

**UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR**  
**FACULTAD MULTIDISCIPLINARIA ORIENTAL**  
**DEPARTAMENTO DE CIENCIAS Y HUMANIDADES**  
**SECCIÓN DE IDIOMAS**



**INFORME FINAL DEL CURSO DE ESPECIALIZACIÓN:**

**CURSO DE ESPECIALIZACIÓN LINGÜÍSTICA**

**TÍTULO DEL INFORME FINAL:**

THE LEVEL OF ENGLISH ORAL PROFICIENCY IN THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS OF  
THE MODERN LANGUAGES DEGREE ACCORDING TO THEIR GRAMMATICAL  
KNOWLEDGE IN RELATION TO THE CEFR STANDARD DURING THE YEAR 2025

**PARA OPTAR AL GRADO ACADÉMICO DE:**

LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS MODERNAS: ESPECIALIDAD EN FRANCÉS E  
INGLÉS

**PRESENTADO POR:**

YANIRA YAMILETH GUEVARA MENDOZA - GM17070  
HERBERTH ALEXIS GUZMÁN ALVARADO - GA19050  
ESMERALDA SARAHÍ QUINTANILLA MARTINEZ - QM19006

**DOCENTE ASESOR:**

MTRA. ANA SILVIA ORELLANA DE CRUZ

OCTUBRE DE 2025  
SAN MIGUEL, EL SALVADOR, CENTROAMÉRICA

**UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR**  
**FACULTAD MULTIDISCIPLINARIA ORIENTAL**  
**AUTORIDADES**



**ING. JUAN ROSA QUINTANILLA**  
**RECTOR**

**DRA. EVELYN BEATRIZ FARFÁN MATA**  
**VICERRECTORA ACADÉMICA**

**MSC. ROGER ARMANDO ARIAS ALVARADO**  
**VICERRECTOR ADMINISTRATIVO**

**LIC. PEDRO ROSALÍO ESCOBAR CASTANEDA**  
**SECRETARIO GENERAL**

**LCDA. ANA RUTH AVELAR VALLADARES**  
**DEFENSORA DE LOS DERECHOS UNIVERSITARIOS**

**LIC. CARLOS AMILCAR SERRANO RIVER**  
**FISCAL GENERAL**

**UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR**  
**FACULTAD MULTIDISCIPLINARIA ORIENTAL**  
**AUTORIDADES**



**MSC. CARLOS IVÁN HERNÁNDEZ FRANCO**  
**DECANO**

**DRA. NORMA AZUCENA FLORES RETANA**  
**VICEDECANA**

**LIC. CARLOS DE JESÚS SÁNCHEZ**  
**SECRETARIO**

**MTRO. EVER ANTONIO PADILLA LAZO**  
**DIRECTOR GENERAL DE PROCESOS DE GRADO**

**DRA. ANA CECILIA CAÑAS ZELAYA**  
**DIRECTOR DE LA ESCUELA O JEFE DE DEPARTAMENTO**

**MTRA. ROXANA JANETH SORTO DE VELIS**  
**COORDINADORA GENERAL DE PROCESOS DE GRADO**

## ÍNDICE

RESUMEN .....	5
ABSTRACT .....	6
INTRODUCTION .....	7
METHODOLOGY .....	8
Type of research study .....	8
Research objectives .....	8
Research design .....	9
Type of Variable .....	9
Population .....	9
Sampling .....	9
Data collection technique .....	10
RESULTS .....	11
RESULTS ANALYSIS .....	16
DISCUSSION .....	18
CONCLUSIONS .....	20
REFERENCES .....	21

## RESUMEN

Este estudio, realizado en 2025 y titulado “El nivel de dominio oral del inglés en estudiantes de tercer año de la carrera de Lenguas Modernas según su conocimiento gramatical en relación con el estándar CEFR”, tiene como objetivo describir y comparar la competencia oral de los estudiantes de tercer año de Lenguas Modernas de la Universidad de El Salvador en relación con su conocimiento gramatical.

