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Table of Contents

Resumen

Este estudio cualitativo examina la aplicación de estrategias de aprendizaje activo en la enseñanza de los idiomas inglés y francés en la Facultad Multidisciplinaria Oriental de la Universidad de El Salvador. Mediante un proceso de triangulación que integró entrevistas semiestructuradas a docentes, encuestas a estudiantes y análisis documental de los programas de estudio se analizó cómo los profesores emplean dichas estrategias en la práctica y qué tipos predominan dentro de los cursos universitarios. Los resultados evidencian una sólida presencia de estrategias basadas en la interacción y las tareas, como el Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), el Task-Based Learning (TBL) y el Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Sin embargo, se identificó una menor sistematicidad en las estrategias colaborativas y un uso limitado de herramientas digitales, cuya incorporación depende de la iniciativa personal de los docentes más que de políticas institucionales. Se concluye que el aprendizaje activo constituye el eje metodológico de los programas, aunque su implementación es desigual y requiere fortalecimiento en el ámbito tecnológico y colaborativo.

Palabras clave: *Estrategias de aprendizaje activo, enseñanza de idiomas, aprendizaje colaborativo, TBL, CLIL, CLT, educación superior, triangulación cualitativa, estudio de caso, enseñanza del francés, enseñanza del inglés.*

Abstract

This qualitative study explores the implementation of active learning strategies in English and French language instruction at the Facultad Multidisciplinaria Oriental, University of El Salvador. Through a triangulation of semi-structured interviews, student surveys, and syllabus analysis, the research examined how instructors employ active methodologies in practice and which types of strategies are most prevalent in the university context. Findings revealed strong alignment in the use of interaction and task-based strategies particularly Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Learning (TBL), and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). However, less structured use of collaborative techniques and limited incorporation of digital tools were observed, indicating that technology integration relies more on teacher initiative than institutional policy. Overall, active learning represents a central pedagogical foundation in language instruction, though its implementation remains uneven across courses. Strengthening teacher training in ICT and fostering collaborative pedagogical innovation are recommended to achieve greater consistency and impact.

Keywords: *Active learning strategies, language teaching, CLT, TBL, CLIL, higher education, qualitative triangulation.*

Introduction

In the evolving landscape of higher education, language teaching increasingly emphasizes methodologies that engage learners through participation, collaboration, and reflection. Traditional teacher-centered instruction, focused mainly on transmission of content, has gradually given way to learner-centered approaches grounded in constructivism and communicative pedagogy (Vygotsky, 1978; Bonwell & Eison, 1991). These approaches collectively known as active learning encourage students to become active participants in their own learning through dialogue, problem-solving, and authentic use of language.

Within this framework, active learning strategies such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Learning (TBL), and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) have proven particularly effective in language education (Savignon, 1997; Willis, 2007; Marsh, 1994). They promote the development of communicative competence and linguistic accuracy while fostering critical thinking and learner autonomy. Furthermore, collaborative activities and digital tools expand opportunities for interaction beyond the classroom, aligning language instruction with contemporary educational and technological demands.

Despite this theoretical consensus, the degree to which such strategies are applied in Latin American universities, especially within bilingual or multilingual programs, remains underexplored. In El Salvador, the Bachelor's Degree in Modern Languages, offered by the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences at the University of El Salvador, promotes the use of active learning methodologies in English and French instruction. However, empirical evidence on how these strategies are implemented, perceived, and aligned with curricular goals has been scarce.

This study addresses that gap by analyzing the use of active learning strategies in English and French instruction at the Facultad Multidisciplinaria Oriental. Through qualitative triangulation combining teacher interviews, student surveys, and syllabus analysis, the research examines how instructors perform and adapt active learning strategies in classroom practice, as well as which types of strategies predominate

across language courses and how they align with curricular design. By integrating multiple perspectives, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the methodological landscape of language instruction and highlights the balance and imbalance between communicative, collaborative, task-based, and technology-enhanced strategies.

Ultimately, the findings contribute to ongoing discussions about pedagogical innovation and professional development in higher education, offering insights into how active learning can be sustained, strengthened, and adapted within the Salvadoran context and similar multilingual university settings.

