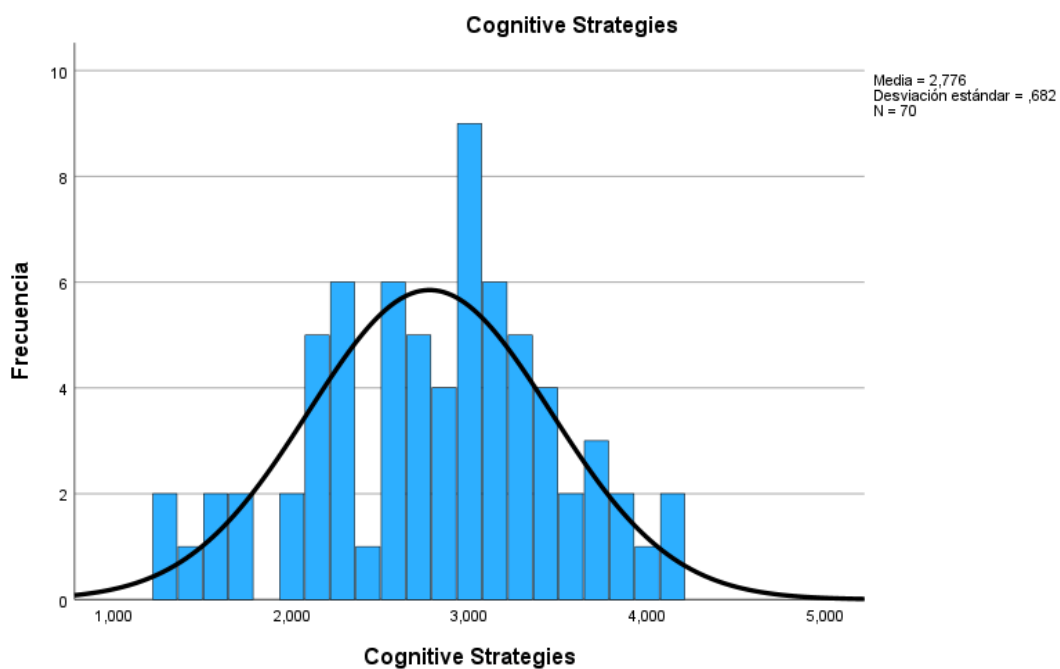
Memory Strategies. In this dimension, the average frequency of strategy use was 2.583 (a moderate frequency) with a Standard Deviation (SD) value of 0.609, the minimum being 1.22 and the maximum 4.33. Regarding the form of the distribution of the data, a slight positive asymmetry ($As = 0.304$) and a slight positive kurtosis ($Ku = 0.245$) were observed, the curve taking a slightly leptokurtic shape. The Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) test confirmed the normality of the data ($p = 0.619$). A good reliability was obtained (Cronbach Alpha 0.737). (See Figure 4 below).

Figure 4
Data Distribution Histogram-Memory Strategies



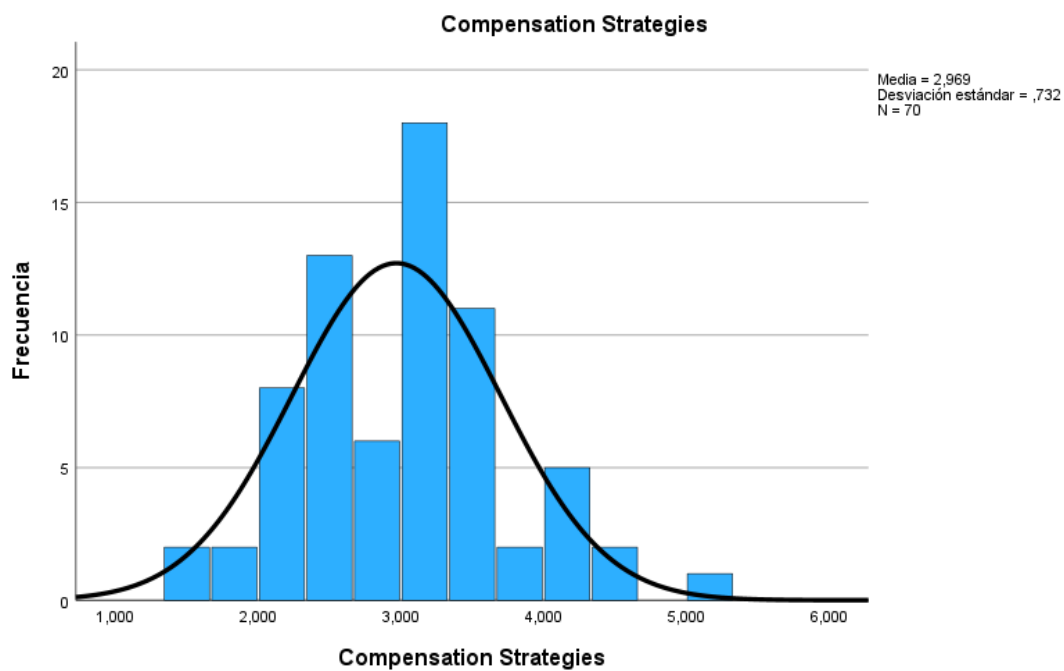
Cognitive Strategies. In this dimension, the average frequency of strategy use was 2.776 (moderate frequency) with a Standard Deviation (SD) value of 0.682, the minimum value being 1.286 and the maximum 4.143. Regarding the form of the distribution of the data, a slight negative asymmetry ($As = -0.237$) and a slight negative kurtosis ($Ku = -0.284$) were observed, the curve taking a slightly platykurtic shape. The Shapiro-Wilk (SW) test confirmed the normality of the data ($p = 0.468$). A good reliability was obtained (Cronbach Alpha 0.843). (See Figure 5 below).

Figure 5
Data distribution Histogram-Cognitive Strategies



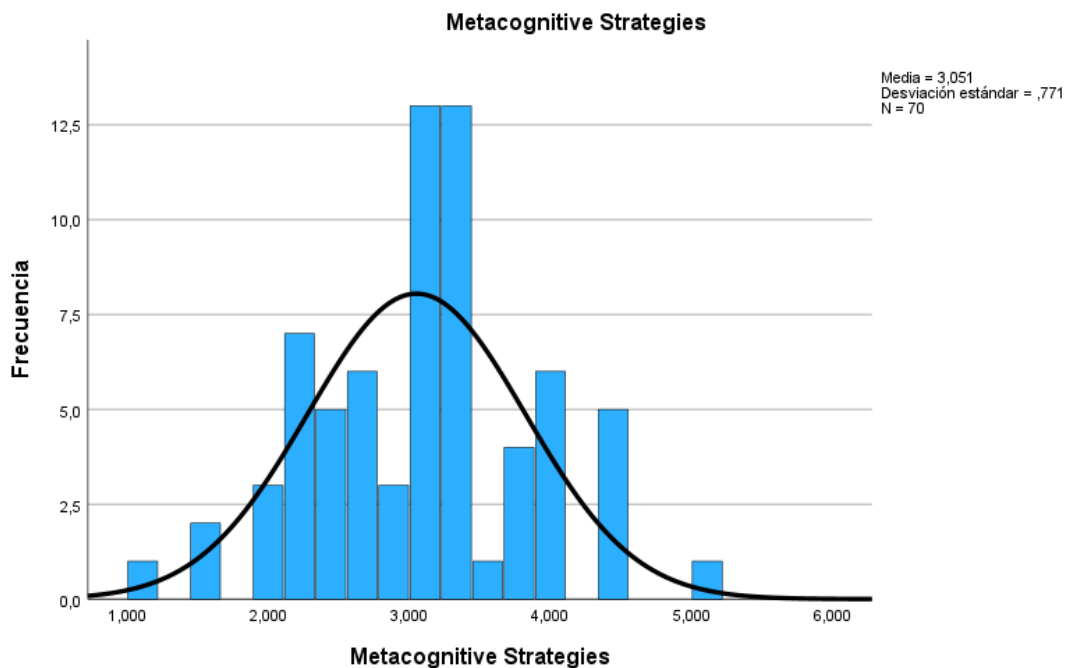
Compensation Strategies. In this dimension, the average frequency of strategy use was 2.969 (moderate frequency) with a Standard Deviation (SD) value of 0.732, the minimum value being 1.5 and the maximum 5. Regarding the form of the distribution of the data, a slight positive asymmetry (0.198) and a very slight negative Kurtosis were observed (Ku= -0.073), the curve taking an almost mesokurtic shape. The Shapiro Wilk (SW) test confirmed the normality of the data (p=0.571). A good reliability was obtained (Cronbach Alpha 0.736). (See Figure 6 below)

Figure 6
Data distribution Histogram-Compensation Strategies



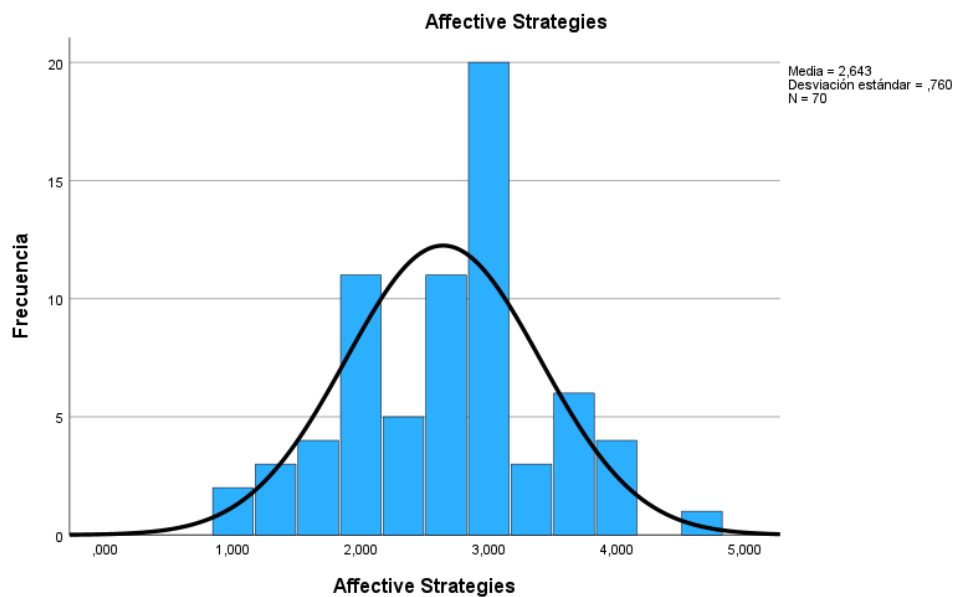
Metacognitive Strategies. In this dimension, the average frequency of strategy use was 3.051 (moderate frequency) with a Standard Deviation (SD) value of 0.771, the minimum being 1.111 and the maximum 5. Regarding the form of the distribution of the data, both the asymmetry (0.043) and kurtosis (0.011) levels showed an almost symmetrical and mesokurtic curve. The Shapiro Wilk (SW) test confirmed the normality of the data ($p= 0.722$). A good reliability was obtained (Cronbach Alpha 0.86). (See figure 7 below).

Figure 7
Data distribution Histogram-Metacognitive Strategies



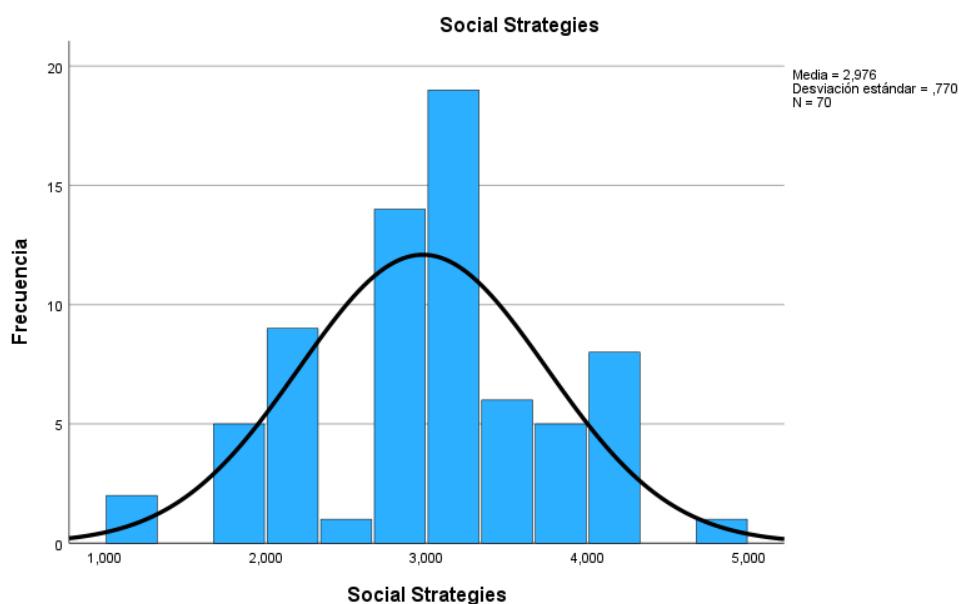
Affective Strategies. In this dimension, the average frequency of strategy use was 2.643 (moderate frequency) with a Standard Deviation (SD) value of 0.76, the minimum being 1 and the maximum 4.5. Regarding the form of the distribution of the data, a slight negative asymmetry (-0.09) and a slight negative kurtosis (-0.23) were observed, the curve taking a slightly platykurtic shape. The Shapiro Wilk (SW) test confirmed the normality of the data ($p= 0.786$). An acceptable reliability was obtained (Cronbach Alpha 0.684). According to Cohen et al. (2018), the reliability level is generally considered to be acceptable if the Cronbach's Alpha is above 0.67. (See Figure 8 below).

Figure 8
Data distribution Histogram-Affective Strategies



Social Strategies. In this dimension, the average frequency of strategy use was 2.976 (moderate frequency) with a Standard Deviation (SD) value of 0.77, the minimum being 1.167 and the maximum 4.833. Regarding the form of the distribution of the data, a slight negative asymmetry (-0.261) and negative kurtosis (-0.215) were observed, the curve taking a slightly platykurtic shape. The Shapiro Wilk (SW) test confirmed the normality of the data ($p= 0.220$). A good reliability was obtained (Cronbach Alpha 0.77). (See Figure 9 below).

Figure 9
Data distribution Histogram-Social Strategies



Statistical averages for all 50 Strategy inventory for Language Learning (SILL) items (strategies) were calculated and ranked according to frequency of use (distinguishing between high, moderate and low frequency, according to Oxford's 1990 criteria), taking into account the complete study sample. As the data shows, only 6 strategies had a frequency of use higher than 3.5 (considered to be a high frequency). Two of the highly frequently used strategies belonged to the metacognitive category and the other two belonged to the compensation category. In contrast, 14 strategies had a frequency of use below 2.5 (which is considered to be a low frequency). 4 among them belonged to the memory category (which consists of 9 items or strategies in total). 30 strategies had a moderate frequency of use (means or averages between 2.5 and 3.5).

Metacognitive strategies had an important presence among the 10 most frequently employed strategies, as four among them were metacognitive. These were: paying attention when encountering English input (M= 3.91), learning from mistakes (M=3.57), planning the schedule to have time to learn and practice English (M=3.40), and trying to find out how to be a better learner of English (M=3.23). Compensation strategies also had a presence among the most frequently used individual strategies. For instance, understanding unknown elements of the target language with the help of context (M=3.84) and paraphrasing or using synonyms (M=3.54). Cognitive strategies generally tended to have a moderate frequency of use. For instance, strategies such as pronouncing or writing a word down several times (M=3.20) and analyzing language structures to find patterns in English (M=3.09). In the case of affective strategies, there were important contrasts. Strategies such as noticing nervousness while practicing English (M=3.20), maintaining motivation to practice English despite having insecurities (M=3.07), and trying to relax while learning or practicing English (M=3.01) all had a moderate frequency of use. In contrast, writing on the emotions related to the learning process had a low frequency of use (M=1.44), being the least frequently employed individual strategy for the complete sample. The use of social strategies also showed contrasts. Practicing the target language with classmates (M=3.14), asking others for corrections (M=3.10), and asking questions to others in English (M=2.81) all had a moderate frequency of use, while practicing English with native speakers (M=1.90) had a low frequency of use. Most memory strategies showed a low frequency. As an exception, there were three that had a high and a moderate frequency of use, respectively: relating new concepts or knowledge to past ones (M=3.61), using new vocabulary words in the context of sentences (M=3.23), and revising English lessons frequently (M=3.17). However, many memory strategies had a low frequency of use. For instance, connecting English words with images (M=2.17), using flashcards to remember new English words (M=2.09), physically acting out new English words (M=1.94), and using rhymes to remember new English words (M=1.60).

Regarding the strategies related to the four language skills, the cognitive item related to writing letters or messages had a low frequency of use (M=2.13). In contrast, reading books or magazines had an average of 2.59 and finding contexts to read in English an average of 2.76, showing a moderate frequency of use. Asking questions to others in English, a strategy related to speaking and listening skills development, also had a higher frequency of use (M=2.81). Another strategy related to listening and speaking skills, watching movies and television in English, also had a higher frequency (M=2.63).

Taking into account the individual strategy use frequencies among the different quantitative variables, writing or pronouncing the new words or expressions several times (cognitive strategy) had an average of 3.09 in the A2 level, compared to 3.31 in the higher B2 level. Similarly, using new words and expressions in different contexts (cognitive strategy) had an average of 3.03 in the A2 level while having an average of 3.2 in the B2 level. Various cognitive strategies had a higher frequency of use in the B2 level. For instance, reading newspapers or books of one's own interest had a mean of 2.2 in the A2 level, while reaching a mean of 2.97 in the B2 language level. At the same time, watching movies and television in English had an average of 2.2 in the A2 level, while reaching a mean of 3.06 in the B2 level. Using synonyms or paraphrasing (compensation strategy) had a notably higher presence in the B2 level (M=3.91) in comparison to the A2 level (3.17). Similarly, the social strategy of practicing English with classmates had a higher presence in the B2 level (A=3.34) than in the A2 level (2.94). Among affective strategies, sharing emotions related to the English learning process with others had a low frequency of use in the case of men (M=2.22), while having a moderate use among women (M=2.51). Similarly, encouraging oneself to participate in the classroom had an average of 3.23 among women while having an average of 2.74 among men. Finally, giving oneself a treat or reward as a result of an English learning success had a higher average of use among females (M=2.85) than among males (M=2.43). Finally, there were certain social strategies that presented a higher frequency of use in the case of older adult learners. Asking other people to slow down or repeat something when a target language content has not been properly understood had an average of 3.52 among the 35 to 50 age group and an average of 3.84 among those that were older than 50. Similarly, asking others for language corrections had a mean of 2.84 among the 35-50 group and a mean of 3.24 among those older than 50. (The complete rankings of individual strategies and their frequency of use according to different variables are available in Appendix F).

The 50 strategies for the complete sample are ranked according to frequency mean and classified according to strategy category below (Table 12):

Table 12

Frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (O1)

Strategy Category	Strategy Num. in SILL	Item description in SILL	Rank	Mean	SD
META	32	<i>Presto atención cuando oigo a alguien hablando en inglés. (I pay attention when someone is speaking English).</i>	1	3.91 (High)	0.913
COM	24	<i>Intento adivinar el significado con la ayuda del contexto cuando no entiendo alguna palabra o expresión. (To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses).</i>	2	3.84 (High)	0.958
SOC	45	<i>Cuando no entiendo algo pido que me lo digan más despacio o que me lo repitan. (If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again).</i>	3	3.73 (High)	1.048
MEM	1	<i>Relaciono lo que ya sé con lo nuevo que aprendo del idioma inglés. (I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English).</i>	4	3.61 (High)	0.822
META	31	<i>Soy consciente de mis errores y uso esa información para mejorar. (I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better).</i>	5	3.57 (High)	0.894
COM	29	<i>Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra, utilizo otra palabra o una frase que signifique lo mismo. (If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing).</i>	6	3.54 (High)	1.086
META	34	<i>Me organizo el horario para tener tiempo de estudiar y aprender inglés. (I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English).</i>	7	3.40 (Moderate)	1.184
META	33	<i>Intento averiguar cómo aprender inglés mejor. (I try to find out how to be a better learner of English).</i>	8	3.23 (Moderate)	1.206

MEM	2	<i>Utilizo las palabras o expresiones nuevas en oraciones para recordarlas.</i> (I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them).	9	3.23 (Moderate)	0.995
AFF	42	<i>Noto si estoy tenso o nervioso cuando uso el inglés o realizo una tarea en inglés</i> (I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English).	10	3.20 (Moderate)	1.223
COG	10	<i>Pronuncio o escribo varias veces las palabras o expresiones nuevas.</i> (I say or write new English words several times).	11	3.20 (Moderate)	1.137
SOC	50	<i>Me interesa la cultura del país o países donde se habla inglés e intento aprender sobre ella.</i> (I try to learn about the culture of English speakers).	12	3.17 (Moderate)	1.251
MEM	8	<i>Repaso habitualmente lo que voy aprendiendo.</i> (I review English lessons often).	13	3.17 (Moderate)	1.049
COG	22	<i>Intento no traducir palabra por palabra para entender lo que escucho o leo</i> (I try not to translate word-for-word).	14	3.17 (Moderate)	1.274
SOC	47	<i>Practico el inglés con otros compañeros.</i> (I practice English with other students).	15	3.14 (Moderate)	1.158
META	38	<i>Pienso sobre cómo voy progresando en mi aprendizaje de inglés.</i> (I think about my progress in learning English).	16	3.13 (Moderate)	1.166
COM	25	<i>Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra utilizo gestos.</i> (When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures).	17	3.13 (Moderate)	1.089
COG	13	<i>Utilizo las palabras o expresiones que conozco en diferentes contextos.</i> (I use the English words I know in different ways).	18	3.11 (Moderate)	0.941
COG	21	<i>Analizo y divido las palabras, frases o textos en las partes que entiendo para comprender su significado.</i> (I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand).	19	3.10 (Moderate)	1.253

SOC	46	<i>Pido a los demás que me corrijan.</i> (I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk).	20	3.10 (Moderate)	1.157
COG	20	<i>Intento analizar estructuras y buscar reglas o patrones que me faciliten mi aprendizaje.</i> (I try to find patterns in English).	21	3.09 (Moderate)	1.260
AFF	40	<i>Me animo a mí mismo a hablar en inglés aunque tema cometer algún error</i> (I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake).	22	3.07 (Moderate)	1.208
COG	18	<i>Antes de leer un texto en profundidad, le echo un vistazo rápido para ver sobre qué va.</i> (I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully).	23	3.01 (Moderate)	1.280
AFF	39	<i>Intento relajarme cuando me pongo nervioso al usar inglés o realizar una tarea en inglés.</i> (I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English).	24	3.01 (Moderate)	1.161
COG	12	<i>Practico los sonidos del inglés.</i> (I practice the sounds of English).	25	2.87 (Moderate)	1.102
MEM	9	<i>Intento recordar nuevas palabras o expresiones en Inglés acordándome de su ubicación en una página, en la pizarra o en una señal callejera.</i> (I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign).	26	2.87 (Moderate)	1.191
META	30	<i>Busco oportunidades fuera del aula para hablar, escuchar, leer o escribir en inglés.</i> (I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English).	27	2.83 (Moderate)	1.063
SOC	49	<i>Realizo preguntas a los demás en inglés.</i> (I ask questions in English).	28	2.81 (Moderate)	1.094
META	36	<i>Busco oportunidades o contextos para leer en inglés todo lo que pueda.</i> (I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English).	29	2.76 (Moderate)	1.256

AFF	41	<i>Me premio o me refuerzo positivamente cuando lo hago bien en inglés. (I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English).</i>	30	2.71 (Moderate)	1.309
COG	15	<i>Veo películas y televisión en inglés. (I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English).</i>	31	2.63 (Moderate)	1.206
COG	19	<i>Busco palabras o expresiones en mi lengua materna parecidas a las nuevas en inglés. (I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English).</i>	32	2.60 (Moderate)	1.134
COG	16	<i>Leo revistas o libros en Inglés que me interesan.(I read for pleasure in English).</i>	33	2.59 (Moderate)	1.257
COM	27	<i>Leo en Inglés sin mirar en el diccionario cada nueva palabra. (I read English without looking up every new word).</i>	34	2.57 (Moderate)	1.211
MEM	4	<i>Me hago una imagen mental de una situación en la que se utilice una palabra o expresión nueva para recordarla. (I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used).</i>	35	2.56 (Moderate)	1.137
COG	11	<i>Intento hablar como un nativo. (I try to talk like native English speakers.)</i>	36	2.56 (Moderate)	1.326
COG	14	<i>Inicio conversaciones en inglés.(I start conversations in English).</i>	37	2.47 (Low)	1.126
META	37	<i>Me marco objetivos claros para mejorar mis habilidades en inglés.(I have clear goals for improving my English skills).</i>	38	2.46 (Low)	1.188
COM	28	<i>Intento predecir o adivinar lo que vendrá a continuación cuando escucho o leo en inglés.(I try to guess what the other person will say next in English).</i>	39	2.43 (Low)	1.137
AFF	44	<i>Comparto con alguien cómo me siento cuando practico inglés. (I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English).</i>	40	2.41 (Low)	1.489

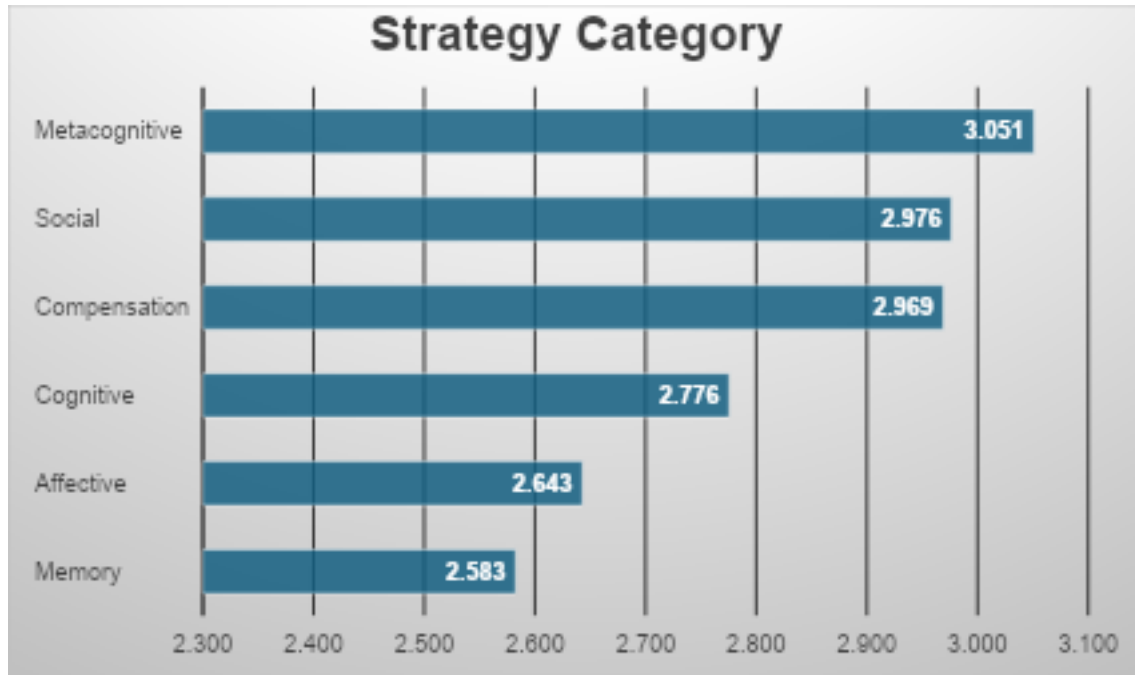
COG	23	<i>Hago resúmenes de lo que escucho o leo. (I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English).</i>	41	2.33 (Low)	1.164
COM	26	<i>Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra me la invento. (I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English).</i>	42	2.30 (Low)	1.196
MEM	3	<i>Relaciono como suena una palabra o expresión nueva con una imagen o dibujo para recordarla. (I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word).</i>	43	2.17 (Low)	1.129
META	35	<i>Busco personas con las que practicar mi inglés. (I look for people I can talk to in English).</i>	44	2.17 (Low)	1.179
COG	17	<i>Escribo mensajes, notas, cartas en inglés para comunicarme con otras personas. (I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English).</i>	45	2.13 (Low)	1.141
MEM	6	<i>Utilizo láminas o tarjetas para recordar palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I use flashcards to remember new English words).</i>	46	2.09 (Low)	1.349
MEM	7	<i>Represento físicamente o gesticulo las nuevas palabras o expresiones (I physically act out new English words).</i>	47	1.94 (Low)	1.048
SOC	48	<i>Pido ayuda a hablantes nativos (I ask for help from English speakers).</i>	48	1.90 (Low)	1.052
MEM	5	<i>Utilizo rimas para recordar palabras nuevas (I use rhymes to remember new English words).</i>	49	1.60 (Low)	0.841
AFF	43	<i>Escribo sobre mis sentimientos y emociones al aprender inglés.(I write down my feelings in a language learning diary).</i>	50	1.44 (Low)	0.845

Note: Own elaboration following Barrios and Montijano (2017)

Following with the descriptive quantitative data of this study, Figure 10 below shows the strategy frequencies for each of the 6 SILL strategy categories or dimensions, ranked from highest to lowest frequency averages in a bar graphic.