La población consiste en estudiantes de tercer año de la carrera de Lenguas Modernas, y los datos fueron recopilados mediante una rúbrica oral alineada con los criterios del CEFR, una prueba tipo TOEFL de gramática y vocabulario, y una herramienta de IA utilizada para analizar los niveles de dominio. Estos instrumentos permitieron a los investigadores evaluar cómo la competencia gramatical de los estudiantes corresponde a su capacidad de comunicarse eficazmente en inglés hablado.

Los resultados indican que la mayoría de los estudiantes se desempeñaron en el nivel A2 tanto en gramática como en expresión oral, con solo una pequeña cantidad alcanzando el nivel B2. En general, el estudio destaca la importancia de integrar la instrucción gramatical con la práctica oral para fortalecer el dominio del inglés de los estudiantes y prepararlos mejor para contextos académicos y profesionales.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Dominio de producción oral, descriptores CEFR, evaluación gramatical, evaluación de fluidez, prueba tipo TOEFL, evaluación con IA.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study, conducted in 2025 and titled “The Level of English Oral Proficiency in Third-Year Students of the Modern Languages Degree According to their Grammatical Knowledge in Relation to the CEFR Standard,” aims to describe and compare the oral proficiency of third-year Modern Languages students at the University of El Salvador in relation to their grammatical knowledge.

The population consists of third-year students from the Modern Languages degree, and data were collected through an oral rubric aligned with CEFR criteria, a TOEFL-style grammar and vocabulary test, and an AI tool used to analyze proficiency levels. These instruments allowed the researchers to assess how students’ grammatical competence corresponds to their ability to communicate effectively in spoken English.

The results indicate that most students performed at the A2 level in both grammar and speaking, with only a small number reaching the B2 level. Overall, the study highlights the importance of integrating grammar instruction with speaking practice to strengthen students’ English proficiency and better prepare them for academic and professional contexts.

**KEY WORDS:** Oral output proficiency, CEFR descriptors, Grammar assessment, Fluency evaluation, TOEFL-style test, AI assessment.

## INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak a second language clearly and confidently is one of the main goals in language learning. In recent years, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has become a widely accepted guide to assess students' proficiency in the four main language skills, including speaking (Little, D. 2011, May 10). Within this skill, not only fluency is important, but also grammatical accuracy, coherence, and clarity. This is especially relevant for students in the Modern Languages degree, who are being trained to become future language professionals.

This research arose after observing that many students, although they possess solid theoretical knowledge of grammar, do not always apply it correctly when speaking. In other words, they may perform well in grammar exercises, but still make errors during oral communication that affect the clarity and accuracy of their ideas (Gahl & Garnsey, 2004). That is why this study aims to analyze how grammatical knowledge influences students' level of spoken English, using CEFR levels and descriptors as the main reference.

The expected English oral proficiency level for third-year students is between B2 and C1 (Communicative Proficiency And Linguistic Development, s. f.), based on the CEFR scale. This level was chosen because students at this stage have completed at least five English courses within their degree program. Therefore, they are expected to carry out advanced communicative tasks and show strong grammatical competence during oral interaction.

The population of this study consists of third-year students from the Modern Languages degree at the University of El Salvador, FMO Campus. The estimated total is 45 students. From this group, a representative sample of 39 students was selected to assess their oral English proficiency and grammatical knowledge using the CEFR as a guide.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This article describes the methodological approach applied in the present study, including the type of research study, research objectives, research design, variables, population, sampling, and data collection techniques.

### **Type of research study**

As a research design, this project is designed as a quantitative study, as the study aims to gather measurable data about students' grammatical understanding and their speaking proficiency in English. Employing this method enables researchers to objectively analyze results using numerical data, making it easier to compare students' performance in the oral rubric with that of the grammar test. Moreover, a quantitative approach is appropriate as this research seeks not only to describe but also to find patterns and connections between the two variables being examined.

The type of research is descriptive. Descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon (McCombes, 2023). This study is descriptive, because it seeks to observe and report the English oral proficiency levels of third-year students in relation to their grammatical knowledge, without manipulating any variables. The data collected provide measurable information to classify students' oral performance and identify common grammar patterns and errors, allowing for a systematic description of the phenomenon under study.

