

DIAGNOSING STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES PREFERENCES FOR THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF MORE EFFICIENT TEACHING ACTIVITIES IN THE  
L2 CLASSROOM

by

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## RESUMEN

Las formas en las cuales un persona característicamente adquiere, guarda y retiene la información son colectivamente denominados como estilos de aprendizaje de un individuo. Los malos entendidos ocurren con frecuencia entre los estilos de aprendizaje de los estudiantes en una clase de lenguas y el estilo de enseñanza del instructor, con efectos infortunados en la calidad del aprendizaje de los estudiantes y en sus actitudes a través de la clase y la materia.

Este trabajo define dimensiones severas de estilo de aprendizaje pensado para ser particularmente relevante a la educación de una segunda y extranjera lengua, fuera de todo parámetro en los cuales algunos estilos de aprendizaje son favorecidos por los estilos de enseñanza de la mayoría de los instructores de lenguas, y sugiere pasos para direccionar las necesidades educacionales de los estudiantes en las clases de lengua extranjera, la cual puede ser hecha simplemente ofreciendo a los estudiantes de lenguas un amplio rango que cubre una gran variedad de estilos de aprendizaje que se desplieguen en clase en L2.



## ABSTRACT

The ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retains, and retrieves information are collectively termed the individual's learning style. Mismatches often occur between the learning styles of students in a language class and the teaching style of the instructor, with unfortunate effects on the quality of the students' learning and on their attitudes toward the class and the subject.

This paper defines several dimensions of learning style thought to be particularly relevant to foreign and second language education, outlines ways in which certain learning styles are favored by the teaching styles of most language instructors, and suggests steps to address the educational needs of all students in foreign language classes, which could be done simply offering languages learners a broader range of classroom activities and hence materials which at time covers a wide variety of learning styles displayed in the L2 classroom.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

*Introduction to the Problem*

Recently, inside the educational field there has been a growing interest in research on learning styles, a vital aspect into students' learning process which has provided teachers; in turn, with a different conception of learning and also has demonstrated how to apply it inside the classroom. An awareness of individual students' differences in learning has made ESL/EFL educators and all those people involved in teaching, more sensitive to their roles in teaching and learning and has permitted them to match teaching and learning styles; and through this way, to profit from students' potentials to teach them a second or foreign language.

Moreover, EFL/ESL teachers have demonstrated an increasing interest in the development of adequate materials that can serve as tools to engage students in their own learning process. The design as well as the selection of that kind of classroom activities and materials can be supported by the identification of a predominant type of learning style present in a group. This selection enables teachers to be more successful in their pedagogical labor and also allow them to create more suitable materials and activities according to the needs of their students.

This document has been designed to provide useful ways to help teachers and all those concerned with teaching in particular, on how to gain a better understanding of the human differences in relation to learning and to assist them in selecting and creating a wide range of classroom activities and materials bearing in mind, of course, students' learning styles tendencies inside the classroom.

*Problem Statement*

Teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) has experienced some changes over the last two decades in relation to learners and their learning processes, specifically with learning styles and also on learning strategies and the implication of them for the ESL/EFL instruction. Consequently, these effects can be observed actually through the curricula, teaching methodology, and even teaching materials which have been developed at the time in order to meet the changing needs of the ESL/EFL students.

As teachers our job or some part of it to some extent, is to make sure of comprehending as well as possible our students (that is, discovering the way they work better with the language) for thus approaching them to learning in general, and L2 learning too in a more natural and appropriate way.

Nowadays, the teacher is not considered as the center of the classroom activity. Teachers have been invited to adopt a more reflective and dynamic role within the learning process of students; that is, taking into account a more complete approach in which all the attention is focused on the learners and all the aspects related to them and their learning in particular.

Although it is obvious some students will be successful in learning a foreign language regardless of the teaching methodology, it is recognized that a divergence between the learning style of a student and the teaching style of a teacher can result in learner anxiety or dissatisfaction, and then reduced achievement (Ehrman, 1996; Felder & Henriques, 1995; Oxford & Lavine, 1992). Simply, teachers should remember as Oxford (1990) says there is no single L2 instructional methodology that fits all learners.

In order to help students to become more independent and improve learning outcomes, it would be useful here to mention that some years ago there has emerged much interest all around the world in implementing into regular classes training for the use of language learning strategies relevant and according to student's learning style preference (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Oxford et al, 1990; Weaver & Cohen, 1994; Wenden, 1986). Since links

between a student's learning style and her/his strategy use have been suggested; exhibiting positive results, such relationships should be taken into account by watchful teachers and also by learners (Ehrman, 1994; Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; Moody, 1988; Tyacke, 1991).

In particular, the purpose of this work for teaching staff is simply to make a proposal for providing a wide range of classroom activities and the development of teaching materials which cater for different learning styles, and thus teachers can help L2 students to develop beyond the comfort zone dictated by the natural style preferences. The key is systematically offering a great variety of activities presented through the use of a wide range of materials within a learner-centered, communicative approach.

#### *Research Question*

Does the recognition of particular learning styles on behalf of teachers to create adequate classroom activities have a positive effect on students' approach to the learning of a foreign language?

#### *Hypothesis*

The hypothesis selected for this study is a null one. The recognition of particular learning styles on behalf of teachers to create adequate classroom activities for

students will have neither positive nor negative effect in relation to students' approach to the learning of a foreign language.

#### *Justification*

Typically, teachers of foreign languages exert their teaching activity through the traditional way that is focusing on teaching explicitly what is suggested in the textbook ignoring most of the time one factor that should be for all of us the main actor inside the classroom dynamic "the learner and all the aspects related to her/him". In the same way, other teachers perform their daily instruction teaching in the way they learnt the language, which in some cases could be successful for some learners (*those who share a similar learning style with the teacher's*) but, in turn, tragic for those learners that approach learning using a different learning style far away from that employed by the teacher.

A reflective assessment aimed at identifying the learning style of students helps us considerably to understand not only their learning preferences but also to select appropriate classroom activities and also make use of materials according to their natural approach to learning, above all in order to enhance their English learning or the learning of another language.

The more teachers know about their students' style preferences, the more effectively they can orient their L2 instruction, as well as the strategy instruction that can be interwoven; as a suggestion only, into language instruction, matched to those style preferences.

On the other hand, not only does the teacher benefit from assessment of learning styles inside the classroom but also students could attain to comprehend themselves in a more global way and direct at the same time their learning process in a more personal and autonomous manner.

Without adequate knowledge of the individual students' styles preferences, teachers cannot systematically provide the needed instructional variety into the classroom.

### *Objectives*

#### *General Objective*

To determine student's learning styles preferences inside a specific group of languages learners in order to design appropriate classroom activities and hence materials for the English teaching.

#### *Specific Objectives*

To identify the different variety of learning styles used by the students inside a languages classroom.

To gain a better understanding of the theory behind the learning styles for thus establishing useful pedagogical

proposals in curriculum design, lesson planning and materials design.

To transform all this theoretical knowledge obtained by researchers into useful activities, which later will be incorporated together with the regular classroom dynamic.

#### *Definition of Terms*

##### *Learning Styles*

Learning style refers to "an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of acquiring, processing, and retaining new information and skills and persist regardless of teaching methods and content areas" (Reid, 1995). That is to say, *learning styles* are the general approaches - for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual - that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject. (Oxford, 1990).

##### *Task*

A task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form (Nunan, 1989). "Task" is therefore assumed to refer to a range of workplans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning from the simple and brief exercise type,



to more complex and lengthy activities such as problem-solving or simulations and decision making (Breen, 1987).

*Activities*

Activities are designed to give learners opportunities to practice and extend their use of language, such as new vocabulary, functional exponents or grammatical structures, or of the subskills of reading, listening, speaking or writing. Obviously, there are many different kinds of activities with different names and different uses.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

*Second Language Acquisition*

In Second Language Acquisition (SLA) some theories about how learners acquire *language* give primary importance to the learner's innate characteristics (*Behaviorism*), some give emphasis to the essential role of environment in shaping language learning (*Cognitivism*); still others seek to integrate learners' characteristics and environment factors in their explanation for how Second Language Acquisition takes place (*Constructivism*) (Lightbown & Spada, 1993). Learners have different characteristics for learning a second or foreign language, and so these characteristics are explained below.

*Learner Characteristics*

According to Lightbown & Spada (1993) all second languages learners, regardless of age, have acquired prior knowledge of language and have an idea about how languages work. This prior knowledge of language can produce an incorrect guess about how to acquire the second language and how it works.

The first language learner does not have the cognitive maturity, metalinguistic awareness, or world knowledge of the older second language learner and therefore most young

learners feel nervous about attempting to use the language (Lightbown & Spada, 1993)

#### *Learning Conditions*

A condition that appears to be used by most learners is the well-known "modified input" which is called foreigner talk or teacher talk for second languages. Most people who interact regularly with language learners seem to have an intuitive sense of what adjustments are needed to help learners understand. Obviously, some people do this better than others.

Error correction tends to be limited to correct meaning of words in First Language Acquisition. In informal Second Language Acquisition, errors are usually overlooked when they do not interfere with meaning. People feel impolite if they interrupt or correct someone who is making an oral error, this case is totally opposite to grammar and pronunciation because the interlocutor grabs the wrong word choice and he will correct it.

#### *Behaviorism*

According to Lightbown & Spada (1993) behaviorists express that learners receive linguistic input from people in their environment, and equally correct repetitions and imitations from them. As a consequence of this, learners form habits, that is, learners of a Second Language start

off with the same habits as grammatical errors associated with the first language; these habits interfere with those needed for the Second Language Acquisition.

For behaviorists, errors are seen as first language habits that interfere with the acquisition of second language habits. This theory has been associated to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) (Lightbown & Spada, 1993)

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) predicts that where there are similarities between the two languages, it will be easier for learners to acquire the target language structures; and also predicts that where there are differences learners will have difficulties. Researchers have found that not all errors predicted by the CAH are actually made. Furthermore, learners make many errors which are not predictable on the basis of the CAH. (Lightbown & Spada, 1993)

#### *Cognitive Theory*

According to Lightbown & Spada (1993) cognitive psychologists tend to see Second Language Acquisition as the building up of knowledge systems that can eventually be called on automatically for speaking and understanding. Learners focus on any aspect of the language which they are trying to understand or produce. Also, through experience

and practice, learners become able to use certain parts of their knowledge so quickly and automatically that they are not even aware that they are doing it. (McLaughlin 1987, quoted by Lightbown & Spada, 1993)

For completing successfully the learning process; which learners are supposed to face during all their academic life, it is necessary they obtain different ways and methods to learn, which includes learning styles and consequently the development of a set of learning strategies appropriate for these.

### *Learning Styles*

Learning styles are the general approaches that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject. According to Ehrman and Oxford (1990) there are 9 major style dimensions relevant to L2 learning, although many more style aspects might also prove to be influential. In her document, Oxford (1990) discusses four dimensions of learning styles that are likely to be among those most strongly associated with L2 learning: sensory preferences, personality types, desired degree of generality, and biological differences.

Learning styles are not mutually exclusive (black or white, present or absent); that is, they are not considered opposites at all. The presence of certain prevailing

characteristic in an individual such as the tendency to prefer visual stimulation while learning, it does not mean this person avoids learning employing other sensory channels (e.g. aural or kinesthetic). (Oxford; 1990).

The following is the definition provided by Oxford (1990) in her learning styles' paper about these four style dimensions considered important to L2 learning.

#### *Sensory Preferences*

First of all, here one must take into consideration whether a student learns best through sight, hearing, or hands-on manipulation. Therefore, sensory preferences can be broken down into three main areas: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic; which is at the same time divided into movement-oriented (kinesthetic) and touch-oriented (tactile). Sensory preferences refer to the physical, perceptual learning channels with which the student feels most comfortable. Visual students like to read and obtain a great deal from visual stimulation. For them lectures, conversations, and oral directions without any visual support can be very confusing. In contrast, auditory students are comfortable without visual stimulation and therefore enjoy and profit from simple lectures, conversations, and oral directions. They are excited by classroom interactions in role-plays and similar activities.

They sometimes, however, have difficulty with written work. Kinesthetic and tactile students like lots of movement and enjoy working with tangible objects, collages, games, role-plays, flashcards and so on where they can involve movements. Sitting at a desk for very long time is not for them; they prefer to have frequent breaks and move around the room (Oxford, 1990).

#### *Personality Types*

Oxford (1990) in her document cites another style aspect that is important for L2 instruction is that of personality type, which consists of four strands: extraverted vs. introverted; intuitive-random vs. sensing-sequential; thinking vs. feeling; and closure-oriented/judging vs. open/perceiving. Personality type often called "psychological type" is a construct based on the work of psychologist Carl Jung (Oxford, 1990).

The explanation about these categories is discussed below.

#### *Extraverted vs. Introverted*

By definition, extraverts gain their greatest energy from the external world. They want interaction with people and have many friendships, some deep and some not. In contrast, introverts derive their energy from the internal world, seeking solitude and tending to have just a few

friendships, which are often very deep. Extraverts and introverts can learn to work together with the help of the teacher.

There are two major contradictory hypotheses regarding the relationship between extroversion/introversion and L2 learning. The first is that extroverted learners will do better in acquiring basic interpersonal communication skills. The rationale for this hypothesis is that sociability will result in more opportunities to practice, more input, and more success in communicating in the L2. The second hypothesis is that introverted learners will do better at developing cognitive academic language ability. The validation for this hypothesis comes from studies which show that introverted learners typically enjoy more academic success, perhaps because they spend more time reading and writing (Ellis, 1994; Littlewood, 1984).

*Intuitive-Random vs. Sensing-Sequential*

Intuitive-random students think in abstract, futuristic, large-scale, and non-sequential ways. They like to create theories and new possibilities, often have sudden insights, and prefer to guide their own learning. Concrete, step-by-step learning bores them. In contrast, sensing-sequential learners like facts rather than theories, they want guidance and specific instruction from the teacher, and



look for consistency. Randomness and inconsistency in lesson plans frustrate them (Oxford, 1990).

*Thinking vs. Feeling*

According to Oxford (1990) thinking learners are oriented toward the truth, even if it hurts some people's feelings. They want to be viewed as competent and do not tend to offer praise easily. Sometimes they seem isolated. In comparison, feeling learners value other people in very personal ways. They show empathy and compassion through words, not just behaviors, and say whatever is needed to smooth over difficult situations. L2 teachers can help thinking learners show greater overt compassion to their feeling classmates and can suggest that those feeling learners might moderate their emotions while working with thinking learners.

*Closure-oriented/Judging vs. Open/Perceiving*

This learning style variable considers how the student approaches tasks, or the degree to which the person needs to reach decisions or clarity.

Students oriented toward closure desire clarity in all aspects of language learning. They want explicit lesson directions and grammar rules. Less spontaneous, these students want rapid closure and are serious, hardworking learners who have developed useful metacognitive skills such

as planning, organizing and self-evaluating. They like control in their lives and in their learning (Oxford, 1990). Students who have less of an orientation toward closure are sometimes known as "open learners". They take language learning far less seriously, treating it like a game rather than a set of tasks to be completed and judged. Open learners generally do not worry about class deadlines. Because of their relaxed attitude, open learners sometimes do better in developing fluency than do more closure-oriented learners (Oxford, 1990), but they are clearly at a disadvantage in a traditional classroom setting. The former are the task-driven learners, and the latter know how to have fun.

