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Lexical development and oral production in EFL adult evening students.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF GRAPHS

LIST OF TABLES

Introduction

In spite of all the improvements made to the Chilean educational system thus far, there are still weaknesses in certain areas which require some further consideration. As a matter of fact, according to an article published by a prestigious university in Chile, there is no desertion during primary education in this country. However, in secondary school the rate of abandonment is over 10 per cent. Therefore, it is interesting to know in detail the sort of students that belong to this type of education and how these students can cope with the Chilean educational system, in order to improve their actual performance in English as a foreign language. Consequently, the Chilean Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) has concentrated its efforts on developing many strategies for the English language, in order to create different ways to make English a means for students to receive culture.

Nowadays, adult education has gained a major importance, due to a lot of changes which are required in our country. Likewise, finishing secondary education has become a prime factor for students who have not yet finished it because students understand now that they may have better job opportunities, improve their cultural development, along with making up for social requirements which they lacked, let alone having the possibility to even contribute to the development of the country.

In addition, one of MINEDUC's aims is to develop and improve students' competence regarding the challenges our country has to face in an ever-changing globalized world. Hence, MINEDUC has granted a number of scholarships and has even carried out statistical tests to measure the level of English achieved by students in primary and secondary school, in order to reach international levels of bilingualism.

Due to this, English as a foreign language has taken a major relevance in the Chilean educational curriculum, by focusing on the four basic language skills (reading, speaking, listening, and writing), but giving more emphasis to the development of the so-called receptive skills: reading and listening. Consequently, this research study is addressed to developing and improving speaking and listening abilities. The improvement of these skills will be noticed -hopefully- after a training period performed by a teacher giving evening classes.

This teacher will be in charge of providing the input during every lesson and evaluating the students' performance by means of applying a pre and post-test. In sum, this research study intends to improve the oral production of students attending evening classes through the development of lexis.

The Research Problem

The problem arises as a way to improve the low level of oral production in the English language that evening students show at the moment of finishing secondary school, in comparison to those students who graduate from the regular system (daytime). Taking into consideration that neither students nor methodologies provided at both levels of education are the same, this research study will be carried out answering the following question:

Is there a relationship between vocabulary development and the oral production of English as a foreign language in students attending evening classes? That is to say, it is expected to improve students' oral production by increasing their vocabulary in the English language during a period of two months. Therefore, if students practice vocabulary and discriminate sounds, they will have a greater opportunity to make their speech proper and improve their oral production in direct proportion.

CHAPTER 1: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1.1 Adults' education

Regarding adult's education, every one of the statements written hereinafter belongs to MINEDUC. As MINEDUC states about adult's education:

"The modality of adult education offers to all young people and adults, the opportunity to begin or complete their primary and secondary education studies". (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers) Chilean government gives the opportunity to each citizen to complete or begin their studies, whether it is primary or secondary studies.

According to MINEDUC, one of the purposes of adult education *"is to help improve advancement opportunities for people towards a cultural, social and productive development of the country".* Among its main challenges are *"increasing the level of literacy in primary and secondary education, and also training the community, especially those belonging to the most vulnerable areas".* MINEDUC continues: *"In fact, there is a percentage of the Chilean population with incomplete schooling, who are interested in increasing their levels of knowledge and skills. Thus, they cope with working and their family life".* (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers) It is important to mention that most people without schooling come from vulnerable areas. On the other hand, there is a large amount of people interested in acquiring knowledge and improving their skills in order to have better job opportunities and be inserted

in Chilean society.

According to the Chilean Ministry of Education, this type of education is mainly addressed *"to people who have not finished their education, and do not hold any degree"*. The main goal of this type of program *"is to insert people in society by improving employment opportunities"*.

The Ministry of Education *"offers three alternatives to complete their studies: a) Adults Education, Regular Modality b) Adults Education, Flexible Modality and c) The Literacy Campaign "Contigo Aprendo" (Mineduc, 2011)* (translation by researchers). These three alternatives allow Chilean adults to be educated according to their possibilities and necessities.

This research study will be focused on the first modality of adults' education, which is the regular modality. According to the Ministry of education, *"adult education allows you to begin or complete primary education in 3 years and secondary humanistic-scientific education in 2 years"*. It continues to claim that this type of education *"is offered in educational institutions under the name 'CEIA' which stands for "Centros de Educación Integral de Adultos (Adults' Integral Education Centres), which operate during the day and also in schools and colleges located throughout the country, in evening sessions"*. In addition, adult education in regular modality *"offers to obtain a technical degree for secondary education, so that students can get a mid-level*

technical degree in three years". (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers)

Educational levels for adults and their equivalence with the regular primary and secondary education are the following:

Table 1: Secondary Education for Adults

Humanistic & Scientific Secondary Education	
Levels of education for adults	Equivalence
First level of secondary humanistic & scientific education	First and second grade of humanistic & scientific education
Second level of secondary humanistic & scientific education	Third and fourth grade of humanistic & scientific education

(Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers)

In this chart, you can see the equivalence between adults' education and regular (daytime) secondary education. Thus, the first level for adults' education represents the first and second grade for secondary education, whereas the second level for adults' education represents the third and fourth grade of secondary education.