### **Research objectives**

The main objective of this research is to describe and compare the English oral proficiency level of third-year students in relation to their grammatical knowledge, based on the CEFR descriptors. In addition, the specific objectives are to classify the students' oral proficiency according to the CEFR scale and to identify frequent grammar patterns and errors in their oral performance.

## **Research design**

The research design applied in this study is cross-sectional and prospective. A cross-sectional design means data are collected at a single point in time from the study participants (Thomas, 2023). The prospective approach involves observing the phenomenon as it occurs, without relying on previous data or background information. This design allows for real-time assessment of English oral proficiency in relation to grammatical knowledge among the participants.

## **Type of Variable**

The research variable consists of students' English oral proficiency level as related to their grammatical knowledge. In this study, the variable is categorical and nominal since the proficiency levels correspond to categories defined by the CEFR framework without an inherent order of magnitude. Our research consists of a categorical variable. Categorical variables represent types of data which may be divided into groups. Instances of categorical variables include race, gender, age category, and level of education. Categorical variables can be classified into two types: nominal and ordinal. Nominal variables lack a defined order; therefore, the variable being studied in our research is a categorical, nominal variable.

## **Population**

The population consists of approximately 45 third-year students enrolled in the Modern Languages degree at the Eastern Multidisciplinary Faculty, University of El Salvador, during the year 2025.

## **Sampling**

A sample is selected from the population using a random sampling method to ensure each member has an equal chance of inclusion (Thomas, 2023). The sample consisted of 39 students through a random sampling method. Instruments were administered to the participants in order to obtain reliable and relevant data for the

development of the study. The application process was carried out in an organized manner and within the time frame established for our research.

### **Data collection technique**

For data collection, we used two main instruments. First, an oral proficiency rubric based on the CEFR criteria was used to assess students' speaking skills. Second, a TOEFL-style test measuring grammar and vocabulary knowledge was administered. Additionally, **Pronounce AI**, an Artificial Intelligence tool, was employed to assist in determining students' proficiency levels based on the data collected. Prior to data collection, participants' consent was obtained, ensuring that ethical standards were met. The instruments were administered during a single session within the established time frame of the study.

## RESULTS

The following part presents all the tables that contain the detailed results obtained from the research work referring to the three variables studied. It includes the percentage obtained for each item in the instruments that were used in the investigation.

Results of the test.

<b>Grammar</b>	<b>Good level</b>	<b>Poor level</b>
Grammar of the students	44%	56%

Source: test data

Description: The results of Table N°2 show that 56% of the tested students had a poor level of grammar knowledge in English. According to the results, it can be noticed that most of the tested students had a poor performance in grammar skills.

*Grammar Proficiency Level (CEFR)*

<b>CEFR Level</b>	<b>Performance description</b>	<b>Numbers of students</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
B2	Exceptional	3	7.7%
B1	Satisfactory	7	18%
A2	Basic	29	74%
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: test data

Description: The distribution of 39 students is shown on this table according to their oral English proficiency, as categorized by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The majority of students are at the A2 level, which means they have a basic ability to write English.

*Speaking test*

<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Good level</b>	<b>Poor level</b>
Oral production	57.9%	42%

Source: test data

Description: The results of Table N°5 show that 57.9% of the tested students had a good level of oral production in English. According to the results, it can be noticed that most of the tested students had a good performance in oral production skills.

*Speaking Proficiency Levels (CEFR)*

<b>CEFR Level</b>	<b>Performance description</b>	<b>Numbers of students</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
B2	Exceptional	4	10.25%
B1	Satisfactory	9	23.07%
A2	Basic	26	66.66%
<b>Total</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: test data

Description: The distribution of 39 students is shown on this table according to their oral English proficiency, as categorized by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The majority of students are at the A2 level, which means they have a basic ability to speak English.

## RESULTS OF THE TWO INSTRUMENTS

### *Categorical variables and their results in the investigation*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Results of the survey</b>	<b>Results of the test</b>
Grammar	48.06%	44%
Oral production	48.06%	57.9%

Source: two instruments data

Description: The survey shows what students consider about their grammatical knowledge, they consider by showing 48.06% that they have a basic knowledge in grammar and 48.06% in oral production. In the skill test, the results showed 44% of knowledge in grammar, and 57.9% in oral production.