#### *Desired Degree of Generality*

According to Oxford (1990), this variable contrasts the learner who focuses on the main idea or big picture with the learner who concentrates on details. *Global or holistic* students like socially interactive, communicative events in which they can emphasize the main idea and avoid analysis of grammatical details. They are comfortable even when not having all the information, and they feel free to guess from the context. *Analytic* students tend to concentrate on grammatical details and often avoid more spontaneous communicative activities. Because of their concern for

precision, analytic learners typically do not take the risks necessary for guessing from the context unless they are fairly sure of the accuracy of their guesses. The global student and the analytic student have much to learn from each other. A balance between generality and specificity is very useful for L2 learning.

#### *Biological Differences*

Oxford (1990) states differences in L2 learning style can also be related to biological factors, such as biorhythms, sustenance, and location. *Biorhythms* reveal the times of day when students feel good and perform their best. Some L2 learners are morning people, while others do not want to start learning until the afternoon, and still others are creatures of the evening. *Sustenance* refers to the need for food or drink while learning. Some L2 learners do not feel comfortable learning without a candy bar, a cup of coffee, or a soda in hand, but others are distracted from study by food and drink. *Location* involves the nature of the environment: temperature, lighting, sound, and even the firmness of the chairs. L2 students differ widely with regard to these environmental factors. The biological aspects of L2 learning style are often forgotten, but vigilant teachers can often make accommodations and compromises when needed.

This set of concepts defined by Oxford (1990) is crucial for this research project because its organization and classification are considered pertinent and appropriate taking into account the original research characteristics and instruments (a learning style survey designed by Oxford which omits the factors mentioned below)

Therefore; for this study purposes, the following project does not consider properly to go inside the personality types the *thinking/feeling component* and equally the *biological differences* partly because of the author of the survey does not decide to include them in her test. Consequently, these factors have been excluded because of the teacher for example; in the first case "thinking vs. feeling" learners, s/he cannot detect this predominant learner characteristic by only applying a questionnaire that predicts this predominance in learners. Simply, there is not an accurate means; that is, a test to precisely determine this personality trait in particular. This could be easily done making use of a meticulous observation around the classroom for thus discovering students' behavior. Now, in relation to the other learner characteristic; to be precise the "biological differences" a teacher before this situation is little what s/he really might do. It is very difficult or let us say impossible for one to make arrangements to

satisfy the varied students' needs (biorhythms, sustenance or location) under the regular classroom conditions. In sum, these factors mainly are delayed because they are beyond teacher's control.

Equally, another learning style dimension mentioned by Oxford (1990) in her *Learning Style Survey* - "SAS" is that of field dependent and field independent learners.

#### *Field Dependence and Field Independence*

One of the most widely researched dimensions of learning style is that of field independence vs. field dependence. Field independent learners easily separate key details from a complex or confusing background, while their field dependent peers have trouble doing this. In the same way, field independent learners show significant advantages over field dependent learners in analytical tasks (Hansen & Stansfield, 1981; Chapelle & Roberts, 1986).

Although the subject of hemispheric predominance is not included directly by Oxford in her discussion about learning styles it is important to consider this element irrespective of the main focus of this study. This information is equally useful for teachers because it is related to their students' abilities and they reveal the way in which they process information while learning.

*Left Side and Right Side of the Brain*

Brain theory research indicates that the two hemispheres of the brain process information differently (Williams 1983, Reiff 1992). Each hemisphere contributes its special functions to cognitive activities. The left hemisphere has the verbal, sequential, and analytical abilities. The right hemisphere has the global, holistic, and visual-spatial functions (Levy 1983). Learners who prefer left-hemisphere approaches to processing information excel at analytical tasks and master abstract, factual, and impersonal material easily. Conversely, students who are right-hemisphere learners like to work collaboratively to achieve a common goal (Williams 1983).

Kinsella (1996) argued that students who have stronger verbal/analytical faculties may have easier access to the traditional teaching model –listening to lectures, reading textbooks, and completing writing assignments. But they are not necessarily developing the right-brain strengths that are crucial for problem solving and creativity.

Thus, teaching methods need to be varied to help students develop the flexible use of both hemispheres by helping students perceive information in both an analytical (field-independent) way and a relational (field-dependent) way.

*Communicative Language Teaching*

The Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) also known as the Communicative approach does a lot to expand on the goal of creating "communicative competence" compared to earlier methods that claimed the same objective. Teaching students how to use the language is considered to be at least as important as learning the language itself. In the following way, Brown (1994:77) describes the "march" towards CLT:

"Beyond grammatical discourse elements in communication, we are probing the nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language. We are exploring pedagogical means for "real-life" communication in the classroom. We are trying to get our learners to develop linguistic fluency, not just the accuracy that has so consumed our historical journey. We are equipping our students with tools for generating unrehearsed language performance "out there" when they leave the womb of our classrooms. We are concerned with how to facilitate lifelong language learning among our students, not just with the immediate classroom task. We are looking at learners as partners in a cooperative venture. And our classroom practices seek to draw on whatever intrinsically sparks learners to reach their fullest potential."

CLT is a broad approach, and can seem non-specific at times in terms of how to actually apply it using practices in the classroom in any sort of systematic way.

In relation to CLT, David Nunan (1991:279) lists five basic characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.

2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus; not only on the language but also on the learning process itself.
4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.

In light of CLT and its theoretical foundations about communicative nature of language, language could be described as follows:

1. Language is a system for the expression of meaning.
2. The primary function of language is for interaction and communication
3. The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.
4. The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse. (Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press)

Three key pedagogical principles that developed around CLT were: the presentation of language forms in context, the importance of genuine communication, and the need for learner-centered teaching. These were widely acknowledged but nevertheless open to interpretation; resulting in what Howatt (1984) described as strong and weak versions of CLT. In strong versions of CLT the teacher is required to take a "less dominant role" and the learners are encouraged to be "more responsible managers of their own learning" (Larsen-Freeman 1986: 131). Rather than a presentation and practice



approach to language forms, the teacher begins with communicative classroom activities that allow learners to actively learn for themselves how the language works as a formal system. On the other hand, the weak version includes pre-communicative tasks (such as drills, cloze exercises, and controlled dialogue practice) along with communicative activities. Littlewood (1981), for example, described pre-communicative activities as a necessary stage between controlled and uncontrolled language use.

One example of such an approach to CLT is what is known as the PPP lesson (for presentation, practice, and production).

#### *Learner-centered Approach*

In recent years a new tendency emerged from CLT claim for the development of a learner-centered approach for language teaching, in which information by and from learners is used in planning, implementing, and evaluating language programs.

In essence, a learner-centered curriculum will contain elements and processes similar to those of traditional curricula. A key difference will be that information by and from learners will be built into every phase of the curriculum.

That is, curriculum development becomes a collaborative effort between teachers and learners since learners will be involved in decisions on content selection, methodology and evaluation (Nunan, D. 1989. *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge University Press)

Breen (1987:20), who has written a great deal on learner-centered language teaching, has pointed out the advantages of linking learner-centeredness with learning tasks. He pointed out the frequent difference between teachers and learners pretend as the final outcome of a task.

Learning outcomes are seen differently by teachers and students. Students can assume that a certain task is carried out to develop a particular skill whereas the teacher's purpose is another one. In order to avoid this problem it is necessary that students are engaged in the designing of tasks. This results in a cooperative view of the learning process but keeping the responsibility of teachers intact.

Of course, no curriculum will ever be totally subject-centered or totally learner-centered.

*Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP)*

"PPP" (or the "3Ps") stands for *Presentation, Practice* and *Production* - a common approach to communicative language teaching that works through the progression of three sequential stages.

*Presentation*

Represents the introduction to a lesson, and necessarily requires the creation of a realistic (or realistic-feeling) "situation" requiring the target language to be learned. This can be achieved through using pictures, dialogs, imagination or actual "classroom situations". The teacher checks to see that the students understand the nature of the situation, then builds the "concept" underlying the language to be learned using small chunks of language that the students already know. Having understood the concept, students are then given the language "model" and engage in harmonic drills to learn statement, answer and question forms for the target language. This is a very teacher-orientated stage where error correction is important.

*Practice*

Usually begins with what is termed "mechanical practice" - open and closed pairwork. Students gradually move into more "communicative practice" involving procedures

like information gap activities, dialog creation and controlled role-plays. Practice is seen as the frequency device to create familiarity and confidence with the new language, and a measuring stick for accuracy. The teacher still directs and corrects at this stage, but the classroom is beginning to become more learner-centered.

### *Production*

Production is seen as the culmination of the language learning process, whereby the learners have started to become independent users of the language rather than *students* of the language. The teacher's role here is to somehow facilitate a realistic situation or activity where the students instinctively feel the need to actively apply the language they have been practicing. The teacher does not correct or become involved unless students directly appeal to him/her to do so.

The PPP approach is relatively straight forward, and structured enough to be easily understood by both students and new or emerging teachers. It is a good place to start in terms of applying good communicative language teaching in the classroom.

*Task*

Within the field of second language teaching there are many different definitions of task but for this study in particular the definition provided by Breen (1987) mainly for its pedagogical conception and quoted by Nunan (1989) in his book "Designing tasks for the communicative classroom" (1989), it was selected in part because of its completeness and objectivity. Breen (1987) defined task as:

... any structured language learning endeavour which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task. "Task" is therefore assumed to refer to a range of workplans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as problem-solving or simulations and decision making (Breen 1987, quoted in Nunan, D. 1989. *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge University Press)

Commonly, all tasks involve communicative language use in which user's attention is focused on meaning rather than linguistic structure (Nunan, 1989).

Nunan (1989) also considers the task as a communicative one which is viewed as..

... a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. (Nunan, D. 1989. *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge University Press)

According to Nunan (1989) the task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right.

That is, the task is a piece of meaning-focused work involving learners in comprehending, producing and/or interacting in the target language, and so these tasks are analyzed or categorized according to their goals, input data and activities generally.

For this reason, the next step in this research is to analyze one by one each of these components at time.

#### *Task components*

Learning tasks in general are analyzed based on its three main components which are: goals, input and activities.

#### *Goals*

According to Nunan (1989) goals are the vague general intentions behind any given learning task. Goals provide a point of contact between the task and the broader curriculum. They may also relate to a range of general outcomes (communicative, affective or cognitive) or may directly describe teacher or learner behavior. In addition there is rarely a simple one-to-one relationship between goals and tasks. Although in some cases a complex task

involving a range of activities might be moving learners towards several goals.

*Input*

Input refers to the data that form the point of departure for the task. Input for communicative tasks can be obtained from a wide range of sources. Hover (1986) suggests the following:

1. letters (formal/informal)
2. newspaper extracts
3. picture stories
4. Telecom account
5. driver's license
6. missing person's declaration form
7. social security form
8. business cards
9. memo note
10. photographs
11. family tree
12. drawings
13. postcards
14. hotel brochures
15. passport photos
16. swop shop cards
17. street map
18. menu
19. magazine quiz
20. calorie counter
21. recipe
22. extract from a play
23. weather forecast
24. diary
25. bus timetable
26. notice board items
27. housing request form
28. star signs
29. hotel entertainment program
30. tennis court booking sheet
31. extracts from film script
32. high school year book
33. note to a friend
34. seminar program
35. newspaper reporter's notes
36. travel regulations

- 37. curriculum vitae
- 38. economic graphs (Hover, 1986; quoted in Nunan, D. 1989. *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge University Press)

This list, which is not exhaustive at all, shows us the wide range of options on which ingenious teachers can form the basis for creation of communicative tasks principally used inside the classroom. Obviously, this input data which might be verbal (for example a dialogue or reading passage) or non-verbal (for example a picture sequence) is used to accomplish different purposes depending on the task goal or goals teacher has in mind.

#### *Activities*

Activities determine what learners will do with the input which is, as it is known, the starting point for the learning task.

Nunan (1989) in relation to activities proposes they can be analyzed in base on three general ways; rehearsal for the real world (authenticity), skills use, and fluency/accuracy.

#### *Authenticity*

Nunan (1989) suggests that tasks could be analyzed according to the extent to which they require learners to rehearse, in class, the sort of skilled behavior they might be expected to display in genuine communicative interaction



outside the classroom. Obviously, in relation to this issue there are some authors who pretend that all kind of activity performed in classroom really implies to develop real tasks like those human beings carry out in real-world situations. Although as Nunan (1989) states that certain activities might only remotely resemble the sorts of things learners are required to do in the real world.

*Skill Getting and Skill Using*

Following Rivers and Temperley (1978), a second way of characterising activities is according to whether they are basically concerned with skill getting and skill using. These relate to the traditional distinction between controlled practice activities; in which learners manipulate phonological, and grammatical forms, and transfer activities; in which learners are meant to apply their newly acquired mastery of linguistic forms to the comprehension and production of communicative language. Nunan (1989) states that the extent to which tasks of various sorts do or do not promote genuine communication is something which, can only be judged by observing their responses they actually promote in the classroom.

*Accuracy and Fluency*

According to Nunan (1989) a third way of analysing learning activities is into those which focus the learners on developing accuracy and those which focus on the development of fluency. Brumfit (1984) deals with the fluency/accuracy polarity suggesting that:

... the demand to produce work for display to the teacher in order that evaluation and feedback could be supplied conflicted directly with the demand to perform adequately in the kind of natural circumstances for which teaching was presumably a preparation. Language display for evaluation tended to lead to a concern for accuracy, monitoring, reference rules, possibly explicit knowledge, problem solving and evidence of skill-getting. In contrast, language use requires fluency, expression rules, a reliance on implicit knowledge and automatic performance. It will on occasion also require monitoring and problem-solving strategies, but these will not be the most prominent features, as they tend to be in the conventional model where the student produces, the teacher corrects, and the student tries again. (Brumfit C. 1984; quoted in Nunan, D. 1989. *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge University Press)

Brumfit (1984) also points out that accuracy and fluency are not opposites, but are complementary.

As it is well-known, activities could be broken down in controlled activities and less controlled/freer activities. In controlled activities, the teacher has the overall control and direction of activity in most cases. The activity focuses on accurate use and mastery of some language items. On the other hand; that is, in freer activities the teacher or the materials do not limit the

language that learners use. This kind of activity focuses on fluency rather than accuracy.

### *Types of Activities*

Pattison (1987) proposes seven activity types which are considered useful because they are oriented towards a much more pedagogical focus. These activities are listed below:

1. Questions and answers: These activities are based on the notion of creating information gap by letting learners make a personal and secret choice from a list of language items which all fit into a given frame (e.g. the location of a person or object). The aim is for learners to discover their classmates' secret choices. This activity can be used to practice almost any structure, function or notion.
2. Dialogues and role-plays: These can be wholly scripted or wholly improvised, however, "If learners are given some choice of what to say, and if there is a clear aim to be achieved by what they say in their role-plays, they may participate more willingly and learn more thoroughly than when they are told to simply repeat a given dialogue in pairs".
3. Matching activities: Here, the task for the learner is to recognize matching items, or to complete pairs or sets. "Bingo", "Happy families" and "Split dialogues" (where learners match given phrases) are examples of matching activities.
4. Communication strategies: These are activities designed to encourage learners to practice communication strategies such as paraphrasing, borrowing or inventing words, using gesture, asking for feedback, simplifying.
5. Pictures and pictures stories: Many communication activities can be stimulated through the use of pictures (e.g. spot the difference, memory test, sequencing pictures to tell a story).
6. Puzzles and problems: Once again, there are many different types of puzzles and problems. These require learners to "make guesses, draw on their general knowledge and personal experience, use their imagination and test their powers of logical reasoning".
7. Discussions and decisions: These require the learner to collect and share information to reach a decision (e.g. to decide which items from a list are essential to have on a desert island). (Pattison, 1987; quoted in Nunan,

D. 1989. *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge University Press)

The range of exercise types and activities compatible with a communicative approach is unlimited, provided that such exercises enable learners to attend the communicative objectives of the curriculum, engage learners in communication, and require the use of such communicative processes as information sharing, negotiation of meaning and interaction. The classroom activities are often designed to focus on completing tasks that are mediated to language or involve negotiation of information and information sharing.