Literature Review

Active learning, far from being a mere pedagogical technique, represents a paradigm shift in higher education, grounded in decades of research on how individuals construct knowledge most effectively. This chapter explores the academic literature that underpins the present study. First, it addresses the theoretical foundations that define active learning, with special emphasis on social constructivism, communicative language teaching, and pedagogical content knowledge. Next, it examines how these principles are specifically applied in the context of second language acquisition. Subsequently, it analyzes previous studies that have investigated the implementation of these methodologies, identifying the most common barriers and facilitators. Finally, this review culminates in the identification of a knowledge gap in the literature, justifying the need and relevance of the present study in the context of higher education in El Salvador.

1. Theoretical Foundations of Active Learning

The concept of active learning is based on the premise that learning is an inherently constructive process, not merely a receptive one. As Bonwell and Eison (1991) state in their seminal work, active learning strategies are "instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing" (p. 9). This approach draws from several fundamental theoretical currents.

Social Constructivism, posited by Lev Vygotsky (1978), is perhaps the most important pillar. Vygotsky argued that knowledge is not transmitted, but is co-constructed through social interaction. His concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) the space between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with the guidance of a more capable peer or instructor, is the theoretical basis for strategies such as collaborative work, debates, and group projects. In these activities, students negotiate meanings, provide mutual scaffolding, and achieve levels of understanding that would be unattainable individually.

In the specific field of language teaching, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), developed by theorists like Savignon (1997), materializes the principles of active learning. CLT shifts the focus from grammatical correction to communicative competence, that is, the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in real contexts. This approach prioritizes authentic interaction, negotiation of meaning, and the use of meaningful tasks (such as role-playing or simulations) where language is a vehicle to achieve an end, not an object of isolated study.

Finally, Lee Shulman's (1986) concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) explains how effective teachers translate their subject mastery into classroom practices. PCK is the knowledge that allows a teacher to select the most appropriate strategy (for example, a debate instead of a mechanical drill) for a specific learning objective and for a particular group of students. A well-developed PCK is what enables teachers to design and implement active learning activities that are truly effective and not merely "entertaining."

Active learning strategies have proven effective in enhancing communicative competence, collaboration, and learner autonomy in language education. Approaches such as Think–Pair–Share, CLT oral performance, debates, collaborative projects, roleplay, digital tools, Task-Based Learning, and CLIL promote meaningful language use and student engagement. By shifting the focus to learner-centered interaction, these strategies strengthen productive skills especially speaking and writing while fostering critical thinking and authentic communication.

1. **Think–Pair–Share (TPS)** is a cooperative learning technique that encourages learners to first reflect individually on a prompt, then exchange ideas with a partner, and finally share their conclusions with the whole class (Lyman, 1981). This strategy fosters critical thinking, confidence, and gradual engagement in oral interaction, making it particularly effective for developing speaking and reasoning skills.

2. **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)** prioritizes the use of language for meaningful communication rather than the mere acquisition of grammatical structures (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Within CLT, oral performance tasks such as discussions,

interviews, and presentations provide opportunities for learners to practice authentic language use and to develop fluency and communicative competence.

3. **Debates** serve as structured communicative events in which learners take opposing viewpoints on a topic and defend their positions using logical and linguistic resources. According to Krieger (2005), debates promote critical thinking, persuasive speaking, and the ability to listen and respond to counterarguments, thus enhancing interactional competence.

4. **Collaborative Projects** encourage learners to work in groups toward the completion of a shared goal, such as a presentation, report, or multimedia product. Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1998) note that such collaboration enhances social interaction, autonomy, and integrated language skills by combining cognitive and communicative engagement.

5. **Roleplay** provides learners with opportunities to simulate real-life scenarios, fostering empathy, adaptability, and spontaneous use of the target language. As Livingstone (1983) suggests, roleplay helps learners bridge classroom practice and authentic communication contexts.

6. **Digital Tools** have become increasingly relevant in promoting interaction and motivation in language learning. The integration of technology such as learning management systems, gamified applications, and digital collaboration platforms supports differentiated instruction and multimodal communication (Hockly, 2013).

7. **Task-Based Learning (TBL)** focuses on the completion of meaningful tasks that reflect real-world language use (Ellis, 2003). Through task performance, learners engage in problem-solving, negotiation of meaning, and contextualized grammar learning, leading to greater fluency and communicative competence.

8. **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)** combines subject content with language learning, promoting cognitive engagement and the use of language as a tool for acquiring knowledge (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). When oriented toward productive skills of speaking and writing, CLIL encourages learners to express complex ideas and develop both linguistic accuracy and academic discourse.