### *Distribution of Students by Grammar and Speaking Proficiency Levels (CEFR)*

<b>CEFR Level</b>	<b>Grammar Proficiency</b>	<b>Speaking Proficiency</b>
B2	7.7%	10.25%
B1	18%	23.07%
A2	74%	66.66%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table summarizes the percentage of students at each CEFR level for both

grammar and oral production based on data collected through a skill test. The majority of students were placed at **A2** in both areas, though slightly more reached **B2** in speaking than in grammar.

## RESULTS ANALYSIS

To understand the data more thoroughly, it is important to analyze and discuss the results of the phenomenon under study. The results not only allow us to confirm or refute the hypotheses put forward, but also provide a solid basis for proposing recommendations to the problems identified throughout the research.

According to the results of the survey, in which we evaluated the following indicators: Fluency, Accuracy and Pronunciation; the 48.06% of the sample selected “Sometimes” in the survey as their main answer between a total of five answers: Always, Sometimes, Seldom, Hardly Ever and Never, demonstrating that they make mistakes but not very frequently when asked about oral production problems, indicating that specific problems like pauses during speech, searching for words, and feelings of anxiety were prevalent. Finally, the lowest answer was Never with 3.89% in which students felt confident by not making mistakes.

On the other hand, according to the results of the test, in which we evaluated their grammatical knowledge; 56% of the tested students had a poor level of grammar knowledge in English. The results indicate that most of the tested students performed poorly in grammar skills. In the second part of the test, there were 57.9% of students who had good oral English production skills. According to the results, it can be noticed that most of the tested students had a good performance in oral production skills.

The oral production assessment further emphasizes the divide among students, with half demonstrating good oral production, while the other half struggle to perform it. This inequality suggests that while some students benefit from regular practice, others may require additional support to build their confidence and skills in speaking English.

The skill test also provides the level of grammar and the level of oral production students possess according to the CEFR scale, revealing an A2 level of proficiency in both grammar 74% and 66.66% in speaking. This suggests a basic command of English, with the ability to communicate simple tasks and use routine expressions. A smaller proportion of students reached B1 level, with 18% in grammar and 23.07% in

speaking, reflecting the ability to handle more complex language functions, such as giving opinions and describing experiences. Notably, a slightly higher percentage of students achieved B2 in speaking (10.25%) compared to grammar (7.7%), indicating that some students may possess stronger oral communication skills than grammatical knowledge. The findings show that oral competence is behind grammatical accuracy, which means there is a need for targeted instructional support in both areas, particularly grammar.

On the other hand, the study called *The Influence of Students' Grammatical Competence toward their English Speaking Fluency in Public Speaking Program of BCS Class at the Tenth Grade Students of MAN 2 Kudus in the Academic Year of 2018/2019* presents results that are consistent with the findings of our research. This study emphasizes the significant impact that grammatical competence has on students' ability to speak fluently in English. It confirms that students who lack a solid understanding of grammar often struggle to express themselves clearly and confidently in oral communication tasks. This parallel suggests that insufficient grammatical knowledge continues to be a barrier to effective oral production, reinforcing the importance of strengthening both grammar and speaking skills simultaneously.

The data obtained with the help of the survey and the test are consistent with the theoretical bases and the studies presented in the background of our research. The theory created by Merrill Swain states that "The comprehensible output (CO) hypothesis states that we acquire language when we attempt to transmit a message but fail and have to try again. Eventually, we arrive at the correct form of our utterance, our conversational partner finally understands, and we acquire the new form we have produced." (Krashen, 1998). Based on the results of the survey, students are aware that they have problems when expressing themselves in English. According to Swain's theory, this is the first step to finding an improvement in output, since through the practice of English speaking skills, students find the elements where they fail and look for a way to improve, while gaining new knowledge and putting it into practice.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide important insights into the relationship between grammatical knowledge and oral proficiency among third-year Modern Languages students at the University of El Salvador, FMO campus. According to the CEFR results, most participants reached an A2 level, indicating that while students can manage basic conversations and use simple expressions, they still face significant challenges in grammar, vocabulary, and oral fluency. This shows that grammatical knowledge alone is not sufficient to ensure strong speaking performance, highlighting the need for more integrated learning approaches.