For concluding this literature review, as an important complement for the task discussion explained before, it would be useful to talk about the materials employed for English teaching.

#### *Materials*

Materials should teach students to learn, that they should be resource books for ideas and activities for instruction or learning, and that they should give teachers rationales for what they do (Allwright, 1990). Allwright (1990) also states textbooks are too inflexible to be used directly as instructional material. In contrast, O'Neill (1990) argues that materials may be suitable for students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them,

that textbooks make it possible for students to review and prepare their lessons, and that textbooks are efficient in terms of time and money, and equally they can and should allow for adaptation and improvization.

Allwright (1990) emphasizes that materials control learning and teaching. O'Neill emphasizes that they help learning and teaching. It is true that in many cases teachers and students rely heavily on textbooks, and textbooks determine the components and methods of learning, that is, they control the content, methods, and procedures of learning. Students learn what is presented in the textbook, and the way the textbook presents material is the way students learn it. The educational philosophy of the textbook will influence the class and the learning process. Therefore, in many cases, materials are the center of instruction and one of the most important influences on what goes on in the classroom.

Experienced teachers can teach English without a textbook. However, it is not easy to do it all the time, though they may do it sometimes. Many teachers do not have enough time to make supplementary materials, so they just follow the textbook. Textbooks therefore take on a very important role in language classes, and it is important to select a good textbook.

Since the end of 1970s, there has been a movement to make learners rather than teachers the center of language learning. According to this approach to teaching, learners are more important than teachers, materials, curriculum, methods, or evaluation. As a matter of fact, curriculum, materials, teaching methods, and evaluation should all be designed for learners and their needs. It is the teacher's responsibility to check to see whether all of the elements of the learning process are working well for learners and to adapt them if they are not. (Allwright, 1990)

In other words, learners should be the center of instruction and learning. The curriculum is a statement of the goals of learning, the methods of learning, etc. The role of teachers is to help learners to learn. Teachers have to follow the curriculum and provide, make, or choose materials. With the present work carried out, what is suggested is teachers may adapt, supplement, and elaborate materials and also as Allwright (1990) affirms monitor the progress and needs of the students and finally evaluate students.

*Characteristics of Materials*

Materials include textbooks, video and audio tapes, computer software, and visual aids. They influence the content and the procedures of learning. The choice of deductive vs inductive learning, the role of memorization, the use of creativity and problem solving, production vs. reception, and the order in which materials are presented all are influenced by the materials.

Technology, such as OHP (overhead projector), slides, video and audio tape recorders, video cameras, and computers, supports instruction.

Evaluations (tests, etc.) can be used to assign grades, check learning, give feedback to students, and improve instruction by giving feedback to the teacher.

Though students should be the center of instruction, in many cases, teachers and students rely on materials, and the materials become the center of instruction. Since many teachers are busy and do not have the time or inclination to prepare extra materials, textbooks and other commercially produced materials are very important in language instruction. Therefore, it is important for teachers to know how to choose the best material for instruction, how to make supplementary materials for the class, and how to adapt materials.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

*Design of the study*

The objective of this research is to provide a systematic description that is as factual and accurate as possible in order to identify the different learning styles preferences exhibited inside a representative sample of a students' community learning a foreign language.

Moreover, this research has been designed from a descriptive perspective, since it only intends to measure the performance of students in a qualitative view and according to Schafer (2001); it does not involve the manipulation of treatments.

*Subjects*

The students who took part of this research were 33 students of fourth level of English at the Languages Center in the University of Nariño. This English level was composed of six different groups, and for this study only three groups were considered.

The first group was composed mainly of teenagers whose ages ranged from 14 to 17 years old. There were 3 women and 8 men. The second group was conformed of teenagers and by some young adults and their ages fluctuated from 15 to 23 years old. There were 6 women and 5 men. The third group was composed by teenagers whose ages ranged from 12 to 14 years



old. There were 7 women and 4 men. All of them attended classes from Monday to Thursday from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. during a period of sixteen weeks.

#### *Materials*

Some of the materials that were used in this research were: SAS test copies for each student, a designed questionnaire in order to know some opinions and strategies used by teachers in the classroom, a computer and a software program employed for data analysis, a wide range of materials used for the elaboration of the applied classroom activity by teachers which catered for different learning styles, and also resources on-line.

#### *Instruments*

The selected instrument which was applied in our research was the "Style Analysis Survey (SAS): Assessing Your Own Learning and Working Styles", developed by Rebecca L. Oxford, Andrew D. Cohen, , and Julie C. Chi. This instrument was modified from the original one in order to reduce its extension and for reducing tiredness by part of students. The original questionnaire consists of 11 parts but for this research purposes the number was reduced only to 6 parts.

Equally; after surveyed students completed the SAS survey, a structured questionnaire was applied to teachers

involved in the research with the objective of knowing their impressions and opinions in relation to material suitability and the real value of this research for them as teachers also.

#### *Procedure*

This research was developed in the Languages Center of the Linguistics and Languages Department at the University of Nariño. Once the population was selected, the "SAS" survey was applied. The SAS survey was conformed by 6 parts.

The first part pretended to identify the visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles, and it consisted of 30 questions. The second part was related to recognition of extraverted and introverted learning styles, and it was composed by 12 questions. The third part was concerned about identifying random-intuitive and concrete-sequential learning styles, and it consisted of 12 questions. The fourth part was related to discover closure-oriented and open learning styles, and it was composed of 8 questions. The fifth part intended to find out global and particular or *analytic* learning styles, and it consisted of 10 questions; and the last part of the survey was concerned about identifying field-independent and field-dependent learning styles, and it was composed of 6 questions.

The results of the test were analyzed in order to obtain an average by student, which would indicate us what kind of learning style was the most predominant in each single part of the survey. The recorded averages were analyzed making use of an answers scale key which classified the learners' average considering only three ranges which were: *low, medium, and high*. Then, taken into account the most predominant learning style obtained in each part, a set of activities were created or developed -from which teachers involved in the study applied only one- in order to promote learning of English among Languages Center students and thereby support their English learning.

The results of this survey after the data gathering and analysis were discussed with each teacher involved inside the research and some appropriate, methodological proposals -in form of activities- were recommended to them concerning each part of learning styles survey. That is, a unique activity was selected from a set of activities by teachers, which later was similarly applied with their respective group of learners.

After that, teachers answered a questionnaire for thus researchers know how successful the application of the chosen activity was.

### *Variables*

The two variables to consider in this study are:

*Independent variable:*

Students' learning styles

*Dependent variable:*

Students' approach to the learning of a foreign language.

### *Data Gathering and Analysis*

In first place, as it was stated earlier, meaningful data for this research were collected through the use of a structured survey (a questionnaire called "Style Analysis Survey (SAS): Assessing Your Own Learning and Working Styles", developed by Rebecca L. Oxford, Andrew D. Cohen, and Julie C. Chi.) through which the different learning styles categories displayed inside a students population pretended to be measured and analyzed systematic and efficiently. The SAS survey consisted of six parts; which at the same time, were subdivided into three sections for the first part and two sections for the remaining parts of it.

The first part of the survey pretended to determine the sensory preference of the students' population and so it was broken down into visual, auditory and kinesthetic sections respectively. The second part of the test was subdivided into extraverted and introverted sections which are related

to recognition of behavior learners adopt, depending on the learning situation. Third part of the applied instrument consisted of the random-intuitive and concrete-sequential components which had the goal of knowing how learners handle possibilities. Fourth part of the survey pretended to know how learners approach tasks; that is, favoring a closure-oriented tendency or an open-oriented one. Fifth part of the test was implemented for thus discovering how students receive and process information and so the sections of this part were global and particular ones respectively. Final part of the applied SAS survey tried identifying learners' independence during a learning situation and the correspondent sections for this part of the test were the field-independent and the field-dependent components. This survey consisted of 78 closed-ending statements distributed along its diverse parts and sections.

Once the numerical results for each section and hence for every part of the survey were recorded, that is, a final score by student was obtained, the next step was to proceed to obtain an average for each individual student's score which later was submitted to a respective interpretation. The procedure carried out for obtaining the required average was performed simply by dividing the total student's score by the number of statements in each section. When

individuals' average for each section was estimated, a comparison between sections, making use of percentages, was performed for thus discovering which learning style tendency was the most predominant in each part of the questionnaire inside the surveyed sample. Logically, this procedure was similarly executed in each basic part of the survey.

After knowing what learning style was the most predominant in each part of the SAS survey; the comparison between these sections produced an overall comprehension of how to design a set of appropriate classroom activities and hence materials, conceived for meeting the special needs of this group of learners under study.

Finally, after teachers implemented only a single activity inside their classrooms a structured questionnaire was administered to them in order to know their conceptions and opinions about the submitted classroom activity and also of material handed in to them. Then, teachers' responses consigned in the questionnaire were submitted to an adequate and impartial interpretation and later a subsequent report of these replies took place on behalf of researchers.

This questionnaire only consisted of 10 close-ending questions (YES/NO questions) and 2 open-ending questions.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Based on Oxford's (1990) learning styles classification as the point of departure for doing this descriptive study, the main objective of it was to identify the diverse learning styles preferences inside a students' community learning a foreign language for thus using this knowledge obtained directly from them in order to create more suitable and efficient classroom activities and hence materials for the English Teaching. The SAS survey was applied and by means of its diverse statements, it intends to measure the attitudes, behaviors, and actions students adopt when they face the endeavor of learning a foreign language in different situations.

For the interpretation of participants' scores an answers scale key (see Table 4) was designed for adequately interpreting and understanding the averages obtained by students and the consequent repercussions of these for the sections and parts of the survey been analyzed. This interpretation table consists of a score, a frequency value, and an average. *Score* refers to the total score student has gotten for each section of the study. The *Frequency Value* corresponds to a symbolic value; expressed in words, which was assigned to a specific score. This symbolic value is represented by 5 categories which fluctuates between low,

and relatively low which stands for low scores (scores from 0 to 1.6); medium which stands for medium scores (scores from 1.7 to 2.4); and relatively high, and high which stands for high scores (scores from 2.5 to 4). And the Average is the element which allows us to locate the obtained score and hence the correspondent frequency value recorded by student within three unique ranges which correspond to low, medium, and high averages; depending obviously on each particular case. These averages also enable us to qualify a students' response with a tendency; lowly, fairly, or highly visual, as for example, and similarly this process might be repeated with each part and section of the study been considered.

**Table 4.** Key for Understanding Averages

Score	Frequency Value	Average
0 to 0,8	Low	<b>LOW</b>
0,9 to 1,6	Relatively Low	
1,7 to 2,4	Medium	<b>MEDIUM</b>
2,5 to 3,2	Relatively High	<b>HIGH</b>
3,3 to 4	High	

Before initiating this analysis, it should be stated that due to the organization of the survey the results were presented for parts for thus explaining in a clear way which are the sections that compound that specific part of the test, and equally were presented total averages recorded for every single component of the same. After that, a



comparative analysis between the internal sections of each part - in which the survey is broken down - was performed in order to attain a detailed understanding of the collected information obtained from the students' responses. Obviously these results were presented along with a frequency table which illustrates the number of times students' responses occurred on each category of the survey (e.g. low, medium, and high averages); likewise, percentages based on overall averages were provided for a better comprehension of research findings.

Ending each part of the SAS survey, a second more overall analysis was performed displaying in a more global but no less relevant way, the general findings by parts found inside this study (*using piecharts for comparing the accumulated percentages for parts*).

It is also important to remember the results are presented by means of averages and then, these obtained averages are shown in form of percentages for each part and section which consist of the survey.

Once these considerations have been measured, results can be presented as follows.

*Results*

To begin with, it was evident for the thirteen sections and six parts which compounds the SAS survey, claiming none of the learners who collaborated with the study attained a called *low score* in some part of the survey. Particularly, for this study purposes, a low score is considered a low mark which oscillates from 0 to 0.8 points. But this not means however that none of the students attained a low average as final score because some of them obtained relatively low scores; which fluctuated from 0.9 to 1.6 points which would correspond as was indicated in table 4 to relatively low averages.

Currently, it is time to proceed to carry out the presentation of results found inside the survey, after the preliminary data analysis.

**Table 4.1.Frequency Table for Visual**

AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	1	3,03%	1	3,03%
MEDIUM	Medium	13	39,39%	14	42,42%
HIGH	Relatively High	15	45,45%	29	87,88%
	High	4	12,12%	33	100%

Regarding the first part of the SAS survey, HOW I USE MY PHYSICAL SENSES, it refers to the sensory preference

preferred by students when they approach to a learning situation and so it is broken down into visual, auditory, and kinesthetic components or sections. The visual component is to be discussed along with its correspondent frequency table (table 4.1) and barcharts of these tables were provided in appendix section. Then, the analysis of the two remaining sections will take place.

Initially, taking into consideration the visual component, as it can be seen in table 4.1, a 3.03% of the surveyed sample achieved a low average on this section. By contrast; a 39.39% of the respondents achieved a medium average, which means that more than a third part of the sample occasionally rely on their visual ability for learning. Furthermore, as a result a 45.45% of the participants attained a relatively high score and equally a 12.12% of the respondents got a high score on the visual component; which stands for that a total of 57.57% of the total sample obtained a high average on this field. It can be said that a relatively high number of the total participants have a reasonably high tendency to rely more on their sight sense while learning a foreign language.

**Table 4.2.Frequency Table for Auditory**

AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	1	3,03%	1	3,03%
MEDIUM	Medium	19	57,58%	20	60,61%
	Relatively High	12	36,36%	32	96,97%
HIGH	High	1	3,03%	33	100%

For the auditory section, as it is shown in table 4.2, similarly as occurred in the visual section, only a 3.03% of respondents attained a low average on this field. On the other hand, a 57.58% of the participants achieved a medium average which indicates that approximately two halves of the total students' sample occasionally relies on their hearing sense for learning. In other words, this means that a relatively high number of the participants of the study have a reasonably medium preference to rely sporadically on their hearing sense while learning a foreign language. Additionally, as a result a 36.36% of the respondents obtained a relatively high score, and in the same way only a 3.03% of the students attained a high score for this section, which indicates that a 39.39% of the total sample; that is, more than a third part of the studied sample rely highly on their hearing ability for learning a foreign language.