Figure 10

Frequency of strategy use according to strategy category in the complete sample (O1)



As can be seen in Figure 10, in the complete sample, metacognitive strategies were the ones most frequently used ($M=3.051$). In contrast, memory strategies were the least frequently used ones ($M=2.583$). All strategy categories had a moderate frequency of use, as they were situated in between mean frequencies of 2.5 and 3.5 (Oxford, 1990).

5.3. Inferential Statistics

The parametric statistic independent samples t-test was used to check for statistically significant strategy use mean differences in all six strategy categories and in the overall frequency of use regarding four variables: age, gender, English language level in the Official Language School, and educational level. Both the normality and homoscedasticity criteria necessary to use parametric statistics were confirmed. The non-parametric Shapiro-Wilk test was used to check for the normality of the data, as the participants in each of the groups of the different variables (men, women, and so on) generally had less than 30 subjects (Galindo, 2020). At the same time, the Levene test was used to check for the equality of variances (homoscedasticity) (Galindo, 2020). When the number of participants in a group is

above 30, normality of the data distribution can be assumed, according to the Central Limit Theorem (Díaz, 2006).

To compare strategy use frequency means between adult and older adult learners in all 6 strategy categories and in the overall frequency, an independent sample t-test was used. To be able to use this parametric statistic, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to check for the normal distribution of the data. The normality of the data was confirmed by the test, as all variables and groups had a p-value above 0.05 (See Table 13 below).

Table 13
Normality test for the Age variable

Normality test				
Category	Age	Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	p-value
Memory	35-50 years old	0.984	25	0.947
	Older than 50	0.965	45	0.196
Cognitive	35-50 years old	0.957	25	0.359
	Older than 50	0.966	45	0.206
Compensation	35-50 years old	0.948	25	0.226
	Older than 50	0.969	45	0.272
Metacognitive	35-50 years old	0.958	25	0.384
	older than 50	0.962	45	0.145
Affective	35-50 years old	0.982	25	0.924
	Older than 50	0.975	45	0.429
Social	35-50 years old	0.980	25	0.878
	Older than 50	0.955	45	0.076
Total	35-50 years old	0.957	25	0.355
	Older than 50	0.978	45	0.557

Note: df= Degrees of freedom

The Levene test for the equal distribution of variances was used to check whether the homoscedasticity criteria necessary to use the independent samples t-test parametric statistic was confirmed. The equality of variances was confirmed by the test as all dimensions had a p-value above 0.05. (See Table 14 below). (For the complete data regarding Levene tests, see Appendix G).

Table 14
Levene test for the Age Variable

Category		Levene test for equality of variances	
		F	p-value
Memory	Equal variances are assumed	0.113	0.738
Cognitive	Equal variances are assumed	2.490	0.119
Compensation	Equal variances are assumed	0.492	0.486
Metacognitive	Equal variances are assumed	1.145	0.288
Affective	Equal variances are assumed	1.657	0.202
Social	Equal variances are assumed	3.761	0.057
Total	Equal variances are assumed	1.956	0.167

An independent sample t-test was carried out to find possible significant mean (average) differences in frequency of strategy use between adult (35 to 50 years old) and older adult (learners over 50) study participants. As can be seen in Table 15, there were no statistically significant differences, contrary to what was initially hypothesized. There was a slightly higher use of memory strategies among the 35-50 age group (M=2.644) and of social strategies in the older than 50 group of older adults (M=3.048), but far from reaching statistical significance in both cases. Metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used ones in both groups. (See Table 15).

Table 15

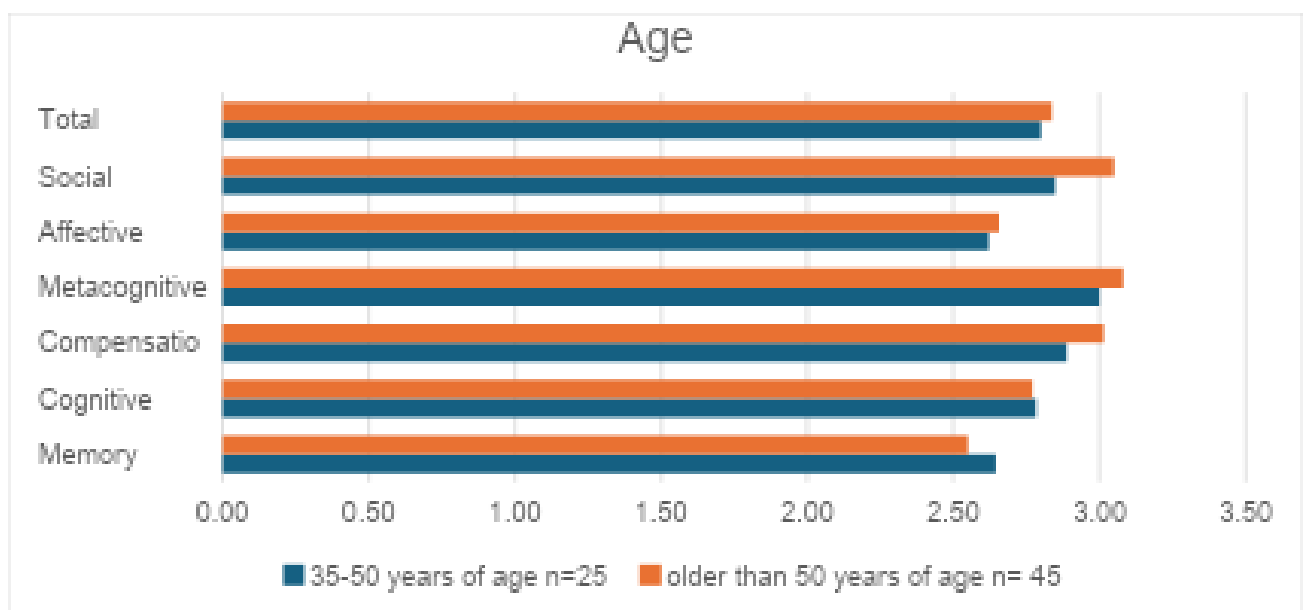
Differences in the frequency mean of strategy use according to Age (independent samples t-test) (O3)

	35-50 years old n=25		Older than 50 n= 45		t	df	p- value	Cohen' s d
	M	SD	M	SD				
Memory	2.644	0.633	2.548	0.600	0.631	68	0.530	0.157
Cognitive	2.783	0.755	2.771	0.647	0.067	68	0.947	0.017
Compensation	2.887	0.836	3.015	0.674	-0.699	68	0.487	-0.174
Metacognitive	3.000	0.822	3.079	0.749	-0.408	68	0.684	-0.102
Affective	2.620	0.897	2.656	0.683	-0.186	68	0.853	-0.046
Social	2.847	0.908	3.048	0.682	-1.050	68	0.298	-0.262
Overall use	2.798	0.598	2.835	0.544	-0.267	68	0.790	-0.067

Note: M: Mean or average; SD: Standard Deviation; t: t-student value; p: significance df: degrees of freedom;d: Cohen's d

Figure 11 shows a statistical clustered column bar graphic distinguishing strategy use frequency differences according to age, both in the overall use and in each of the strategy categories. A slightly higher use of social strategies among learners that were older than 50 can be observed. At the same time, a slightly higher use of memory strategies in the 35-50 age group can be observed.

Figure 11
Differences in the frequency of strategy use according to Age



To compare strategy use frequency means between male and female learners in all 6 strategy categories and in the overall frequency, an independent sample t-test was used. To be able to use this parametric statistic, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to check for the normal distribution of the data. The normal distribution of the data was confirmed by this test, as all variables and groups had a p-value over 0.05 (See Table 16).

Table 16
Normality test for the Gender variable

Category	Gender	Normality test		
		Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	p-value
Memory	Male	0.944	23	0.217
	Female	0.978	47	0.504
Cognitive	Male	0.954	23	0.361
	Female	0.982	47	0.696
Compensation	Male	0.976	23	0.833
	Female	0.98	47	0.601
Metacognitive	Male	0.986	23	0.98
	Female	0.984	47	0.769
Affective	Male	0.974	23	0.783
	Female	0.976	47	0.426
Social	Male	0.966	23	0.6
	Female	0.971	47	0.29
Total	Male	0.959	23	0.442
	Female	0.986	47	0.841

Note: df= Degrees of freedom

The Levene test for the equal distribution of variances was used to check whether the homoscedasticity criteria necessary to use the independent samples t-test parametric statistic was confirmed. The equality of variances was confirmed by the test as all dimensions had a p-value above 0.05. (See Table 17).

Table 17
Levene test for the Gender variable

Category		Levene test for equality of variances	
		F	p-value
Memory	Equal variances are assumed	0.641	0.426
Cognitive	Equal variances are assumed	1.051	0.309
Compensation	Equal variances are assumed	2.346	0.130
Metacognitive	Equal variances are assumed	1.229	0.271
Affective	Equal variances are assumed	0.311	0.579
Social	Equal variances are assumed	0.470	0.495
Total	Equal variances are assumed	0.882	0.351

An independent sample t-test was carried out to find possible significant mean (average) differences in frequency of strategy use between male and female study participants. There were no statistically significant differences. As can be seen in Table 18 below, the use of affective strategies was considerably higher among female learners (M=2.727), but it did not reach statistical significance (p value= 0.188). In the case of men, affective strategies had a low frequency of use (M=2.471). Memory (M=2.671) and compensation (M=3.080) strategies had a slightly higher frequency mean of strategy use among men, but without reaching statistical significance in either case. Compensation strategies (M=3.080) were the most frequently used ones among male learners and metacognitive strategies (M=3.059) were the most popular ones among females.

Table 18

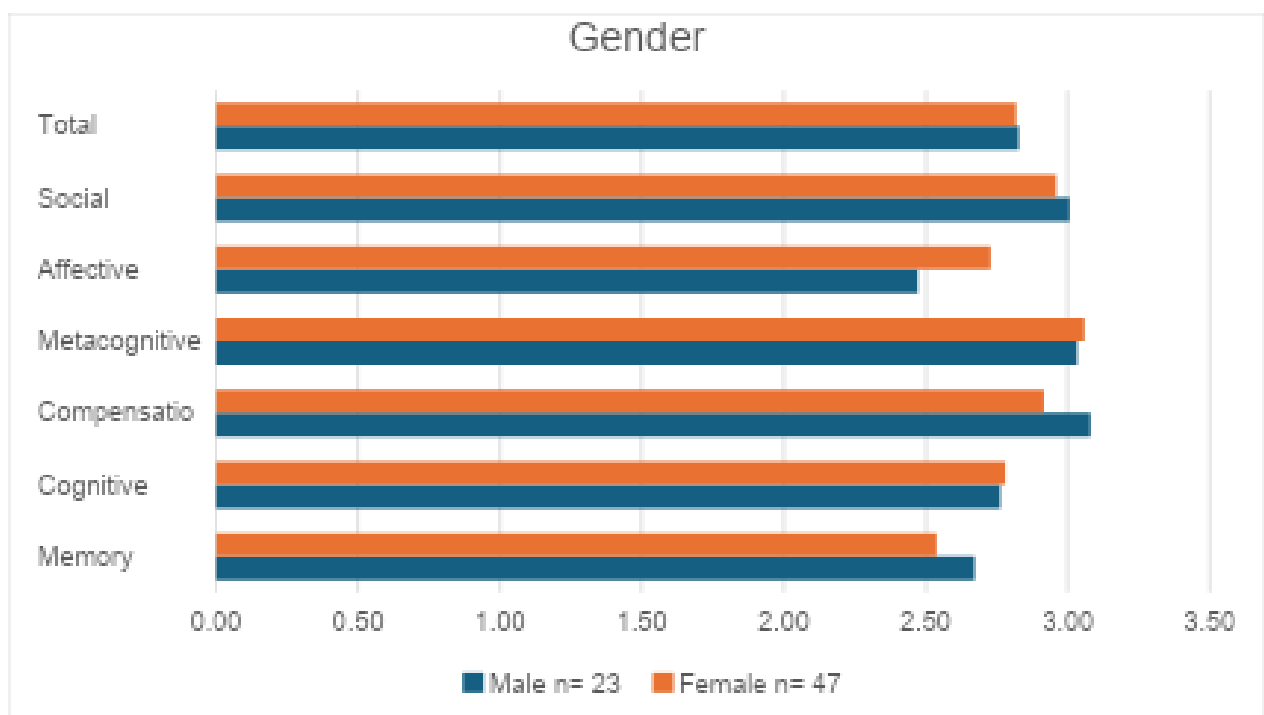
Differences in the frequency mean of strategy use according to Gender (independent samples t-test) (03)

	Male n= 23		Female n= 47		t	p-value	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Memory	2.671	0.532	2.539	0.645	0.853	0.397	0.217
Cognitive	2.764	0.597	2.781	0.726	-0.098	0.922	0.025
Compensation	3.080	0.577	2.915	0.798	0.883	0.380	0.225
Metacognitive	3.034	0.670	3.059	0.823	-0.128	0.899	0.033
Affective	2.471	0.770	2.727	0.749	-1.331	0.188	0.339
Social	3.007	0.712	2.961	0.804	0.234	0.815	0.060
Overall use	2.828	0.499	2.819	0.592	0.063	0.950	0.016

Note: M:Mean or average; SD: Standard Deviation; t: t-student value; p:significance; d: Cohen's d

Figure 12 below shows a statistical clustered column bar graphic distinguishing strategy use frequency differences according to gender, both in the overall or total use and in each of the strategy categories or dimensions. A higher use of affective strategies among females is clearly visible. At the same time, a slightly higher use of compensation and memory strategies among males is visible in the figure.

Figure 12
Differences in the frequency of strategy use according to Gender



To compare strategy use frequency means between A2 and B2 level learners of English in all 6 strategy categories and in the overall frequency, an independent sample t-test was used. To be able to use this parametric statistic, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to check for the normal distribution of the data. The normal distribution of the data was confirmed by this test, as all variables and groups had a p-value over 0.05 (See Table 19 below).

Table 19
Normality test for the English Language Level Variable

English Language Level at the EOI		Normality Test		
		Statistic	df	p-value
Memory	A2	0.984	35	0.871
	B2	0.982	35	0.815
Cognitive	A2	0.984	35	0.879
	B2	0.964	35	0.309
Compensation	A2	0.968	35	0.381
	B2	0.967	35	0.362
Metacognitive	A2	0.983	35	0.838
	B2	0.977	35	0.671
Affective	A2	0.978	35	0.685
	B2	0.969	35	0.407
Social	A2	0.985	35	0.897
	B2	0.948	35	0.095
Total	A2	0.988	35	0.966
	B2	0.952	35	0.135

Note:
df=Degrees of freedom

The Levene test for the equal distribution of variances was used to check whether the homoscedasticity criteria necessary to use the independent samples t-test parametric statistic was confirmed. The equality of variances was confirmed by the test as all dimensions had a p-value above 0.05. (See Table 20 below).

Table 20
Levene test for the English Language Level variable

Category		Levene test for equality of variances	
		F	p-value
Memory	Equal variances are assumed	0.331	0.567
Cognitive	Equal variances are assumed	0.027	0.870
Compensation	Equal variances are assumed	1.727	0.193
Metacognitive	Equal variances are assumed	2.473	0.120
Affective	Equal variances are assumed	1.134	0.291
Social	Equal variances are assumed	0.978	0.326
Total	Equal variances are assumed	1.960	0.166

An independent sample t-test was carried out to find possible significant mean (average) differences in frequency of strategy use between EOI English language levels A2 and B2. As can be seen in Table 21, frequency of strategy use was higher in the B2 language level in the case of all strategy categories, except for the memory ones. The frequency was also higher in the B2 level in the case of the overall frequency of use. The higher use of cognitive strategies in the B2 level (M=2.969) in comparison to the A2 level (M=2.582) was statistically significant (p- value=0.016), with a moderate Cohen's d effect size (0.589). Metacognitive strategies were the most popular ones among both the A2 and B2 level learners (M A2= 2.997; M B2=3.105).

Table 21

Differences in the frequency mean of strategy use according to English Language Level (independent samples t-test) (O2)

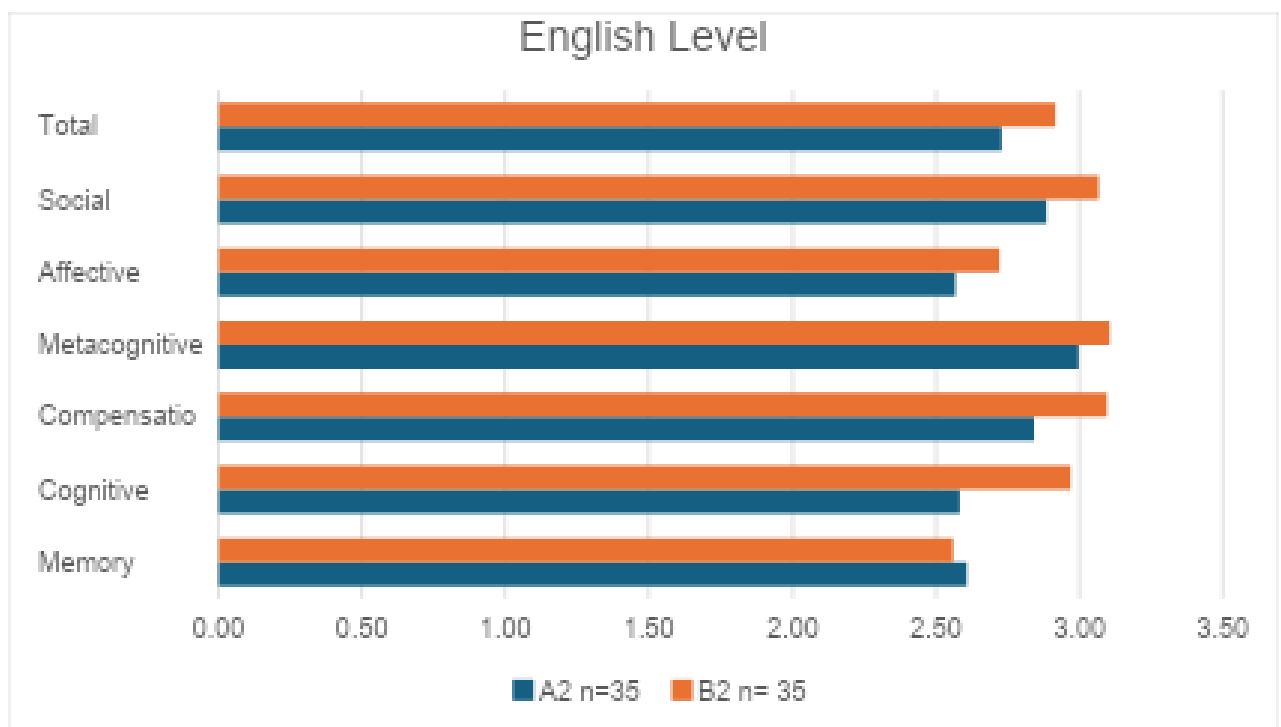
	A2 n=35		B2 n= 35		t	p-value	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Memory	2.606	0.650	2.559	0.575	0.325	0.746	0.078
Cognitive	2.582	0.664	2.969	0.652	-2.465	0.016*	0.589
Compensation	2.843	0.792	3.095	0.655	-1.453	0.151	0.347
Metacognitive	2.997	0.871	3.105	0.664	-0.583	0.562	0.139
Affective	2.567	0.677	2.719	0.838	-0.837	0.406	0.200
Social	2.886	0.820	3.067	0.717	-0.983	0.329	0.235
Overall use	2.727	0.608	2.917	0.497	-1.429	0.158	0.341

Note: M: Mean or average; SD: Standard Deviation; t: t-student value; p: significance; d: Cohen's d

* p-value significant at 0.016

Figure 13 below shows a statistical clustered column bar graphic distinguishing strategy use frequency differences according to English language level, both regarding overall strategy use and in each of the 6 SILL strategy categories or dimensions. The figure shows a clear higher use of cognitive strategies in language level B2, a difference that was statistically significant. At the same time, a higher use of strategies in the higher language level (B2) for each dimension is visualized, except for the memory strategy category.

Figure 13
Differences in the frequency of strategy use according to English Language Level



To compare strategy use frequency means between intermediate educational level and high educational level learners of English in all 6 strategy categories and in the overall frequency, an independent sample t-test was used. To be able to use this parametric statistic, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to check for the normal distribution of the data. The normal distribution of the data was confirmed by this test in most cases, as all variables and groups but one had a p-value over 0.05. In the case of the total or overall strategy use dimension among high educational level learners, normality was not confirmed by a small margin (p-value=0.048). However, the Central Limit Theorem (Díaz, 2006) states that normality can be assumed if the number of subjects in a given group of a variable is above 30. In this case, the number of subjects was 42 and, therefore, normality was assumed (See Table 22 below).

Table 22
Normality test for the Educational Level variable

Normality Test				
Current Educational Level		Shapiro-Wilk		
Strategy		Statistic	df	p-value
Memory	Intermediate Studies	0.955	26	0.303
	High Studies	0.981	42	0.701
Cognitive	Intermediate Studies	0.966	26	0.529
	High Studies	0.965	42	0.224
Compensation	Intermediate Studies	0.969	26	0.590
	High Studies	0.985	42	0.849
Metacognitive	Intermediate Studies	0.954	26	0.293
	High Studies	0.972	42	0.394
Affective	Intermediate Studies	0.953	26	0.270
	High Studies	0.947	42	0.050
Social	Intermediate Studies	0.946	26	0.191
	High Studies	0.981	42	0.699
Total	Intermediate Studies	0.973	26	0.699
	High Studies	0.946	42	0.048

Note: df=Degrees of freedom.

The Levene test for the equal distribution of variances was used to check whether the homoscedasticity criteria necessary to use the independent samples t-test parametric statistic was confirmed. The equality of variances was confirmed by the test as all dimensions had a p-value above 0.05. (See Table 23).

Table 23
Levene test for the Educational Level variable

		Levene test for equality of variances	
		F	p-value
Memory	Equal variances are assumed	1.873	0.176
Cognitive	Equal variances are assumed	0.013	0.909
Compensation	Equal variances are assumed	0.237	0.628
Metacognitive	Equal variances are assumed	0.411	0.524
Affective	Equal variances are assumed	2.438	0.123
Social	Equal variances are assumed	1.229	0.272
Total	Equal variances are assumed	0.625	0.432

An independent sample t-test was carried out to find possible statistically significant mean (average) differences in frequency of strategy use between learners with intermediate studies and learners with a high educational level. There were only 2 cases in the study sample that had a basic educational level and, therefore, they were not taken into consideration. As can be seen in Table 24 below, frequency of strategy use was generally higher among those learners with high studies (except for the memory strategy dimension), although the results did not reach statistical significance, except for the category of compensation strategies, in which those learners with high studies had a statistically significant higher frequency of strategy use ($M=3.163$; $p= 0.011$), with a moderate Cohen's d effect size (0.651). Moreover, compensation strategies were the most popular ones among high educational level learners ($M=3.163$), followed by metacognitive strategies ($M=3.143$). At the same time, social strategies were the most popular ones among intermediate level learners ($M=2.910$), followed by the metacognitive ones ($M=2.897$).

Table 24

Differences in frequency mean of strategy use according to Educational Level (independent samples t-test) (O3)

	Intermediate Studies n= 26		High Studies= 42		t	p-value	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Memory	2.607	0.691	2.590	0.568	0.110	0.913	0.027
Cognitive	2.698	0.693	2.816	0.692	-0.686	0.495	0.171
Compensation	2.705	0.726	3.163	0.688	-2.609	0.011*	0.651
Metacognitive	2.897	0.768	3.143	0.783	-1.264	0.211	0.316
Affective	2.494	0.900	2.742	0.669	-1.302	0.197	0.325
Social	2.910	0.853	3.032	0.734	-0,623	0.535	0.156
Overall use	2.719	0.583	2.893	0.551	-1.235	0.221	0.308

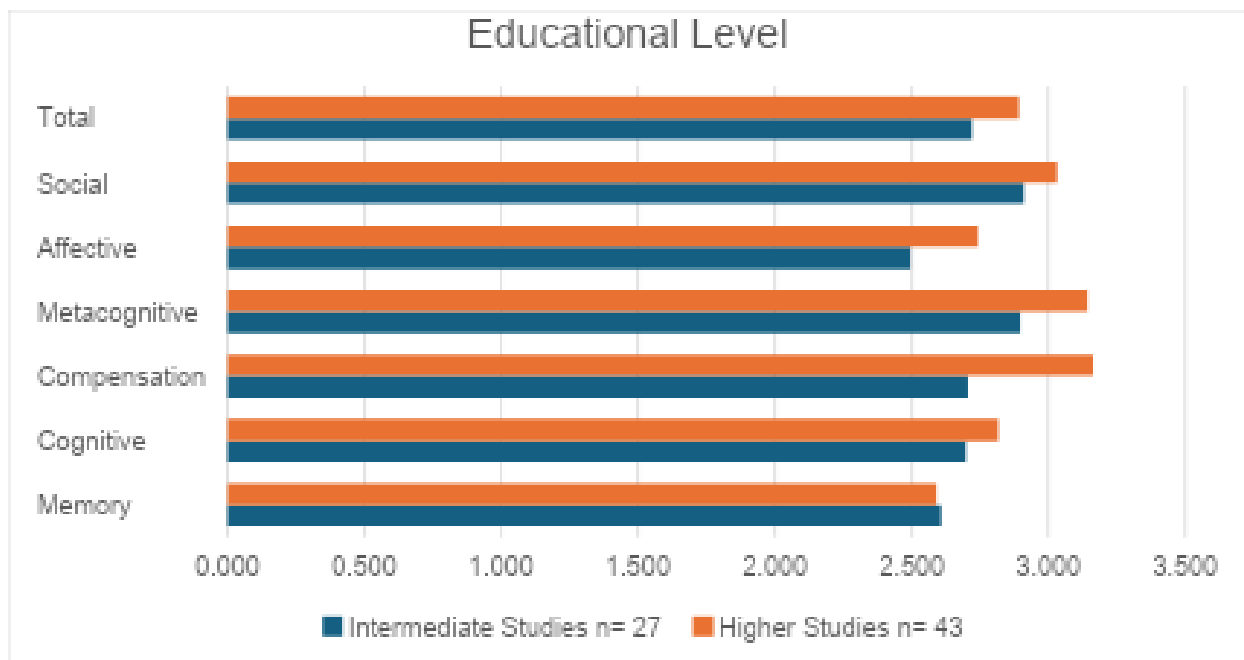
Note: M=Mean or average; SD= Standard Deviation; t=t-student value; p=significance; d= Cohen's d value.