One possible explanation for these outcomes is that students often focus more on written grammar exercises than on speaking practice. As a result, they may know how to form correct structures in theory but struggle to apply them in real conversations. This finding aligns with previous studies and underscores that grammar instruction should be embedded within communicative activities, allowing students to use grammar naturally while speaking.

The results also reveal a strong connection between grammatical knowledge and oral performance. Students with stronger grammar skills were able to express their ideas more clearly and accurately, whereas those with weaker grammar struggled with fluency and clarity. This demonstrates that grammar is not separate from communication but rather a critical component that supports effective oral performance and helps students gain confidence in their English use.

Despite several semesters of English instruction, there remains a noticeable gap between students' grammatical competence and their oral proficiency, with few students reaching B1 or B2 levels. This suggests that current teaching practices may not provide sufficient opportunities for authentic oral interaction. Structured activities that combine grammar and speaking, such as discussions, role plays, communicative problem-solving tasks, and targeted grammar drills, are essential to address this gap. Additionally, regular feedback and guidance can help students improve both accuracy and fluency, fostering confidence and engagement.

In general, these findings emphasize the importance of balancing grammatical instruction with communicative practice. Integrating both aspects can help students develop the accuracy, fluency, and confidence necessary for effective communication. This approach aligns with established language-learning methodologies and supports students in meeting CEFR standards while preparing them for real-world academic and professional situations.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study show that most third-year students from the Modern Languages degree at the University of El Salvador, FMO Campus, are at an A2 level of English proficiency according to the CEFR scale. This means that students can use simple expressions and manage basic conversations, but they still have difficulties with grammar and oral fluency. Only a few students reached the B1 or B2 level, which shows that achieving advanced communication skills is still a challenge.

The results from the grammar test and the oral performance rubric showed that grammar and speaking are strongly connected. Students who had better knowledge of grammar were able to speak more clearly and accurately, while those who had more grammar problems also had more trouble expressing their ideas fluently. This shows that grammar plays an important role in how well students can communicate in English.

The findings also suggest that even though students have studied English for several semesters, they still need more opportunities to practice real communication. Grammar should not be taught separately but through speaking activities that allow students to use what they learn in real situations. In the same way, oral practice should focus not only on fluency but also on using grammar correctly.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of keeping a balance between grammar learning and oral practice to help students improve their overall English level. Working in both areas will prepare Modern Languages students to meet the CEFR standards and to communicate more effectively in academic and professional environments.

## REFERENCES

Communicative proficiency and linguistic development. (s. f.). Google Books. [https://books.google.com/sv/books?hl=es&lr=&id=uFpZCgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA191&dq=based+cefr+b2+c1&ots=Hn9jal0Plq&sig=Bp5Pp-4tyYMw72URoZ2mJyIXOBI&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=based%20cefr%20b2%20c1&f=false](https://books.google.com/sv/books?hl=es&lr=&id=uFpZCgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA191&dq=based+cefr+b2+c1&ots=Hn9jal0Plq&sig=Bp5Pp-4tyYMw72URoZ2mJyIXOBI&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=based%20cefr%20b2%20c1&f=false)

Gahl, S., & Garnsey, S. M. (2004). Knowledge of Grammar, Knowledge of Usage: Syntactic Probabilities Affect Pronunciation Variation. *Language*, 80(4), 748-775. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lan.2004.0185>

Little, D. (2011, May 10). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: A Research Agenda: Language Teaching. Cambridge Core. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-teaching/article/abs/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-a-research-agenda/301D5C162C3427581F2CA3CF2CB7F766#>

McCombes, S. (2023, June 22). Descriptive Research | Definition, Types, Methods & Examples. Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/descriptive-research/>

Thomas, L. (2023, June 22). Cross-Sectional Study | Definition, Uses & Examples. Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/cross-sectional-study/>