**Table 4.3. Frequency Table for Kinesthetic**

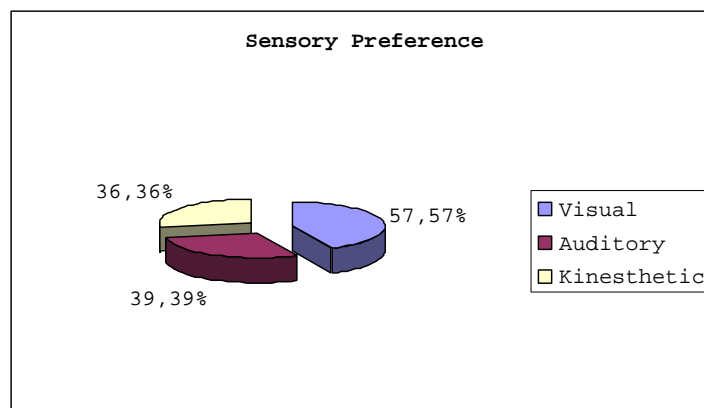
AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	6	18,18%	6	18,18%
MEDIUM	Medium	15	45,45%	21	63,64%
	Relatively High	11	33,33%	32	96,97%
HIGH	High	1	3,03%	33	100%

In relation to the sensory preference but concerning to the kinesthetic component, as it can be clearly observed in table 4.3, an 18.18% of the participants achieved a low average on the kinesthetic field. In contrast, a 45.45% of the participants attained a medium score, which means that a relatively high number of the total respondents approach learning occasionally from doing (e.g. *moving, acting, manipulating things*) rather than seeing or hearing. In addition, as a result a 33.33% of the respondents obtained a relatively high score for this section; which represents exactly the third part of the studied sample, and equally a 3.03% of the total participants achieved a high score for the kinesthetic section. That is to say, a 36.36% of the total surveyed sample marked a high average on this category. A big number of the averages were placed on the medium average instead of another one category for this section of the study.

As a general overview, for this chapter only the high average category was considered significant for the subsequent design and development of classroom activities and materials for enhancement of English learning among Languages Center students.

Concerning the first part of survey, it was devoted to answer the question of how students use their physical senses to study or work.

**Figure 4.1.Sensory Preference**



The figure 4.1 shows a reduced percentage of Languages Center students tend to be kinesthetic (36.36%) and a relatively similar proportion demonstrated to be auditory learners (39.39%) while the majority of surveyed languages learners are overwhelmingly visual learners (57.57%). The tendency of languages learners to be more oriented toward learning by means of sight was evident for this study. Thus, English learners seem to prefer learning through seeing, that is, by actively participating through visual means.

Now, moving to the second part of the SAS survey called HOW I EXPOSE MYSELF TO LEARNING SITUATIONS, which refers to the personality type students adopt while learning or working, it is broken down into extraverted and introverted sections.

**Table 4.4. Frequency Table for Extraverted**

AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	0	0%	0	0%
MEDIUM	Medium	12	36,36%	12	36,36%
HIGH	Relatively High	19	57,58%	31	93,94%
	High	2	6,06%	33	100%

As it is shown in table 4.4, none of the participants obtained a low average on this section. On the other hand, a 36.36% of respondents achieved a medium average, which stands for more than a third part of the surveyed sample sometimes prefer learning with others rather than alone. Additionally, a 57.58% of the participants reported a relatively high score and equally, for the same component a 6.06% of respondents attained a high score for extraversion section which indicates that a reasonably high number of the studied sample, exactly a 63.64% of the total sample prefer learning in group or in interaction with others because they feel comfortable learning in that way.

**Table 4.5. Frequency Table for Introverted**

AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	1	3,03%	1	3,03%
MEDIUM	Medium	16	48,48%	17	51,52%
	Relatively High	12	36,36%	29	87,88%
HIGH	High	4	12,12%	33	100%

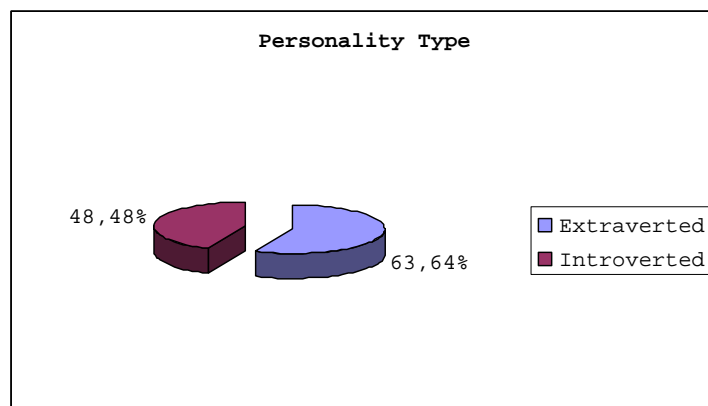
Unlike its counterpart, that is the extraverted component, this section of the study pretends to estimate students' tendency towards the introversion as a prominent feature in their learning behavior. As it can be observed in table 4.5, only a 3.03% of the participants attained a low average on this category. By contrast, a 48.48% of the participants got a medium average on the introversion component as final score for them, which means that a big number of the total studied sample was represented with this average. Here, it can be said a considerable number of the total respondents frequently enjoy learning a language by themselves rather than others. In addition, a 36.36% of the participants attained a relatively high score and a 12.12% of the same sample was reported with a high score for the section, which indicates that a reasonably high number of students obtained a high average on this category. As a consequence, these results conduct to assert that a



significant percentage of the sample under study; that is a 48.48% for the medium and high categories, enjoy learning alone in some situations and another considerable number of them prefer most of time learning by themselves rather than accompanied.

In general terms, the second part of SAS survey answers the question of how the studied learners deals with people.

**Figure 4.2. Personality Type**



As it is shown in figure 4.2 Languages Center students demonstrated to be more extraverted (63.64%) in tendency in relation to the personality type, but in comparison a substantial percentage of respondents demonstrated a moderately high preference towards the introversion (48.48%) as opposed to extroversion. One would expect that a person who orally participates with high frequency would tend to be more extroverted in tendency at all and consequently enjoy more learning through activities more adequate to them and to their favored learning style.

Well, regarding the third part of the SAS survey, which is called HOW I HANDLE POSIBILITIES, it pretends to identify if the random-intuitive factor prevailed on the concrete-sequential component *or vice versa* into the students' responses.

**Table 4.6.Frequency Table for Random-Intuitive**

AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	0	0%	0	0%
MEDIUM	Medium	4	12,12%	4	12,12%
HIGH	Relatively High	20	60,61%	24	72,73%
	High	9	27,27%	33	100%

As it is shown in table 4.6, none of respondents marked a low average on this section. On the other hand, it could be said that only a 12.12% of the total sample attained a medium average on the random-intuitive section of the study. In contrast, a 60.61% of the respondents obtained a relatively high score for this section and a 27.27% of the group obtained a high score for the same category, which demonstrates the reasonably high preference of almost all the group been studied for learning in a less controlled and autonomous, and also creative way inside the languages classroom. This high preference is represented by 87.88% of the total participants inside the survey.

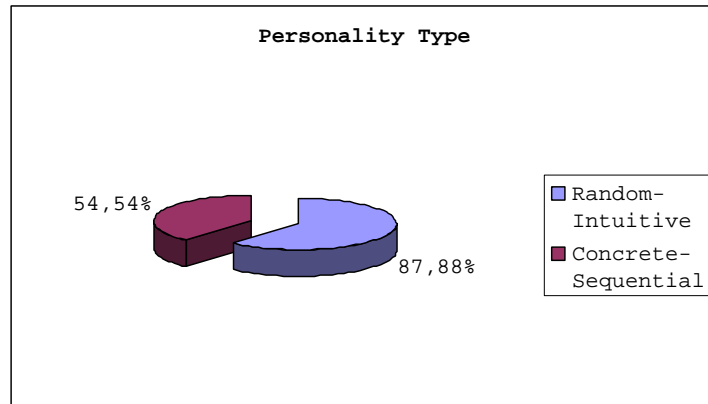
**Table 4.7. Frequency Table for Concrete-Sequential**

AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	0	0%	0	0%
MEDIUM	Medium	15	45,45%	15	45,45%
HIGH	Relatively High	14	42,42%	29	87,88%
	High	4	12,12%	33	100%

Likewise as occurred for the random-intuitive component, as it can be seen in table 4.7, any student fell in the lowest category. On the contrary, a considerable number of participants, more exactly a 45.45% of the total sample obtained a medium average for the concrete-sequential component. This significant number represents more than a third part of the total respondents were placed on this category. Similarly, it could be said that a reasonably high number of respondents of the study attained relatively high and high scores on the concrete-sequential component, and in percentages the correspondent numbers for these values are 42.42% (for relatively high) and 12.12% (for high) respectively. This high preference accumulated within this field represents the 54.54% of the total studied sample.

In general, the third part of the survey looks at how the respondents of the survey handle possibilities.

**Figure 4.3. Personality Type**



As it can be observed in figure 4.3 languages learners demonstrated an overwhelming high tendency for random-intuitiveness among them, which was represented by an 87.88% of the total studied sample. That is to say, the high majority of surveyed students are future-oriented, able to seek out the major principles of a topic, like to speculate about possibilities, enjoy abstract thinking, are creative and avoid step-by-step instruction.

Changing to the fourth part of the SAS survey, called HOW I DEAL WITH AMBIGUITY AND WITH DEADLINES, its sections simply relate to the identification of tendency towards closure-oriented or open predominance among students during language learning.

**Table 4.8. Frequency Table for Closure-Oriented**

AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	4	12,12%	4	12,12%
MEDIUM	Medium	6	18,18%	10	30,30%
	Relatively High	14	42,42%	24	72,73%
HIGH	High	9	27,27%	33	100%

Well, as it can be observed in table 4.8, a reduced percentage of the sample; represented by a 12.12% of the same got a low average for the closure-oriented section. On the other hand, an 18.18% of the total participants obtained a medium score for this section of the survey, which means that a relatively minimal number of students were placed marking a medium average. In the same way, it could be said a 42.42% of the respondents marked a relatively high score and equally a representative high number of participants, that is a 27.27% obtained a high score for the closure-oriented section. These percentages represent a reasonably high number of the studied sample, which means a 69.69% of the participants inside the study attained a high average for the closure-oriented category.

**Table 4.9. Frequency Table for Open**

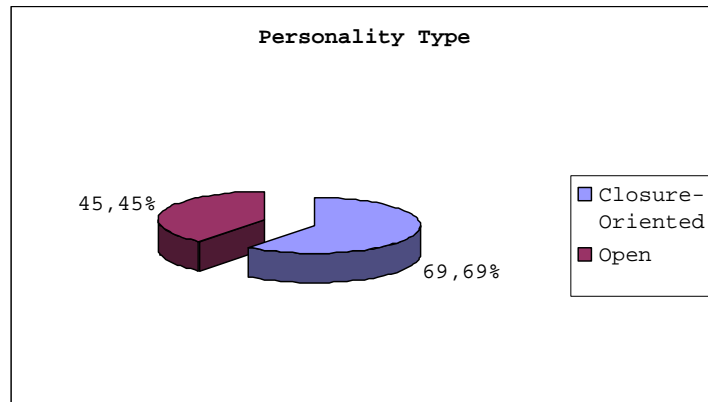
AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	3	9,09%	3	9,09%
MEDIUM	Medium	15	45,45%	18	54,55%
HIGH	Relatively High	12	36,36%	30	90,91%
	High	3	9,09%	33	100%

The second section of this fourth part of the SAS survey, concerned about identifying how students approach tasks and so it pretends to measure their attitude while learning and at the same time classify it either closure-oriented or by contrary open-oriented. This section is concerned about discovering the extent to which participants of the study can be classified as being open here. As it is shown in table 4.9, a 9.09% of the sample achieved a low average for the open component. On the contrary, a 45.45% of the surveyed sample attained a medium score for the open section. This percentage locates more than the third part of the total sample with a medium average as final result for this section. In addition, a 36.36% of the respondents of the survey got a relatively high score and equally a 9.09% of the total group obtained a high score, which means a considerable percentage of the total sample; exactly a 45.45% of the sample was placed with a high average for the

open category. Very similar percentages of the studied sample here were located under medium and high averages.

Generally, the fourth part of SAS survey focuses on knowing how learners approach learning tasks.

**Figure 4.4. Personality Type**



In figure 4.4, a high number of surveyed languages learners tended to be biased to an orientation toward closure (69.69%); and in contrast, a 45.45% of the same sample exhibited a clear orientation toward openness in relation to the way they deal with learning tasks. Results revealed Languages Center students were overwhelmingly oriented toward closure. Essentially, languages learners prefer being concerned with deadlines and rules rather than picking up information in unstructured ways and relaxing and so enjoying learning. These closure-oriented learners have the tendency to focus carefully on all learning tasks, meet deadlines, plan ahead, and want specific instructions.

Turning to the fifth part of the survey, HOW I RECEIVE INFORMATION, the objective of this part is to try to discover the tendency of students on how they prefer the information is to be presented to them, that is, in a very general and simple way or in a more specific and explicit way. This section so relates to the identification of the global or particular tendency of learners and specially, on how they perceive and analyze input data while learning a foreign language.

**Table 4.10.Frequency Table for Global**

AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	3	9,09%	3	9,09%
MEDIUM	Medium	14	42,42%	17	51,52%
HIGH	Relatively High	12	36,36%	29	87,88%
	High	4	12,12%	33	100%

For the first section, that is, the global section, a 9.09% of the studied group obtained a low average for the global component. On the other hand, a 42.42% of the respondents achieved a medium score for this component, which stands for more than a third part of the studied sample attained a medium average as final score. Equally for this component, a 36.36% of the studied sample attained a relatively high score and a 12.12% of the studied group



obtained a high score for the global component. This indicates that a considerable number of respondents; exactly a 48.48%, were located on this section with a high average.

**Table 4.11. Frequency Table for Particular**

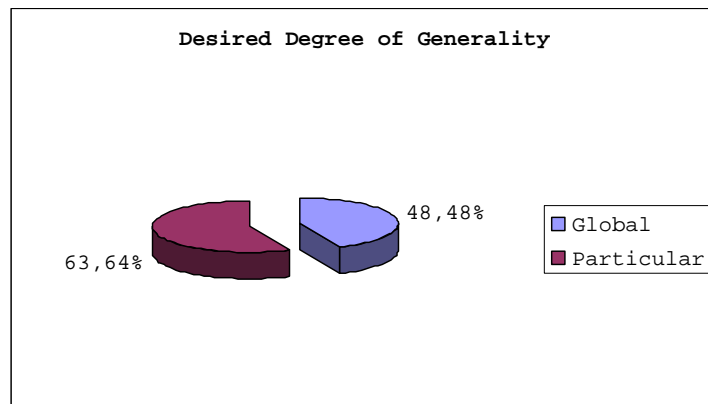
AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	1	3,03%	1	3,03%
MEDIUM	Medium	11	33,33%	12	36,36%
HIGH	Relatively High	18	54,55%	30	90,91%
	High	3	9,09%	33	100%

Regarding the particular section, the averages and percentages accumulated were the following. As it can be seen in table 4.11, a 3.03% of participants achieved a relatively low average for the particular component. On the contrary, it could be stated a third part of the total studied sample; exactly a 33.33%, obtained a medium average for the particular section. For the same component, a considerable number of participants, more precisely a 54.55% of the total sample obtained a relatively high score and similarly a 9.09% of the same population obtained a high score in the same section. These percentages represent a reasonably high number of the studied sample, which stands for a 63.64% of the total participants of the study attained a high average for the particular component and so these

learners prefer the information is to be presented to them, in a more specific and explicit way.

Synthesizing the fifth part of the study is concerned about knowing how learners deal with ideas during learning situations.

**Figure 4.5.Desired Degree of Generality**



As it is shown in figure 4.5, the majority of the respondents, more exactly a 63.64% of Languages Center students tended toward being more analytical in preference. On the other hand, a 48.48% of the studied group was oriented toward globality. That is to say, rather than looking for the main idea, guessing meanings, and communicating without being sure of all the words and concepts, the students surveyed prefer focusing on details, logical analysis and contrasts.