*p-value significant at 0.011

Figure 14 shows a statistical clustered column bar graphic distinguishing strategy use frequency differences according to educational level, taking into account both the overall or total frequency of strategy use and the frequency for each of the six strategy dimensions. This figure shows a clear higher use of compensation strategies among high educational level learners. At the same time, a higher use of strategies among the high educational level learners is observed in all dimensions, except for the memory strategy category.

Figure 14

Differences in frequency of strategy use according to Educational Level



5.4. Hypothesis testing and confirmation

After the inferential data has been presented, it is necessary to check whether the initially formulated quantitative hypotheses have been fulfilled or not and explain the reasons in the data for that. According to the inferential data of the study, none of the 3 hypotheses initially formulated was confirmed by the quantitative data. There was a similar use of strategies among men and women in the overall frequency of strategies. There were almost no differences and no statistically significant differences regarding age in the use of Language Learning Strategies, including metacognitive strategies. There was a higher overall use of strategies in the case of English language level B2, but it did not reach the statistical significance mentioned in Hypothesis 2. (See Table 25).

Table 25
Hypothesis Testing/Confirmation (O2, O3)

Hypothesis	Confirmed?	Reason	Statistic used
H1. There is a statistically significant higher use of Language Learning Strategies among women than among men.	NO	There is almost no difference between genders in the overall frequency of Language Learning Strategy use.	Independent samples t-test (parametric)
H2. There is a statistically significant higher use of Language Learning Strategies among learners at level B2 than among learners at level A2 of the Common European Framework for Languages.	NO	There is a higher use of overall learning strategies in the B2 English level, but it does not reach statistical significance.	Independent samples t-test (parametric)
H3. There is a statistically significant higher use of metacognitive Language Learning Strategies among older adult learners (learners over 50 years of age) than among adult learners below this age range, which are the ones situated in the 35 to 50 age range.	NO	There is almost no difference in the frequency of strategy use according to age, both in the overall frequency and in each of the categories.	Independent samples t-test (parametric)

The quantitative descriptive data of the study showed that the participants tended to use strategies with a moderate overall frequency ($M=2.8$). All six strategy categories of the SILL had a moderate frequency of use, with metacognitive strategies being the most popular ones ($M=3.051$) and memory strategies the least frequently used ones ($M=2.583$). In the inferential part of the quantitative data, there were not many statistically significant data differences, with the exception of the higher use of cognitive strategies in language level B2 ($M=2.969$, $p\text{-value}=0.016$) and the higher use of compensation strategies among high educational level learners ($M=3.163$, $p\text{-value}=0.011$). Strategy use was highest in the compensation category in the case of high educational level learners ($M=3.163$) as well as in the metacognitive category in the case of high educational level learners ($M=3.143$) and in the case of the B2 English level learners ($M=3.105$). Although memory strategies were the least frequently used strategy category for the complete sample ($M=2.583$), when dividing the results by variables, strategy use was lowest in the case of the affective category among men ($M=2.471$) and among intermediate educational level learners ($M=2.494$). Contrary to what was initially expected, none of the 3 quantitative hypotheses was confirmed by the data. However, a general trend towards a higher use or more frequent use of strategies in the higher English language level (B2) and among high educational level learners was observed, with the exception of memory strategies. Females were also found to use affective strategies more frequently in general. At the same time, the general relevance of metacognitive strategies for the complete sample, both as a category and in the case of several individual strategies, was observed. Finally, various compensation and social strategies related to compensating for target language knowledge gaps and avoiding communication breakdowns were also among the most popular individual strategies.

6.DISCUSSION

In the discussion section of this thesis, the different objectives enumerated in the methodology section will be resolved by contrasting the original data of the study with different references of the theoretical framework. Each of the objectives of the study and their related variables will be resolved one by one in this section.

Objective 1 analyzed the general type and frequency of Language Learning Strategies used by the study participants, taking into account the complete sample. Regarding the beliefs a learner can have related to a learning process, Dickinson (1995) states that those learners who believe that making efforts in a learning process is more important than having an innate ability tend to persist for longer periods of time and may have better learning outcomes. In the present research sample, a majority of respondents stated that making efforts to learn and having frequent contacts with a target language were more important to learn successfully than having an innate ability or specific talent for language learning. However, the overall frequency of strategy use across the complete study sample remained medium or moderate ($M=2.8$), following Oxford's criteria to classify SILL strategy use frequency (1990). All six strategy categories or dimensions had a moderate frequency of use with means between approximately 2.5 and 3. This finding may be explained by the fact that there may be a lack of awareness about the existence or correct use of certain strategies among the learners that participated in this study (Barrios & Montijano, 2017). At the same time, MacIntyre and Noels (1996) explained that the perceived difficulty of use of certain strategies could influence their ultimate frequency of use. The use of certain strategies, such as practicing frequently with native speakers of English ($M=1.9$), present important limitations in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning context in which this study was set. The limitations regarding the development of autonomous or self-regulated learning as well as the time constraints that some learners face to devote to learning also have to be taken into account to explain the current findings. In fact, in the qualitative answers, certain participants reported spending as much as 15 to 20 hours a week practicing or learning English outside the formal learning classroom, while others reported almost none or very few hours. There was a pattern of certain retired older adults spending more time in English learning activities. It also has to be taken into account that the amount of interest or motivational intensity in the learning activity and the importance given to it tend to influence the amount of time and resources devoted to it, thus, influencing strategy use and its frequency. These can present relevant interindividual variations (MacIntyre and Noels, 1996; Ushioda, 2008). Zhang (2009) explained that

Language Learning Strategies can help overcome the problems adults face when learning a new language. In the present investigation, learning strategies were portrayed as valuable techniques that may help engaging with the target language in various ways. However, their full potential was not developed by the participants, probably owing to a lack of awareness about the existence and/or appropriate use of certain strategies. In this sense, authors such as Oxford and Amerstorfer (2018) as well as Plonsky (2011) have insisted on the value of incorporating language strategy teaching into the classroom syllabus in order to foster self-regulated language learning and try to improve language competence levels.

In the total sample, metacognitive strategies were the ones that were most frequently employed ($M= 3.051$). In contrast, memory strategies were the least frequently employed ones ($M=2.583$). These results match what was found by Lee and Oxford (2008) and Risueño et al. (2015, 2016) in their respective studies with adult language learners. In a similar way, García Herrero and Jiménez Vivas (2014) found that metacognitive strategies were the most frequently employed ones among young adult learners of EFL in a Spanish university context. In the same study, memory strategies were the least frequently used ones. Similarly, Nguyen and Godwyll (2010) found in their study of university majors learning English as a Second Language (ESL) in the United States that metacognitive and social strategies were the most frequently employed ones and memory as well as affective strategies the least frequent ones, in the same manner as in the present study. Metacognitive strategies are considered to be relevant to foster learner autonomy (Tajima & Waldhoff, 2010) and learning self-regulation (Wenden, 1998). In this sense, authors such as Muñoz (2010) have stated that adults are cognitively developed individuals with an ability for learning self-regulation. Similarly, Macaro (2001) stated that adults would have an advantage to use learning management and support strategies such as the metacognitive ones because of their higher intellectual development and usual higher experience with formal learning. Therefore, the present results, coming from a sample consisting only of adult learners, are in line with previous research and theoretical literature. Both middle-aged adults and older adults showed a very similar frequency of metacognitive strategy use, with both age groups finding the metacognitive strategies the most popular ones. These results match with what was found by García (2017) and Mora et al. (2018), in the Brazilian and Ecuadorian EFL learning contexts respectively, regarding the higher prevalence of metacognitive strategies among older adult learners. The use of metacognitive strategies was highest among B2 English level learners ($M=3.105$) and among learners with a high educational level ($M=3.143$). Regarding this issue, Wu (2008) found that the frequency of metacognitive strategy use tends to augment in higher language levels. It is worth noting that the memory strategies were also the least mentioned strategy category in the

semi-structured interview with only 3 strategies belonging to this dimension being mentioned, repeating words, using flashcards, and contextualizing new words or expressions in sentences. In this sense, McGillivray (2021) mentioned that the use of metacognitive awareness and metacognitive strategies could help to overcome or compensate for deficits related to age in memory abilities in the case of older adults. Moreover, Lee and Heinz (2016) explained that, in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning contexts, the use of metacognitive strategies becomes important in order to plan learning and find more opportunities for target language input as there is usually a scarcity of it.

Among individual strategies, paying attention when encountering English input (M=3.91), understanding unknown elements of the language with the help of context (M= 3.84), asking conversation partners to repeat or clarify messages (M= 3.73), relating new knowledge to previous concepts (M= 3.61) learning from one's own mistakes (3.57,) and paraphrasing or using synonyms (M= 3.54) were the most frequently used individual strategies for the complete study sample. In contrast, writing about emotions related to English learning (M=1.44), using rhymes to remember new words (M= 1.6), asking native English speakers for help (M=1.9), physically acting out new words or expressions (M=1.94), as well as using flashcards for novel English word or expression learning (M= 2.09) were the least frequently employed learning strategies. It is of interest to note that three of those least frequently used individual strategies belong to the memory strategy dimension, the least frequently employed strategy category in the total sample. These results are relatively similar to the ones found by Barrios and Montijano (2017) in the Spanish university EFL learning context and by Risueño et al. (2016) with adult Spanish learners of EFL. The individual strategy of paying attention when encountering or receiving English language input (M= 3.91) was also the most frequently used individual strategy in the studies by Barrios and Montijano (2017), Barrios (2015), and Chang (2011).

It could be stated that some of the more frequently used Language Learning Strategies by the research participants tended to be strategies that are relatively easy to use and can be practiced immediately, as in the case of some compensation strategies and some social strategies. For instance, understanding unknown language elements with the help of context (M=3.84), asking others to repeat or clarify messages (M=3.73), using gestures to clarify or convey meaning (M=3.13,) or noticing input in English (M=3.91). They are usually related to trying to understand the target language despite having knowledge limitations, making a communicative exchange easier, or solving a communication breakdown as well as noticing the presence of the target language (Barrios & Montijano,

2017). Reflecting on the language learning process was also a relatively frequently used strategy (M=3.13), as were learning from feedback and mistake correction given by experts (M=3.57), relating new to previous knowledge (M=3.61), organizing daily life to make time for English learning (M=3.40), contextualizing new words or expressions in sentences (M=3.23), finding out how to be a better learner of English (M=3.23), as well as repeating new English words (M=3.20). In contrast to reflecting on the learning process, establishing clear objectives to improve English skills had a relatively low frequency of use (M=2.46). Metacognitive strategies had an important presence among the ten most frequently employed individual strategies, as four among them were metacognitive. These were paying attention when someone is speaking in English (M=3.91), noticing the mistakes to learn from them (M=3.57), organizing the daily schedule to have time to learn English (M=3.40), and trying to find out how to be a better learner of English (M=3.23). Moreover, there seemed to be an important interindividual variability in the learning strategies used by the study participants and their frequency. Individual variability is considered to be important among adults engaging in SLA (Birdsong & Mollis, 2001). These differences could be attributed to the learners' different learning objectives or motivation, degree or level of intensity of their motivational orientations, different personalities as well their diverse life and educational experiences (Barrios & Montijano, 2017; Birdsong & Mollis, 2001). At the same time, as Barrios and Montijano (2017) pointed out, the degree of familiarity or awareness regarding a given strategy can influence its level or frequency of use, with interindividual variations also influencing this issue.

Language Learning Strategies can be, as stated by Lee and Heinz (2016), a resource to try to overcome the limitations of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning context. For instance, the qualitative data showed that various strategies were used by the learners in the present study to overcome the scarcity for oral communicative or naturalistic practice in this context. Among others, creating informal language practice groups with classmates, using AI-based apps for speaking skills practice, finding private teachers, and even creating monologues about various topics were mentioned. The quantitative data revealed certain difficulties to initiate conversations in English among the participants (M=2.47), difficulty to find people to practice the target language (M=2.17), and lack of opportunities for practice with native speakers (M=1.90). Although authors such as López Medina (2010) explained that native speaker teachers sometimes tend to be present in the classrooms of the Official Schools of Languages, the results of the present study showed that their presence was probably limited and insufficient. These circumstances probably made it necessary for the study participants to practice English with the people closest on a daily basis, such as classmates (M=3.14). In this sense, Long (1991) explained

that practicing the oral and communicative skills of the target language is important from the beginning of the learning process. The strategy of trying to sound like native speakers of English had a moderate frequency of use in the complete sample ($M=2.56$). The scarcity of contact with native speakers may make it difficult for the study participants to try to achieve a native-like level. Indeed, as explained by Montrul et al. (2008), the majority of interlanguage grammars of both child and adult second language starters tend to be incomplete compared to natives and fossilize at a certain time. However, authors such as Baildon (2018) do not see this circumstance as necessarily problematic as long as the non-native learner is able to communicate successfully. Moreover, the strategy of learning about the culture of native English speakers had a moderate frequency of use ($M=3.17$) for the complete sample. The use of this social strategy (Oxford, 2003) was particularly related to the will of travelling to foreign countries, according to some testimonies of the qualitative part. In fact, learning English to help in the learner's travels to different foreign countries was the most popular motivational orientation of the research participants.

Regarding the frequency of use of the learning strategies related to the four language skills, in the qualitative data results, certain among the study participants expressed that the development of the writing skills was not as important or useful for them as the development of the other three language skills (as in the case of Interviewed Participant 2). This hesitance was especially related to writing long and complex texts. This opinion seems to be in accordance with the low frequency of use (Oxford, 1990) in the complete sample of the SILL cognitive item related to writing letters or messages ($M=2.13$). In a similar manner, making summaries of target language texts or information also had a low frequency of use ($M=2.33$). In contrast, reading books or magazines had an average of 2.59 and finding contexts to read in English an average of 2.76 (showing a moderate frequency of use). Asking questions to others in English, a strategy related to speaking and listening skills development, also had a higher frequency of use ($M=2.81$). Another strategy related to listening and speaking skills, watching movies, and television in English, also had a higher frequency ($M=2.63$). Indeed, Hashim et al. (2018) remarked on their importance in order to develop listening and speaking skills. Regarding strategies related to writing skills, writing on the emotions related to the second language learning process, an affective strategy, was the least frequently used learning strategy out of the 50-item SILL questionnaire ($M=1.44$). Meanwhile, other affective strategies had a moderate frequency of use. Noticing nervousness while practicing English had an average of 3.20, keeping motivation to participate in class an average of 3.07 and trying to relax when feeling afraid of using English an average of 3.01.

The relevance of the new technologies or digital technologies, understood by Reinders and White (2016) as resources that enable a more autonomous and less formal language learning, was important in the case of the present study. In particular, they could be seen as resources that allow the learner for more language input and to use more learning strategies. Among other strategies, reading and listening to the news online, listening to podcasts about various topics, listening to songs, using artificial intelligence-based Elsa Speak to practice Speaking skills, watching videos on grammar, and cultural tips as well as using Whatsapp classroom chats were mentioned by the study participants. Authors such as Kenny (2022) have pointed out that digital technologies could be an important opportunity to improve the learning of a foreign language. However, making an adequate use of those resources was seen as necessary to guarantee this fact. In the present study, although they were generally valued in positive terms, some participants mentioned that using the new technologies was a challenge for the older learners as they were not used to them in their learning experiences of the past in certain cases. In this sense, Dominicé (1996) explained that the cultural and social context in which previous learning has taken place tends to influence the mindset of the adult learner.

Objective 2 compared the frequency of strategy use according to English language level in the CEFR (A2 vs B2). In the present research sample, those learning in the higher English language level (B2) ($M=2.917$) had a higher overall frequency of strategy use than those learning in the lower language level (A2) ($M=2.727$), although the results did not reach statistical significance. In this sense, it can be stated that most studies over the decades have shown that those students who use more Language Learning Strategies with a higher frequency tend to have higher target language proficiency levels (Ho & Peacock, 2003; Nunan & Wong, 2011; Oxford & Amerstorfer, 2018). In the same way, Song and Cheng (2006) consider that strategy use and language achievement may both be cause and consequence of each other, with higher strategy use promoting language proficiency and vice versa. In the present sample, strategy use was higher in the case of the higher language level in all strategy categories or dimensions, except for memory strategies, which had a slightly higher frequency of use in the EOI English language level A2, but the difference did not reach statistical significance in this case. In this sense, Oxford (2003) argued that the use of memory strategies is generally more typical in lower language levels in order to build basic structures and vocabulary. By the same token, it is important to mention that the higher use of cognitive strategies among the learners in the B2 level did reach statistical significance in the present study (A2 $M= 2.582$, B2 $M= 2.969$; $p\text{-value}= 0.016$). In this sense, Saks and Leijen (2018) reached the same conclusions regarding the higher use of cognitive strategies in the higher English level in their study. Similarly, the

importance of cognitive strategies among higher level learners was also found by Risueño et al. (2015) in the Spanish EFL learning context. Metacognitive strategies were also found to have a higher prevalence among higher English level learners in the current study, but the results did not reach statistical significance. In this sense, the results are relatively similar to those found out by Wu (2008). In the case of the present study, both affective and compensation strategies had a higher prevalence in the higher English level B2. This result is contradictory regarding the usual higher presence of affective and compensation strategies in lower language levels, according to various authors, as a way of keeping motivation levels despite having language difficulties and as a way of compensating a lack of knowledge of certain elements of the target language (García & Ruíz, 2005; Oxford, 2003; Papadopoulou, 2018). However, it is consistent with the idea of having a higher frequency use of strategies while having a higher language proficiency level (Ho & Peacock, 2003; Nunan & Wong, 2011). Moreover, Mora et al. (2018) explain that older adults tend to show a certain hesitance to engage in social learning activities or use social learning strategies. In contrast, in the present study, this hesitance was generally associated with having a basic or lower language level, according to certain views expressed in the qualitative data. Similar findings were presented by Nyikos and Oxford (1989) and Oxford (2003), which pointed out that the use of social strategies generally tends to be higher when learners have more experience with the target language, usually having a higher proficiency level and feeling more confident about learning and practicing with others.

In the case of individual strategies and their frequency of use according to language level, writing or pronouncing the new words or expressions several times (cognitive strategy) had an average of 3.09 in the A2 level, compared to 3.31 in the higher B2 level. Similarly, using new words and expressions in different contexts (cognitive strategy) had an average of 3.03 in the A2 level while having an average of 3.2 in the B2 level. Moreover, paying attention when encountering language input in English, a metacognitive strategy, had an average of 3.77 in the A2 level, while increasing to a mean of 4.06 in the B2 level. The metacognitive strategy of finding opportunities to engage with the target language outside the classroom also increased its frequency of use, from a mean of 2.6 in the A2 level to a mean of 3.06 in the higher B2 language level. Interestingly, using synonyms or paraphrasing (compensation strategy) had a notably higher presence in the B2 level ($M=3.91$) in comparison to the A2 level (3.17). This finding could be interpreted in the sense that more language experience tends to give more language knowledge and, therefore, more resources in order to use different alternative words or paraphrasing (Oxford, 2003). Various cognitive strategies related to the development of language skills had a higher frequency of use in the B2 level. For instance, reading newspapers or books of one's own interest had a

mean of 2.2 in the A2 level, while reaching a mean of 2.97 in the B2 language level. At the same time, watching movies and television in English had an average of 2.2 in the A2 level, while reaching a mean of 3.06 in the B2 level. In a similar way, the social strategy of practicing English with classmates had a higher presence in the B2 level (M=3.34) than in the A2 level (M=2.94), which can be interpreted in the sense that having more language experience and a higher level makes learners more confident about practicing the target language with other people, as previously stated (Nyikos & Oxford, 1989; Oxford, 2003). Asking questions to others in English, another social strategy, also had a higher prevalence in the B2 level (M=3.06) than in the A2 level (M=2.57). Finally, the qualitative testimonies showed that strategies related to translation and code-switching between the target language and the learners' native language tend to be more common among lower level learners, as explained by Baildon (2019).

Objective 3 compared the differences in the frequency of strategy use according to age, gender and educational level. Contrary to what was hypothesized in the early phases of this study, there were no significant and no major strategy use differences in the case of age differences, both in the overall frequency (35-50 years old M= 2.798; Older than 50 years old M=2.835) and in each of the categories. There was a slightly higher use of social learning strategies among older adult learners (M=3.048), but it did not reach statistical significance. As a possible exception to this generalized pattern, there were several individual social strategies that presented a higher frequency of use in the case of older adult learners. Asking other people to slow down, clarify or repeat something when a target language content has not been properly understood had an average of 3.52 among the 35 to 50 age group and an average of 3.84 among those that were older than 50, showing a high frequency of use in both cases. Similarly, asking others for language corrections had a mean of 2.84 among the 35-50 group and a mean of 3.24 among those older than 50. The first finding can be interpreted in the sense that, as Liu and Wen (2010) pointed out, repetition of certain structures, ideas and concepts may be necessary in the case of older adults. For instance, a relatively similar cognitive strategy, pronouncing or writing down new English words several times, had a mean of 3.30 among older adults and a mean of 3.09 among adults (showing a moderate frequency of use in both cases). Martínez (2006) also explained that the cognitive deceleration older adults experience may require making adjustments in their speed of learning. In the qualitative part of this study, different participants remarked the importance of learning at their own pace, and even repeating learning courses in order to consolidate knowledge. Moreover, the second finding previously mentioned can be interpreted in the sense that, as Kuklewicz and King (2018) remarked, older adults tend to appreciate being guided by others, particularly experts, in a language learning process. The

importance of social learning for older adults was remarked by these authors. In this sense, in the present study, the affective strategy of sharing the emotions related to the learning process with others had an average of 2.06 among adults between 35 and 50 years of age, showing a low frequency of use, while having an average of 2.62 among older adults, showing a moderate frequency.

With regards to the strategy use differences according to gender, another noteworthy finding of the present study may be the fact that female learners tended to make a higher use of affective learning strategies ($M= 2.727$ in women; $M=2.471$ in men). However, the results did not reach statistical significance by a relatively small margin ($p\text{-value}= 0.188$). As early as in 1988, Oxford et al. explained that women tend to give more importance to the affective or emotional aspects in a language learning process than men. Similar findings were presented by Fong and Goh (1997) as well by Sison (2022) in the Chinese EFL learning context and the Filipino ESL learning context, respectively. However, as Griffiths (2010) mentioned, these results have to be taken cautiously because there are many individual differences in language learning that may be more important than general learning patterns associated with gender. In this sense, it is important to mention that there were almost no differences between men and women in the overall frequency of strategy use (Male $M=2.828$, Female $M= 2.819$). Among individual strategies, sharing emotions related to the English learning process with others had a low frequency of use in the case of men ($M=2.22$) while having a moderate use among women ($M=2.51$). Similarly, encouraging oneself to participate in the classroom had an average of 3.23 among women while having an average of 2.74 among men. Finally, giving oneself a treat or reward as a result of an English learning success had a higher average of use among females ($M=2.85$) than among males ($M=2.43$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the major differences in strategy use between men and women were found in the affective category, with females generally being more willing to use affective strategies. Although Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1990) found in their study that females tend to be more prone to using metacognitive strategies such as goal setting, planning, and record keeping, in the present study, there were almost no differences in the use of metacognitive strategies between the two genders. Both genders valued using metacognitive strategies and did so in almost equal terms.

In the present investigation, those learners with a high educational level tended to use Language Learning Strategies with a higher frequency than intermediate educational level students in all strategy dimensions except the memory strategies and also in the overall use. However, only the compensation strategies had a statistically significant higher frequency of use ($M= 3.163$, $p\text{-value}= 0.011$). These results are relatively similar to those

found by Agustin et al. (2021) in the Indonesian EFL learning context. There was a positive correlation between strategy use and academic achievement in their study. It can be stated that the fact that not many studies have addressed this specific issue until the present time made it difficult to contrast and discuss.

After the analysis of the data has been completed, it can be concluded that none of the three hypotheses initially formulated was confirmed by the quantitative data. There was a similar use of strategies among men and women in the overall frequency of strategies. There were almost no differences regarding age in the use of Language Learning Strategies, including metacognitive strategies. There was a higher overall use of strategies in the case of English language level B2, but it did not reach the statistical significance mentioned in Hypothesis 2. However, it can be stated that two general patterns were found in the quantitative data: a general higher use of Language Learning Strategies in the higher EOI English language level (B2) and a general higher use of Language Learning Strategies among high educational level learners, with the exception of memory strategies. Furthermore, metacognitive strategies were the most popular ones in the complete study sample and in most of the groups of the four quantitative variables. Moreover, several individual metacognitive strategies were among the most frequently employed ones.

Objective 4 aimed at understanding the influence of different contextual and individual variables in the use of Language Learning Strategies. Regarding the influence of age and educational level in English learning engagement, in the quantitative research sample, a total of 42 learners (59.2% of the sample) had college or university-level studies (high studies). This finding seemed to be in accordance with Parisi's (2010) idea that those adults who have a higher previous educational attainment level tend to be more eager to engage in new complex intellectual and educational activities. The educational level usually influences the subsequent ability and ease of learning. In this sense, Baltes et al. (2006) explained that the educational and cultural knowledge accumulated during the lifespan can compensate to an extent the deficits in memory or processing speed that appear in older age. In the qualitative data of this inquiry, various participants mentioned that they used to be teachers or that their professional careers were related to the educational world in various ways. Others expressed having completed university or high level studies of different kinds. Some among them expressed that their accumulated cultural and educational knowledge made it easier to understand or to learn certain concepts during their learning activities, a similar idea to what was mentioned by Koutska (2024), although they did express having memory or phonetic difficulties of various kinds at their age. At the same time, the fact that no people over 69 answered the study seemed to be in accordance with what Villar and

Celdrán (2013) said regarding the usual lesser presence of mature or older senior adults in formal learning activities. In this sense, Pikhart et al. (2021) explained that the presence of older adult learners in second language learning activities usually lessens after the age of 70.