2. Implementation, Barriers, and Facilitators of Active Learning

The academic literature on the implementation of active learning is extensive and reveals a consistent pattern of benefits as well as recurring challenges. Case studies conducted at various universities worldwide confirm that the adoption of these methodologies is associated with greater student engagement, better development of critical thinking, and deeper long-term knowledge retention (Freeman et al., 2014). In the context of language teaching, research has shown that increased interaction time and authentic language use in the classroom directly correlate with greater fluency and confidence among students (Swain, 2000).

However, implementation is not without its barriers. The most cited in the literature is resistance, from both students and teachers. Students, accustomed to a passive role, may feel uncomfortable or anxious when required to participate actively, perceiving it as additional work or a lack of direct "teaching" from the professor (Seidel & Tanner, 2013). For their part, teachers often cite a lack of time both to prepare complex activities and to cover the entire curriculum content as a major obstacle. The lack of adequate resources and classroom infrastructure (e.g., rooms with fixed chairs that hinder group work) are also significant structural barriers.

On the other hand, key facilitators for successful adoption include strong institutional support, manifested in professional development programs and the valuation of pedagogical innovation. The existence of a collaborative culture among teachers, such as "Communities of Practice," has proven to be a powerful catalyst, allowing professors to share resources, solve problems, and mitigate the feeling of isolation that often accompanies innovation (Wenger, 1998).

3. Identification of the Research Gap

Despite the robust theoretical basis and the considerable number of implementation studies globally, a review of the literature reveals a notable scarcity of empirical research on the adoption of active learning strategies in the specific context of higher education in Central America, and more specifically, in El Salvador. Most existing

studies have been conducted in North American, European, or Asian contexts, whose institutional, cultural, and resource conditions may differ significantly from the realities of a public university in the region.

It is not fully understood how language teachers in this particular context adapt, reinterpret, and apply the principles of active learning, nor what specific barriers and facilitators they face. Are a lack of time and student resistance the main challenges, or are there more pressing contextual factors? How is technology integrated in an environment with potential resource limitations?

This study, therefore, seeks to fill this geographical and contextual gap. By conducting a qualitative case study at the Eastern Multidisciplinary Faculty of the University of El Salvador, this research aims to provide an empirical and in-depth view of existing pedagogical practices. The findings will not only contribute valuable and contextualized data to the academic literature but will also offer an evidence base for pedagogical and administrative decision-making within the institution itself.

This qualitative case study addressed this gap by investigating active learning strategy implementation in French and English language instruction at the Facultad Multidisciplinaria Oriental, University of El Salvador. Specifically, the research examined how and why language instructors integrate active learning approaches, what strategies predominate, and how students and faculty perceive their effectiveness.

The following research question guided the inquiry: *How and why do English and French professors at the University of El Salvador use active learning strategies in their language instruction?*

Methodology

This investigation employed a qualitative case study design, selected for its capacity to examine contemporary phenomena holistically within authentic contexts (Yin, 2009). The case study approach enabled deep exploration of active learning strategy implementation across multiple data sources, facilitating rich description and interpretation of pedagogical practices in French and English classrooms at the Facultad Multidisciplinaria Oriental.

An interpretive paradigm framed the research, prioritizing participants' lived experiences and the meanings they construct (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake, 1995). This approach proved essential for capturing instructors' subjective realities, including their pedagogical philosophies, decision-making processes, and reflections on teaching practice.

Participants

The study population comprised 10 language instructors teaching in the Bachelor's Degree in Modern Languages program and all enrolled students. Non-probability convenience sampling yielded five instructor participants (three French specialists, two English specialists) who were available and willing to participate. The student sample consisted of 54 volunteers from various program levels who responded to survey invitations.

Ethical Considerations

The study received approval from the head of the CCHH department to review teachers’ programs and the teachers’ authorization to be interviewed. All participants provided informed consent after receiving detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. Participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained through pseudonyms and secure data storage.

Data Collection Instruments

Data triangulation employed three techniques and instruments :

1. **Interviews.** An interview schedule protocol explored instructors' teaching philosophies, specific active learning strategies employed, technology integration approaches, assessment methods, and perceived implementation barriers. Interviews lasted 45-60 minutes, were audio-recorded with permission, and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

2. **Student surveys:** A closed ended questionnaire including Likert-scale items. The instrument assessed students' perceptions of active learning strategy frequency, effectiveness, and impact on motivation and learning outcomes. Surveys were administered electronically, ensuring anonymity.