And for the last part of the learning styles survey, HOW I DEAL WITH MULTIPLE INPUTS, it compares the students' tendency towards the field-independence or by the contrary to the field-dependence within their learning process.

**Table 4.12. Frequency Table for Field-Independent**

AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	4	12,12%	4	12,12%
MEDIUM	Medium	12	36,36%	16	48,48%
	Relatively High	13	39,39%	29	87,88%
HIGH	High	4	12,12%	33	100%

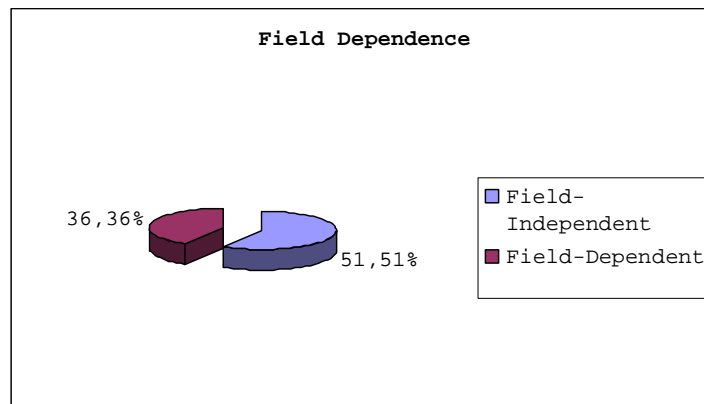
For this final part of the survey, as it is shown in table 4.12, a 12.12% of participants achieved a low average. On the other hand, a high number of participants inside the study, that is a 36.36%, attained a medium average as final score for this section. In the same way, it could be said a 39.39% of the total respondents of the study obtained a relatively high score for the section and similarly a 12.12% of the total sample attained high scores. The total percentage of high field-independent learners in this section is equal to 51.51% of the total surveyed sample.

**Table 4.13. Frequency Table for Field-Dependent**

AVERAGE	VALUE	FREQUENCY	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUM. REL. FREQUENCY
LOW	Low	0	0%	0	0%
	Relatively Low	4	12,12%	4	12,12%
MEDIUM	Medium	17	51,52%	21	63,64%
	Relatively High	8	24,24%	29	87,88%
HIGH	High	4	12,12%	33	100%

In relation to the field-dependent section, as it can be observed in table 4.13, a 12.12% of respondents achieved a low average for this section. In contrast, a considerable number of respondents, a 51.52% of the surveyed sample, obtained a medium average as final score for the same section. In the same way, percentages demonstrate a 24.24% of the study participants obtained relatively high scores for the field-dependent component and a 12.12% of the same group obtained high scores in this section. In other words, it indicates a 36.36% of the total sample under study attained high averages for the field-dependent component.

In general terms, the last part of the survey is focused on identifying the learner dependence during learning situations.

**Figure 4.6. Field Dependence**

As it can be observed in figure 4.6, a relatively high percentage of the respondents, more exactly a 51.51% of languages learners tended toward being more field-independent in preference. By the contrary, a 36.36% of the same group presented an overt tendency towards field-dependence.

As it is known, field-independent individuals are more proficient at structuring and analytic activity relative to field-dependent individuals. Field-dependent individuals prosper more on situations where learning is structured and analyzed for them. They tend to prefer a spectator approach rather than the hypothesis-testing approach favored by more field-independent learners. They operate with a relatively external frame of reference. Essentially, field-independent individuals tend to experience the components of a structured field analytically, as separate from their background, and to impose structure on a relatively

unstructured field. By contrast, relatively field-dependent individuals tend to be less good at such structuring and analytic activity, and to perceive a complex stimulus globally.

Based on the gathered results previously, and as a general overview, it could be stated highest averages recorded for each individual part of the SAS survey were considered as the most important and main source for design and development of classroom activities and materials, which was from the beginning of the study one of the pretended goals through this research. Also, this set of classroom activities and materials were specifically conceived for thus enhancing English learning among Languages Center students, as it was mentioned in earlier chapters of this study.

Concerning the questionnaire answered by the teachers who were in charge of the students who participated in the research, and whose responsibility was to carry out an activity planned following predominant learning styles in this specific setting, these are the results.

Since three courses were part of this research, the questionnaires were answered by the three teachers directing these groups. All of them coincided with affirmative answers in questions one to seven. They agreed about aspects related

with oral participation in the class, students' motivation, and students' engagement during the activity, teachers' confidence and comfort, activity's attractiveness for students, communicative values included in the task, activity's flexibility in terms of language use and exigencies. However, in question number eight that asked teachers about their opinions about how demanding the activity was, they conceived activity's requirements in a broader sense. One of the teachers offered two answers for the same question: s/he explained that if the question referred to "demanding" as difficulties for students his/her answer was not. But in the case demanding was used to refer to enhancement, her answer was yes. The remaining two teachers answered negatively to this question. They also agreed in giving positive answers to questions number nine and ten; these questions asked teachers about their opinions about learning styles' activation in the L2 classroom through activities such of this, and the usefulness of knowing students' learning styles preferences for thus make the most of them and their abilities.

In question number eleven, teachers were asked to grade the activity based on their experiences in the classroom. They all consider grading it with a five which was the highest grade the activity could get.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

*Discussion*

As it had been hypothesized before, languages learners would exhibit different learning styles when approaching the endeavor of learning a foreign language.

After application and the subsequent analysis of the collected data obtained from SAS survey, it emerged a broad conception for us as researchers of the learning styles preferences and consequently, the profile of the group under study.

In general, the results of the SAS survey revealed that the highest averages were recorded for the first part in the visual section, for the second part in extraverted component, for the third part in the intuitive-random section, for the fourth part in the closure-oriented component, for the fifth part in the particular section, and for the sixth part in the field-independent component. In other words, predominant learning styles inside Languages Center students involved in this research were: visual, extraverted, intuitive-random, closure-oriented, particular, and field-independent and therefore as complement for the research it was created on behalf of researchers a single classroom activity which caters for this set of prevalent learning styles exhibited inside the surveyed sample.



As it was stated before, the majority of surveyed languages learners are overwhelmingly visual learners (57.57%); which means, Languages Center students seem to prefer learning through seeing, that is, by actively participating through visual means.

Consequently, as visual learners in preference they need extensive visual input, such as bulletin boards, banners, posters, transparencies, slides, films, filmstrips, flashcards, TV, video, photos, graphs, charts, maps, magnetic or felt boards, board games, and puppets. They also need written directions on the board, on handouts, or on worksheets. They need to be shown, not told, what to do. They like to write stories based on pictures, draw pictures illustrating characters in literature or summarizing stories, take notes and organize them visually, create semantic maps on paper to memorize words, use visual imagery for memorizing, and do extensive reading of all kinds.

Recent studies of learning styles in foreign language education (e.g., Oxford & Ehrman, 1993) consistently place reading in the visual category, implying that instructors can meet the needs of visual learners solely by relying on written instructional material. Certainly visual learners learn better if they see and hear words in the target language, but so do auditory learners: presenting the same

material in different ways invariably has a reinforcing effect on retention. The challenge to language teachers is to devise ways of augmenting their verbal classroom presentation with nonverbal visual material for example, showing photographs, drawings, sketches, and cartoons to reinforce presentation of vocabulary words, and using films, videotapes, and dramatizations to illustrate lessons in dialogue, and pronunciation.

For this reason, the activity chosen by researchers to be applied with Languages Center students was a visual one. An activity specially created for this group, which makes use of a picture sequence story for enhancing in learners through pair-work the English learning and in this way stimulating their oral communication.

Likewise, as results demonstrated Languages Center students are more extraverted learners in tendency (63.64%); which means they enjoy a wide range of social, interactive learning tasks like games, conversations, discussions, debates, role-plays and simulations (Oxford, 1993), which could be applied for keeping this kind of learners successfully involved in their own learning. It could be possible that while a student enjoys parties and going out with friends socially, he does not necessarily feel

comfortable participating in the classroom setting by the contrary.

Extroversion and Introversion (E/I) are the tendencies that L2 learners show when learning the language. An extrovert student tends to be more outgoing and more ready to participate in classroom discussions, while an introvert student is doing something the opposite. S/he tends to be more silent and passive. However, these concepts embody more stereotypes than the actual learning proficiency. Research has shown that an extrovert student is not necessarily learning the language better than an introvert. When approaching both kinds of students, we must realize that both possess advantages and disadvantages. Extroversion or introversion may be only the things we see on the surface; while there could be something much deeper underneath that we still do not totally understand at this time.

Taking into consideration the said before, we as researchers decided that a picture story sequence was used with this group of learners and also it should be developed in couples for thus developing among them the discussion because of extraverted personality of Languages Center students and in this way enhance in them additionally their oral communication.

As results shown, the highest averages were recorded in the intuitive-random section for the third part of the SAS survey, and this high tendency for random-intuitiveness among Languages Center students was represented by an 87.88% of the total studied sample. That is to say, the majority of surveyed students is future-oriented, able to seek out the major principles of a topic, likes to speculate about possibilities, enjoys abstract thinking, is creative and avoids step-by-step instruction. Intuitive learners often prefer discovering possibilities and relationships. Intuitors like innovation and dislike repetition. Intuitors may be better at grasping new concepts and are often more comfortable than sensors with abstractions and mathematical formulations, they tend to work faster and to be more innovative than sensitive learners.

As a consequence, the activity selected for this kind of learners, that is random-intuitive learners, was created for promoting mainly the use of their creativity while working with the picture sequence, and for thus they could discover also a more autonomous way of working and learning.

Changing to the fourth part of the survey, results revealed Languages Center students were overwhelmingly oriented toward closure (69.69%). As was mentioned in the previous chapter, languages learners prefer being concerned

with deadlines and rules rather than picking up information in unstructured ways and relaxing and so enjoying learning. These closure-oriented learners have the tendency to focus carefully on all learning tasks, meet deadlines, plan ahead, and want specific instructions.

Based on this learning feature, which was described before, this implies that a classroom activity designed for closure-oriented learners should be directed to focus on giving them clear instructions about the purposes and equally parameters established for developing the activity.

As results evident for this study, the majority of the participants, more exactly a 63.64% of Languages Center students tended toward being more analytical in preference. Rather than looking for the main idea, guessing meanings, and communicating without being sure of all the words and concepts, the students surveyed prefer focusing on details, logical analysis and contrasts.

Keeping in mind this information as basic for the design of the classroom activity, this learning style dimension was focused initially on concentrating in acquiring the main idea of the picture sequence and then if learners by pairs agreed, to focus on more specific details of the picture story.

As it was revealed in results section, a considerable number of Languages Center students tended toward being more field-independent in preference (51.51%) as opposed to field-dependent learning style.

Field independence is associated with the ability to perceive a particular, relevant item or factor in a 'field' of distracting items (Brown, 1994:106-107). Such a learning style enables the students to distinguish parts from a whole, to concentrate on something, to analyze separate variables without the contamination of neighboring variables. Field independence is closely related to classroom learning that involves analysis, attention to details, and mastering of exercises, drills, and other focused activities. Recent studies (Alptekin and Atakan 1990, Chapelle and Abraham 1990, Chapelle and Green 1992) seem to suggest that there is some "superiority of a field independent style for second language success" (Brown, 1994).

Consequently, the activity designed to cater for the needs of field-independent learners was firstly focused at using their analytical abilities and their concentration on details individually on the picture sequence for then be involved in a group interaction to share information and ideas, and in this way complete as couple the task goals.

Regarding the classroom activity created to work with this group of learners and their learning styles mainly, in any moment we meant that all the time teachers should focus on promoting these learning styles tendencies and so orient learning activities and materials exclusively at favoring these learning preferences, as some teachers involved in this study believed. Another objective intended with this research is to induce teachers and all those people concerned with this research to be more interested in knowing more their students' learning styles for thus be ready to help learners to keep strengthening their strong learning styles in the classroom setting and also to provide the needed variety with regard to classroom activities and materials used in the classroom for working and developing the weaker learning styles of learners, that is those learning styles which represent a trouble for them yet.

Essentially, the research synthesized in this chapter has some implications for L2 teaching and consequently for the daily classroom practice: diagnosing students' learning styles in the L2 classroom, adjusting L2 instruction to learners' styles preferences, and remembering that no single L2 instructional methodology fits all students.

Regarding diagnosis of learning styles inside the classroom, L2 teachers could profit by identifying the

learning styles and the use of those styles in their students, because such diagnosing leads to greater understanding of those predominant styles. Teachers also need to assess their own styles, so that they will be aware of their preferences and of possible tendencies. Useful means exist to make this diagnosis, as mentioned later. There exist a wide variety of useful questionnaires and sources at hand for accomplishing this objective.

Also, the benefit of learning styles diagnosis can be innumerable not only for the classroom teacher but also, and more important, for the learner. Through learning styles diagnosis, the classroom teachers are exposed to a deeper and more profound view of the student, both as an individual and as a learner. This knowledge in turn can assist classroom teachers in deciding the form and presentation of materials, as well as the classroom activities to be used. Being aware of a student's learning styles gives educators the most powerful tool available to analyze, motivate and assist him or her in learning settings: "It opens the door to personalizing education" (J. Keefe, 1987: 18). Learning style diagnosis thus takes a step towards learner autonomy.

As for the learner, Ngeow (1999) summarizes three main benefits of assessing learning styles:



- 1) Learners who are conscious of their learning styles make better use of their learning opportunities.
- 2) Learners learn better when they are provided with learning opportunities that enhance and extend their learning preferences.
- 3) Learners work better with new learning styles when they are given guided opportunities to practice them.

These principles suggest that learning is enhanced and enriched when learning styles are properly addressed both before and during instruction. But how can teachers help to raise such awareness? The role of educators is to assist students in the process of self-discovery so that students become more aware of how they learn, what strategies work better at the moment of learning, what works better for them and what does not.

The first step in raising such awareness can be achieved by administering one of the already existing learning styles questionnaires or by creating new inventories for drawing assumptions about students' learning styles. Devising an instrument is not an easy task, so it is likely that only researchers would want to pursue such an enterprise. It requires not only careful preparation and detailed statistical analysis, but also commitment and patience because the results can only be seen over long periods of time.

On the other hand, in relation to adjust L2 instruction to learners' style preferences, as it was stated from the

beginning of the study, the more teachers know about their students' style preferences, the more effectively they can orient their L2 instruction. Some learners might need instruction presented more visually, while others might require more auditory, kinesthetic, or tactile types of instruction. Without adequate knowledge about their individual students' style preferences, teachers cannot systematically provide the needed instructional variety inside the languages classroom.

Studies show that matching teaching styles to learning styles can significantly enhance academic achievement, student attitudes, and student behavior at the primary and secondary school level (Griggs & Dunn 1984; Smith & Renzulli 1984), at the college level (Brown 1978; Charkins et al. 1985), and specifically in foreign language instruction (Oxford et al. 1991; Wallace & Oxford 1992). This is not to say that the best thing one can do for one's students is to use their preferred modes of instruction exclusively.