Related to the relationship between the learning of English and the concept of active aging, in the present inquiry, certain study subjects (for instance, Interviewed Participant 6) expressed the fact that keeping active as older adults or past a certain age has almost become an obligation to fulfill, linking this idea with social pressures and various commercial interests. Generally speaking, most of the study participants valued the idea of active aging and the value of learning new concepts and skills at their age. In a similar way, Andrew (2012) noted that, currently, society increasingly expects adults and older adults to remain as active, independent, and productive as possible. Similarly, learning English could be related to the concepts of gaining cultural capital and social prestige (Bourdieu, 1977). In this sense, various study participants expressed the perception that second language learning was becoming an increasingly popular activity among seniors. In fact, in the present study, learning English was generally seen as a useful and desirable activity that helps dealing with an increasingly globalized and diverse world. The importance of learning one or various foreign languages to face a globalized, multilingual, and multicultural context is remarked by the lifelong learning programs of the European institutions (European Commission, 2019). Authors such as Martinez (2006) remarked on the relevance of lifelong learning to adapt a person's skills to new or rapidly changing economic and cultural circumstances. Moreover, authors such as Mühlig-Versen et al. (2012) and Celdrán and Villar (2013) have remarked that adult and older adult learning programs and activities are important tools to keep senior citizens as active members of society and still have an important potential for consolidation and growth. Indeed, Greve and Staudinger (2006) explained that most older adults have an ability to maintain their basic cognitive functions and their basic social networks. Lifelong learning could foster these abilities, helping the senior learners to maintain or augment their self-esteem levels and keep their sense of identity.

Regarding the influence of age on the English learning process, although being an older learner was generally seen as a characteristic that allows the learner to have more time available, more intrinsic motivation, and higher educational experience, the belief that learning a language is easier during the first decades of life was still quite pervasive among the participants, similar to what was found by Horwitz (1999). Generally speaking, many among them, specially, in the case of the oldest learners, expressed that cognitive and learning difficulties become more present with advancing age, particularly regarding a

deterioration of the memory functions and a slowing of the processing speed. This would tend to cause difficulties in new vocabulary acquisition and in the development of listening/speaking skills, making it necessary to use specific strategies such as a frequent repetition and practice of the classroom exercises at home in order to manage these difficulties, according to the data of this study. In contrast, Koutska (2024) explained that, although their reaction times tend to be slower, adult learners could have an advantage to communicate appropriately in different social contexts, benefiting from their higher life and educational experience (something similar to what was explained by Interviewed Participant 1).

Intergenerationality in the classroom was valued in positive terms by some participants, according to the testimonies given in the qualitative part. It was linked to the general positive value of learning alongside a diverse group of individuals and was also related to learning new social insights about the novelties of the contemporary world, as explained by Newman and Hatton-yeo (2008). However, this opinion was not unanimous among the participants and certain among them expressed that they generally preferred to learn with people of a similar age and characteristics. In this sense, Rámirez Gómez (2016) justified the possibility of creating specific second language learning classrooms for older adult learners, taking into account their specific learning needs. This idea was presented as a demand directed at the Official School of Languages in the case of certain study subjects (for instance, Interviewed Participant 7).

Regarding learning motivation, intrinsic motivation was prevalent among the participants in the study. Ennis et al. (2013) remarked on the positive value of this kind of learning motivation to take on a learning task, by having an inner sense of interest and challenge. In fact, many study participants explained that they were learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), either to retake a past interest that was not completely fulfilled (Keinan, 1996) or to overcome personal frustrations and intellectual deficiencies (Ruíz Calatrava, 2009). In this sense, Mora and Abad (2016) explained that augmenting their self-esteem and self-satisfaction levels is common among the adult and older adult learners of a foreign language. Finally, Teimouri et al. (2022) explained that, as humans age, they tend to become more focused on achieving long-term goals and perseverating to achieve those goals, something that can be related to a long learning process such as foreign language learning. In this sense, some participants expressed that they understood English learning as a long-term process that requires patience and perseverance in the learning efforts.

The language learning context of the Official Language Schools was generally perceived as both intellectually and academically demanding by the participants in the current study. It was seen as a learning context that could guarantee a systematic and complete learning of a target language, not just offer a space for socialization and entertainment. Thus, it could be stated that the learners that chose this particular learning context were looking for an intellectual challenge of considerable dimensions. In fact, seeking an intellectual challenge was the second most common motivational orientation among the participants, after having it easier while traveling. Seeking a space for entertainment and socialization was ranked in third place. These findings generally match with what was mentioned by Pot et al. (2019), Słowik-Krogulec (2019), and Pikhart et al. (2021) regarding the second language learning motivations of older adult learners. Some of the study participants remarked the value of English language learning as providing a space for both cognitive stimulation and socialization. Precisely, second language learning has been proposed as a possible cognitive intervention for seniors (Antonioni et al., 2013). At the same time, having frequent and quality social contacts during older age is considered to be a resource to improve an adult's well-being (Fratiglioni et al., 2004). For certain study participants, learning English was considered as an opportunity to have a new attitude in life, by opening to a new culture as well as to new ways of thinking, feeling and acting, as explained by Brown (2000). Moreover, it could be considered as a challenging and potentially transformative learning activity (Mezirow, 1990).

Regarding adult second language learning preferences, Kuklewicz and King (2018) found out in their study that older adult second language learners usually prefer to learn in formal language learning classrooms in which they can share the learning experience with other learners and be guided by expert language teachers. They considered this learning context as the base or foundation necessary to continue with their more personal or autonomous work afterwards. In the case of the present investigation, many participants expressed similar points of view, remarking on the need to learn alongside others and be guided by experts (for instance, Interviewed Participants 2 and 5). The positive value of formal explicit instruction for adult second language learners was remarked by authors such as Doughty (2003) and Bley-Vroman (2009). At the same time, the relevance of personal involvement in learning and practicing the target language outside the formal classroom was also pointed out by various participants in the present study (for instance, Interviewed Participants 1 and 7). In this sense, Muñoz (2010) remarked that adults do have a potential ability for learning self-regulation. The quantitative data showed that engaging with English in various ways outside the classroom had a moderate frequency of use ($M=2.83$). In the case of the study by Kuklewicz and King (2018), the only older adult that was learning English in a

totally self-directed manner, because of personal reasons, expressed a difficulty in progressing in his learning process and noted that he would prefer to learn in the company of others. In the same study, participants explained that they generally prefer lessons with a slower pacing and a frequent revision of previous concepts. This finding also appeared in the present investigation, as reviewing English lessons regularly had a moderate frequency of use ($M=3.13$) and was the 13th most popular individual strategy of SILL for the complete sample. Indeed, Kuklewicz and King (2018) explained that older adults could have problems with activities that demand working to strict time limits such as exams.

Continuing with the issue of adult engagement in second language learning, Ruiz Calatrava (2009) explained that the adult and older adult learning a new language usually wants to communicate in it from the very beginning, even if the language level is still basic or limited. The sense of usefulness or practicality is important for the learners situated in this age-range, as the perspective is usually changed from “I have to” to “I want to” learn. This sense of the need of finding practicality and immediacy of application of the learned knowledge was mentioned in various qualitative testimonies of the present study and is also present in Knowles’ (1980) concept of Andragogy. Moreover, many in the current study expressed a desire to communicate and engage with English in everyday situations or while traveling to a foreign country (as in the cases of Interviewed Participants 5, 6 and 7). A desire to have access to more information and opportunities for leisure was also present. In this sense, Eguz (2019) remarked that the older adult language learner usually wants to communicate in the relevant contexts as well as to have access to more information, entertainment, and services. Related to this idea, certain research participants expressed the fact that they tend to lose attention in the classroom if they do not find certain learning contents or materials of interest. An idea related to what was pointed out by Wlodkowski (2008). Similarly, McGilivry (2021) explained that older adult learners remember information more accurately if they perceive it as interesting and relevant or important. Discussing what the teacher can do related to adult language learners, Wlodkowski (2008) explains that it is important for learners to relate their learning process to their daily life experiences, problems and interests. In this sense, it could be argued that most adult and older adult learners of English surveyed for this inquiry were not focused on passing exams to achieve official certificates. In certain cases, it could have been a way of demonstrating that the learning objectives had been fulfilled, but most of the learners expressed that they were interested in the value of the learning process in itself and the positive contributions it could make to their daily lives in a practical sense.

To finish with the issue of adult and older adult engagement in second language learning, it is interesting to note that authors such as Mora et al. (2018) pointed out that older adults tend to use strategies related to metamotivation. This means that they tend to be aware of the reasons they have for learning a particular subject and keep those reasons in mind during the learning activities. This circumstance was observed during the present study. Similarly, certain study participants expressed a frequent reflection on the sense and pros and cons of the learning activity, even considering the possibility of leaving the activity in certain cases or not continuing to learn in a higher language level. This finding can be related to the relevance of metacognition and the use of metacognitive strategies in the case of adults previously mentioned. Authors such as Alexander and Garner (1989) had explained that adults may drop a learning activity that is not considered to be as sufficiently beneficial or relevant. In this sense, Ehrman and Oxford (1995) explained that, for motivation to remain strong, language learners need to see a match between the learning outcomes and the efforts made during the learning process. In the case of second language learning, the participants in the present study generally acknowledge that learning a new language is an activity that demands important amounts of both time and effort. Similarly, Cozma (2015) explained that adults can sustain their learning motivation levels during prolonged periods of time, ensuring the persistence of learning efforts, as long as their learning goals remain clear and they can see a path to fulfill their objectives.

Related to the English learning self-regulation and evaluation abilities of the participants, in some answers, there was a certain confusion between the concepts of self-regulated and self-directed language learning, with some learners understanding self-regulated as fully self-directed learning (as in the cases of Interviewed Participants 3 and 6). Fully self-directed learning was considered to be something difficult to achieve by a majority of the participants, preferring learning alongside others and some kind of expert direction. The study participants reflected on the language learning process and expressed relatively clear learning motivations and objectives, as well as a willingness to plan different actions and strategies in order to achieve them. However, error correction and, especially, learning evaluation were generally expected to be carried out by teachers and experts in language teaching/learning. This idea was similar to what was mentioned by Green and Oxford (1995). In certain cases, higher proficiency learners or proficient English speakers were also expected to help dealing with those processes. In this sense, learners particularly appreciated having support structures such as close family members and friends with a good command of English. According to the findings of the qualitative part, it can be stated that lower language level learners were generally less prone to learning self-regulation, as explained by Wu (2008), generally needing more expert help and direction.

In relation to the affective issues of a second language learning process, Shao et al. (2020) explained that positive emotions and affectivity tend to support the process of learning a new language. In the current study, many participants expressed a need for the learning process to be as pleasant and enjoyable as possible, including the relationships established with classmates and teachers, trying to understand their emotions and needs. The need of maintaining motivation to participate in the classrooms and in English practicing activities despite having insecurities was also remarked. This dimension of positive affectivity would be especially important for older adults, according to Braver et al. (2014). However, certain participants expressed that second language learning can be an emotionally complex process that requires affective balance. One of the participants explained that taking breaks from the English learning activities was sometimes necessary to avoid excessive frustration. In this sense, it could be stated that a strong learning motivation and having clear learning objectives can help to withstand the emotional changes that happen during the language learning process (Shao et al., 2020). In this sense, the relevance of affective problems for adult second language learners was already pointed out by authors such as Marinova-Todd et al. (2000).

Objective 5 aimed at understanding the learning objectives of the study participants as well as their learning strengths and difficulties. The learning objectives of the majority of the study participants tended to be realistic, consistent with the general learning tendencies of older adults, according to Martínez (2006). They generally learned a foreign language to apply the new knowledge to their daily life circumstances and as a source of personal satisfaction. Reading comprehension and oral communication abilities were preferred by the learners. Most learners expressed a desire to be able to communicate in English at an average or intermediate proficiency level. They were usually conscious about the fact that mastering a new language is a long process that requires considerable amounts of both time and effort, usually preferring to establish modest and achievable short-term objectives, along the lines of the realistic life expectations more common among older adults (Baltes et al., 2006), as they tended to be more conscious about their personalities and their life circumstances. In fact, adult and older adult learners can generally decide by themselves the language level or level of language complexity they want to achieve or the aspects or skills of the target language they prefer to focus on, as they are not usually answering to external requirements or pressures. They tend to have an important control over their learning objectives. In the case of the learning methodologies and strategies they use, it could be hypothesized that they could be influenced by the particular learning context in which they are learning, especially regarding learning methodologies in the context of a formal learning

classroom. Although Hashim and Sahil (1994) explained that the teaching methodologies employed in a certain classroom usually affect the learner's strategy choices, nowadays Language Learning Strategies could have a more autonomous or self-regulated development, by using informal practice opportunities and digital resources (Reinders & White, 2016).

With regards to the issue of second language learning strengths and difficulties in the case of adult and older adult learners, according to a study by Grasso (2017), listening and speaking skills tend to be particularly related to emotional and anxiety problems. In the current inquiry, the results were similar, particularly, regarding speaking skills. Moreover, they were also perceived as the more complicated language skills, pointing to a lack of opportunities for a naturalistic practice in the case of speaking skills and general comprehension problems in the case of listening skills. Phonetic problems were also pointed out by the participants, which can be connected to what Saito (2015) and Dollman et al. (2020) said regarding the advantage of early or young learners of a second language for pronunciation and phonology. Similarly, authors such as Osle (2020) found out that older adults learning a foreign language tend to have difficulties with listening and speaking abilities because of a deceleration of the processing speed as well as with timed exercises, phonetic coding and new vocabulary retrieval. However, in the case of the present study, different participants expressed the fact that listening and speaking skills as well as communicatively-oriented activities were now more present in their English learning than in their past learning experiences, which were generally based around grammar and written exercises. Opportunities for target language input were also considered to be greater in the present moment, thanks to the development of the internet and digital resources. In contrast, the opportunities for a frequent naturalistic communicative practice remained scarce in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning context. Reading was found to be the language skill in which the majority of the participants of the present study felt more comfortable with, as it allowed them to have more time available and to use various support resources. Grammar rules and exercises also tended to be generally well-understood, even among lower level learners, according to the qualitative data. Related to this finding, the two SILL cognitive items related to the understanding of grammar rules and language structures had a moderate frequency of use. Trying to find patterns in English structures had a mean of 3.09, while finding the meaning of an English word by dividing it into comprehensible parts had a mean of 3.10. In this sense, authors such as Cummings (1981) have pointed out that adult learners of a second language tend to have an advantage for reading and writing skills development as well as for morphosyntax understanding because of their higher cognitive development, usual higher experience with formal learning and the development of their

native language skills. In the case of the present study, the qualitative data revealed that writing certain structures to compensate for phonetic problems or asking conversation partners to write down unknown elements of the target language were relatively common strategies as was reading and listening to a text simultaneously. In this sense, Ruiz Calatrava (2009) explained that adult learners of a second language usually need written materials and support in their learning process. Similarly, Muñoz and Cadierno (2021) remark on the importance of combining oral input in the target language with audiovisual materials and the use of subtitles. For instance, as a way of linking images and words.

Regarding cognitive development in adulthood, authors such as Kemper (2006) noted that seniors over 75 tend to experience a slowing of their processing speed and some difficulties with their working memories. Similarly, Schaie (2010) documented relatively important intellectual decreases after age 60 in some of the subjects studied in the Seattle Longitudinal Study (SLS). Those decreases became more general and remarkable after age 74. In the case of the present study, although all participants were younger than 70, the qualitative testimonies revealed perceived problems regarding the memory functions and processing speed of the participants. In this sense, Eguz (2019) explains that some older adults could be excessively critical regarding their memory problems, exaggerating their memory issues. In the present study, those issues were notably present regarding the difficulties in the learning of new vocabulary. Those difficulties could be at least in part explained by the working memory problems often experienced by senior learners (Kurdziel et al., 2017; Schleppegrell, 1987). Therefore, it could be stated that contextualizing new vocabulary word learning was important for the participants. For instance, by creating or reading sentences in which new words or expressions appear, which had a moderate frequency of use in the complete sample ($M=3.23$) and was the 9th most frequently used individual strategy. This strategy was also mentioned as relevant by various testimonies of the qualitative part (for instance, by Interviewed Participant 7). This result draws a contrast with the low frequency of use of other memory strategies such as using flashcards for novel English word or expression learning ($M= 2.09$) and using rhymes to remember new words ($M= 1.6$).

7. CONCLUSIONS

The present research aims to have contributed to the understanding of the use of Language Learning Strategies among adult and older adult learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning at the Basque Official Schools of Languages at levels A2 and B2 of the CEFR. Among the main findings of the study, a general moderate frequency of Language Learning Strategy use was found, as well as a general pattern towards a higher use of strategies in the higher English language level (B2) and among high educational level learners. At the same time, metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used ones and, probably, the most relevant ones in the present study overall. Some of the more frequently used individual strategies were related to planning learning, reviewing lessons frequently, learning from expert feedback, understanding the target language despite having knowledge gaps, and maintaining communication. There were two statistically significant strategy use mean differences: a higher use of cognitive strategies in the B2 English language level and a higher use of compensation strategies among learners with a high educational level. Moreover, a majority of the participants had an intrinsic learning motivation, showing a will to improve self-satisfaction and self-esteem levels. Most of the learners surveyed considered English learning as something valuable in our contemporary globalized society and a good way of fostering active aging. The participants showed generally realistic learning objectives, oriented towards reading comprehension, and achieving average or intermediate communication abilities. They were conscious about the fact that achieving a proficient mastery of a new language is a long process that requires considerable amounts of effort and dedication. Learning was generally oriented to obtaining benefits in their daily life. The major difficulties of the English learning process were associated with memory problems related to new vocabulary learning and certain difficulties with listening/speaking skills development because of a deceleration of the processing speed, phonetic problems, and some affective issues. Moreover, different participants expressed a lack of sufficient opportunities to develop a naturalistic practice of the target language in their learning context. Reading comprehension and grammar understanding abilities were the main strengths of the learners. Finally, there was a frequent reflection on the language learning process on the part of the participants, which can be related to their metacognitive awareness abilities. However, error correction and learning evaluation usually demanded expert or higher proficiency learner support and direction, especially among lower English level learners.

Research may always present limitations. In the case of this study, a series of limitations and recommendations for future research were observed. First of all, the data was based on the self-reports of the participants. Although it is a resource that can give important amounts of valuable information, it can present a certain bias and could be contrasted with more objective research techniques in future studies. Moreover, a convenience sample was used to gather the quantitative data, because of some time and learning centre access constraints. Therefore, it is necessary to interpret the statistical data of the study cautiously and acknowledge that there are limitations regarding the generalizability of the present data. Furthermore, the qualitative data also presents limitations regarding generalizability by definition. The quantitative sample (71 study participants), although sufficient, was not especially large and could be increased in future studies. It is also necessary to mention that, because of learning centre access constraints of various kinds, there were only 4 participants from the Official School of Languages in Éibar.

The study was set in the socio educational learning context of the Basque Country. Future studies can be set in other territories and areas. At the same time, it is important to take into account that this study was set in the Official Language Schools. Future studies can take a look at the realities of informal or leisure-oriented learning contexts, private language academies, Education for Seniors (*EPA*), and other second language learning contexts. Moreover, future research can give insights into the perspective of teachers in the Official Language Schools or in other educational contexts in which they teach English or other foreign languages to adults and older adults. For instance, by carrying interviews with them. The research could be extended to teachers and the results compared to those of the present study or others to see if the strategies that the students use are similar or different to those that teachers find significant. Furthermore, in the present investigation, there was not a specific question regarding the possible improvements in the learning conditions and methodologies employed in the Official School of Languages, although there were certain answers that addressed parts of these issues, especially regarding older adults' realities. Questions similar to this one could be made during future investigations. In addition, this investigation was carried out among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Future studies can research the use of Language Learning Strategies among the learners of other languages. Finally, it is necessary to note that there were no participants over 70 years old in this study. It would be interesting to include them if possible in future studies.

The quantitative instrument used to assess strategy use frequency in this study, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), although it is a validated questionnaire and one used on numerous learning contexts over time, it could be considered a not very

updated instrument (1990). Future studies could use more recent quantitative instruments such as the Diagnostic Inventory for Self-regulated Language Learning (DISLL) by Oxford, which is still in its validation process. Finally, future studies could address more extensively the relationship between Language Learning Strategies and educational level as a variable, as this has not been studied deeply until the present time.

A series of pedagogical recommendations/implications can be derived from the different results of this study. First of all, the teaching of Language Learning Strategies could be incorporated into the Official Language School curriculum in order to make students aware of their existence and use, fostering learner autonomy, and learning self-regulation abilities. Moreover, specific second language learning classrooms directed to senior learners could be created, if appropriate. In any case, it would be necessary to take more into account their needs, interests, and problems in the language learning activities, especially in classrooms in which there are a majority of senior learners. In this sense, specific methods, methodologies, activities, and materials could be created in order to make senior students more motivated as they are adapted to their needs and preferences. Furthermore, having a higher presence of native English speakers/teachers in the classrooms alongside creating more opportunities for communicative practice activities would be a positive feature. Finally, there could be a possibility of incorporating more learners with a basic educational level into the Official Language Schools, as they are currently underrepresented.

All in all, the present study has tried to shed light into the EFL learning processes of adult and senior students, focusing on their use of various Language Learning Strategies. In a moment in which active aging is becoming more popular and foreign language learning among seniors gaining social recognition, this research has taken a look at the techniques and strategies used by each learner for the development of their target language skills, connecting with the current educational psychology theories that emphasize the importance of learner agency, autonomy, and self-regulation abilities. Teachers also need to be aware of the strategies that adult and elderly students need and want to make their classes more dynamic, student-focused, motivational, and interesting. This dissertation may have given an interesting perspective on these issues in the particular learning context of the Basque Official Language Learning Schools. Future research could complement the current one with information on new learning contexts and using different research instruments. Moreover, it could expand the current study with regards to language learning self-regulation, sociocultural issues, and digital technology-mediated strategy use, which are the current main trends in Language Learning Strategy research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Literal Quotes of the Qualitative Findings

Table A1

Literal Quotes on Language Learning Strategies reported in the semi-structured interviews

Language Learning Strategy category	Individual Strategies (O1)
(O1)	
Memory Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Repeating words. “Normalmente, intento apuntar las palabras o frases hechas, cualquier cosa que no he entendido a la primera. Luego, a veces me doy cuenta que las tengo apuntadas cuatro veces en el cuaderno. Las reviso e intento utilizarlas”. (Interviewed Participant 4, Age 66, Level C1) (Similar to SILL item Num. 10).<li>● Using flashcards. “(…) es poner en un tarjetero, voy poniendo las palabras más difíciles para mí. Las voy pasando y cuando las he pasado ya por tercera o cuarta vez y me sé las palabras, las aparto. De esta manera, se me van quedando las que no consigo aprender”. (Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2) (Similar to SILL item Num. 6).<li>● Contextualizing new words in sentences.

“Cuando veo que esa palabra ya la tengo memorizada, luego intento hacer una frase con ella, para que se quede interiorizada. Es decir, después de saber el significado, saber cómo utilizarla”(Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2). (Same as SILL item Num. 2).

Cognitive Strategies

- **Reading comprehensible input materials (the news, information about topics of interest and self-relevance).**

“Lo que pasa que en el tema de lectura tienes que ser cuidadoso de elegir un libro adaptado a tu nivel y de un tema que te atraiga”.

(Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2) (Similar to SILL item Num. 16).

“No leo novelas en inglés o textos largos, leo poco y noticias cortas o noticias del periódico” (Interviewed Participant 4, Age 66, Level C1).

- **Reading without using the dictionary.**

“En los textos escritos, trato de utilizar el diccionario lo menos posible. Trato de buscar el significado de las palabras por medio del contexto, que nos de pistas. Si no, la lectura se puede hacer pesada”.(Interviewed Participant 1, Age 62, Level B2) (Similar to SILL items Num. 22 and 27).

- **Using electronic translators.**

“Bueno, lo que más hago es ir a los traductores electrónicos. El Google Translator lo uso, aunque hace traducciones de aquella manera. Cuando leo algo y no tengo muy claro lo que pone, voy al traductor (...) Aunque tengo diccionarios de inglés en casa en papel, suelo ir a aparatos electrónicos. El wordreference también, para palabras sueltas”. (Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Level B1).

- **Using the dictionary to understand vocabulary meaning and its pronunciation.**

“Cuando estoy trabajando vocabulario, utilizo el diccionario, reviso en el diccionario sinónimos, oigo cómo se pronuncia y luego escribo la palabra. Yo para retener la palabra y el vocabulario la tengo que escribir varias veces”(Interviewed Participant 4, Age 66, Level C1).

-
- **Writing to compensate for listening and phonetic coding problems.**

“Todo lo que puedo, lo escribo. Además, varias veces si hace falta. Quiero acordarme del orden de las letras dentro de la palabra. Procuero escribir frases cortas y contestar a lo que se me pregunta”(Interviewed Participant 6, Age 63, Level B1) (Similar to SILL item Num. 10).

- **Using artificial intelligence-based apps for speaking skills practice.**

“Pues lo que sí tengo es una aplicación de inteligencia artificial a la cual le preguntas qué opción quieres trabajar: ir de compras a un mall, quieres comparar un teléfono móvil, quieres hacer una presentación...Entonces te sigue el rollo o te hace preguntas. Después te hace un informe con todos los errores que has cometido, donde tienes que mejorar (gramática, vocabulario, pronunciación...). Hablando en inglés, por ejemplo, me dice que soy muy “polite”, pero que me falta un poco de fluidez y vocabulario”. (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2).

- **Listening to podcasts/ the news.**

“Todos los días, a primera hora escucho noticias en inglés”. (Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2).

- **Watching videos on tips regarding grammar, vocabulary and culture-related issues.**

“Y luego pues aparte, me meto en redes, estoy en instagram, sigo a personas que todos los días te enseñan una expresión, un adverbio...Lo que sea”. (Relatively Similar to SILL item Num. 15). (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2).

- **Using colors to highlight different language aspects.**

“Utilizo mucho los colores, cojo las expresiones de tiempo y las pongo en azul, las peligrosas o complicadas que no acabo de entender en rojo, para lo que está claro el amarillo...”(Interviewed Participant 6, Age 63, Level B1) (Relatively similar to both SILL items Num. 20 and 21).

- **Making a contrastive analysis (comparing the grammar structures of various languages).**
-

“Hay determinadas estructuras que identifico más con el francés o con el euskera...dependiendo del idioma y de la estructura. O, incluso, por contraste. Es decir, esta estructura que estoy aprendiendo ahora no tiene nada que ver con otras. El contraste me ayuda a recordar la nueva estructura (...) Sobre todo a la hora de identificar alguna estructura que te puede resultar chocante, extraña etc.”. (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 19**).

Compensation Strategies

- **Guessing unknown meanings with the help of context (very common).**

“A veces hay cosas que por el contexto las das por entendidas”

(**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2) (Similar to SILL item **Num. 24**).

“Intento entender usando el contexto”

(**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1 (Similar to SILL item **Num. 24**).

- **Using gestures**

“Tratar de darle vueltas con otras palabras y si, a pesar de eso, no encuentras palabras, tratar de usar el idioma gestual. Por ejemplo, si lo que quieres es comer en un restaurante, más o menos sabes lo que tienes que hacer”(Interviewed **Participant 1**, Age 62, Language Level B2). (Same as SILL item **Num. 25**).

“Gesticulo. Utilizo la expresión corporal bastante. Tanto cuando voy a hablar sobre algo, como cuando tengo una duda y voy a hacer una cuestión sencilla”.. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Language Level B1). (Same as SILL item **Num.25**).