3. **Document analysis:** The syllabi and course plans for French and English subjects were collected and analyzed by a checklist. This analysis aimed to corroborate the information obtained from the interviews and to verify the alignment between formal curricular planning and the classroom practices reported.

Data Analysis

Inductive thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. Interview transcripts were coded systematically to identify emergent themes and patterns. Survey data underwent descriptive statistical analysis for closed-ended items, while open-ended responses were thematically coded. Document analysis employed content matrices conducted using a checklist of objectives and planned activities with interview and survey data. Finally, interpretive synthesis across all three data sources enabled comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Results

Triangulation of Active Learning Strategies between Teachers, Students, and Syllabi

Category	Active Learning Strategy	Teachers (Interviews)	Students (Surveys, n=54)	Syllabi (Documents)	Interpretation / Coherence
Interaction-based	**1. Think–Pair–Share**	•Promote individual reflection, pair discussions, and whole-class synthesis. • Encourage critical thinking and oral participation.	• Always: 11.1% • Usually: 31.5% •Sometimes:44.4% • Never: 13%	•Discussion groups, reflective reading, and topic analysis.	**High level of coherence** — strategy regularly used, aligned with communicative principles.

Interaction-based	**2. CLT – Oral Performance**	• Consistent use of oral presentations and class discussions. • Emphasize pronunciation, fluency, and ongoing feedback.	• Always: 20.3% •Usually: 38.9% •Sometimes:37.0% •Never: 3.8%	•Activities: micro teachings, oral presentations, exposes.	**High level of coherence** — central approach in both language programs.
Interaction-based	**3.Debates**	• Encourage analysis, argumentation, and respect for diverse perspectives . • Applied gradually depending on level.	• Always: 5.6% •Usually: 40.7% •Sometimes:44.4% • Never: 9.3%	• Text analysis and discussion groups mentioned in syllabi.	**High level of coherence** — debate fosters critical thinking and communicative competence.

Collaboration-based	**4. Collaborative Projects**	• Use group research, presentations, and digital projects. • Evaluate participation and teamwork roles.	• Always: 7.4% •Usually 42.6% •Sometimes:37.0% • Never: 12.9%	• Activities such as group work, problem-solving, cultural projects.	**High level of coherence** — consistent with constructivist and cooperative learning.
Collaboration-based	**5. Role-Play**	• Applied in beginner and intermediate levels. • Enhances motivation, fluency, and confidence. • Often used in realistic scenarios.	• Always: 16.7% • Usually: 42.6% • Sometimes:33.3% • Never: 7.4%	• simulations and situational dialogues.	**High level of coherence** — effective strategy to encourage participation and engagement.

Technology-enhanced	**6. Digital Tools** (Kahoot, Quizlet, etc.)	• Uneven implementation among teachers. • Used mainly for motivation, review, and feedback.	• Usually: 38.9% • Sometimes: 37.0%	• English syllabi: digital materials design. • French syllabi: limited digital references.	**Medium level of coherence** -ICT use depends on teacher initiative; weak curricular presence.
Task- and content-based	**7. Task-Based Learning (TBL)**	• Employ authentic materials and communicative tasks (songs, readings, audios). • Promote autonomy and comprehension.	•Usually: 48.1% •Sometimes: 31.5% •	• Task-based syllabus, listening/reading activities.	**High level of coherence**- systematic implementation of task-based methodology.

Task-and content-based	**8. CLIL / Productive Skills** (Speaking & Writing)	• Promote meaningful oral and written production. • Evaluate through essays, presentations, and portfolios.	• Always: 37.0% • Usually: 25.9% •Sometimes: 35.2% •	• Activities: essays, oral reports, written compositions.	**High level of coherence** — strong integration of content and language learning.

Active Learning Strategies: Frequency and Implementation Patterns

Analysis of the triangulated data revealed clear patterns regarding the frequency and implementation of active learning strategies across English and French language instruction at the University of El Salvador. Student survey data indicated that most strategies are applied usually or sometimes, suggesting a moderate-to-high level of implementation across the program. Interaction-based and collaboration-based strategies emerged as the most dominant and consistently practiced forms of active learning, while technology-enhanced strategies showed more variability.