Students will inevitably be requested to deal with problems and challenges that require the use of their less preferred modes, and so it should regularly be given practice in the use of those modes (Hunt 1971; Friedman and Alley 1984; Cox 1988). However, Smith and Renzulli (1984) caution that stress, frustration, and tiredness may occur

when students are submitted over extended periods of time to teaching styles inconsistent with their learning style preferences. Students learn more when information is presented in a variety of modes than when only a single mode is used. The point is supported by a research study carried out several decades ago, which concluded that students retain 10 percent of what they read, 26 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they see and hear, 70 percent of what they say, and 90 percent of what they say as they do something (Stice, 1987). What must be done to achieve effective foreign language learning is to balance instructional methods, somehow structuring the class so that all learning styles are simultaneously – or at least sequentially – accommodated (Oxford 1990), and it could be done simply balancing the content and type of activity introduced to the class.

And related to remembering that no single L2 instructional methodology fits all students' learning styles, since the recognition of learning styles inside the classroom help us to determine a particular learner's ability and enthusiasm to work within the framework of various instructional methodologies. It is imprudent to think that a single L2 methodology could possibly fit an entire class filled with students who have a range of

stylistic and strategic preferences. Instead of choosing a specific instructional methodology, L2 teachers would do better to employ an extensive instructional approach, notably the best version of the communicative approach that contains a combined focus on form and fluency. Such an approach allows for deliberate, creative variety to meet the needs of all students in the class.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In spite of little available information about learning styles theory and consequently on research on this topic, this work intends to open a new perspective for the development of the teaching-learning process, but it demands a change of attitude and an evolution in the way of thinking - of learners, teachers and also institutions - for thus obtaining the biggest possible profit of this acquaintance.

To make changes based on the existent research is premature. It is not still known enough about the topic, it lacks to investigate more and to elaborate instruments that are adjusted to the student population in question, that is adapting an instrument which be more appropriate for our learning setting; however, the objectives are: to achieve the students to have a more positive attitude and an increasing motivation toward the study, at the same time that they improve their learning, and as for teachers, the

more they understand about learning styles - they can learn more about their own teaching styles and thus as much educators as institutions they both extend the fan of possibilities in relation to the ideal materials and consequently the methodology to be applied in the classroom.

Students, for instance, will become aware of their learning styles, and it may lead them towards the basic steps that need to be taken to reach autonomy. Teachers can understand better how students learn, so instructional materials can be adapted to meet students' real needs. Material designers and also skillful teachers can use the results to design activities which address more than one learning style at once. We agree with Keefe's (1987: 32) thoughts when he states, "an understanding of the way students learn is the door to educational improvement. And learning styles diagnosis is the key to understanding of student learning".

It is also necessary to mention some of the practical suggestions seated by Oxford, Hollaway and Horton-Murillo (1992) to try with different learning styles inside EFL settings. These are:

- To determine teachers' and students' learning styles.
- To alternate teaching styles, in order to generate an adaptation and improvement of learning style *teacher-student*

*and student-teacher* through the use of a great range of activities. The changes and adjustments in the teaching will be made from teacher's judgment, since according to Laugh (1987) the risk of changing the teacher's teaching style to adapt it to the learners' learning style might decrease the development of her/his own repertoire of learning styles, what would go in detriment of the achievements of the students.

- To organize group activities. From time to time, teacher can organize teams taking into consideration similar learning styles among students, and s/he can also form groups with different learning styles to increase the efficiency and to generate bigger flexibility of styles and behaviors.

- To include approaches and activities for the different learning styles discovered inside the lesson plan. It is necessary to remember that teacher should act as facilitator, promoting the strengthening and diversity of alternative students' learning styles, using a great variety of methods, classroom activities and teaching materials, and creating an atmosphere characterized by the plurality and collaboration.

- To change the view about conflicts between learning styles and teaching styles. Teachers of English as foreign language

should not only take into consideration the predominant learning styles of the students, but also their own, in order to not favor the learning potential and attitude of those students who share their same styles or to affect those that have different styles of learning of their. The differences in relation to predominant learning styles can be seen as development opportunities and not as drawbacks.

Lastly, it is necessary to know and to respect each individual's characteristics, so much educators as educational institutions, and to consider the learning styles in order to promote their development inside the classroom setting without to privilege or to discriminate some of them.

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Figure 1. Barchart for Visual