- **Combining reading and listening to a text simultaneously.**

“Intento mejorar la pronunciación, aunque la fonética me resulta muy difícil. Me cuesta sobre todo eso. Para eso si que utilizo algún libro o artículo que pudiera escuchar al tiempo que leo. Eso sí me parece muy útil” (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

- **Using shorter and simpler utterances to convey meaning.**

“Por ejemplo, este año solo he escrito una composición y tengo otra pendiente. Pero a mí déjame un ordenador y con hora y media y las herramientas que hoy en día tenemos, al final consigues escribir y que se entienda lo que quieras decir. Y si no

se entiende, pues lo menguas y lo reduces a algo más sencillo de tal manera que, con los recursos que tienes, puedas pasar el trance de escribir la conversación”(Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item Num. 29).

- **Coining words in the target language that are similar to the learner’s native language.**

“Y cuando no sé algo, a veces lo extranjerizas a ver si cuela (risas)...Hay veces que cuela, ¿eh? El otro día por ejemplo, la expresión la tendré apuntada en el cuaderno pero era drástico, “drastic”, le dijimos al profesor “does that exist?” y nos dijo: “pues sí, existe”. Intentas hacer una composición de palabras, extranjerizas lo que sabes, a veces con el francés o con el inglés y a veces cuela y lo entienden” (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2 (Similar to SILL item Num. 26).

- **Code-switching between English and the learner’s native language.**

“Además, intento hablar con ella en inglés, planteárselo en inglés. Lo que pasa que no siempre sé hacerlo. Entonces, empiezo a planteárselo en inglés, pero muchas veces acabo con el castellano. Empiezo en inglés para que se vea mi buena voluntad, pero acabo en castellano para que la conversación sea efectiva ”.(Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Language Level B1).

Metacognitive Strategies

- **Reflecting on the progress made during the learning process and about its sense.**

“Bueno...Si, suelo reflexionar. Es más, ahora mismo no estoy en la escuela de idiomas debido a una reflexión. Es decir, yo ahora he aprobado tres exámenes, pero no quiero entrar de seguido en un nivel superior en el que voy a necesitar más tiempo, voy a andar a rastras...”(Interviewed Participant 1, Age 62, Language Level B2). (Very similar to SILL item Num. 38).

“Sí, reflexiono mucho y aún no tengo una decisión tomada. Estoy muy indeciso entre continuar y no continuar”.. (Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Language Level B1). (Very similar to SILL item Num.38).

- **Self-correction of certain mistakes.**

“Hay veces que según voy hablando ya me estoy dando cuenta que lo estoy diciendo mal. Y, sin embargo, otras veces según voy escribiendo, incluso sabiendo la palabra correcta, la regla gramatical y cómo se deletrea...Lo veo y no lo veo mal”.(Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2) (Relatively similar to SILL item Num. 31).

-
- **Reflecting on feedback given by experts.**

“Por lo tanto, yo creo que de los errores se aprende, son imprescindibles a la hora de aprender, cuando hay un *feedback*, si que tratas de volver a ese error una y otra vez para tratar de darle la vuelta” (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 31**).

- **Noticing the presence of the target language in their environment.**

“Sí que cada vez me animo más a responder o intentar ayudar a los turistas que hay por la ciudad. Me noto más suelto y antes cerraba el oído cuando oía un idioma extranjero, ahora procuro abrirlo”(Interviewed Participant 6, Age 63, Level B1). (Very similar to SILL item **Num. 32**).

Affective Strategies

- **Maintaining a pleasant and enjoyable learning environment, especially, regarding classmates.**

“Procuro generar alrededor de mí un clima que sea agradable. Porque tus fallos, inseguridades...El de al lado también los tiene”.

(Interviewed Participant 6, Age 63, Level B1).

- **Taking breaks to avoid excessive frustration.**

“Normalmente me enfado conmigo misma, cierro todo y me pongo a hacer alguna otra actividad. Sin embargo, luego vuelvo. Cambio de actividad para que eso no se haga grande y luego vuelvo, porque estoy motivada. Lo que no quiero es frustrarme más de la cuenta”.(Interviewed Participant 5, Age 52, Level A2).

- **Making positive affirmations to oneself.**

“Pero si que veo que hay que ser valiente en clase y participar, porque sino no vas a saber nunca si lo que dices está bien o mal. Te van a decir que no eres perfecta, pero tienes que saber tus limitaciones y echar para adelante ”.(Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2). (Similar to SILL item **Num.40** and relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 39**).

-
- **Using songs for learning while having fun**

“Las canciones a veces me ayudan para retener una frase o regla gramatical si la has cantado alguna vez, por ejemplo, aunque no te hayas dado cuenta”.. (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2).

Social Strategies

- **Practicing with family members and classmates (very common).**

“Tengo una tía que es docente y también ha estudiado inglés. Principalmente, le suelo preguntar a ella. Habla bastante inglés y cualquier duda que tenga le puedo preguntar a ella. Tengo ese apoyo familiar incondicional que me aconseja y anima para seguir estudiando”. (Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 44**).

“Éramos un batiburrillo de gente. Lo que no sabía uno lo sabía otro y eso te impulsa a distintas formas de aprender e interesarte por el idioma”. (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2).

“Intento comunicarme con mis más cercanos”.(Interviewed Participant 6, Age 63, Level B1). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 47**).

- **Practicing with native speakers (rare).**

“Me falta encontrar un grupo de nativos que nos adopte”(Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 48**).

“Tengo amigos, uno de Bristol y otro que es de Tolosa pero se dedicó a la venta ambulante en Sheffield. Tengo también otro pariente que también sabe. Yo sé que si acudo a ellos puedo aprender. Pero creo que no tengo que ir tan deprisa (...) Con la gente que conozco, en la medida en la que vaya cogiendo confianza en mí, voy a ir abriéndome a ellos. Pero no voy a abrirme así como así de la noche a la mañana. No tengo ninguna prisa, esto es para siempre (...)”.(Interviewed Participant 6, Age 63, Level B1) (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 48**).

“Con gente nativa nunca he estado en una conversación” (Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Level B1).

- **Using informal conversation groups to improve naturalistic practice of the target language.**
-

“Mi práctica del inglés ha sido escasa. Ahora me he apuntado a un pequeño grupo en el que vamos a tratar de hablar en inglés y esto, hoy precisamente tenemos una reunión. Veremos cómo funciona. Las dificultades son muchas y el grupo no es muy numeroso, los niveles son muy diversos. Pero bueno, se trata de trabajar el oral de forma más suelta, que no sea muy formal”. (Interviewed Participant 1, Age 62, Level B2). (Same as SILL item **Num. 47**).

“El año pasado sí que intenté hablar con gente de clase para ver si hacíamos un grupo para hablar en inglés un día a la semana, mientras nos tomamos algo. Sin embargo, no hubo mucha aceptación, quizás tampoco teníamos el nivel para hacer eso”.(Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Level B1).

- **Using class groupal Whatsapp chats.**

“Por ejemplo, tenemos un grupo de whatsapp en clase y procuro compartir todo lo que puedo allí. Está bien que la gente se anime a escribir en inglés”. (Interviewed Participant 6, Age 63, Level B1). (Relatively similar to SILL items **Num. 47** and **49**).

- **Creating cultural understanding.**

“Yo cada vez que voy a algún país me intento informar sobre toda su cultura, historia...Cuando fuimos a Dublín intentas saber sobre la ciudad, sus gentes, cómo ha evolucionado...Luego sobre aspectos culturales puedes practicar con la gente allí. No me centro en ello, pero me interesa y me gusta. Pero no exclusivamente anglosajón. Por ejemplo, si voy a Milán me interesa saber sobre la cultura de ese sitio”(Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2). (Similar to SILL item **Num. 50**).

- **Asking conversation partners to slow down, repeat or clarify messages.**

“Cuando no entiendo algo en una conversación, pido por favor que lo repitan y funciona bastante bien. Si todavía sigo sin entenderlo, a veces suelo pedir que lo escriban”. (Interviewed Participant 4, Age 66, Level C1) (Similar to SILL item **Num.45**).

“En una conversación, si estás hablando con una persona de habla inglesa, lo interesante sería tratar que repita aquello que ha dicho usando pequeños trucos. Cosas como: “¿cómo me has dicho?” o “¿lo que me has dicho era esto?” y que la otra persona diga “no era esto, era lo otro...”.(Interviewed Participant 1, Age 62, Level B2). (Relatively similar to SILL item **Num. 45**).

Literal Quotes on English language learning experience

“Yo conozco otras lenguas y pensaba que era un poco extraño el no haber tenido relación nunca con un idioma como el inglés. Por eso empecé hace unos tres años a aprenderlo y, en fin, este es el contexto general. No existe una motivación específica ni de tipo económico ni de tipo lúdico. Simplemente, es el hecho de aprender un idioma más y tener una pequeña relación con este idioma”..(**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2)

“Siempre he tenido interés por aprender idiomas, también he estado aprendiendo euskera. El inglés me apetecía en aquel momento porque estaba de moda, las canciones, la música...(...) Después empecé algún “bai and by”, alguna cosa online, pero entre la familia, estudios, trabajo...pues dejas de progresar. Y ahora que he dejado el trabajo he dicho: “esta es la mía” ”. (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2)

“Lo que más ha influido es que me jubilé y, entonces, disponía de tiempo. Me jubilé en junio de 2022 y disponía de tiempo para dedicarme al inglés. Por otro lado, porque es una frustración de toda una vida laboral trabajando en una multinacional y no hablaba inglés”..(**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 65, Level B1).

“Bueno, yo estudié francés cuando era pequeña. El inglés era una eterna asignatura pendiente que emprendía varias veces, pero sin mucho tiempo. Cuando me jubilé, pensé que era un momento adecuado para mejorar mi inglés. Sin ninguna presión de necesidades laborales o de currículum” (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

“Entonces, lo he estudiado con anterioridad, pero nunca de una manera muy estable, sólida, muy intensa. Ahora, era el momento”. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1).

Literal Quotes on English learning motivation

“Yo conozco otras lenguas y pensaba que era un poco extraño el no haber tenido relación nunca con un idioma como el inglés. Por eso empecé hace unos tres años a aprenderlo y, en fin, este es el contexto general. No existe una motivación específica ni de tipo económico ni de tipo lúdico. Simplemente, es el hecho de aprender un idioma más y tener una pequeña relación con este idioma”. (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2.).

“Creo que el inglés te da muchas disponibilidades. Yo creo que es el nuevo latín, el nuevo esperanto. Hay un montón de conferencias, de información en la red que están en inglés. Y sí, hay muchos traductores como el deepl, el Google traductor (que también está muy bien) si no sabes inglés, pero me interesa acceder a la información en primera persona” (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).

“(…) suelo escuchar a políticos del mundo hablando y veo que todos saben inglés. Incluso veo gente que llega a España en pateras, muchas veces vienen hablando en inglés (…). En el año 2022, yo me jubilé en mayo y en junio comencé a hacer el camino de Santiago (…). Bueno, pues allí solo se hablaba en inglés. Ahí me di cuenta que el mundo ha elegido, y ha elegido el inglés” (**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 65, Level B1).

“(…) tener acceso a mucha más información, tanto técnica como de entretenimiento, como de intereses personales que pueda tener”. (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).

“(…) me preocupaba tener alguna actividad intelectual que me rete un poco y me exija un poco de trabajo. Esta era perfecta: me interesaba, me gustaba, y me resultaba útil”. (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

“En cambio, en el aula te encuentras con gente de diferentes edades, situaciones, orígenes...No pensaba que me iba a parecer interesante, sin embargo sí que me lo ha parecido” (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

“(…) ampliar, bueno, mis relaciones, mi mundo...Pensar de otra manera quizás”. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1).

“Es como un reto. En casa todos tienen un nivel alto de inglés. Mis dos hijos y mi marido tienen un nivel bastante alto de inglés. Creo que es una motivación para que yo también consiga ese nivel de inglés”(Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2).

“La verdad es que laboralmente a estas alturas de mi vida no sé si me va a ayudar mucho...Podría ser un segundo punto”. (**Interviewed Participant 5** Age 52, Level A2).

“Yo he sido administrativa...Ahora estoy trabajando en el sector público, en Osakidetza. A mí el inglés me viene muy bien, porque hay textos que me toca leer que están en inglés. No me toca hablar con la gente en inglés, es más para mis viajes y ocio”. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2).

Literal Quotes on Age and English learning

“Yo creo que tiene aspectos negativos y aspectos positivos(...) a determinada edad, por ejemplo, el tema de la memoria es un handicap. Se va perdiendo la capacidad de retención, se va perdiendo ese tipo de capacidades (...) Pero, por otra parte, yo creo que el tener una determinada edad te da una cierta experiencia a la hora de expresarte, comunicar, a la hora de estructurar las ideas...”. (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2).

“ Ves a la gente joven y reaccionan mucho más rápido, la pronunciación y el oído lo tienen mucho más abierto (...) Creo que el tema de la retención cuesta más. El oído y el tema de la retención. Por otro lado, como ventajas, te voy a decir que evidentemente tenemos más tiempo, esa es una ventaja que tenemos la gente que ya no trabajamos y eso se logra, si tienes mucha pasta o con la edad (...) Luego si que tienes que tener una motivación porque también si ves que no avanzas, pues tiendes a dejarlo. Si ves que tu esfuerzo da algún fruto, sea poco o mucho...” (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).

“Igual la gente joven lo que quiere es sacarse el título y acabar cuanto antes. Nosotros que, igual tenemos menos tiempo de vida, pero tenemos más tiempo para dedicarle a una única cosa, el proceso en sí ya nos resulta satisfactorio”. (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).

“Cuando eres más mayor y te fijas una meta concreta, pones más medios para conseguirla. Cuando eres joven te despistas más”. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2).

“Tenemos más dificultad, sobre todo, para retener vocabulario y ese tipo de cosas. Al mismo tiempo, la falta de presión que te da la edad y el tiempo disponible, es la otra cara de la moneda (...) si yo ahora no dispusiera de tanto tiempo, no estaría aprendiendo (...) El inglés tiene una fonética complicada y, aunque oigo bien, a veces me da la sensación de que no oigo bien, aunque oigo bien” (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

“Creo que los idiomas se aprenden bien de verdad cuando uno es joven (...) Creo que mi cerebro ahora es más de madera, mientras que cuando era joven era un cerebro ágil y flexible. Ahora, me cuesta más. Cuando eres mayor, el oído es peor. No solo para los idiomas, sino para todo. Por lo tanto, si no tienes un oído fino, es más difícil aprender para mí”. (**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 65, Level B1).

“La vista también cuesta, te cansas más enfrente del ordenador. Con la edad si que te frustras del hecho de que te cuesta” (**Interviewed Participant 7**).

“Entonces te encuentras con que, a partir de los 60, tienes que hacer algo casi obligatoriamente (...) Parece que hay una especie de actividad comercial en la que parece que tienes que hacer algo a la fuerza. Me he dado cuenta de que no puedes ir en contra de la cadena. Si tienes horas libres, tienes que emplearlas” (...) Ahora, lo de los idiomas creo que en España sigue produciendo cierta envidia. Sobre todo, si consigues pasar un examen. Si consigues pasar un examen de idiomas tu ya eres diferente”. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1).

“Yo como me muevo un poco en el mundo de la educación, yo creo que en mi ámbito estoy acostumbrada a que la gente estudie y aprenda. En cambio en otros ámbitos sí que veo a gente que dice: “¿cómo me voy a poner yo a estudiar ahora que tengo 50?”. Yo creo que nunca es tarde para aprender” (**Interviewed Participant 5**, Age 52, Level A2).

“Aunque últimamente veo que cada vez más gente está empezando a estudiar inglés después de jubilarse. Creo que últimamente se está valorando más el estudiar un idioma después de jubilarse”. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2).

“Para mí esto de acudir a clase y encontrarme con gente joven, incluso más jóvenes que la edad de mis hijas, compartir con ellos temas que para ti son novedosos y para ellos es, “pues, claro”, parece un intercambio generacional. Y luego, también, con gente de mi edad que tiene otras experiencias. Me parece muy enriquecedor. Me gusta tener clases presenciales y con gente tan diversa”. (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).

“Creo que la EOI podría ponerse un poco las pilas y crear grupos según edades. Yo estaría más cómoda al entrar en una clase y ver un grupo de gente que se sitúa más o menos alrededor de mi edad. Yo estoy más contenta y relajada cuando voy a clase y no tenga que hablar con alguien que tenga 18 años. Creo que, en cuanto a temas de conversación, tenemos más temas de los que hablar en común con alguien de una edad similar a la nuestra”. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2).

Literal Quotes on English learning recommendations

“Yo creo que todos los idiomas, en general, tienen que ser funcionales (...) (que) empiece a utilizar el idioma desde el momento cero dentro de las posibilidades que pueda tener (...) creo que es imprescindible comunicar y comunicarse. Para comunicar es importante saber qué comunicar”. (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2).

“El ritmo de aprendizaje debe ser el que te impones tu, no el que impone la clase”. (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2).

“Por ejemplo, ya te digo que hay gente mayor que está “tripitiendo” (repetir 3 veces). Para esto hay que pedir una convocatoria de gracia y la gente la pide” (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).

“Pues...depende mucho del tiempo que esté dispuesto/a a dedicarle (...) Yo aconsejaría, sin ninguna duda, clases presenciales. Luego, posteriormente, le diría que también es muy importante el trabajo personal. (...) Eso te va a facilitar, pero para mi es esencial que las clases sean presenciales, que tengas compañeros que van a tu mismo nivel, que vayamos progresando todos juntos, que puedas preguntar las dudas en primera persona al profesor (...) Creo que es mucho más motivante el preguntar las dudas a alguien, ver que el de al lado comparte las dudas contigo, el que no estás solo en eso”. (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).

“Yo le recomendaría que busque gente de esa lengua y se lance a hablar y que trate de hablar lo máximo posible” (**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 52, Level B1).

“Como no tengo unas grandes metas, me digo paciencia y a seguir adelante” (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).

“Le diría que este no es un aprendizaje para un tiempo determinado, que una vez se anime va a ser un aprendizaje para toda la vida. Por tanto, no tiene que ponerse unas metas a corto plazo muy exigentes”. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1).

“ (...) le recomendaría que se lo tome con tranquilidad y que busque que partes del aprendizaje le gustan más o le interesan más” (...) pero elegir un poco qué partes del aprendizaje le interesan más, o le resultan más fáciles o gratificantes y centrarse ahí. El resto hacer el mínimo necesario” (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

“Pero estoy todo el santo día repasando el libro de A1 y el de A2, porque me voy dando cuenta de que aún no he sedimentado en mi cabeza vocabulario y estructuras básicas, *expressions*...Y que es eso lo que garantiza que una persona vaya avanzando”. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1).

“Creo que lo importante con un idioma es vivirlo. No solo académicamente puedes oírlo todos los días, puedes escribirlo, hablarlo, pero no solo académicamente. Yo le recomendaría si quieres tener un buen nivel que vaya a los sitios donde se habla en inglés”. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level A2).

Literal Quotes on English learning objectives

“No tengo necesidad de escribir mucho” (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2)

“Yo lo que quiero es hablar y aprender a pronunciar bien”. (**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 65, Level B1).

“Para mí, sin duda, centrarme en las habilidades de tipo oral. En comprensión oral que en inglés resulta difícil por la variedad de acentos...Y luego, en expresión oral. (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

“Lo que más me apetece es que oyes una canción y eres capaz de entenderla, ser capaz de responder a alguien si se dirige a ti en inglés...Es lo que me apetece, saber simplemente” (**Interviewed Participant 5**, Age 52, Level A2).

“Mi objetivo es poder hablar algo con todos, aunque sean cuatro palabras”. (**Interviewed Participant 6**).

“Me gustaría aprender para relacionarme de una manera básica o media con gente”. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1).

“En mi caso, ahora, lo más importante es el oral”. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level A2).

Literal Quotes on English learning strengths and difficulties

Table A2

English learning strengths and difficulties (O5)

English learning strengths and difficulties (O5)	English learning strengths	English learning difficulties
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● “Es cierto que dado mi entorno donde no tengo un entorno anglófono, lógicamente avanzo más en la lectoescritura que lo que podría ser lo oral” (Interviewed Participant 1, Age 62, Level B2).● “El leer pasa lo mismo, si tienes tiempo de reflexionar y darte cuenta que algo que has leído no lo entiendes completamente, pues vas al diccionario o a un traductor y lo consigues”. (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2).● “Yo creo que, en comprensión lectora, no tengo problemas si, por ejemplo, tengo que ir a Inglaterra y enterarme de una guía de viajes que esté en inglés. Ahí no tengo problema”. (Interviewed Participant 4).● “Yo he sido profesora de euskera, conozco bien la gramática, la entiendo y me gusta. Creo que la	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● “Con el listening no tienes esa facultad porque es algo que es inmediato, te lo están diciendo y tienes que interpretarlo en ese momento, para reaccionar y dar una contestación. Es lo que más esfuerzo y habilidad requiere” (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2).● “Por ejemplo, he intentado ver otro tipo de series también británicas, de espías y así, y me resulta muy duro. Hablan igual más en jerga o muy deprisa o no tan pausadamente y me cuesta”. (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2).● “Si hay 25 palabras, a lo mejor aprendo 5. No todas”. (Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Level B1).● “La verdad que me gustaría hablar mucho más en grupos más pequeños”. (Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Level B1).● “De manera previa a los exámenes si que he hecho alguna sesión de Speaking online con una profesora...Pero, fuera

gramática, para las personas que la conocemos, puede ser un elemento de gran ayuda” (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

- “(...) ahí me he dado cuenta de una cosa curiosa...A mí me encanta escuchar canciones y ponerme a cantar, ver películas...Sin embargo, me he dado cuenta de que mi nivel todavía no llega para esos aspectos y eso resulta un poco frustrante. Sin embargo, a nivel gramatical y de vocabulario me doy cuenta de que avanzo más de lo que pensaba”. (**Interviewed Participant 5**, Age 52, Level A2) .
- “Sí que es cierto que también he leído y me ha resultado más sencillo de lo que esperaba también”. (**Interviewed Participant 5**, Age 52, Level A2).

del aula, en estos momentos de ninguna manera el hablar, más que si voy de viaje” (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

- “Creo que me cuesta más entender lo que dicen que expresarme”. (**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1) .

Literal Quotes on EOI Learning Context

“Ahora cuando he ido a la escuela, me ha resultado muy motivante tener una profesora con un nivel universitario alto y tener unas clases presenciales con gente de distintas edades, intenciones y orígenes (...) A mi me ha resultado super interesante estar este año en la escuela (de idiomas), de verdad”. (**Interviewed Participant 2**, Age 60, Level B2).

“Los profesores son buenos y tienen claro que tenemos que hablar todos. Una vez pasa el primer mes, yo creo que ya se dan cuenta de quienes son las personas que tienen tendencia a escaquearse de hablar”. (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

“A mí me ha motivado, quizás, el que exista una Escuela Oficial de Idiomas. De no existir, quizás, yo hoy no estaría aprendiendo inglés. La EOI no es que sea mejor o peor que una academia, yo no sé evaluar eso. Lo que sí le veo es un grado de solvencia, de estructuración en la forma de aprender, tiene un precio más accesible que una academia.” (**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 65, Level B1).

“Sin molestar a nadie...hay centros de jubilados que dan clases de inglés a jubilados aburridos. Yo conozco a alguna persona que va a estas clases desde hace años y sabe contar los números básicos y, realmente, poco más. Creo que van a entretenerse. Si realmente quieres aprender, vete a la Escuela de Idiomas, vete a una academia...Hay determinadas formas de aprendizaje de idiomas, que a mi ni fú ni fá” (**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 65, Level B1).

“Son muy duros en la Escuela. Pero, bueno, me he dado cuenta de que es normal. Es diferente a estudiar otras materias. Los idiomas son otra cosa”. (**Interviewed Participant 6** Age 63, Level B1).

“En la Escuela Oficial, lo que te inculcan es mucho estudio, tienes que llevar a casa muchos deberes, involucrarte, escribir todos los días, un poco de organización a nivel de estudios. Yo hice mis estudios, pero te vuelve a involucrar a nivel de tener una organización a la hora de estudiar”. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2).

Literal Quotes on English learning self-regulation and evaluation

Table A3

English Learning self-regulation and evaluation (O4)

English Learning self-regulation and evaluation (O4)	English learning self-regulation	English learning evaluation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Yo estoy convencido de que sí. Los procesos de aprendizaje se regulan por uno mismo. Es decir, yo no sé si conoces el funcionamiento de las EOI, pero en principio su metodología con un ratio de gente que llega prácticamente hasta a 25-30 personas (por aula), no es algo muy personalizado (...) teniendo los ratios que existen, si no existe una participación o implicación personal en la tarea, difícilmente puedes llegar a nada ”. (Interviewed Participant 1, Age 62, Level B2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “En la EOI, existe una evaluación teórica y esa evaluación teórica es tu exámen de inglés. Esa evaluación no creo que sea excesivamente real, es una evaluación muy numérica que difícilmente te lleva a decir en qué nivel estás. Luego creo que tiene que haber una reflexión interior, ¿realmente esto se corresponde con lo que yo sé o no?” (Interviewed Participant 1, Age 62, Level B2).

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- “Sí, el trabajo personal yo lo hago en casa, hago los deberes, incluso intento ir un poco más allá. Aún así, creo que es importante que alguien que sabe más te indique el camino” (**Interviewed Participant 2** , Age 60, Level B2).
 - “Yo creo que, en este nivel por lo menos, no. A veces he intentado coger libros o ejercicios diferentes a los habituales, pero me frustró si no llego. Prefiero ir por el camino que me marcan”. (**Interviewed Participant 5**, Age 52, Level A2).
 - “Para hacerlo solo, creo que hay que tener mucha experiencia o un nivel. Yo en mi nivel necesito hablar con la gente”.(**Interviewed Participant 6**, Age 63, Level B1).
 - “Creo que, aparte del aula, es imprescindible que te conciencies que hay que hacer trabajo en casa. Entonces creo que es importante el encontrar a alguien que te motive, que te apoye...”(**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2).
 - “No, creo que no. Además, creo que no sé ni cómo podría evaluarme a mí mismo. Es muy difícil ser objetivo con uno mismo sin tener ese punto de autocomplacencia o de egocentrismo”. (**Interviewed Participant 3**, Age 65, Level B1).
 - “(...) luego también de la percepción de que vas entendiendo más, de que vas leyendo más fácil, pero no de una manera sistemática porque yo lo busque” (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).
 - “La evaluación me la tiene que dar un profesor, profesora o experto en la materia”.(**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2).
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Literal Quotes on Affective aspects of English learning

“La verdad que mi relación con el inglés siempre ha sido una relación de amor-odio. En principio creo que existen una serie de idiomas coloniales o que acaparan el monopolio prácticamente mundial. A mi este aspecto del inglés no me gusta demasiado (...) Es decir, el inglés lo trato como otro idioma parejo o similar a cualquier otro de los que tengo en mi entorno. Y, en ese sentido, en la medida en la que se acerca a ser igual que los demás, es la medida en la que más me gusta (...) te diré que me gustan los idiomas y el inglés también, como cualquier otro idioma”. (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B1).

“Para mí, de alguna manera, ha sido un poquito volver a la infancia. El ir a que te expliquen, el ir a que te exijan...A mi me ha resultado satisfactorio” (Interviewed Participant 2, Age 60, Level B2).

“Yo he sentido una cierta alegría de ver que se avanza...Un recuperar una posición de estudiante y confirmar que eres capaz de mantener el ritmo del grupo...Eso es gratificante” (Interviewed Participant 4, Age 66, Level C1).

“Quizás, en el futuro, si consigo lograr un cierto nivel más alto tenga un sentimiento de orgullo. Hoy por hoy, no”. (Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Level B1).