Among interaction-based strategies, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and oral performance activities reported the highest consistency between teachers, students, and syllabi. Approximately 59.2% of students (Always + Usually) confirmed regular oral participation, aligned with instructors' reports emphasizing pronunciation, fluency, and classroom discussions.

Similarly, Debates and Think–Pair–Share activities reflected strong alignment, though at slightly lower frequencies only about one-third of students reported "always"

engaging in them, indicating that while communicative activities are integral, their structured use still depends on each instructor.

Collaboration-based strategies, particularly Role-Play and Collaborative Projects, demonstrated a solid presence in classroom practice. Around 59% of students reported engaging “usually or always” in role-play activities, confirming instructors’ emphasis on realistic and motivational tasks that enhance confidence and oral fluency. Collaborative projects also scored high alignment, appearing frequently in both interviews and syllabi; however, survey data revealed that only 7.4% of students “always” participate, suggesting uneven implementation across different courses.

By contrast, the use of digital tools such as Kahoot, Quizlet, and Padlet presented the lowest coherence among the eight strategies. While 38.9% of students stated that they “usually” use digital tools and 37% reported “sometimes,” instructors described implementation as inconsistent and mostly limited to warm-up activities or vocabulary reviews. Documentary evidence confirmed this inconsistent syllabi for English mentioned digital materials design, whereas French syllabi contained minimal references to ICT. This suggests a medium level of coherence, with technology integration dependent largely on teacher initiative rather than institutional policy.

Finally, task- and content-based strategies, including Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), demonstrated the highest level of coherence across all three data sources. Teachers consistently reported using authentic materials and communicative tasks to develop receptive and productive skills. Student surveys supported these findings, with 48.1% indicating “usually” engaging in task-based activities and 37% reporting “always” participating in CLIL-related speaking or writing tasks. Both English and French syllabi confirmed these approaches through the inclusion of essays, oral reports, and reading/listening activities.

Taken together, these patterns show that active learning is a fundamental part of classroom practice, though not always applied with equal intensity across courses. The data suggest that instructors emphasize communicative and collaborative interaction, while digital and technologically enhanced methods remain underdeveloped.

Figure 1:

Frequency of Active Learning Strategies as Reported by Students

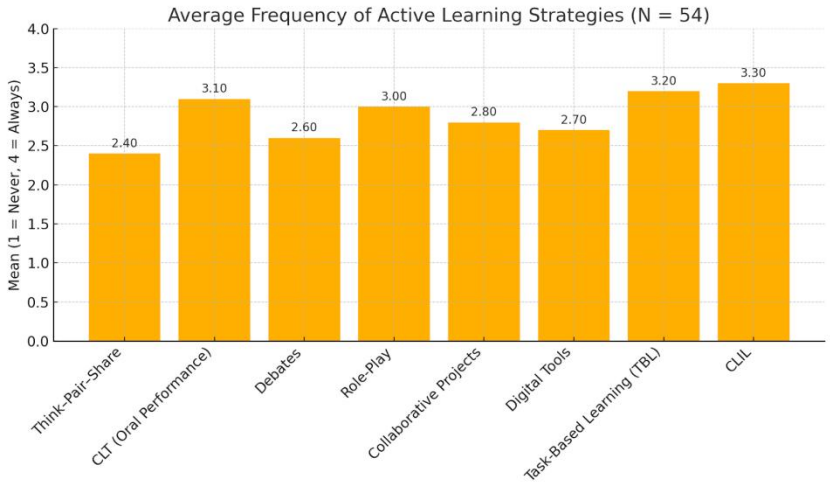

Table : 1

Interpretation of Active Learning Strategy Categories

Category	Strategies Included	Mean Range (1–4)	General Frequency Level
Interaction-based Strategies	Think–Pair–Share, CLT, Debates	2.4 – 3.1	Moderate-to-High
Collaboration-based Strategies	Role-Play, Collaborative Projects	3.0 – 2.8	Moderate

Task- and Content-based Strategies	Task-Based Learning (TBL), CLIL	3.2 – 3.3	High
Technology-enhanced Strategies	Digital Tools (Kahoot, Quizlet, etc.)	2.7	Moderate-to-Low

Instructor Perspectives: Pedagogical Philosophy and Practice

Interviews with English and French instructors provided deeper insight into how and why active learning strategies are used. Across both programs, teachers displayed a strong commitment to learner-centered pedagogy and reflected an understanding of active learning as an approach that promotes participation, reflection, and real communication.