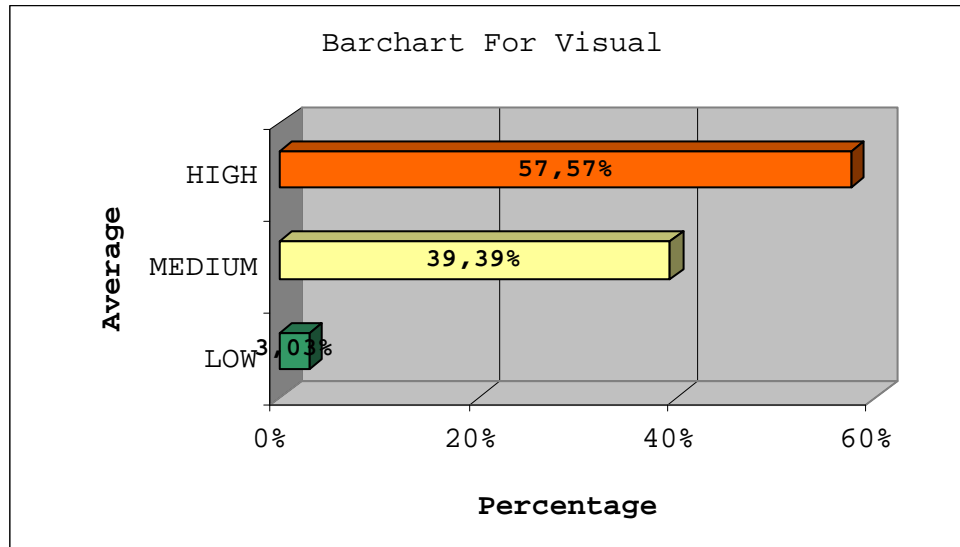


Figure 2. Barchart for Auditory

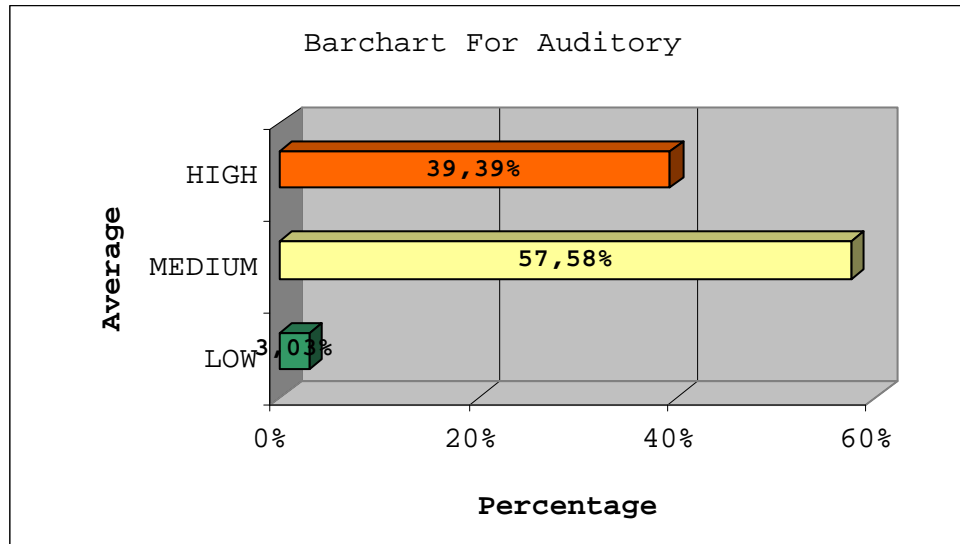


Figure 3. Barchart for Kinesthetic

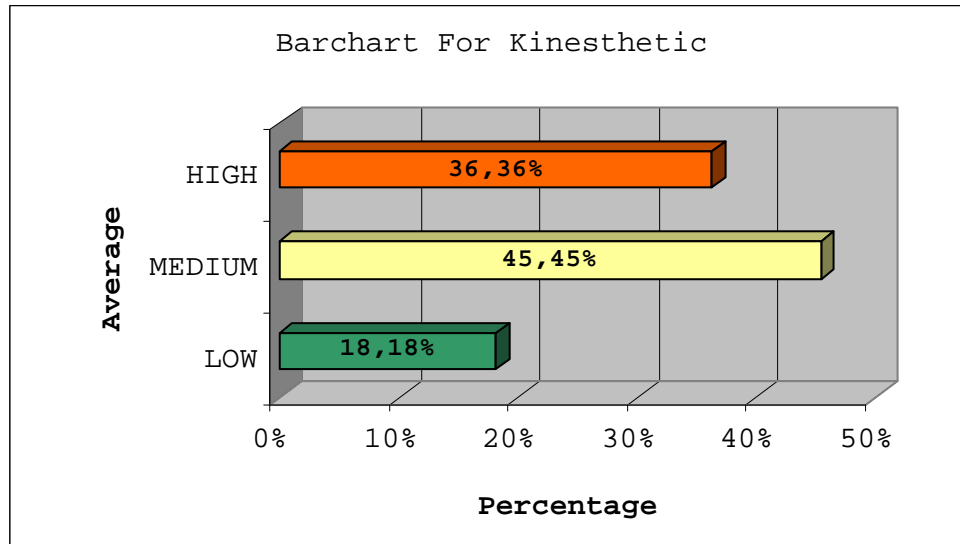


Figure 4. Barchart for Extraverted

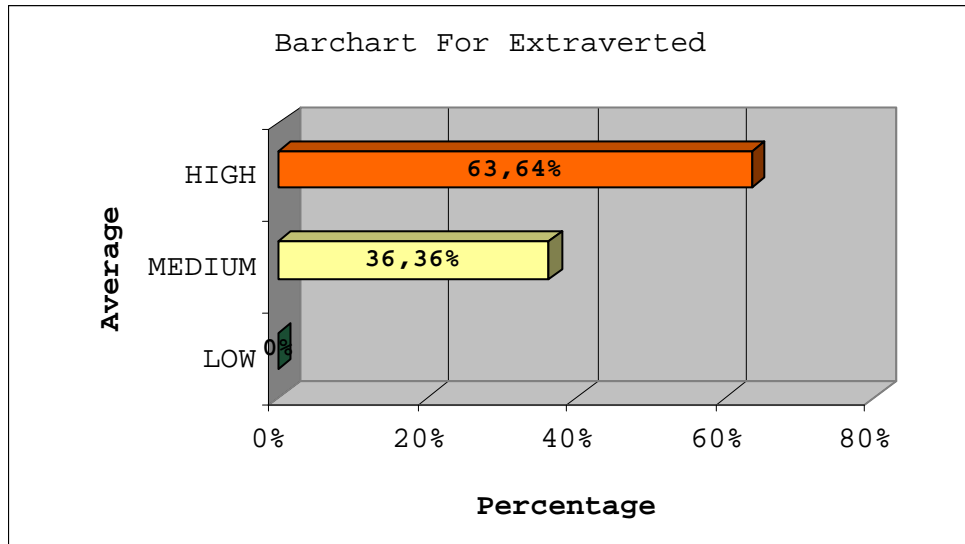


Figure 5. Barchart for Introverted

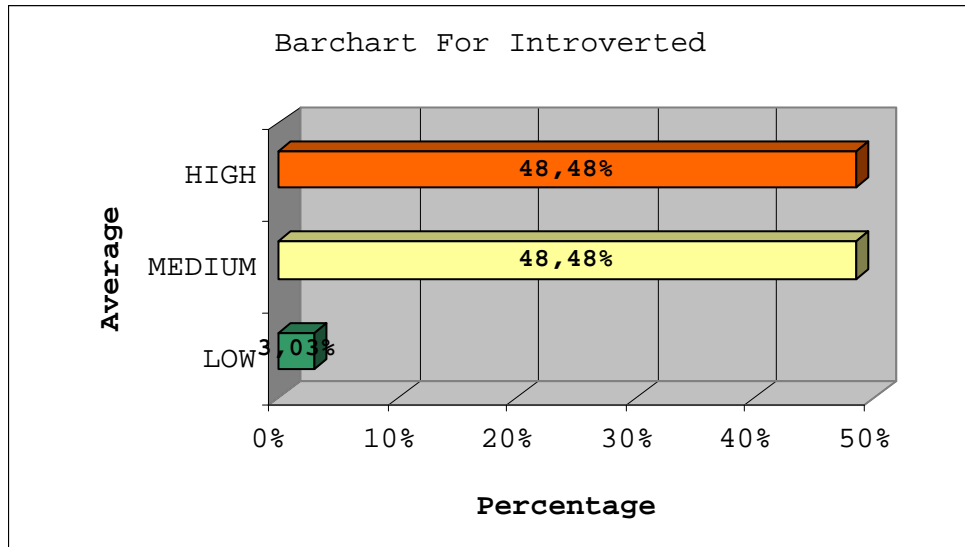


Figure 6. Barchart for Random-Intuitive

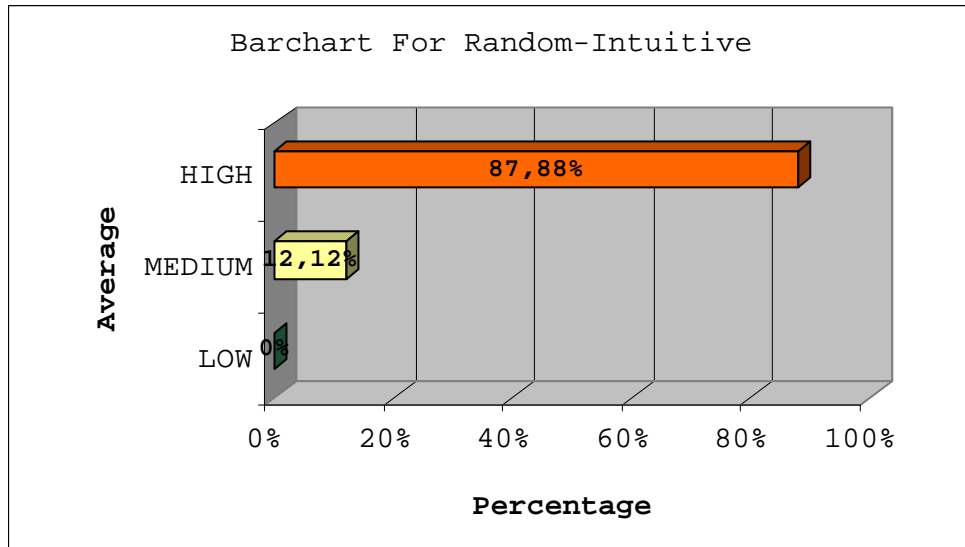




Figure 7. Barchart for Concrete-Sequential

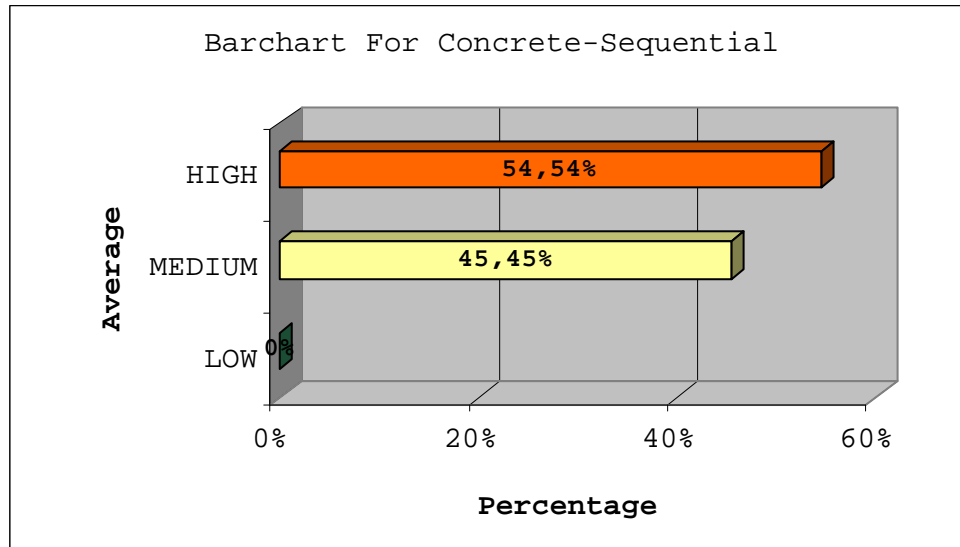


Figure 8. Barchart for Closure-Oriented

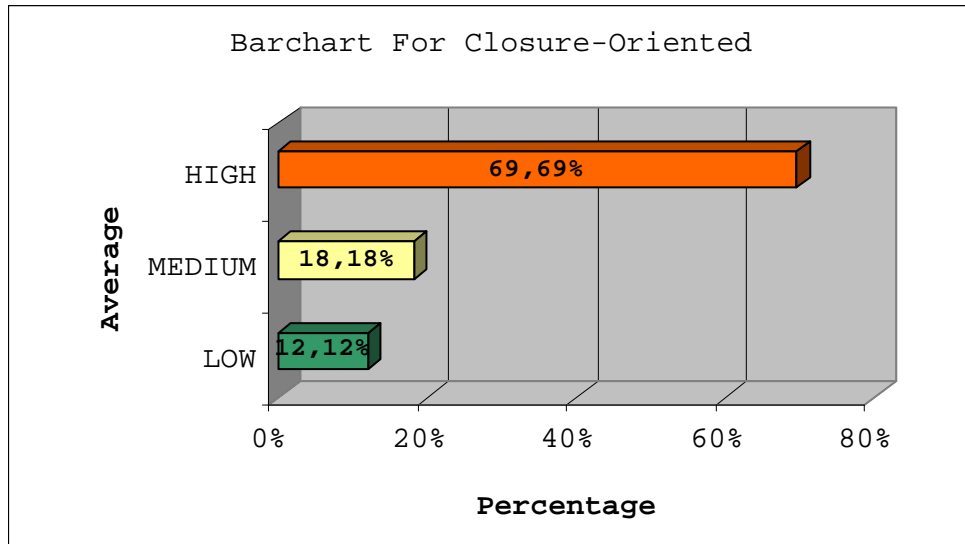


Figure 9. Barchart for Open

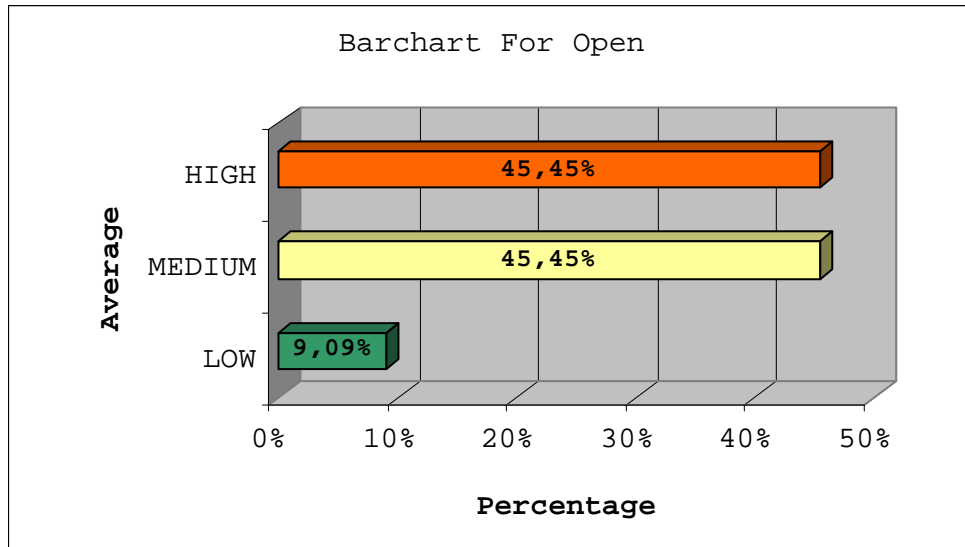


Figure 10. Barchart for Global

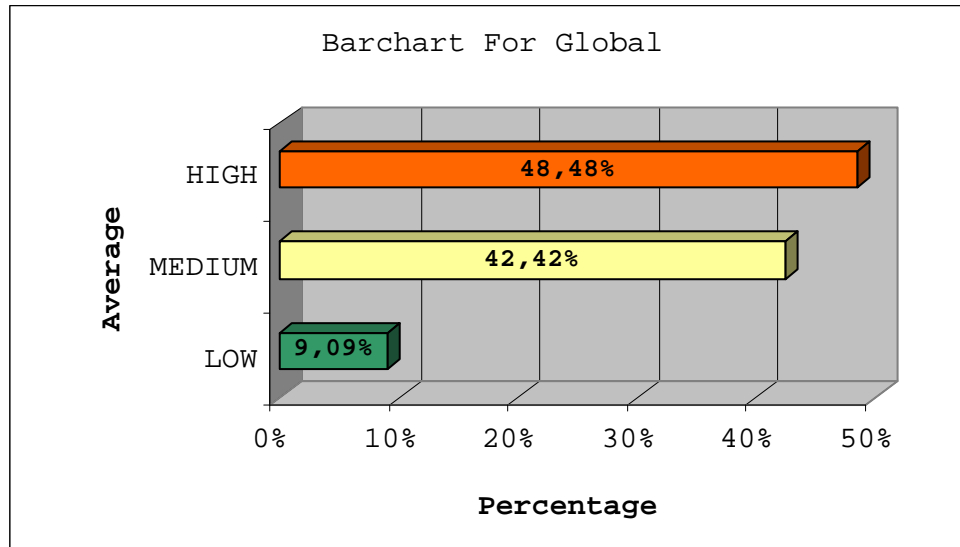


Figure 11. Barchart for Particular

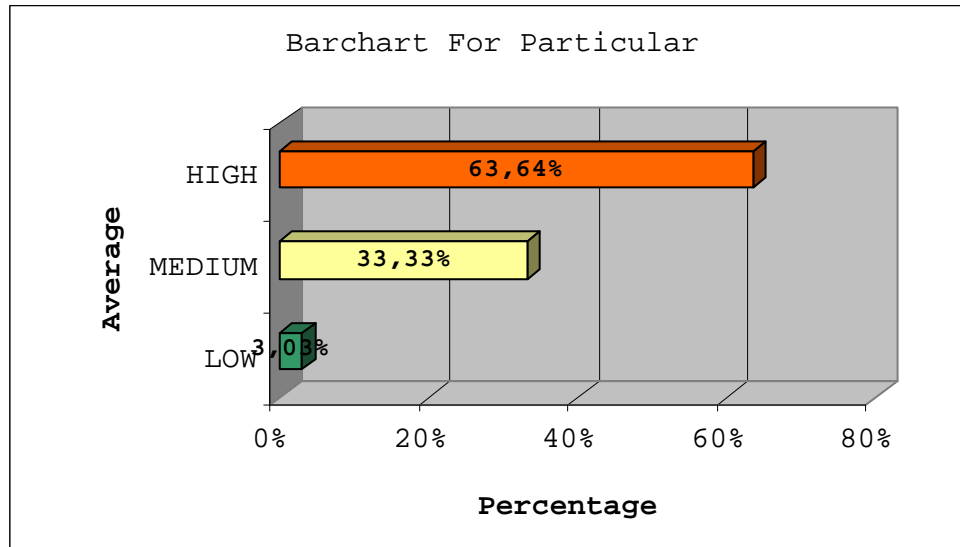


Figure 12. Barchart for Field-Independent

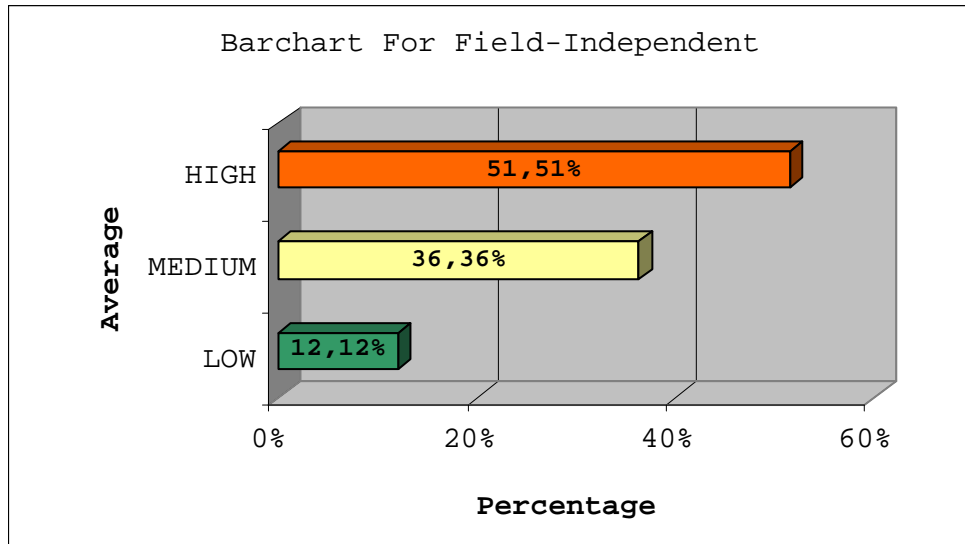
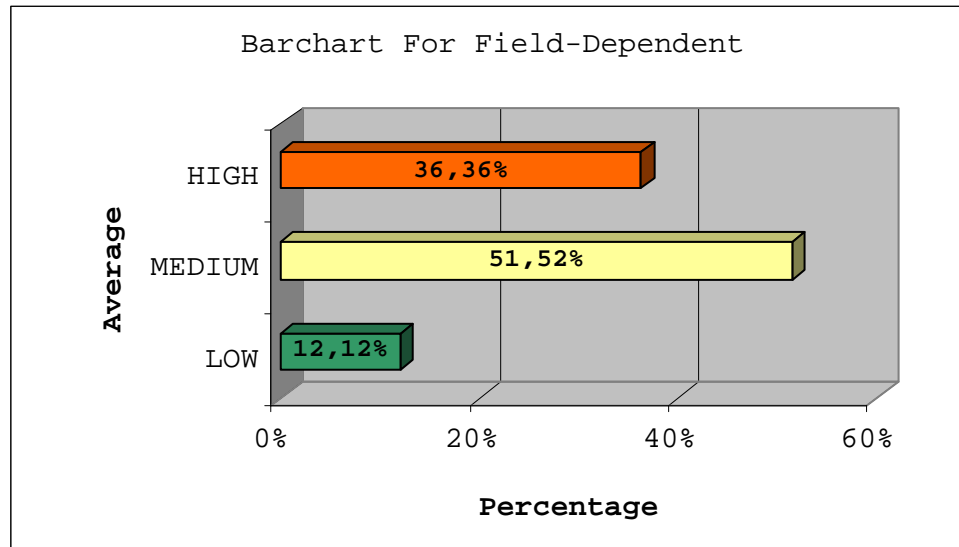


Figure 13. Barchart for Field-Dependent



# APPENDIX



APPENDIX A. Learning Style Survey: Assessing Your Own  
Learning Styles

**Learning Style Survey: Assessing Your Own Learning Styles**

For each item, circle the response that represents best your approach while learning:

**0 = Never    1 = Rarely    2 = Sometimes    3 = Often    4 = Always**

**Part 1: HOW I USE MY PHYSICAL SENSES**

- 1. I remember something better if I write it down. 0 1 2 3 4
- 2. I take detailed notes during lectures. 0 1 2 3 4
- 3. When I listen, I visualize pictures, numbers, or words in my head. 0 1 2 3 4
- 4. I prefer to learn with TV or video rather than other media. 0 1 2 3 4
- 5. I use color-coding to help me as I learn or work. 0 1 2 3 4
- 6. I need written directions for tasks. 0 1 2 3 4
- 7. I have to look at people to understand what they say. 0 1 2 3 4
- 8. I understand lectures better when professors write on the board. 0 1 2 3 4
- 9. Charts, diagrams, and maps help me understand what someone says. 0 1 2 3 4
- 10. I remember peoples' faces but not their names. 0 1 2 3 4

**A - Total**

- 11. I remember things better if I discuss them with someone. 0 1 2 3 4
- 12. I prefer to learn by listening to a lecture rather than reading. 0 1 2 3 4
- 13. I need oral directions for a task. 0 1 2 3 4
- 14. Background sound helps me think. 0 1 2 3 4
- 15. I like to listen to music when I study or work. 0 1 2 3 4
- 16. I can understand what people say even when I cannot see them. 0 1 2 3 4
- 17. I remember peoples' names but not their faces. 0 1 2 3 4
- 18. I easily remember jokes that I hear. 0 1 2 3 4
- 19. I can identify people by their voices (e.g., on the phone). 0 1 2 3 4
- 20. When I turn on the TV, I listen to the sound more than I watch the screen. 0 1 2 3 4

**B - Total**

- 21. I'd rather start to do things, rather than pay attention to directions. 0 1 2 3 4
- 22. I need frequent breaks when I work or study. 0 1 2 3 4
- 23. I need to eat something when I read or study. 0 1 2 3 4
- 24. If I have a choice between sitting and standing, I'd rather stand. 0 1 2 3 4
- 25. I get nervous when I sit still too long. 0 1 2 3 4
- 26. I think better when I move around (e.g., pacing or tapping my feet). 0 1 2 3 4
- 27. I play with or bite on my pens during lectures. 0 1 2 3 4
- 28. Manipulating objects helps me to remember what someone says. 0 1 2 3 4
- 29. I move my hands when I speak. 0 1 2 3 4
- 30. I draw lots of pictures (doodles) in my notebook during lectures. 0 1 2 3 4

**C - Total**

**Part 2: HOW I EXPOSE MYSELF TO LEARNING SITUATIONS**

- 1. I learn better when I work or study with others than by myself. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 2. I meet new people easily by jumping into the conversation. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 3. I learn better in the classroom than with a private tutor. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 4. It is easy for me to approach strangers. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 5. Interacting with lots of people gives me energy. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 6. I experience things first and then try to understand them. **0 1 2 3 4**

**A – Total**

- 7. I am energized by the inner world (what I'm thinking inside). **0 1 2 3 4**
- 8. I prefer individual or one-on-one games and activities. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 9. I have a few interests, and I concentrate deeply on them. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 10. After working in a large group, I am exhausted. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 11. When I am in a large group, I tend to keep silent and listen. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 12. I want to understand something well before I try it. **0 1 2 3 4**

**B – Total**

**Part 3: HOW I HANDLE POSSIBILITIES**

- 1. I have a creative imagination. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 2. I try to find many options and possibilities for why something happens. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 3. I plan carefully for future events. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 4. I like to discover things myself rather than have everything explained to me. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 5. I add many original ideas during class discussions. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 6. I am open-minded to new suggestions from my peers. **0 1 2 3 4**