“Pero muchas veces pienso que le estoy dedicando mucho tiempo y no veo progresos, o no tengo la sensación de estar viendo progresos” (Interviewed Participant 3, Age 65, Level B1).

“Pues un poco montaña rusa. Cuando me doy cuenta que lo estoy haciendo bien, euforia. Me pongo muy contenta. Cuando veo que no llego, me frustro más de lo que pensaba que me iba a frustrar. Me enfado conmigo misma”. (Interviewed Participant 5, Age 52, Level A2).

“En principio, cualquier idioma es un tema duro de llevar por lo que te puedes llevar muchas decepciones” (Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2).

“Pues depende mucho del profesor y del nivel de participación del resto de la clase. Tiene mucho que ver. Hace unos años tenía una clase que participaba mucho y, entonces, me animaba”. (Interviewed Participant 7, Age 48, Level B2).

Literal Quotes on past vs present English learning

“Por ejemplo, ahora los libros son muy buenos comparando con lo que yo conocí de niño” (Interviewed Participant 6, Age 63, Level B1).

“He conocido técnicas en clase que utilizan la pantalla para la visualización de gráficos, ejercicios...Al principio me chocó porque no estaba acostumbrado. He conocido toda la práctica de vídeos, a lo que tampoco estaba acostumbrado...” (Interviewed Participant 6, Age 63, Level B1).

“Al final las metodologías del pasado se basaban en la memoria. Es decir, estructuras de memoria...Era algo escrito sobre todo. Oíamos grabaciones, pero no veíamos vídeos explicativos, por ejemplo (...) Es increíble la cantidad de recursos que hay en internet para estudiar y tener contacto con un idioma. Eso antes no existía. La metodología de antes era el libro y escribir. Todo lo que hay ahora creo que está bastante bien para la gente que está empezando a estudiar”. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2).

“Ahora lo hacemos todo mucho más por internet...A los que no estamos tan habituados a la tecnología nos cuesta”. (**Interviewed Participant 7**, Age 48, Level B2).

Literal Quotes on the Professional and educational background

“Ahora estoy jubilado, pero trabajaba de profesor en un colegio de primaria”. (**Interviewed Participant 1**, Age 62, Level B2).

“-Me comentabas antes que habías sido profesora de euskara, ¿en educación reglada o en academias?” (**Interviewer**).

“-En educación secundaria, en bachiller”. (**Interviewed Participant 4**, Age 66, Level C1).

“Trabajo en un cole, pero no soy profesora. Soy administrativa. Mi madre ha sido profesora. Mi vida está muy vinculada al ámbito escolar “ (**Interviewed Participant 5**, Age 52, Level A2).

Quotes on learner perceptions regarding the four language skills

Table A 4

Learner perceptions regarding the four Language Skills

Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Reading. supongo que es porque yo controlo el ritmo de lectura”. (Age 60, Level B2.2).• “Reading. Puedo usar diccionarios”. (Age 62, Level B2.2).
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- “Reading. Porque veo las palabras tal y cómo las he aprendido en gramática”. (Age 50, Level B2.1).
 - “Creo que es la más fácil cuando no estás haciendo una inmersión total en el idioma”. (Age 67, Level B2.2).
 - “Reading, porque soy capaz de comprender un texto aunque no sea capaz de traducirlo completamente”.(Age 50, Level A2).
 - “Reading, porque soy lectora habitual en mi lengua materna y me siento cómoda con esa actividad. También pq cuando aprendí Euskera leer me ayudó a "despegar" y ahora intento que me sirva también con el inglés”. (Age 64, Level A2)
 - “Reading. Creo que el viajar, Internet y los medios de comunicación han hecho que muchas palabras nos sean familiares. Me gusta mucho leer en castellano”.(Age 64, Level A2)
 - “Es más fácil Reading. Porque cuando te ponen el Listening y a la vez lees lo que escuchas, se aprende mejor”.(Age 45, Level A2).

Writing

- “Con el Writing me siento más cómodo porque me permite pensar antes de expresarme e incluso corregir si me doy cuenta de que falta alguna letra en la palabra, frase o párrafo escrito”.(Age 62, Level A2).
- “Writing, tengo más tiempo para pensar lo que escribo”.(Age 54, Level A2).
- “Porque no sé redactar y no tengo imaginación para desarrollar un tema”.(Age 55, Level A2).
- “Writing. Me falta vocabulario a la hora de contar algo y los hago muy repetitivos y con algún fallo gramatical”.(Age 36, B2.1).

Listening

- “El Listening me resulta lo más difícil ya que no tengo facilidad de concentración en la escucha activa y eso me obliga a concentrarme lo máximo para poder entender lo que se escucha”.(Age 62, Level A2).
 - “Listening me resulta lo más difícil porque tengo que traducir en mi cabeza según escucho y para cuando traduzco algo el hablante ya va varias frases por delante, y esa diferencia se va ampliando continuamente por lo que acaba siendo un problema serio para mí”.(Age 65, Level A2).
 - “Listening, me cuesta distinguir las palabras y sobre todo el entender cuando las palabras las dicen como todas juntas”.(Age 64, Level A2).
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- “Listening. Porque no entiendo la pronunciación”. (Age 50, Level A2).
 - “Porque no tengo experiencia escuchándolo, cuando lo estudié de joven no hacíamos Listening”.(Age 56, Level A2).
 - “Me pongo nervioso al no captar las palabras”.(Age 67, Level A2).
 - “Listening. Porque depende mucho de la forma de hablar de cada persona, las entonaciones, la rapidez a la que habla...”(Age 58, Level B2.2).
 - “Listening, es la que más ejercito, oyendo la radio y viendo las películas en inglés”.(Age 42, Level B2.2).

Speaking

- “Por la vergüenza y el temor a que no pronuncies bien las palabras”.(Age 45, Level A2).
 - “Speaking. Vergüenza, **inseguridad**”(Age 47, Level B2.2).
 - “Speaking. Por la **rapidez** que exige. Hay que pensar simultáneamente en el qué y en el cómo y de forma que tu discurso sea fluido”.(Age 67, Level B2.2).
 - “Cuesta lanzarme”.(Age 67, Level A2).
 - “Porque no me salen las palabras, no tengo fluidez, entonces digo palabras sin conexiones”.(Age 42, Level B2.1).
 - “Quizá porque confío que de una forma u otra me haré entender”.(Age 65, Level A2).
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Quotes on motivational orientations for learning English

Table A5

Motivational orientations for learning English

Learning as a way of overcoming intellectual frustrations and deficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Para aumentar mi autoestima ya que siempre ha sido una carencia intelectual que ahora quiero cubrir”.(Age 62, Level A2).• “Porque es algo que ha estado pendiente siempre y siento que lo tengo que hacer”.(Age 51, Level B2.1)• “Siempre deseé conocer este idioma y no lo conseguí”(Age 69, Level A2)• “Llevo toda la vida estudiando y no lo puedo acreditar. Amor propio”.(Age 52, Level B2.2).• “Porque es algo que nunca conseguí aprender y ahora entiendo la gramática”.(Age 56, Level A2).• “Tengo una espinita clavada por haber dejado la academia en su día, y me da rabia no entender cuando alguien quiere dialogar en inglés”.(Age 46, Level A2).
Learning as intellectual stimulation and challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “No necesito ningún título pero me interesan los idiomas”.(Age 66, Level B2.2).• “Simplemente lo estudio por curiosidad ya que yo estudié francés en la escuela”.(Age 66, Level B2.2).• “Porque me gusta retarme, me gusta ver que mejoro y me gusta ser capaz de desenvolverme cada vez mejor en mis pequeñas situaciones que requieren de él”.(Age 51, Level B2.1).• “Además me interesa el idioma en sí mismo, su comparación con los que sé. Y es un reto el demostrarme a mí misma que soy capaz de aprender un idioma pasados los 60”.(Age 67, Level B2.2).• “Mantenerme activa mentalmente”.(Age 54, Level A2).

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- “Es muy enriquecedor a nivel mental”.(Age 38, Level A2).

Learning as a way of socializing

- “Me gusta estudiar. Disfruto el tiempo de las clases porque son variadas, tanto en cuanto a la metodología utilizada como en cuanto a las relaciones que se establecen. Valoro mucho el ambiente creado en el grupo, en el que jóvenes, menos jóvenes y mayores intercambiamos ideas y risas”.(Age 67, Level B2.2).
- “Me parece que a mi edad es bueno para mi salud mental, estoy con personas de mi edad y mi misma situación”.(Age 48, Level B2.2).
- “Sí, para socializar fuera de mi país”.(Age 48, Level A2).

Learning for traveling purposes

- “Me gusta viajar y es una forma de poder comunicarse en ciertos lugares”.(Age 57, Level B2.2).
- “Me encanta estudiar y deseo aprenderlo para comunicarme en mis viajes con las demás personas y no tener que depender de un traductor”.(Age 67, Level A2).
- “Me gusta saberlo pero no lo necesito más que para viajar. No lo necesito en mi entorno laboral. No considero que en mi vida sea algo importante más allá de entender canciones, comunicarme en viajes y poco más”.(Age 42, Level B2.2).

Learning to better understand the audiovisual and digital worlds

- “PORQUE PUEDO ACCEDER A MUCHA INFORMACIÓN EN EL MUNDO MODERNO”. (Age 65, Level A2).
 - “En este caso un idioma te permite acceder a lecturas, música, documentales , etc”.(Age 50, Level A2)
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- “Me encanta ir entendiendo letras de canciones o frases en películas y me gusta aprender en general”.(Age 64, Level A2).
 - “Me gusta estudiar y además me abre puertas en otros campos como la informática”.(Age 66, Level B2.2).
 - “Cada vez más contenido audiovisual está en inglés”.(Age 50, Level B2.1).

Learning to improve job and academic opportunities

- “Trabajo en hostelería”.(Age 54, Level A2).
- “Porque me ayuda laboralmente”.(Age 58, Level B2.2).
- “Quiero dar clases de inglés para niños, pues soy pedagoga”.(Age 48, Level B2.2).
- “En mi trabajo se puntúa como mérito para ascender a niveles superiores”.(Age 48, Level B2.2).

Learning as a way of knowing about new cultures and people

- “El poder comunicarte con otra comunidad de hablantes y conocer otra cultura”.(Age 56, Level A2).
- “Hablar con nativos de otros países de habla inglesa”.(Age 67, B2.1).
- “Porque puedo conocer otras personas y así poder hablar en su idioma”.(Age 45, Level A2).

Learning a useful global or international language

- “El inglés está por todas las partes y cada vez más”.(Age 56, Level A2).
 - “Me gustan los idiomas. No el inglés en particular, pero he elegido este porque parece más útil”.(Age 67, Level A2).
 - “Considero que es un lenguaje casi universal en el que me gustaría poder desenvolverme”.(Age 38, Level A2).
 - “Es una lengua que se utiliza bastante”.(Age 65, Level A2).
 - “Necesario por ser el idioma más importante”.(Age 45, Level A2).
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- “Porque creo que todo el mundo debería saber al menos tres idiomas, más hoy en día que vivimos en un mundo globalizado”. (Age 57, Level B2.2).
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Literal Quotes on learner perceptions on age and learning of English

Table A6

Perceptions on age and learning of English

Positive aspects, perceived benefits

More time available, more educational experience and intrinsic motivation

- “Experiencia con otros idiomas y falta de presión ambiental”.(Age 62, Level B2.2).
 - “Es un reto personal”.(Age 49, Level B2.2).
 - “Adquirir nuevos conocimientos lingüísticos, cuando es voluntario, es satisfactorio”.(Age 67, Level B2.1).
 - “Porque tengo el tiempo y la relajación mental que no tenía antes”.(Age 67, Level B2.2).
 - Porque en este momento en el que estoy jubilada tengo todo el tiempo disponible para estudiar y disfruto haciéndolo. Si un día tengo que estar cuatro horas estudiando, pues lo hago sin problema”.(Age 66, Level B2.2).
 - “Al estar jubilada puedo elegir mis retos y dedicarme solo a los que quiero hacerlos”.(Age 65, Level B2.1).
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- “La motivación, poder utilizar estrategias adquiridas a lo largo del proceso de aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida. No tienes la agilidad o memoria de un joven pero puedes utilizar otras estrategias para conseguir el mismo objetivo, el camino puede ser más largo en el tiempo.... pero al final se puede llegar a conseguir con trabajo y tesón.”(Age 47, Level A2).

Active Aging

- “Me gusta la disciplina de tener que acudir a clase, creo que es muy bueno mantener el cerebro activo, y disfruto del ambiente de clase”.(Age 67, Level B2.1).
- “Me estimula la mente”.(Age 61, Level B2.1).
- “Mantiene mi cabeza ocupada de una manera diferente a la diaria normal”. (Age 48, Level B2.2).

The positive value of lifelong learning

- “Siempre es bueno aprender”.(Age 47, level A2).
- “Desde que era estudiante siempre he seguido estudiando, nunca he dejado de estudiar. Me sigue gustando aprender y experimentar, el inglés además de ser un aprendizaje representa un reto”.(Age 65, Level A2).
- “Me satisface comprobar que puedo aprender cosas nuevas”.(Age 57, Level B2.2).
- “En general, considero que el ser humano tiene un límite corpóreo pero no un límite intelectual, y superarse día a día es lo que te otorga la satisfacción personal. Cada vez que retengo algo o respondo en inglés me siento muy bien”.(Age 62, Level A2).
- “Me siento bien viendo que puedo volver a estudiar”.(Age 55, Level A2).

Opening new opportunities and creating new attitudes in life

- “Porque te abre un abanico muy grande para ver cosas nuevas, personas, culturas, historia, etc...”(Age 56, Level A2).
- “Me gustan los idiomas. Abren el camino a conocer otras culturas”.(Age 62, Level B2.2).
- “Me da nuevas perspectivas para entender a otros”.(Age 60, Level A2).
- “Te mantiene activo, te hace pensar diferente”.(Age 43, Level B2.2).

Negative aspects, difficulties

General cognitive deceleration and decline. Learning difficulties.

- “La madurez ayuda a tener más claro lo que quieres, aunque a veces el cuerpo y mente no acompaña”(Age 51, Level A2)..
- “Porque cuando era más joven aprendía más deprisa y las cosas no se me olvidaban”(Age 64, Level A2).
- “Mi capacidad de concentración y aprendizaje ha disminuido con la edad”.(Age 62, Level B2.2).
- “(...) no tenemos tanta agilidad mental y descaro que se tiene con unos años menos”.(Age 51, Level A2).
- “Pienso que memorizo peor las palabras. Antes aprendía más rápido”.(Age 60, Level A2).
- “(...) en comparación con gente joven de clase notó que tienen más recientes los contenidos, algunos más rápidos, más tiempo a estudiar...”.(Age 56, Level A2).

Memory, phonetic and hearing problems

- “Por las pérdida de facultades, pérdida de oído, dificultad de memorización etc...”(Age 48, Level B2.2)

-
- “Aunque igual si hay más madurez y conocimiento de conceptos que puedan ayudar a entender las cosas en su contexto, cuesta mucho más memorizar algo que cuando eres joven”.(Age 60, Level B2.2).
 - “LA CAPACIDAD DE ASIMILACIÓN (OIR, MEMORIZAR, PRONUNCIAR) ES BAJA”.(Age 67, Level A2).
 - “A mi edad es difícil aprender vocabulario. El listening se me hace muy complicado”.(Age 62, Level B2.2).
 - “Falta de retención de vocabulario”.(Age 57, Level B2.2).
-

Literal Quotes on Language ability vs effort

“La mayoría de las actividades que aprendemos están desarrolladas con técnicas de aprendizaje”.(Questionnaire Participant 2, Age 54, Level A2).

“Sin actitud de aprendizaje ninguna habilidad puede tener ningún efecto. Aunque también hay que decir que si hay cero habilidad, el resultado será nefasto: como intentar mover una catedral empujando su pared ”. (Questionnaire Participant 5, Age 60, Level B2.2).

“Los idiomas se aprenden con esfuerzo, estudiando y teniendo contacto con el idioma ya sea escuchando, hablando etc”.(Questionnaire Participant 6, Age 54, Level A2).

“En el aprendizaje de un segundo idioma es importante la disciplina”. (Questionnaire Participant 17, Age 35, Level A2).

“Veo a mi alrededor (esposa, hija...) aprenden y hablan idiomas con aparente poco esfuerzo y cierta naturalidad obteniendo muy buenos resultados. A diferencia sobre mí, no necesitan tanto esfuerzo de estudio como yo, además obtienen resultados muy satisfactorios mientras yo apenas avanzo. Deduzco que no tengo esa habilidad innata”. (Questionnaire Participant 24, Age 65, Level A2).

Appendix B

Semi-structured interview questions

PREGUNTAS DEFINITIVAS (TRADUCIDAS)

1. Contexto de Aprendizaje y motivación

1. ¿Cuáles han sido los aspectos o factores más importantes o significativos que han influido/influyen en su aprendizaje del idioma inglés? (Adaptada de Muñoz, 2010).
2. ¿Ha habido algún momento que haya sido particularmente significativo en la mejoría del aprendizaje del idioma inglés? ¿Ocurrió algo en particular? (Adaptada de Muñoz, 2010).
3. ¿Le gusta aprender idiomas? (Adaptada de Muñoz, 2010).
4. ¿Cuál es su motivación principal para aprender inglés? (Elaboración propia).
5. ¿Qué le recomendaría a un amigo/a que esté pensando en aprender un nuevo idioma (en particular, el inglés)? (Adaptada de Muñoz, 2010).
6. ¿Considera que el aprendizaje del idioma inglés le ha aportado cosas positivas? ¿En qué aspectos o ámbitos? (Elaboración propia).

2. La edad y el aprendizaje de segundos idiomas

6. ¿Cree que su edad es un factor positivo o negativo en su aprendizaje del idioma inglés? ¿Por qué? (Elaboración propia).

7. ¿Cree que hay un prejuicio en la sociedad o en su entorno contrario o escéptico con respecto al aprendizaje de idiomas en adultos mayores? (Elaboración propia).

3. Preferencias sobre el aprendizaje del idioma inglés

8. ¿Cuál es, en general, su manera preferida de aprender inglés? (Elaboración propia).

9. ¿Qué aspectos son los más importantes en el aprendizaje de inglés para usted? (Por ejemplo, “aprender todo el vocabulario que pueda” o “centrarme en las habilidades orales”). (Adaptada de Yin, 2008).

10. Del 1 al 10, ¿cómo puntuaría sus nivel de competencia en cada una de las cuatro habilidades del idioma inglés (reading, writing, listening, speaking)? (Adaptada de Muñoz, 2010)

4. Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas (Cognitivas-Memorísticas)

11. ¿Qué estrategias o técnicas de aprendizaje emplea para aprender vocabulario? ¿Le funcionan? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

12. ¿Qué estrategias usa para aprender la gramática? ¿Le funcionan? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

13. ¿Qué estrategias utiliza para mejorar la comprensión de la lectura? ¿Le funcionan? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

14. ¿Qué estrategias utiliza para mejorar la escritura? ¿Le funcionan? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

15. ¿Qué estrategias utiliza para desarrollar las habilidades orales? ¿Le funcionan? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

16. ¿Qué estrategias utiliza para mejorar la habilidad de comprensión de lo escuchado? ¿Le funcionan? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

17. ¿Cómo relaciona lo nuevo que aprende con lo aprendido anteriormente? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

5. Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas (De Compensación)

18. ¿Qué estrategias utiliza cuando no entiende algo en una conversación o cuando no sabe cómo decir algo? ¿Le funcionan? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

6. Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas (Metacognitivas)

19. ¿Reflexiona habitualmente sobre su progreso en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés? ¿De qué manera? (Elaboración propia).

20. ¿De qué manera planifica su aprendizaje semanal? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

21. ¿Suele encontrar y corregir sus propios errores? ¿De qué manera? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

¿Utiliza estrategias de autoevaluación en su proceso de aprendizaje? Si es así, ¿cuáles?

22. ¿Considera que, hasta cierto punto, puede regular su proceso de aprendizaje del idioma inglés por si mismo? (ej. haciendo ejercicios o prácticas extra, buscando un mayor contacto con el idioma fuera del aula etc.) (Elaboración propia).

7. Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas (Afectivas)

- 22. ¿De manera habitual, qué emociones siente al aprender inglés? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).
- 23. ¿Cómo se reduce la ansiedad al aprender inglés? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010)
- 24. ¿Se anima a sí mismo/a a (Intenta) hablar o participar en el aula? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).
- 25. ¿Se premia a si mismo/a cuando hace algo bien en su proceso de aprendizaje? ¿De qué manera? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

8. Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas (Sociales y comunicativas)

- 26. ¿Qué hace cuando necesita ayuda o asistencia en el aprendizaje de inglés? ¿Le suele funcionar? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).
- 27. ¿Cómo practica el inglés fuera del aula? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).
- 28. ¿Le gusta o interesa aprender sobre la cultura de países anglosajones (británica, estadounidense etc.)? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

9. Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas (dificultades, problemas)

- 29. ¿Hay estrategias o técnicas de aprendizaje que se le hacen difíciles de utilizar o le generan desagrado/ansiedad? (ej., preguntar o hablar con extraños, realizar resúmenes de textos escritos u orales largos, realizar transcripciones fonéticas etc.) (Elaboración propia)
- 30. ¿Qué estrategias o técnicas de aprendizaje no han funcionado en su caso? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010)

10. Cuestiones Finales

31. ¿Querría comentar algún otro tema o aspecto antes de terminar la entrevista? (Adaptada de Paredes, 2010).

Appendix C

Translated and original Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), Language Learning-context related questions and Demographic variables

Cuestionario de Contexto sobre el aprendizaje del Idioma Inglés y Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

En primer lugar, encontrarás una serie de preguntas relacionadas con tu experiencia de aprendizaje del Inglés como segundo idioma (idioma extranjero). Intenta responder de la manera más honesta y completa posible. No hay preguntas correctas ni incorrectas, simplemente estamos interesados en conocer más sobre los distintos aspectos de tu experiencia de aprendizaje.

A continuación, encontrarás un cuestionario llamado Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Inventario de Estrategias para el Aprendizaje de Idiomas). Esta versión del Strategy Inventory for Language Learning es para estudiantes que aprenden el Inglés como segundo idioma o idioma extranjero. Encontrarás una serie de afirmaciones sobre el aprendizaje del Inglés y las técnicas o estrategias que pudieras emplear en ese proceso de aprendizaje. Por favor, lee cada afirmación y, a continuación, marca la respuesta (1, 2, 3, 4 o 5) que puntúa lo CIERTA QUE ES LA AFIRMACIÓN EN TU CASO.

1. Nunca o casi nunca.
2. Muy pocas veces.

3. Algunas veces.
4. La mayoría de las veces.
5. Siempre o casi siempre.

Responde en términos de hasta qué punto la afirmación describe tu manera de aprender o lo que haces en el proceso de aprendizaje. No respondas en términos de lo que deberías hacer o lo que hacen otras personas. Se tardan aproximadamente unos 20-30 minutos en responder al cuestionario. Si tienes alguna duda o pregunta, no dudes en preguntar al investigador vía e-mail. Muchas gracias por tu participación en esta investigación.

Correo*

Tu dirección de correo electrónico

Edad*

Tu respuesta

Género*

Hombre

Mujer

Otro (no binario, no-conforme etc.)

Otro:

Lugar de la Escuela Oficial de Idiomas (EOI)

Donostia-San Sebastián

Bilbao

Vitoria-Gasteiz

Éibar

¿Cuál es tu nivel de estudios actual?

ESO, Graduado Escolar o equivalente (Estudios Primarios)

Bachillerato, Grado Medio en FP o Grado Superior (Estudios Secundarios)

Estudios Universitarios o equivalente (Estudios Superiores)

¿Cómo describirías tu actual nivel en el idioma inglés?

Deficiente

Medio

Satisfactorio

Muy bueno

Excelente

¿Cómo te describirías a ti mismo como aprendiz de segundas lenguas?

Deficiente

Medio

Satisfactorio

Muy bueno

Excelente

¿Es esta tu primera experiencia aprendiendo inglés? ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas aprendiéndolo? ¿Cuál ha sido la experiencia en la que más y mejor has aprendido?

Tu respuesta

¿Conoces otros segundos idiomas aparte del inglés? ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas aprendiéndolos o teniendo contacto (input) con ellos?

¿Qué nivel tienes en estos idiomas?

Tu respuesta

¿Cómo prefieres aprender inglés?

Escuchando y hablando

Leyendo y escribiendo

Haciendo juegos de rol y jugando a juegos.

A través de un diccionario y observando las reglas/estructuras gramaticales

¿Por qué prefieres aprender inglés de esta manera?

Tu respuesta

¿En qué medida es el inglés un idioma difícil para ti?

Nada difícil

Algo difícil

Bastante difícil

Muy difícil

¿Por qué?

Tu respuesta

¿En cuál de las siguientes habilidades del inglés te consideras más capacitado?

Writing

Speaking

Reading

Listening

¿Cuál de las siguientes habilidades del inglés se te hace la más fácil? Writing, Speaking, Reading, Listening. ¿Por qué?

Tu respuesta

¿Cuál de las siguientes habilidades del inglés se te hace la más difícil? Writing, Speaking, Reading, Listening ¿Por qué?

Tu respuesta

¿Cuánto tiempo le dedicas a aprender/practicar el inglés fuera del aula durante una semana?

Tu respuesta

¿Cuánto tiempo dura la instrucción en inglés en el aula durante una semana?

Tu respuesta

¿Cuál es tu idioma nativo o cuáles son (si tienes más de uno)?

Tu respuesta

¿En qué nivel de inglés te encuentras matriculado?

A1

A2

B1

B2.1

B2.2

C1

C2

¿En qué medida es importante para ti aprender inglés?

No demasiado importante.

Algo importante.

Bastante importante.

Muy importante

¿Por qué?

Tu respuesta

¿Por qué estás aprendiendo inglés? (Razón o motivo principal)

Para socializar/entretenimiento o disfrute

Para viajar

Razones relacionadas con el trabajo

Conocer a hablantes nativos.

Como un reto intelectual

Como requerimiento académico/de estudios

Otro:

¿Consideras que es beneficioso para ti aprender un segundo idioma? ¿Si es así, en qué aspectos?

Tu respuesta

¿Consideras que tu edad es un aspecto o factor positivo en el aprendizaje del inglés?

Sí

No

¿Por qué?

Tu respuesta

¿Disfrutas aprendiendo inglés?

Sí

No

¿Por qué?

Tu respuesta

¿Qué crees que es más importante para aprender un segundo idioma?

Tener una habilidad innata.

Hacer esfuerzos por tener contacto con y aprender el idioma

¿Por qué?

Tu respuesta

¿Crees que, hasta cierto punto, eres capaz de regular por ti mismo/a y con cierta autonomía el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés?

SILL Estrategias Memorísticas

Nunca o casi nunca-1

Muy pocas veces-2

Algunas veces-3

La mayoría de las veces-4

Siempre o casi siempre-5

Relaciono lo que ya sé con lo nuevo que aprendo del idioma inglés.

Utilizo las palabras o expresiones nuevas en oraciones para recordarlas

Relaciono como suena una palabra o expresión nueva con una imagen o dibujo para recordarla

Me hago una imagen mental de una situación en la que se utilice una palabra o expresión nueva para recordarla.

Utilizo rimas para recordar palabras nuevas

Utilizo láminas o tarjetas para recordar palabras o expresiones nuevas.