Promoting critical thinking and synthesis:

Teachers described moving from surface-level comprehension to deeper analytical engagement. For instance, one instructor explained: “I no longer ask students to answer questions about a text; I ask them to create synthesis maps that show the relationships and contradictions among different readings.” This demonstrates how instructors use task-based and reflective approaches to develop students’ higher-order thinking skills.

Learning through collaboration:

Teachers emphasized the value of teamwork and peer interaction. One instructor noted: “In group projects, I evaluate not just the final product but also the process of who contributed, how they interacted, and how they solved problems together.” This

approach reflects social constructivist principles, positioning the classroom as a cooperative learning environment.

Gradual scaffolding of oral competence:

Particularly in the French program, instructors described adjusting the complexity of activities based on students' proficiency levels from dialogues and role-plays in beginner courses to debates and oral presentations in advanced ones.

This progression aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, showing that instructors scaffold learning according to learners' needs.

Technology as a complementary tool:

Although some professors creatively use digital tools such as Kahoot or Quizlet for formative assessment, others reported limited digital integration, citing lack of familiarity or infrastructure. One instructor mentioned: "I prefer to use WordReference or simple online resources; tools like Padlet or Edpuzzle are more for first-year students." This indicates that while teachers acknowledge the potential of technology, its use remains inconsistent across the department.

Syllabus: From Paper to Practice

The documentary analysis of syllabi largely supported the findings from interviews and surveys. Most syllabi explicitly mention debates, oral presentations, role-plays, and group projects as integral components of assessment and classroom practice. This demonstrates that active learning is institutionally recognized within the curriculum.

However, a closer comparison revealed a gap between curricular design and implementation frequency. While syllabi mandate communicative and collaborative methods, the student survey indicated that these activities, though frequent, are not systematic across all courses. The integration of technology was the most significant area of discrepancy; it is minimally represented in syllabi and inconsistently applied in classroom practice.

Overall, the triangulation between instructors, students, and syllabi confirms that active learning represents the pedagogical backbone of language instruction in the Modern Languages Program. Yet, its consistency and digital integration remain areas for continued professional development and institutional strengthening.

Table : 2

Teachers' Reported Practices in Active Learning Implementation

Informant	**Implementation Highlights**
Informant 1 (English)	• Focused on oral fluency and critical thinking. • Encouraged group interaction and participation. • Integrated reading and listening for skill balance.
Informant 2 (English)	• Promotes real-life contexts and cooperative learning. • Debates rarely used; prefers analytical reading. • Emphasizes continuous oral practice.
Informant 3 (French)	• Combines communicative and task-based approaches.

	• Focuses on pronunciation and oral confidence. • Encourages progressive autonomy in speaking.
Informant 4 (French)	• Encourages reflection and collaboration. • Uses digital tools to assess vocabulary and grammar interactively. • Creates a dynamic and supportive learning environment.
Informant 5 (French)	• Shifts from “teach-then-assess” to “assess-then-improve” model. • Uses technology for data-driven feedback and creativity. • Encourages self-assessment and autonomy through digital portfolios.

Table: 3

Reported Findings from Syllabi Regarding Active Learning Strategies

Category / Course Area	Findings Reported in English Syllabi	Findings Reported in French Syllabi
Interaction-Based Strategies (CLT, Think–Pair–Share, Debates)	• Explicitly mention communicative activities, oral discussions, and debates as part of class participation and assessment. • Continuous emphasis on oral performance and interactive tasks.	• Include oral expression and class discussion as evaluation components. • Less explicit mention of debates or structured communicative tasks.
Collaboration-Based Strategies (Role-Play, Group Projects)	• Group presentations and pair work mentioned as cooperative techniques. • Emphasis on peer interaction and classroom collaboration.	• Group work occasionally cited for cultural or linguistic projects. • Role-play is rarely stated explicitly.

Task & Content-Based Strategies (TBL, CLIL)	• Learning outcomes explicitly mention “use of authentic materials,” “content integration,” and “task performance.” • Tasks like essays, debates, oral reports, and project work appear as formal assessments.	• French syllabi include contextualized learning (e.g., literature analysis, oral expositions). • Integration between language and content is implicit rather than explicit.
Technology-Enhanced Strategies (Digital Tools, ICT)	• Occasional reference to digital resources or online materials. • No structured ICT integration framework.	• Minimal or no mention of technological tools. • Focus remains traditional (textbooks, oral/written exercises).