**A – Total**

- 7. I focus in on a situation as it is rather than thinking about how it could be. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 8. I read instruction manuals (e.g., for computers or VCRs) before using the device. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 9. I trust concrete facts instead of new, untested ideas. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 10. I prefer things presented in a step-by-step way. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 11. I dislike it if my classmate changes the plan for our project. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 12. I follow directions carefully. **0 1 2 3 4**

**B – Total**

**Part 4: HOW I DEAL WITH AMBIGUITY AND WITH DEADLINES**

- 1. I like to plan language study sessions carefully and do lessons on time or early. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 2. My notes, handouts, and other school materials are carefully organized. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 3. I like to be certain about what things mean in a target language. **0 1 2 3 4**
- 4. I like to know how rules are applied and why. **0 1 2 3 4**

**A – Total**

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 5. I let deadlines slide if I'm involved in other things.            | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. I let things pile up on my desk to be organized eventually.       | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. I don't worry about comprehending everything.                     | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. I don't feel the need to come to rapid conclusions about a topic. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| <b>B – Total</b>   |           |

**Part 5: HOW I RECEIVE INFORMATION**

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. I prefer short and simple answers rather than long explanations.     | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. I ignore details that do not seem relevant.                          | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. It is easy for me to see the overall plan or big picture.            | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. I get the main idea, and that's enough for me.                       | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. When I tell an old story, I tend to forget lots of specific details. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| <b>A – Total</b>  |           |

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 6. I need very specific examples in order to understand fully.               | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. I pay attention to specific facts or information.                         | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. I'm good at catching new phrases or words when I hear them.               | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. I enjoy activities where I fill in the blank with missing words I hear.   | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. When I try to tell a joke, I remember details but forget the punch line. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| <b>B – Total</b>   |           |

**Part 6: HOW I DEAL WITH MULTIPLE INPUTS**

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. I can separate out the relevant and important information in a given context even when distracting information is present.                          | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. When I produce an oral or written message in the target language, I make sure that all the grammatical structures are in agreement with each other. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. I not only attend to grammar but check for appropriate level of formality and politeness.   | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| <b>A - Total</b>   |           |

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 4. When speaking or writing, a focus on grammar would be at the expense of attention to the content of the message.  | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. It is a challenge for me to both focus on communication in speech or writing while at the same time paying attention to grammatical agreement (e.g., person, number, tense, or gender). | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. When I am using lengthy sentences in a target language, I get distracted and neglect aspects of grammar and style.  | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| <b>B - Total</b>   |           |

**Understanding your totals**

Once you have totaled your points, write the results in the blanks below. Circle the higher number in each part (if they are close, circle both). Read about your learning styles starting below

**PART 1**

A \_\_\_\_\_ visual                      B \_\_\_\_\_ auditory                      C \_\_\_\_\_ tactile/kinesthetic

**PART 2**

A \_\_\_\_\_ extraverted                      B \_\_\_\_\_ introverted

**PART 3**

A \_\_\_\_\_ random-intuitive                      B \_\_\_\_\_ concrete-sequential

**PART 4**

A \_\_\_\_\_ closure-oriented                      B \_\_\_\_\_ open

**PART 5**

A \_\_\_\_\_ global                      B \_\_\_\_\_ particular *or analytic*

**PART 6**

A \_\_\_\_\_ field-independent                      B \_\_\_\_\_ field-dependent

APPENDIX B. Questionnaires

Diagnosing Students' Learning Styles Preferences for the Implementation of More Efficient Teaching Activities in the L2 Classroom

For the teacher: Please answer the following questions taking into account the performance of your students during the activity presented to them and developed by the researchers. If there are some comments you consider relevant for this research please INCLUDE them in the Comments and Suggestions' section.

Please check (√) your answer.

1. Do you consider the use of the activity enhances students' oral performance participation during the class?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you think the motivation of your students was increased during the task?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does the engagement of your students appeared to be increased during the activity?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

4. Did you feel comfortable when carrying the activity out?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did the material used during the activity appear to be attractive for students?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

6. As a teacher, do you think the material used was suitable for communicative purposes?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

7. Did you feel confident when working with the material presented to you in terms of the language used in the lesson plan and the requirements of the activity itself?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you think an activity like this can be a very demanding one for students?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

9. In your opinion this kind of activities can serve as means to activate students' learning styles in the L2 classroom?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you think the use of activities that take into account students' learning styles could make the most of your students and their abilities?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

11. Please grade the activity from 1 to 5 and justify your grade with a comment.

GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

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COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

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APPENDIX C. Classroom Activity applied by Teachers

## WORKING WITH PICTURE STORIES

Level: All levels.

Time: 30-40 minutes.

Aim: Using their own words students express what they look in the pictures for thus developing oral communication through pair discussion.

Language focus: pair-group discussion, use of various verbs tenses (past tense, etc), prepositions of place, connectors, adverbs, different vocabulary topics (depending on the picture), answering teacher's questions (Yes/No or Wh).

Materials: a sequence picture story (black and white cartoons are best) which can be described in a simple way can be used. They can be taken from different resource books for teachers, textbooks, newspapers or magazines or even drawn by the teacher or students.

Pictures should reflect vocabulary topics which students are familiar with or they want to develop or review. Before they start working, students are given a copy of picture sequence.

Instructions:

Step 1: Teacher pre-teaches or revises necessary vocabulary items and verb tenses required for developing the activity.

Step 2: Then, he proceeds to give an example of what students actually have to do in groups with the provided material.

Step 3: Next, teacher organizes the class in couples.

Step 4: Teacher hands in a new sequence of pictures to each couple which they are going to work in. Students organize the sequence of pictures and then they imagine or create what happens in the missed boxes.

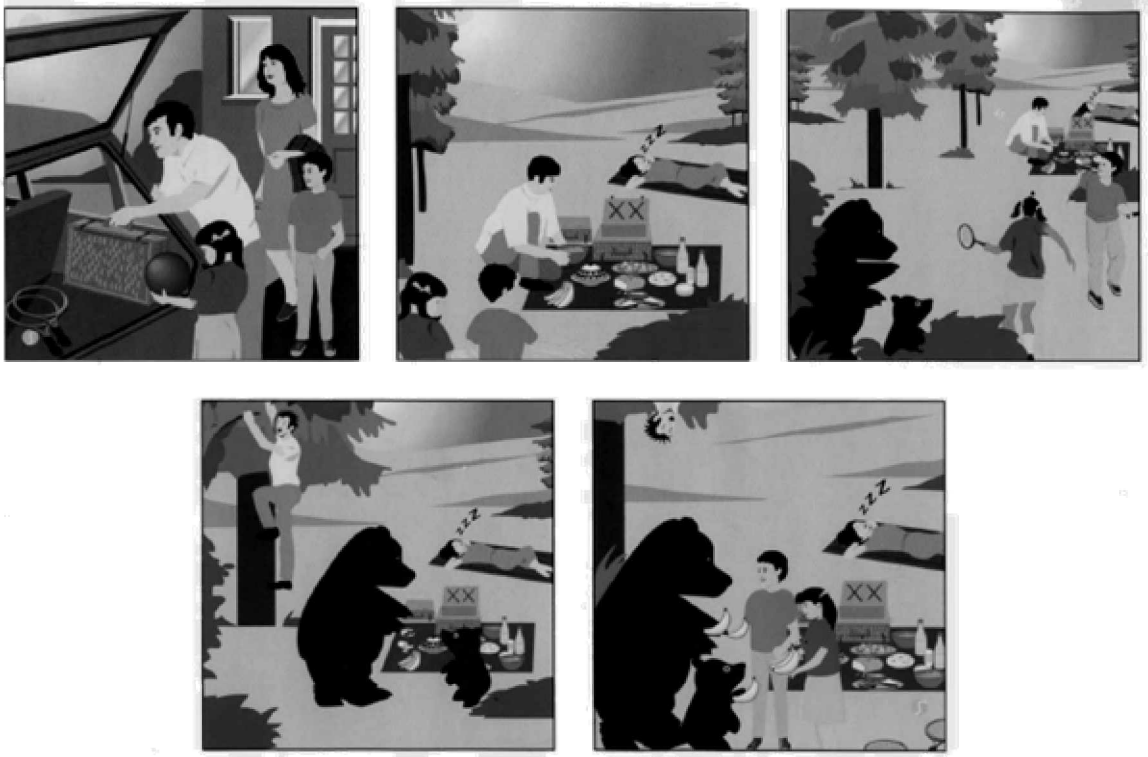
Step 5: Learners analyze the pictures in group and after a discussion they finally reach a conclusion of what exactly happens in each box. This step is exactly the same with all pictures.

Step 6: After that, each couple present their story at the whole class and then the entire class chooses the best of all.

Step 7: Finally, the teacher reveals his/her class the true sequence of the pictures and the missing pictures content and tell his version of this story to his/her students (*that version of the sequence provided in the textbook*).

Step 8: A follow-up writing activity could be an interesting and practical task for your students practicing their written composition; of course, using the story they have created for the pictures (*optional*).

Procedure: *Picture Story (Teacher's Sample)*.



1. First, teacher describes what s/he sees in the sample picture story, using verb tenses and vocabulary known by the students as much as possible, (e.g. *there is/there are, present continuous, past and present habits, conjunctions, etc*).

The students are shown the story card and invited to try and tell the story, or at least, to point out familiar words or concepts. Having *'brainstormed'* the story as a group, the teacher then tells the story, using simple terms and language but adding character and life to the story (*for example by naming characters in the picture, asking students to verify certain details as the story progresses, adding interjections, explanations and comments*).

Example:

*Picture 1:* In this picture, there is a happy family. There are two children and their parents. It's a warm day and they are getting ready to leave, and so the father is putting in the car a lot of things as balls and a bag full of food, etc.

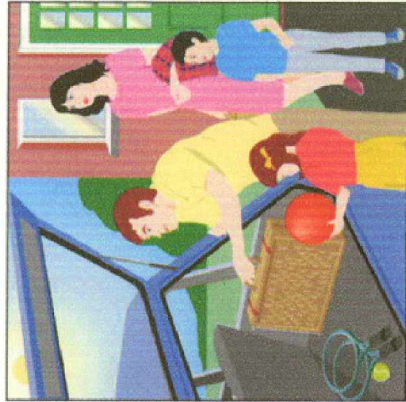
*Picture 2:* In picture 2, they have arrived to a beautiful park and the kids are enjoying a lot of this trip!! .....etc.

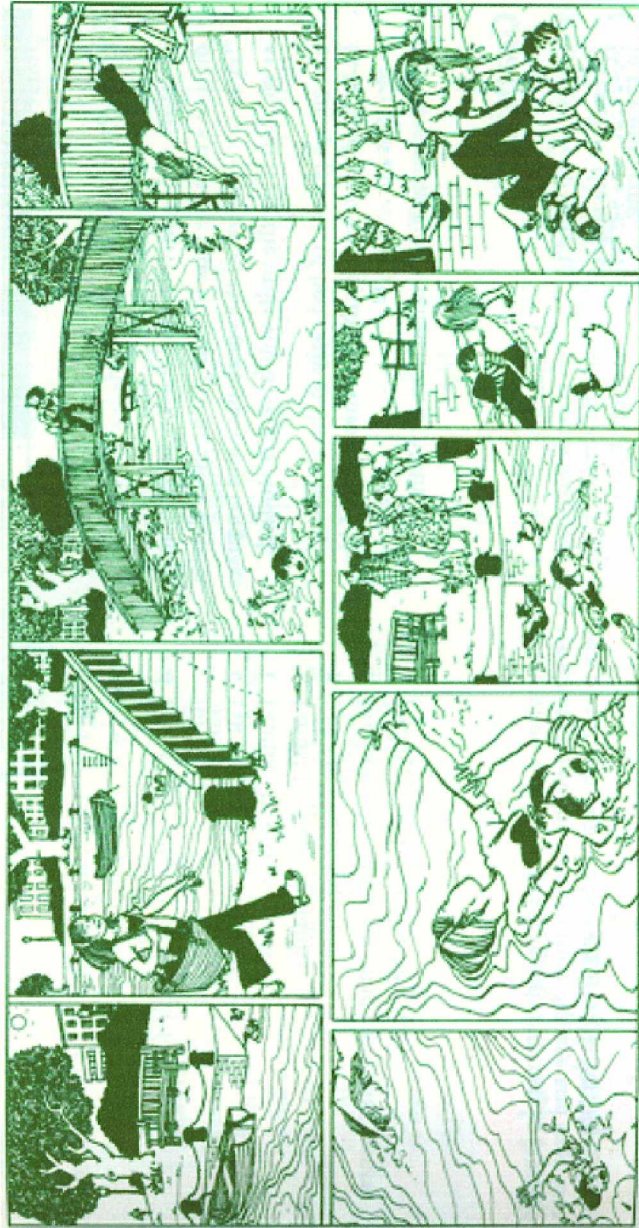
This procedure is repeated with each scene but the teacher allows students to talk if they want.

2. After teacher concludes her/his presentation, s/he organizes the class in pairs and hands them in a copy of a new sequence of pictures to work on.
3. Teacher asks students to order the sequence of pictures and then imagine/create what happens in the missed boxes.
4. Then learners analyze and interpret in couple all scenes presented in the copy and using their knowledge and creativity discuss about them and try to imagine what happens for them in the sequence.
5. Students' couples have 20-30 minutes to complete and organize using their own words their presentation for the sequence before presenting their version of it to the rest of the class. The whole class decides what story was the best of all!!

*NOTE: Here it would be useful that teacher extends as much as s/he could the students' intervention for thus keeping them talking. Teacher could make it asking student questions and also making comments for thus knowing student's opinion, etc.*

6. Finally, when the presentations conclude teacher puts in correct order the sequence and then reveals the missing boxes content and tells students the original version provided in the textbook for the sequence.
7. A follow-up writing activity for developing and practicing students' written skills could take place here (*optional*).





## STUDENTS' WORKSHEET

- a) a crowd of people had gathered and were watching her anxiously as she struggled to reach to the bank.
- b) she heard someone whimpering below her and when she looked down from the bridge, she saw a small boy in the deepest part of the river, waving his arms helplessly.
- c) she thought he was dead but when he coughed and his legs started to move, she knew she had saved his life.
- d) it was a fast-flowing river and she had to swim harder than she had ever swum before, to get to him before it was too late.
- e) as Jean walked towards the bridge, she was thinking of all the things she could do now that the school holidays had arrived.
- f) although he was panicking, she was able to grab him and she started to pull him back to the bank.
- g) it was a beautiful summer's day, the sun was shining and the birds were singing.
- h) she jumped off the bridge and dived into the rushing water.
- i) she managed it and threw both herself and the boy onto the warm grass.

## CORRECT PICTURES SEQUENCE ORDER

- (g) It was a beautiful summer's day, the sun was shining and the birds were singing.
- (e) as Jean walked towards the bridge, she was thinking of all the things she could do now that the school holidays had arrived.
- (b) she heard someone whimpering below her and when she looked down from the bridge, she saw a small boy in the deepest part of the river, waving his arms helplessly.
- (h) she jumped off the bridge and dived into the rushing water.
- (d) it was a fast-flowing river and she had to swim harder than she had ever swum before, to get to him before it was too late.
- (f) although he was panicking, she was able to grab him and she started to pull him back to the bank.
- (i) a crowd of people had gathered and were watching her anxiously as she struggled to reach to the bank.
- (c) she managed it and threw both herself and the boy onto the warm grass.
- (a) she thought he was dead but when he coughed and his legs started to move, she knew she had saved his life.