Represento físicamente o gesticulo las nuevas palabras o expresiones.

Repaso habitualmente lo que voy aprendiendo

Intento recordar nuevas palabras o expresiones en Inglés acordándome de su ubicación en una página, en la pizarra o en una señal callejera.

SILL Estrategias Cognitivas

Nunca o casi nunca-1

Muy pocas veces-2

Algunas veces-3

La mayoría de las veces-4

Siempre o casi siempre-5

Pronuncio o escribo varias veces las palabras o expresiones nuevas

Intento hablar como un nativo

Practico los sonidos del inglés

Utilizo las palabras o expresiones que conozco en diferentes contextos

Inicio conversaciones en inglés

Veo películas y televisión en inglés

Leo revistas o libros en Inglés que me interesan

Escribo mensajes, notas, cartas en inglés para comunicarme con otras personas

Antes de leer un texto en profundidad, le echo un vistazo rápido para ver qué va.

Busco palabras o expresiones en mi lengua materna parecidas a las nuevas en inglés

Intento analizar estructuras y buscar reglas o patrones que me faciliten mi aprendizaje

Analizo y divido las palabras, frases o textos en las partes que entiendo para comprender su significado.

Intento no traducir palabra por palabra para entender lo que escucho o leo.

Hago resúmenes de lo que escucho o leo

SILL Estrategias de Compensación

Nunca o casi nunca-1

Muy pocas veces-2

Algunas veces-3

La mayoría de las veces-4

Siempre o casi siempre-5

Intento adivinar el significado con la ayuda del contexto cuando no entiendo alguna palabra o expresión.

Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra utilizo gestos

Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra me la invento

Leo en Inglés sin mirar en el diccionario cada nueva palabra.

Intento predecir o adivinar lo que vendrá a continuación cuando escucho o leo en inglés.

Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra, utilizo otra palabra o una frase que signifique lo mismo.

SILL Estrategias Metacognitivas

Nunca o casi nunca-1

Muy pocas veces-2

Algunas veces-3

La mayoría de las veces-4

Siempre o casi siempre-5

Busco oportunidades fuera del aula para hablar, escuchar, leer o escribir en inglés.

Soy consciente de mis errores y uso esa información para mejorar

Presto atención cuando oigo a alguien hablando en inglés.

Intento averiguar cómo aprender inglés mejor.

Me organizo el horario para tener tiempo de estudiar y aprender inglés

Busco personas con las que practicar mi inglés

Busco oportunidades o contextos para leer en inglés todo lo que pueda

Me marco objetivos claros para mejorar mis habilidades en inglés.

Pienso sobre cómo voy progresando en mi aprendizaje de inglés.

SILL Estrategias Afectivas

Nunca o casi nunca-1

Muy pocas veces-2

Algunas veces-3

La mayoría de las veces-4

Siempre o casi siempre-5

Intento relajarme cuando me pongo nervioso al usar inglés o realizar una tarea en inglés.

Me animo a mí mismo a hablar en inglés aunque tema cometer algún error

Me premio o me refuerzo positivamente cuando lo hago bien en inglés.

Noto si estoy tenso o nervioso cuando uso inglés o realizo una tarea en inglés.

Escribo sobre mis sentimientos y emociones al aprender inglés.

Comparto con alguien cómo me siento cuando practico inglés.

SILL Estrategias Sociales

Nunca o casi nunca-1

Muy pocas veces-2

Algunas veces-3

La mayoría de las veces-4

Siempre o casi siempre-5

Cuando no entiendo algo pido que me lo digan más despacio o que me lo repitan.

Pido a los demás que me corrijan.

Practico el inglés con otros compañeros.

Pido ayuda a hablantes nativos.

Realizo preguntas a los demás en inglés

Me interesa la cultura del país o países donde se habla inglés e intento aprender sobre ella.

Además de las estrategias mencionadas en este cuestionario, ¿utilizas otras Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas o técnicas de aprendizaje? Si es así, ¿cuáles? y ¿con qué frecuencia?

Tu respuesta

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)

© R. Oxford, 1989

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on Worksheet)

Part A

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word.
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I review English lessons often.
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the

page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Part B

10. I say or write new English words several times.
11. I try to talk like native English speakers.
12. I practice the sounds of English.
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.
14. I start conversations in English.
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
16. I read for pleasure in English.
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
20. I try to find patterns in English.
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22. I try not to translate word-for-word.
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

Part C

24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
27. I read English without looking up every new word.
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Part D

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.

31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
38. I think about my progress in learning English.

Part E

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F

45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47. I practice English with other students.
48. I ask for help from English speakers.
49. I ask questions in English.
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENTS

Formulario de Consentimiento Informado

Universidad de Deusto.
Programa de Doctorado en Educación

Unibertsitate Etorbidea, 24, 48007, Bilbao, Bizkaia

Título de la investigación: Approaching the use of Language Learning Strategies among adult and Senior learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the Basque Official Language Schools (Aproximación al uso de Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas entre los aprendices adultos y adultos mayores de Inglés como Idioma Extranjero de las Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas del País Vasco).

A. Propósito y Contexto

Bajo la supervisión de los doctores Donna Fernández Nogueira y Juan Francisco López Paz, el doctorando/investigador Aitor Arenas Cendoya está llevando a cabo una investigación en relación al aprendizaje de segundos idiomas (en concreto, Inglés como Idioma Extranjero) entre los alumnos adultos y adultos mayores de las Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas (EOI) del País Vasco. El uso que estos alumnos realizan de las Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas va a ser el principal asunto tratado en esta investigación. Por otro lado, cuestiones como la motivación, la afectividad y las creencias en el proceso de aprendizaje (y su relación con el empleo de las estrategias) también van a ser tratadas, pero en menor medida.

B. Procedimiento

Si Ud. decide participar en esta investigación, participará en las siguientes cuestiones:

1. Se realizará una entrevista semi-estructurada (partiendo de un guión previo) donde se le preguntará sobre cuestiones relacionadas con su uso de las Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas (las estrategias empleadas por usted para aprender el segundo idioma-Inglés). Asimismo, también se le preguntará sobre su motivación para aprender el segundo idioma, los aspectos emocionales del proceso de aprendizaje, las

creencias que tiene sobre el proceso de aprendizaje (por ejemplo, la influencia de la edad) etc. Esta entrevista durará aproximadamente entre unos 45 min.

2. Esta entrevista se realizará, preferiblemente, de manera online (telemática) a través de herramientas como Zoom o Google Meet. Si esto no fuera posible, el entrevistador está dispuesto a encontrarse con el/la entrevistado/a en un lugar y momento decidido por ambos de mutuo acuerdo. Se grabará y transcribirá la entrevista/conversación.

C. Riesgos

Ud. no estará expuesto/a a ningún riesgo importante si decide participar en esta investigación. Es posible que sienta cierta incomodidad a la hora de responder a alguna pregunta. Toda la información que Ud. de se mantendrá en el estricto anonimato. Su nombre y apellidos reales NO aparecerán en el informe final que escribirá el investigador. Toda la información que Ud. de se guardará en un lugar seguro.

D. Beneficios Directos

No hay beneficios directos garantizados para Ud. si decide participar en esta investigación. Sin embargo, podría saber más sobre su proceso de aprendizaje del segundo idioma (Inglés) y sobre sus hábitos de aprendizaje de la segunda lengua (posibilitando una reflexión sobre los mismos). Asimismo, el investigador se compromete a, si Ud. así lo desea, compartir las transcripciones de las entrevistas así como a dar información sobre la investigación.

E. Alternativas

Ud. es libre de no participar en esta investigación. Si decide participar, Ud. es libre de no contestar a algunos ítems o preguntas. Se agradecerá su honestidad al responder.

F. Costes

No habrá costes económicos para Ud. como consecuencia de participar en esta investigación.

G. Preguntas/Dudas

Puede preguntar cualquier duda que tenga con respecto de la investigación al investigador, Aitor Arenas. Lo puede hacer enviando un e-mail a la dirección aitor.a@opendeusto.es. Asimismo, puede utilizar este mismo canal de contacto para recibir las transcripciones e información sobre el desarrollo de la investigación.

H. Consentimiento

La participación en este estudio/investigación es voluntaria. Ud. es libre de abandonar su participación en cualquier momento que considere oportuno. Si decide participar en esta investigación, firme en los espacios abajo indicados. Muchas gracias por su atención de antemano.

La participación en este estudio/investigación es voluntaria. Ud. es libre de abandonar su participación en cualquier momento que considere oportuno. Si decide participar en esta investigación, rellene los espacios abajo indicados. Muchas gracias por su atención de antemano.

Correo*

Correo válido

Este formulario registra los correos.[Cambiar configuración](#)

Nombre y apellidos

*

Texto de respuesta corta

Número DNI (con letra).

Texto de respuesta corta

Fecha

Texto de respuesta corta

Formulario de Consentimiento Informado

Universidad de Deusto.
Programa de Doctorado en Educación

Unibertsitate Etorbidea, 24, 48007, Bilbao, Bizkaia

Título de la investigación: Approaching the use of Language Learning Strategies among adult and Senior learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the Basque Official Language Schools (Aproximación al uso de Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas entre los aprendices adultos y adultos mayores de Inglés como Idioma Extranjero de las Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas del País Vasco).

A. Propósito y Contexto

Bajo la supervisión de los doctores Donna Fernández Nogueira y Juan Francisco López Paz, el doctorando/investigador Aitor Arenas Cendoya está llevando a cabo una investigación en relación al aprendizaje de segundos idiomas (en concreto, Inglés como Idioma Extranjero) entre los alumnos adultos y adultos mayores de las Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas (EOI) del País Vasco. El uso que estos alumnos realizan de las Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas va a ser el principal asunto tratado en esta investigación. Por otro lado, cuestiones como la motivación, la afectividad y las creencias en el proceso de aprendizaje (y su relación con el empleo de las estrategias) también van a ser tratadas, pero en menor medida.

B. Procedimiento

Si Ud. decide participar en esta investigación, realizará las siguientes cuestiones:

1. Se le pedirá que complete el cuestionario Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) en relación al uso de Estrategias de Aprendizaje de Idiomas. Es un cuestionario que consta de 50 ítems. Deberá marcar cada uno de ellos en una escala Likert del 1 al 5, en relación al grado

de uso de cada estrategia (de nunca o casi nunca cierto en mí a siempre o casi siempre cierto en mí). Completar este cuestionario suele tardar en torno a 20-30 minutos.

2. Se le pedirá que conteste a unas breves preguntas en relación a su edad, género, años aprendiendo inglés, importancia de su aprendizaje, motivación para aprender, nivel en el que se encuentra aprendiendo en la EOI etc. para contextualizar los resultados del cuestionario SILL.

3. Estas actividades se llevarán a cabo, siempre y que sea posible, a través de Formularios de Google. Es decir, se le pedirá que complete un formulario de Google y lo envíe a la dirección de correo del investigador (aitor.a@opendeusto.es).

C. Riesgos

Ud. no estará expuesto/a a ningún riesgo importante si decide participar en esta investigación. Es posible que se le haga algo incómodo responder a alguna pregunta. Toda la información que Ud. de se mantendrá en el estricto anonimato. Su nombre y apellidos reales NO aparecerán en el informe final que escribirá el investigador. Toda la información que Ud. de se guardará en un lugar seguro.

D. Beneficios Directos

No hay beneficios directos garantizados para Ud. si decide participar en esta investigación. Sin embargo, podría saber más sobre su proceso de aprendizaje del segundo idioma (Inglés) y sobre sus hábitos de aprendizaje de la segunda lengua (posibilitando una reflexión sobre los mismos), lo cual puede ser de ayuda para mejorar su proceso de aprendizaje. Asimismo, el Investigador se compromete a, si Ud. así lo desea, compartir información sobre el desarrollo de la investigación.

E. Alternativas

Ud. es libre de no participar en esta investigación. Si decide participar, Ud. es libre de no contestar a algunos ítems o preguntas. Se agradecerá su honestidad al responder.

F. Costes

No habrá costes económicos para Ud. como consecuencia de participar en esta investigación.

G. Preguntas/Dudas

Puede preguntar cualquier duda que tenga con respecto de la investigación al investigador, Aitor Arenas. Lo puede hacer enviando un e-mail a la dirección aitor.a@opendeusto.es. A través de este mismo canal de contacto podrá saber más, si así lo desea, sobre la investigación y sus posibles resultados.

H. Consentimiento

La participación en este estudio/investigación es voluntaria. Ud. es libre de abandonar su participación en cualquier momento que considere oportuno. Si decide participar en esta investigación, rellene los espacios abajo indicados. Muchas gracias por su atención de antemano.

Correo*

Correo válido

Este formulario registra los correos. [Cambiar configuración](#)

Nombre y apellidos

*

Texto de respuesta corta

Número DNI (con letra).

Texto de respuesta corta

Fecha

Texto de respuesta corta

Appendix E

Rebecca Oxford's permission to use the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Dear Aitor (if I may),

You have my permission to use the SILL in your study. I am not available to help you in any detail regarding your SILL study. However, I suggest you to look at my 2017 book, which might help you greatly with the aspects of the study or with aspects of learning strategies.

Appendix F

Frequency of individual Strategy Use according to the Quantitative variables

Table F1

Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Men (O1)

Strategy Category	Strategy Num. in SILL	Item description in SILL	Rank	Mean
META	32	Presto atención cuando oigo a alguien hablando en inglés. (I pay attention when someone is speaking English).	1	3.96 (High)
COM	24	Intento adivinar el significado con la ayuda del contexto cuando no entiendo alguna palabra o expresión. (To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses).	2	3.91 (High)
MEM	1	Relaciono lo que ya sé con lo nuevo que aprendo del idioma inglés.(I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English).	3	3.70 (High)
SOC	45	Cuando no entiendo algo pido que me lo digan más despacio o que me lo repitan. (If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again).	4	3.61 (High)
COM	29	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra, utilizo otra palabra o una frase que signifique lo mismo. (If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing)	5	3.52 (High)
META	31	Soy consciente de mis errores y uso esa información para mejorar.(I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better).	6	3.48 (Moderate)
SOC	50	Me interesa la cultura del país o países donde se habla inglés e intento aprender sobre ella. (I try to learn about the culture of English speakers).	7	3.48 (Moderate)

META	38	Pienso sobre cómo voy progresando en mi aprendizaje de inglés. (I think about my progress in learning English).	8	3.39 (Moderate)
META	33	Intento averiguar cómo aprender inglés mejor. (I try to find out how to be a better learner of English)	9	3.39 (Moderate)
COG	22	Intento no traducir palabra por palabra para entender lo que escucho o leo (I try not to translate word-for-word).	10	3.35 (Moderate)
COM	25	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra utilizo gestos. (When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures)	11	3.35 (Moderate)
COG	13	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones que conozco en diferentes contextos. (I use the English words I know in different ways)	12	3.30 (Moderate)
AFF	42	Noto si estoy tenso o nervioso cuando uso el inglés o realizo una tarea en inglés (I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English).	13	3.26 (Moderate)
COG	21	Analizo y divido las palabras, frases o textos en las partes que entiendo para comprender su significado. (I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand)	14	3.22 (Moderate)
MEM	2	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones nuevas en oraciones para recordarlas.(I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them).	15	3.17 (Moderate)
SOC	46	Pido a los demás que me corrijan.(I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk).	16	3.17 (Moderate)
SOC	47	Practico el inglés con otros compañeros. (I practice English with other students).	17	3.17 (Moderate)
META	34	Me organizo el horario para tener tiempo de estudiar y aprender inglés. (I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English)	18	3.13 (Moderate)
MEM	8	Repaso habitualmente lo que voy aprendiendo. (I review English lessons often).	19	3.13 (Moderate)
COG	10	Pronuncio o escribo varias veces las palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I say or write new English words several times).	20	3.09 (Moderate)

COG	20	Intento analizar estructuras y buscar reglas o patrones que me faciliten mi aprendizaje. (I try to find patterns in English).	21	3.09 (Moderate)
COG	18	Antes de leer un texto en profundidad, le echo un vistazo rápido para ver sobre qué va. (I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully)	22	3.09 (Moderate)
MEM	4	Me hago una imagen mental de una situación en la que se utilice una palabra o expresión nueva para recordarla. (I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used).	23	3.00 (Moderate)
MEM	9	Intento recordar nuevas palabras o expresiones en Inglés acordándome de su ubicación en una página, en la pizarra o en una señal callejera. (I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign)	24	2.96 (Moderate)
COG	12	Practico los sonidos del inglés. (I practice the sounds of English).	25	2.87 (Moderate)
AFF	39	Intento relajarme cuando me pongo nervioso al usar inglés o realizar una tarea en inglés. (I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English)	26	2.83 (Moderate)
SOC	49	Realizo preguntas a los demás en inglés. (I ask questions to others in English)	27	2.83 (Moderate)
META	30	Busco oportunidades fuera del aula para hablar, escuchar, leer o escribir en inglés. (I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English).	28	2.83 (Moderate)
AFF	40	Me animo a mí mismo a hablar en inglés aunque tema cometer algún error (I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake).	29	2.74 (Moderate)
COM	28	Intento predecir o adivinar lo que vendrá a continuación cuando escucho o leo en inglés.(I try to guess what the other person will say next in English).	30	2.74 (Moderate)
COM	27	Leo en Inglés sin mirar en el diccionario cada nueva palabra. (I read English without looking up every new word).	31	2.65 (Moderate)
META	36	Busco oportunidades o contextos para leer en inglés todo lo que pueda. (I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English).	32	2.65 (Moderate)

COG	19	Busco palabras o expresiones en mi lengua materna parecidas a las nuevas en inglés. (I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English).	33	2.57 (Moderate)
COG	11	Intento hablar como un nativo. (I try to talk like native English speakers.)	34	2.52 (Moderate)
COG	15	Veo películas y televisión en inglés. (I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English).	35	2.48 (Low)
META	37	Me marco objetivos claros para mejorar mis habilidades en inglés.(I have clear goals for improving my English skills).	36	2.48 (Low)
AFF	41	Me premio o me refuerzo positivamente cuando lo hago bien en inglés. (I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English).	37	2.43 (Low)
COG	23	Hago resúmenes de lo que escucho o leo. (I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English).	38	2.43 (Low)
COG	16	Leo revistas o libros en Inglés que me interesan.(I read for pleasure in English).	39	2.39 (Low)
MEM	3	Relaciono como suena una palabra o expresión nueva con una imagen o dibujo para recordarla. (I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word).	40	2.35 (Low)
COG	14	Inicio conversaciones en inglés.(I start conversations in English).	41	2.35 (Low)
COM	26	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra me la invento. (I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English).	42	2.30 (Low)
AFF	44	Comparto con alguien cómo me siento cuando practico inglés. (I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English).	43	2.22 (Low)
MEM	6	Utilizo láminas o tarjetas para recordar palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I use flashcards to remember new English words).	44	2.13 (Low)
MEM	7	Represento físicamente o gesticulo las nuevas palabras o expresiones (I physically act out new English words).	45	2.13 (Low)

META	35	Busco personas con las que practicar mi inglés. (I look for people I can talk to in English).	46	2.00 (Low)
COG	17	Escribo mensajes, notas, cartas en inglés para comunicarme con otras personas. (I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English)	47	1.96 (Low)
SOC	48	Pido ayuda a hablantes nativos (I ask for help from English speakers)	48	1.78 (Low)
MEM	5	Utilizo rimas para recordar palabras nuevas (I use rhymes to remember new English words)	49	1.48 (Low)
AFF	43	Escribo sobre mis sentimientos y emociones al aprender inglés.(I write down my feelings in a language learning diary).	50	1.35 (Low)

Table F2

Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Women (O1)

Strategy Category	Strategy Num. in SILL	Item description in SILL	Rank	Mean
META	32	Presto atención cuando oigo a alguien hablando en inglés. (I pay attention when someone is speaking English).	1	3.89 (High)
COM	24	Intento adivinar el significado con la ayuda del contexto cuando no entiendo alguna palabra o expresión. (To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses).	2	3.81 (High)
SOC	45	Cuando no entiendo algo pido que me lo digan más despacio o que me lo repitan. (If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again)	3	3.79 (High)
META	31	Soy consciente de mis errores y uso esa información para mejorar.(I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better)	4	3.62 (High)
MEM	1	Relaciono lo que ya sé con lo nuevo que aprendo del idioma inglés.(I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English).	5	3.57 (High)

COM	29	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra, utilizo otra palabra o una frase que signifique lo mismo. (If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing)	6	3.55 (High)
META	34	Me organizo el horario para tener tiempo de estudiar y aprender inglés. (I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English)	7	3.53 (High)
COG	10	Pronuncio o escribo varias veces las palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I say or write new English words several times).	8	3.26 (Moderate)
MEM	2	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones nuevas en oraciones para recordarlas. (I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them).	9	3.26 (Moderate)
AFF	40	Me animo a mí mismo a hablar en inglés aunque tema cometer algún error (I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake).	10	3.23 (Moderate)
MEM	8	Repaso habitualmente lo que voy aprendiendo. (I review English lessons often).	11	3.19 (Moderate)
AFF	42	Noto si estoy tenso o nervioso cuando uso el inglés o realizo una tarea en inglés (I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English).	12	3.17 (Moderate)
META	33	Intento averiguar cómo aprender inglés mejor. (I try to find out how to be a better learner of English)	13	3.15 (Moderate)
SOC	47	Practico el inglés con otros compañeros. (I practice English with other students).	14	3.13 (Moderate)
AFF	39	Intento relajarme cuando me pongo nervioso al usar inglés o realizar una tarea en inglés. (I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English)	15	3.11 (Moderate)
COG	20	Intento analizar estructuras y buscar reglas o patrones que me faciliten mi aprendizaje. (I try to find patterns in English).	16	3.09 (Moderate)
COG	22	Intento no traducir palabra por palabra para entender lo que escucho o leo (I try not to translate word-for-word).	17	3.09 (Moderate)

SOC	46	Pido a los demás que me corrijan.(I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk).	18	3.06 (Moderate)
COG	21	Analizo y divido las palabras, frases o textos en las partes que entiendo para comprender su significado. (I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand)	19	3.04 (Moderate)
COM	29	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra utilizo gestos. (When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures)	20	3.02 (Moderate)
COG	13	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones que conozco en diferentes contextos. (I use the English words I know in different ways)	21	3.02 (Moderate)
SOC	50	Me interesa la cultura del país o países donde se habla inglés e intento aprender sobre ella. (I try to learn about the culture of English speakers).	22	3.02 (Moderate)
META	38	Pienso sobre cómo voy progresando en mi aprendizaje de inglés. (I think about my progress in learning English)	23	3.00 (Moderate)
COG	18	Antes de leer un texto en profundidad, le echo un vistazo rápido para ver sobre qué va. (I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully)	24	2.98 (Moderate)
COG	12	Practico los sonidos del inglés. (I practice the sounds of English)	25	2.87 (Moderate)
AFF	41	Me premio o me refuerzo positivamente cuando lo hago bien en inglés. (I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English)	26	2.85 (Moderate)
META	30	Busco oportunidades fuera del aula para hablar, escuchar, leer o escribir en inglés. (I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English).	27	2.83 (Moderate)
MEM	9	Intento recordar nuevas palabras o expresiones en Inglés acordándome de su ubicación en una página, en la pizarra o en una señal callejera. (I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign)	28	2.83 (Moderate)
META	36	Busco oportunidades o contextos para leer en inglés todo lo que pueda. (I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English).	29	2.81 (Moderate)

SOC	49	Realizo preguntas a los demás en inglés (I ask questions to others in English).	30	2.81 (Moderate)
COG	15	Veo películas y televisión en inglés. (I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English).	31	2.70 (Moderate)
COG	16	Leo revistas o libros en Inglés que me interesan.(I read for pleasure in English).	32	2.68 (Moderate)
COG	19	Busco palabras o expresiones en mi lengua materna parecidas a las nuevas en inglés. (I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English).	33	2.62 (Moderate)
COG	11	Intento hablar como un nativo. (I try to talk like native English speakers.)	34	2.57 (Moderate)
COM	27	Leo en Inglés sin mirar en el diccionario cada nueva palabra. (I read English without looking up every new word).	35	2.53 (Moderate)
COG	14	Inicio conversaciones en inglés.(I start conversations in English).	36	2.53 (Moderate)
AFF	44	Comparto con alguien cómo me siento cuando practico inglés. (I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English)	37	2.51 (Moderate)
META	37	Me marco objetivos claros para mejorar mis habilidades en inglés.(I have clear goals for improving my English skills)	38	2.45 (Low)
MEM	4	Me hago una imagen mental de una situación en la que se utilice una palabra o expresión nueva para recordarla. (I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used).	39	2.34 (Low)
COM	26	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra me la invento. (I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English)	40	2.30 (Low)
COG	23	Hago resúmenes de lo que escucho o leo. (I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English)	41	2.28 (Low)

COM	28	Intento predecir o adivinar lo que vendrá a continuación cuando escucho o leo en inglés.(I try to guess what the other person will say next in English).	42	2.28 (Low)
META	35	Busco personas con las que practicar mi inglés. (I look for people I can talk to in English).	43	2.26 (Low)
COG	17	Escribo mensajes, notas, cartas en inglés para comunicarme con otras personas. (I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English)	44	2.21 (Low)
MEM	3	Relaciono como suena una palabra o expresión nueva con una imagen o dibujo para recordarla. (I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word).	45	2.09 (Low)
MEM	6	Utilizo láminas o tarjetas para recordar palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I use flashcards to remember new English words)	46	2.06 (Low)
SOC	48	Pido ayuda a hablantes nativos (I ask for help from English speakers)	47	1.96 (Low)
MEM	7	Represento físicamente o gesticulo las nuevas palabras o expresiones (I physically act out new English words).	48	1.85 (Low)
MEM	5	Utilizo rimas para recordar palabras nuevas (I use rhymes to remember new English words)	49	1.66 (Low)
AFF	43	Escribo sobre mis sentimientos y emociones al aprender inglés.(I write down my feelings in a language learning diary).	50	1.49 (Low)

Table F3

Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) 35-50 years old (O1)

Strategy Category	Strategy Num. in SILL	Item description in SILL	Rank	Mean
META	32	Presto atención cuando oigo a alguien hablando en inglés. (I pay attention when someone is speaking English).	1	3.76 (High)
COM	24	Intento adivinar el significado con la ayuda del contexto cuando no entiendo alguna palabra o expresión. (To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses).	2	3.72 (High)
MEM	1	Relaciono lo que ya sé con lo nuevo que aprendo del idioma inglés.(I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English).	3	3.60 (High)
COM	29	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra, utilizo otra palabra o una frase que signifique lo mismo. (If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing)	4	3.56 (High)
SOC	45	Cuando no entiendo algo pido que me lo digan más despacio o que me lo repitan. (If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again)	5	3.52 (High)
META	34	Me organizo el horario para tener tiempo de estudiar y aprender inglés. (I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English)	6	3.48 (Moderate)
META	31	Soy consciente de mis errores y uso esa información para mejorar.(I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better)	7	3.40 (Moderate)
COG	13	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones que conozco en diferentes contextos. (I use the English words I know in different ways)	8	3.32 (Moderate)
COG	22	Intento no traducir palabra por palabra para entender lo que escucho o leo (I try not to translate word-for-word).	9	3.28 (Moderate)
MEM	2	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones nuevas en oraciones para recordarlas.(I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them).	10	3.24 (Moderate)