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that English and French instructors at the University of El Salvador employ a mixed model of active learning strategies, integrating communicative, collaborative, and task-based methods to foster interaction and linguistic development. This diversity of strategies reflects the instructors' awareness of the importance of student participation and meaning-focused language use.

Interaction-based strategies particularly Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Think–Pair–Share, and Debates emerged as central components of language instruction. Teachers' descriptions and syllabi evidence confirm that oral performance, pronunciation, and discussion are integral to course design. However, student data revealed that while participation is frequent, the structure and consistency of these activities vary across courses and instructors. This indicates that communicative interaction is a pedagogical norm, yet not always applied systematically.

Collaboration-based strategies, such as Role-Play and Collaborative Projects, also occupy a significant role in classroom practice. Teachers emphasized the motivational and affective benefits of teamwork, while syllabi included projects and group presentations as formal assessment tools. Still, the frequency of use reported by students suggests that collaborative work is present but uneven, possibly depending on course level, teacher preference, or time constraints.

Task- and content-based strategies, specifically Task-Based Learning (TBL) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), demonstrated the highest level of coherence among all sources. Instructors actively use authentic materials and communicative tasks to integrate content knowledge and language practice, reflecting a mature application of active learning theory. These strategies exemplify how professors guide learners toward meaningful language use through cognitive engagement and real-world relevance.

By contrast, technology-enhanced strategies showed the lowest coherence. Although some instructors use tools such as Kahoot or Quizlet to motivate students, their use remains inconsistent, mostly limited to review activities. Documentary analysis revealed that syllabi include only vague or minimal references to ICT, particularly in French courses. The lack of digital infrastructure and training appears to limit broader implementation. This gap highlights the need for institutional support and professional development in technology integration.

Overall, the triangulated data demonstrate that active learning is a pedagogical reality within the Modern Languages Program, yet its application varies in intensity and sophistication. The most consolidated approaches are task- and interaction-based, while collaborative and digital strategies remain secondary or optional. These results align with constructivist and communicative frameworks, confirming that teachers aim to make learning participatory, authentic, and student-centered.

Conclusions

English and French professors at the University of El Salvador use active learning strategies primarily to promote communicative competence, critical thinking, and learner autonomy. They apply them in different ways through discussions, debates, projects, and real-life tasks to make students active participants in their learning. The “how” is reflected in their use of varied, interactive techniques; the “why” stems from their goal of encouraging engagement, reflection, and practical language use.

The study confirms that active learning strategies are widely employed in both English and French instruction, serving as a foundation for teaching and assessment. However, their implementation level depends on instructor training, course objectives, and available resources. The findings highlight a strong pedagogical commitment to active learning but also reveal asymmetry between traditional and innovative practices, particularly regarding technology integration.

Instructors perform active learning through oral presentations, group discussions, and interactive projects. Students perceive these strategies as frequent and beneficial, though not always consistent across classes. Thus, active learning is effectively performed, but its depth and structure differ among instructors.

The triangulation allowed the classification of strategies into four main categories: Interaction-based strategies (Think–Pair–Share, CLT, Debates), Collaboration-based strategies (Role-Play, Projects), Task- and content-based strategies (TBL, CLIL), Technology-enhanced strategies (Digital Tools). Among these, task- and content-based strategies are the most consistently implemented, followed by interaction-based strategies, confirming that communicative and experiential learning dominate instruction. Technology-enhanced strategies show the lowest presence, reflecting institutional and methodological gaps.

Recommendations

For Teachers

- Integrate digital tools beyond motivational activities, using them for assessment, feedback, and content creation (e.g., Edpuzzle for comprehension tasks, Padlet for writing forums).
- Engage in continuous professional development focused on ICT integration, digital pedagogy, and blended learning design.

For the Institution

- Provide structured training programs and workshops on the use of digital platforms in language education.
- Update syllabi to include explicit guidelines for technology-enhanced and task-based methodologies, ensuring alignment between curriculum and practice.

For Future Research

- Conduct mixed-method or longitudinal studies to measure the long-term impact of active learning strategies on language proficiency.
- Explore students' perceptions of digital learning environments to better understand engagement and motivation factors.
- Compare the implementation of active learning across different universities or linguistic programs, identifying contextual variables that affect effectiveness.

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