SOC	47	Practico el inglés con otros compañeros. (I practice English with other students).	11	3.20 (Moderate)
META	33	Intento averiguar cómo aprender inglés mejor. (I try to find out how to be a better learner of English)	12	3.16 (Moderate)
MEM	8	Repaso habitualmente lo que voy aprendiendo. (I review English lessons often).	13	3.12 (Moderate)
AFF	40	Me animo a mí mismo a hablar en inglés aunque tema cometer algún error (I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake).	14	3.12 (Moderate)
AFF	42	Noto si estoy tenso o nervioso cuando uso el inglés o realizo una tarea en inglés (I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English).	15	3.08 (Moderate)
COG	12	Practico los sonidos del inglés. (I practice the sounds of English)	16	3.08 (Moderate)
SOC	50	Me interesa la cultura del país o países donde se habla inglés e intento aprender sobre ella. (I try to learn about the culture of English speakers).	17	3.04 (Moderate)
COM	29	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra utilizo gestos. (When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures)	18	3.04 (Moderate)
AFF	39	Intento relajarme cuando me pongo nervioso al usar inglés o realizar una tarea en inglés. (I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English)	19	3.04 (Moderate)
COG	10	Pronuncio o escribo varias veces las palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I say or write new English words several times).	20	3.00 (Moderate)
AFF	41	Me premio o me refuerzo positivamente cuando lo hago bien en inglés. (I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English)	21	2.88 (Moderate)
COG	21	Analizo y divido las palabras, frases o textos en las partes que entiendo para comprender su significado. (I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand)	22	2.88 (Moderate)
META	38	Pienso sobre cómo voy progresando en mi aprendizaje de inglés. (I think about my progress in learning English)	23	2.84 (Moderate)

META	30	Busco oportunidades fuera del aula para hablar, escuchar, leer o escribir en inglés. (I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English).	24	2.84 (Moderate)
SOC	46	Pido a los demás que me corrijan.(I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk).	25	2.84 (Moderate)
MEM	9	Intento recordar nuevas palabras o expresiones en Inglés acordándome de su ubicación en una página, en la pizarra o en una señal callejera. (I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign)	26	2.84 (Moderate)
COG	20	Intento analizar estructuras y buscar reglas o patrones que me faciliten mi aprendizaje. (I try to find patterns in English).	27	2.84 (Moderate)
COG	15	Veo películas y televisión en inglés. (I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English).	28	2.80 (Moderate)
META	36	Busco oportunidades o contextos para leer en inglés todo lo que pueda. (I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English).	29	2.76 (Moderate)
COG	11	Intento hablar como un nativo. (I try to talk like native English speakers.)	30	2.72 (Moderate)
MEM	4	Me hago una imagen mental de una situación en la que se utilice una palabra o expresión nueva para recordarla. (I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used).	31	2.68 (Moderate)
COG	18	Antes de leer un texto en profundidad, le echo un vistazo rápido para ver sobre qué va. (I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully	32	2.68 (Moderate)
SOC	49	Realizo preguntas a los demás en inglés (I ask questions to others in English).	33	2.64 (Moderate)
COG	19	Busco palabras o expresiones en mi lengua materna parecidas a las nuevas en inglés. (I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English).	34	2.64 (Moderate)
COG	14	Inicio conversaciones en inglés.(I start conversations in English).	35	2.60 (Moderate)

META	37	Me marco objetivos claros para mejorar mis habilidades en inglés.(I have clear goals for improving my English skills)	36	2.60 (Moderate)
COG	23	Hago resúmenes de lo que escucho o leo. (I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English).	37	2.48 (Low)
COG	16	Leo revistas o libros en Inglés que me interesan.(I read for pleasure in English).	38	2.48 (Low)
MEM	6	Utilizo láminas o tarjetas para recordar palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I use flashcards to remember new English words).	39	2.48 (Low)
COM	28	Intento predecir o adivinar lo que vendrá a continuación cuando escucho o leo en inglés.(I try to guess what the other person will say next in English).	40	2.44 (Low)
COM	27	Leo en Inglés sin mirar en el diccionario cada nueva palabra. (I read English without looking up every new word).	41	2.44 (Low)
MEM	3	Relaciono como suena una palabra o expresión nueva con una imagen o dibujo para recordarla. (I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word).	42	2.28 (Low)
COG	17	Escribo mensajes, notas, cartas en inglés para comunicarme con otras personas. (I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English)	43	2.16 (Low)
META	35	Busco personas con las que practicar mi inglés. (I look for people I can talk to in English).	44	2.16 (Low)
COM	26	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra me la invento. (I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English).	45	2.12 (Low)
AFF	44	Comparto con alguien cómo me siento cuando practico inglés. (I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English)	46	2.04 (Low)
SOC	48	Pido ayuda a hablantes nativos (I ask for help from English speakers)	47	1.84 (Low)
MEM	7	Represento físicamente o gesticulo las nuevas palabras o expresiones (I physically act out new English words).	48	1.84 (Low)
MEM	5	Utilizo rimas para recordar palabras nuevas (I use rhymes to remember new English words)	49	1.72 (Low)

AFF	43	Escribo sobre mis sentimientos y emociones al aprender inglés.(I write down my feelings in a language learning diary).	50	1.56 (Low)
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Table F4

Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Older than 50 (O1)

Strategy Category	Strategy Num. in SILL	Item description in SILL	Rank	Mean
META	32	Presto atención cuando oigo a alguien hablando en inglés. (I pay attention when someone is speaking English).	1	4.00
COM	24	Intento adivinar el significado con la ayuda del contexto cuando no entiendo alguna palabra o expresión. (To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses).	2	3.91
SOC	45	Cuando no entiendo algo pido que me lo digan más despacio o que me lo repitan. (If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again)	3	3.84
META	31	Soy consciente de mis errores y uso esa información para mejorar.(I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better)	4	3.67
MEM	1	Relaciono lo que ya sé con lo nuevo que aprendo del idioma inglés.(I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English).	5	3.62
COM	29	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra, utilizo otra palabra o una frase que signifique lo mismo. (If I can' t think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing	6	3.53
META	34	Me organizo el horario para tener tiempo de estudiar y aprender inglés. (I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English)	7	3.36
COG	10	Pronuncio o escribo varias veces las palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I say or write new English words several times).	8	3.31

META	38	Pienso sobre cómo voy progresando en mi aprendizaje de inglés. (I think about my progress in learning English)	9	3.29
META	33	Intento averiguar cómo aprender inglés mejor. (I try to find out how to be a better learner of English)	10	3.27
AFF	42	Noto si estoy tenso o nervioso cuando uso el inglés o realizo una tarea en inglés (I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English).	11	3.27
SOC	46	Pido a los demás que me corrijan.(I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk).	12	3.24
SOC	50	Me interesa la cultura del país o países donde se habla inglés e intento aprender sobre ella. (I try to learn about the culture of English speakers).	13	3.24
MEM	2	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones nuevas en oraciones para recordarlas.(I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them).	14	3.22
COG	21	Analizo y divido las palabras, frases o textos en las partes que entiendo para comprender su significado. (I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand)	15	3.22
COG	20	Intento analizar estructuras y buscar reglas o patrones que me faciliten mi aprendizaje. (I try to find patterns in English).	16	3.22
COG	18	Antes de leer un texto en profundidad, le echo un vistazo rápido para ver sobre qué va. (I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully)	17	3.20
MEM	8	Repaso habitualmente lo que voy aprendiendo. (I review English lessons often).	18	3.20
COM	29	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra utilizo gestos. (When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures).	19	3.18
SOC	47	Practico el inglés con otros compañeros. (I practice English with other students).	20	3.11
COG	22	Intento no traducir palabra por palabra para entender lo que escucho o leo (I try not to translate word-for-word).	21	3.11
AFF	40	Me animo a mí mismo a hablar en inglés aunque tema cometer algún error (I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake).	22	3.04

AFF	39	Intento relajarme cuando me pongo nervioso al usar inglés o realizar una tarea en inglés. (I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English)	23	3.00
COG	13	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones que conozco en diferentes contextos. (I use the English words I know in different ways)	24	3.00
SOC	47	Practico el inglés con otros compañeros. (I practice English with other students).	25	2.91
MEM	9	Intento recordar nuevas palabras o expresiones en Inglés acordándome de su ubicación en una página, en la pizarra o en una señal callejera. (I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign)	26	2.89
META	30	Busco oportunidades fuera del aula para hablar, escuchar, leer o escribir en inglés. (I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English).	27	2.82
META	36	Busco oportunidades o contextos para leer en inglés todo lo que pueda. (I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English).	28	2.76
COG	12	Practico los sonidos del inglés. (I practice the sounds of English)	29	2.76
COG	16	Leo revistas o libros en Inglés que me interesan.(I read for pleasure in English).	30	2.64
COM	27	Leo en Inglés sin mirar en el diccionario cada nueva palabra. (I read English without looking up every new word).	31	2.64
AFF	44	Comparto con alguien cómo me siento cuando practico inglés. (I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English)	32	2.62
AFF	41	Me premio o me refuerzo positivamente cuando lo hago bien en inglés. (I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English)	33	2.62
COG	19	Busco palabras o expresiones en mi lengua materna parecidas a las nuevas en inglés. (I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English).	34	2.58
COG	15	Ve películas y televisión en inglés. (I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English).	35	2.53

MEM	4	Me hago una imagen mental de una situación en la que se utilice una palabra o expresión nueva para recordarla. (I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used).	36	2.49
COG	11	Intento hablar como un nativo. (I try to talk like native English speakers.)	37	2.47
COM	28	Intento predecir o adivinar lo que vendrá a continuación cuando escucho o leo en inglés.(I try to guess what the other person will say next in English).	38	2.42
COG	14	Inicio conversaciones en inglés.(I start conversations in English).	39	2.40
COM	26	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra me la invento. (I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English).	40	2.40
META	37	Me marco objetivos claros para mejorar mis habilidades en inglés.(I have clear goals for improving my English skills)	41	2.38
COG	23	Hago resúmenes de lo que escucho o leo. (I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English).	42	2.24
META	35	Busco personas con las que practicar mi inglés. (I look for people I can talk to in English).	43	2.18
MEM	3	Relaciono como suena una palabra o expresión nueva con una imagen o dibujo para recordarla. (I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word).	44	2.11
COG	17	Escribo mensajes, notas, cartas en inglés para comunicarme con otras personas. (I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English)	45	2.11
MEM	7	Represento físicamente o gesticulo las nuevas palabras o expresiones (I physically act out new English words).	46	2.00
SOC	48	Pido ayuda a hablantes nativos (I ask for help from English speakers)	47	1.93
MEM	6	Utilizo láminas o tarjetas para recordar palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I use flashcards to remember new English words).	48	1.87
MEM	5	Utilizo rimas para recordar palabras nuevas (I use rhymes to remember new English words)	49	1.53

AFF	43	Escribo sobre mis sentimientos y emociones al aprender inglés.(I write down my feelings in a language learning diary).	50	1.38
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Table F5

Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) English Level A2 (O1)

Strategy Category	Strategy Num. in SILL	Item description in SILL	Rank	Mean
META	32	Presto atención cuando oigo a alguien hablando en inglés. (I pay attention when someone is speaking English).	1	3.77
SOC	45	Cuando no entiendo algo pido que me lo digan más despacio o que me lo repitan. (If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again)	2	3.74
COM	24	Intento adivinar el significado con la ayuda del contexto cuando no entiendo alguna palabra o expresión. (To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses).	3	3.71
META	34	Me organizo el horario para tener tiempo de estudiar y aprender inglés. (I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English)	4	3.69
MEM	1	Relaciono lo que ya sé con lo nuevo que aprendo del idioma inglés.(I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English).	5	3.57
META	31	Soy consciente de mis errores y uso esa información para mejorar.(I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better)	6	3.57
SOC	50	Me interesa la cultura del país o países donde se habla inglés e intento aprender sobre ella. (I try to learn about the culture of English speakers).	7	3.31
MEM	8	Repaso habitualmente lo que voy aprendiendo. (I review English lessons often).	8	3.26

META	33	Intento averiguar cómo aprender inglés mejor. (I try to find out how to be a better learner of English)	9	3.26
MEM	2	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones nuevas en oraciones para recordarlas.(I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them).	10	3.23
AFF	42	Noto si estoy tenso o nervioso cuando uso el inglés o realizo una tarea en inglés (I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English).	11	3.2
COM	29	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra, utilizo otra palabra o una frase que signifique lo mismo. (If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing)	12	3.17
COG	21	Analizo y divido las palabras, frases o textos en las partes que entiendo para comprender su significado. (I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand)	13	3.11
COG	22	Intento no traducir palabra por palabra para entender lo que escucho o leo (I try not to translate word-for-word).	14	3.11
COM	29	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra utilizo gestos. (When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures).	15	3.11
COG	10	Pronuncio o escribo varias veces las palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I say or write new English words several times).	16	3.09
META	38	Pienso sobre cómo voy progresando en mi aprendizaje de inglés. (I think about my progress in learning English)	17	3.09
COG	13	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones que conozco en diferentes contextos. (I use the English words I know in different ways)	18	3.03
COG	20	Intento analizar estructuras y buscar reglas o patrones que me faciliten mi aprendizaje. (I try to find patterns in English).	19	3.03
AFF	40	Me animo a mí mismo a hablar en inglés aunque tema cometer algún error (I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake).	20	3.03
SOC	46	Pido a los demás que me corrijan.(I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk).	21	3.03

AFF	39	Intento relajarme cuando me pongo nervioso al usar inglés o realizar una tarea en inglés. (I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English)	22	2.97
SOC	47	Practico el inglés con otros compañeros. (I practice English with other students).	23	2.94
MEM	9	Intento recordar nuevas palabras o expresiones en Inglés acordándome de su ubicación en una página, en la pizarra o en una señal callejera. (I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign)	24	2.8
COG	18	Antes de leer un texto en profundidad, le echo un vistazo rápido para ver sobre qué va. (I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully)	25	2.71
COG	12	Practico los sonidos del inglés. (I practice the sounds of English)	26	2.63
MEM	4	Me hago una imagen mental de una situación en la que se utilice una palabra o expresión nueva para recordarla. (I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used).	27	2.6
META	30	Busco oportunidades fuera del aula para hablar, escuchar, leer o escribir en inglés. (I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English).	28	2.6
AFF	41	Me premio o me refuerzo positivamente cuando lo hago bien en inglés. (I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English)	29	2.6
SOC	49	Realizo preguntas a los demás en inglés (I ask questions to others in English).	30	2.57
COM	28	Intento predecir o adivinar lo que vendrá a continuación cuando escucho o leo en inglés.(I try to guess what the other person will say next in English).	31	2.54
META	36	Busco oportunidades o contextos para leer en inglés todo lo que pueda. (I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English).	32	2.51
META	37	Me marco objetivos claros para mejorar mis habilidades en inglés.(I have clear goals for improving my English skills)	33	2.49
COM	27	Leo en Inglés sin mirar en el diccionario cada nueva palabra. (I read English without looking up every new word).	34	2.46

COG	23	Hago resúmenes de lo que escucho o leo. (I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English).	35	2.4
COG	19	Busco palabras o expresiones en mi lengua materna parecidas a las nuevas en inglés. (I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English).	36	2.37
COG	11	Intento hablar como un nativo. (I try to talk like native English speakers.)	37	2.31
AFF	44	Comparto con alguien cómo me siento cuando practico inglés. (I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English)	38	2.26
MEM	3	Relaciono como suena una palabra o expresión nueva con una imagen o dibujo para recordarla. (I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word).	39	2.2
COG	15	Veo películas y televisión en inglés. (I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English).	40	2.2
COG	16	Leo revistas o libros en Inglés que me interesan.(I read for pleasure in English).	41	2.2
MEM	6	Utilizo láminas o tarjetas para recordar palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I use flashcards to remember new English words).	42	2.17
COG	14	Inicio conversaciones en inglés.(I start conversations in English).	43	2.17
COM	26	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra me la invento. (I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English).	44	2.06
MEM	7	Represento físicamente o gesticulo las nuevas palabras o expresiones (I physically act out new English words).	45	2
META	35	Busco personas con las que practicar mi inglés. (I look for people I can talk to in English).	46	2
COG	17	Escribo mensajes, notas, cartas en inglés para comunicarme con otras personas. (I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English)	47	1.77
SOC	48	Pido ayuda a hablantes nativos (I ask for help from English speakers)	48	1.71

MEM	5	Utilizo rimas para recordar palabras nuevas (I use rhymes to remember new English words)	49	1.63
AFF	43	Escribo sobre mis sentimientos y emociones al aprender inglés.(I write down my feelings in a language learning diary).	50	1.34

Table F6

Mean frequency of Strategy use for each item in the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) English Level B2 (O1)

Strategy Category	Strategy Num. in SILL	Item description in SILL	Rank	Mean
META	32	Presto atención cuando oigo a alguien hablando en inglés. (I pay attention when someone is speaking English).	1	4.06
COM	24	Intento adivinar el significado con la ayuda del contexto cuando no entiendo alguna palabra o expresión. (To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses).	2	3.97
COM	29	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra, utilizo otra palabra o una frase que signifique lo mismo. (If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing)	3	3.91
SOC	45	Cuando no entiendo algo pido que me lo digan más despacio o que me lo repitan. (If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again)	4	3.71
MEM	1	Relaciono lo que ya sé con lo nuevo que aprendo del idioma inglés.(I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English).	5	3.66
META	31	Soy consciente de mis errores y uso esa información para mejorar.(I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better)	6	3.57
SOC	47	Practico el inglés con otros compañeros. (I practice English with other students).	7	3.34
COG	10	Pronuncio o escribo varias veces las palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I say or write new English words several times).	8	3.31

COG	18	Antes de leer un texto en profundidad, le echo un vistazo rápido para ver sobre qué va. (I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully)	9	3.31
MEM	2	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones nuevas en oraciones para recordarlas.(I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them).	10	3.23
COG	22	Intento no traducir palabra por palabra para entender lo que escucho o leo (I try not to translate word-for-word).	11	3.23
COG	13	Utilizo las palabras o expresiones que conozco en diferentes contextos. (I use the English words I know in different ways)	12	3.2
META	33	Intento averiguar cómo aprender inglés mejor. (I try to find out how to be a better learner of English)	13	3.2
AFF	42	Noto si estoy tenso o nervioso cuando uso el inglés o realizo una tarea en inglés (I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English).	14	3.2
META	38	Pienso sobre cómo voy progresando en mi aprendizaje de inglés. (I think about my progress in learning English)	15	3.17
SOC	46	Pido a los demás que me corrijan.(I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk).	16	3.17
COG	20	Intento analizar estructuras y buscar reglas o patrones que me faciliten mi aprendizaje. (I try to find patterns in English).	17	3.14
COM	29	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra utilizo gestos. (When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures).	18	3.14
COG	12	Practico los sonidos del inglés. (I practice the sounds of English)	19	3.11
META	34	Me organizo el horario para tener tiempo de estudiar y aprender inglés. (I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English)	20	3.11
AFF	40	Me animo a mí mismo a hablar en inglés aunque tema cometer algún error (I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake).	21	3.11
MEM	8	Repaso habitualmente lo que voy aprendiendo. (I review English lessons often).	22	3.09

COG	21	Analizo y divido las palabras, frases o textos en las partes que entiendo para comprender su significado. (I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand)	23	3.09
COG	15	Veo películas y televisión en inglés. (I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English).	24	3.06
META	30	Busco oportunidades fuera del aula para hablar, escuchar, leer o escribir en inglés. (I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English).	25	3.06
AFF	39	Intento relajarme cuando me pongo nervioso al usar inglés o realizar una tarea en inglés. (I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English)	26	3.06
SOC	49	Realizo preguntas a los demás en inglés (I ask questions to others in English).	27	3.06
SOC	50	Me interesa la cultura del país o países donde se habla inglés e intento aprender sobre ella. (I try to learn about the culture of English speakers).	28	3.03
META	36	Busco oportunidades o contextos para leer en inglés todo lo que pueda. (I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English).	29	3.00
COG	16	Leo revistas o libros en Inglés que me interesan.(I read for pleasure in English).	30	2.97
MEM	9	Intento recordar nuevas palabras o expresiones en Inglés acordándome de su ubicación en una página, en la pizarra o en una señal callejera. (I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign)	31	2.94
COG	19	Busco palabras o expresiones en mi lengua materna parecidas a las nuevas en inglés. (I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English).	32	2.83
AFF	41	Me premio o me refuerzo positivamente cuando lo hago bien en inglés. (I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English)	33	2.83
COG	11	Intento hablar como un nativo. (I try to talk like native English speakers.)	34	2.8
COG	14	Inicio conversaciones en inglés.(I start conversations in English).	35	2.77
COM	27	Leo en Inglés sin mirar en el diccionario cada nueva palabra. (I read English without looking up every new word).	36	2.69

AFF	44	Comparto con alguien cómo me siento cuando practico inglés. (I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English)	37	2.57
COM	26	Cuando me comunico en inglés y no me acuerdo de una palabra me la invento. (I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English).	38	2.54
MEM	4	Me hago una imagen mental de una situación en la que se utilice una palabra o expresión nueva para recordarla. (I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used).	39	2.51
COG	17	Escribo mensajes, notas, cartas en inglés para comunicarme con otras personas. (I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English)	40	2.49
META	37	Me marco objetivos claros para mejorar mis habilidades en inglés.(I have clear goals for improving my English skills)	41	2.43
META	35	Busco personas con las que practicar mi inglés. (I look for people I can talk to in English).	42	2.34
COM	28	Intento predecir o adivinar lo que vendrá a continuación cuando escucho o leo en inglés.(I try to guess what the other person will say next in English).	43	2.31
COG	23	Hago resúmenes de lo que escucho o leo. (I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English).	44	2.26
MEM	3	Relaciono como suena una palabra o expresión nueva con una imagen o dibujo para recordarla. (I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help remember the word).	45	2.14
SOC	48	Pido ayuda a hablantes nativos (I ask for help from English speakers)	46	2.09
MEM	6	Utilizo láminas o tarjetas para recordar palabras o expresiones nuevas. (I use flashcards to remember new English words).	47	2.00
MEM	7	Represento físicamente o gesticulo las nuevas palabras o expresiones (I physically act out new English words).	48	1.89
MEM	5	Utilizo rimas para recordar palabras nuevas (I use rhymes to remember new English words)	49	1.57

AFF	43	Escribo sobre mis sentimientos y emociones al aprender inglés.(I write down my feelings in a language learning diary).	50	1.54
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Appendix G

Complete Levene tests for Equality of Variances (Homocedasticity)

Table G1

Levene Test (Age)

Independent samples t-test											
		Levene test for equality of variances		Significance						Difference according to 95%confidence interval	
		F	p-value	t	df	One factor p-value	Two factor p-value	Mean difference	Standard Deviation difference	Inferior	Superior
Memory	Equal variances are assumed	0.113	0.738	0.631	68	0.265	0.530	0.096	0.152	-0.208	0.400
Cognitive	Equal variances are assumed	2.490	0.119	0.067	68	0.474	0.947	0.011	0.171	-0.330	0.353

Compensation	Equal variances are assumed	0.492	0.486	-0.699	68	0.244	0.487	-0.128	0.183	-0.494	0.237
Metacognitive	Equal variances are assumed	1.145	0.288	-0.408	68	0.342	0.684	-0.079	0.193	-0.465	0.307
Affective	Equal variances are assumed	1.657	0.202	-0.186	68	0.426	0.853	-0.035	0.190	-0.416	0.345
Social	Equal variances are assumed	3.761	0.057	-1.050	68	0.149	0.298	-0.201	0.191	-0.584	0.181
Total	Se asumen varianzas iguales	1.956	0.167	-0.267	68	0.395	0.790	-0.037	0.140	-0.318	0.242

Table G2
Levene Test (Gender)

independent samples t-test											
		Levene test for equality of variances		Significance					Difference according to 95% confidence interval		
		F	p-value	t	df	One factor p-value	Two factor p-value	Mean difference	Standard Deviation difference	Inferior	Superior
Memory	Equal variances are assumed	0.641	0.426	0.853	68	0.198	0.397	0,132	0.155	-0.177	0.442
Cognitive	Equal variances are assumed	1.051	0.309	-0.098	68	0.461	0.922	-0,017	0.174	-0.365	0.331
Compensation	Equal variances are assumed	2.346	0.130	0.883	68	0.190	0.380	0,164	0.186	-0.207	0.537
Metacognitive	Equal variances	1.229	0.271	-0.128	68	0.449	0.899	-0,025	0.197	-0.419	0.368

	are assumed										
Affective	Equal variances are assumed	0.311	0.579	-1.331	68	0.094	0.188	-0.255	0.192	-0,639	0.127
Social	Equal variances are assumed	0.470	0.495	0.234	68	0.408	0.815	0.046	0.197	-0,347	0.439
Total	Equal variances are assumed	0.882	0.351	0.063	68	0.475	0.950	0.0091	0.143	-0,277	0.295

Table G3*Levene Test (English Language Level)*

independent samples t-test											
		Levene test for equality of variances		Significance						Difference according to 95% confidence interval	
		F	p-value	t	df	One factor p-value	Two factor p-value	Mean difference	Standard Deviation difference	Inferior	Superior
Memory	Equal variances are assumed	0.331	0.567	0.325	68	0.373	0.746	0.047	0.146	-0.244	0.340
Cognitive	Equal variances are assumed	0.027	0.870	-2.465	68	0.016	0.032	-0.387	0.157	-0.701	-0.073
Compensation	Equal variances are assumed	1.727	0.193	-1.453	68	0.075	0.151	-0.252	0.173	-0.598	0.094

Metacognitive	Equal variance s are assumed	2.473	0.120	-0.583	68	0.281	0.562	-0.107	0.185	-0.477	0.261
Affective	Equal variance s are assumed	1.134	0.291	-0.837	68	0.203	0.406	-0.152	0.182	-0.515	0.210
Social	Equal variance s are assumed	0.978	0.326	-0.983	68	0.165	0.329	-0.180	0.184	-0.548	0.186
Total	Equal variance s are assumed	1.960	0.166	-1.429	68	0.079	0.158	-0.189	0.132	-0.454	0.075

Table G4*Levene Test (Educational Level)*

		Levene test for equality of variances				Significance				Difference according to 95% confidence interval	
		F	p-value	t	df	One factor p-value	Two factor p-value	Mean difference	Standard Deviation difference	Inferior	Superior
Memory	Equal variances are assumed	1.873	0.176	0.110	66	0.457	0.913	0.016	0.154	-0.290	0.324
Cognitive	Equal variances are assumed	0.013	0.909	-0.686	66	0.248	0.495	-0.118	0.172	-0.463	0.226
Compensation	Equal variances are assumed	0.237	0.628	-2.609	66	0.011	0.022	-0.457	0.175	-0.807	-0.107
Metacognitive	Equal variances are assumed	0.411	0.524	-1.264	66	0.105	0.211	-0.245	0.194	-0.632	0.142
Affective	Equal variances are assumed	2.438	0.123	-1.302	66	0.099	0.197	-0.248	0.190	-0.629	0.132
Social	Equal variances are assumed	1.229	0.272	-0.623	66	0.268	0.535	-0.121	0.194	-0.510	0.267

Total	Equal variances are assumed	0.625	0.432	-1.235	66	0.111	0.221	-0.173	0.140	-0.454	0.107
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