1.1.1 The English subject in Chilean adults' education

In Chile, education is organised by a curriculum which is divided into plans, programs and a curricular framework. Specifically, English as a Foreign

Language is led and approached, with goals and steps in order to be learnt and taught systematically. Firstly, you have to know the meaning of these previously mentioned concepts:

1.1.2 Curricular Framework:

It is a document which: *"sets out the fundamental objectives for each year of study either in primary or secondary education".* To be precise, they are*: "the minimum compulsory contents which will facilitate the achievement of the objectives set".* (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers)

1.1.3 Study Program

"It offers a proposal to organise and direct the educational work of the school year". This proposal aims *"to promote the achievement of the Fundamental Objectives (FO) and the development of the Minimum Compulsory Contents (MCC) that define the curriculum framework".* The main components that make up the proposed program: *"are the expected learning outcomes corresponding to a learning specification to be achieved in order to reach the FO and MCC of the curriculum framework".* The second one is: *"a temporary organization of these learning into semesters and units".* And the last one is: *"a proposed assessment of the learning activities, which is presented as a suggestion". Such definitions are the main components of the study program.* (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers)

The study plans define the organization of each school level. *"They record the curricular activities which students must take and the minimum weekly time devoted to them".* (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers)

In the case of adults' education*, "it requires a flexible curriculum conception, corresponding to the needs of each sector of the population that this system serves".* Mainly: *"it refers to the different regions in which the country is divided and their particular situation".* It is also necessary, in this case *"to relate education with the working environment by providing students with knowledge and skills to increase their employment opportunities".* Consequently*: "educational matters will be linked to the labour market".* (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers)

That is to say, adults' education in the English subject is focused on covering the necessities of adults inside the working world. Consequently, the curriculum has to be flexible in order to give them more employment opportunities.

1.2 Competences:

The Chilean curriculum "*is focused on the development of communicative skills in the foreign language".* (Mineduc, 2011) (Translated by researchers)

These are productive and receptive skills which help students develop an appropriate level of understanding and performance in the foreign language:

a) Productive: *"The productive skills are speaking and writing. It means that after being taught these aspects of English competences, learners will be able to produce their own speech by applying it in context".*

b) Receptive*: "The receptive skills are listening and reading. Since, learners do not need to produce language to do it, they receive it and understand it".*

Each competence consists of two skills. On the one hand, *"productive skills consist of writing and speaking".* On the other hand: "*receptive skills comprise listening and reading".*

1.2.1 Productive skills

As it was mentioned before, productive skills are compounded by two skills:

Speaking:

*"It only emphasizes oral expression in basic communication situations of everyday life or the working world" (*Mineduc, 2011)

Writing

"Writing in this context will consolidate the learning of the receptive skills and students will write short simple sentences to reply or give information" (Mineduc, 2011)

1.2.2 Receptive skills

As it was mentioned before, receptive skills are compounded by two skills:

Reading

"It has been established, in this curriculum, the development of reading skills through the acquisition of strategies and techniques that will allow adults to have access to informative content close to their interests and needs". (Mineduc, 2011)

> The goal is that *"every adult can understand, use or apply the information portrayed in the text of their interest, which will be related to health, technology, recreation, and more specifically, to labour matters, i.e. texts with instructions for the use of machinery, instruments or tools. Translation is not the fundamental goal, but the reading comprehension of material in English is".* (Mineduc, 2011)

Listening:

"*The ability to understand oral texts can create a favourable environment for foreign language learning. It introduces a wide variety of stimuli; reinforces the development of intellectual and linguistic skills; and provides the basic tools for communication that the current social and working environment needs"* (Mineduc, 2011)

1.3 Proposal for a curriculum methodology

"The proposed curriculum is based on a constant exposure to the foreign language by reading and listening: the more texts students read or listen, the more they increase their chances of understanding a foreign language" (Curriculum Framework, Mineduc,2011), it means adults students will be exposed to foreign language by reading and listening.

1.3.1 Resources:

*"The selected texts must gather the diverse needs and adults' interests; it is possible to use different resources, such as graphic, audio or electronic equipment. In addition, different types of texts are included to be used for recreation" (*Mineduc.2011*) (*translation by researchers). These didactic materials are meant to help adult students acquire the language.

In the Chilean curriculum**,** there are two important points that are included in this curriculum; they are "the Fundamental Objectives" and "Minimum Compulsory Contents".

1.3.2 Fundamental objectives:

The Chilean Ministry of Education states that "*the fundamental objectives are the skills or abilities that students should achieve by the end of the different levels of education and are intended to guide the whole of the teaching and*

learning process". (Mineduc, 2011) That is to say, students are expected to have internalized the fundamental objectives by the time they have finished their learning process.

To clarify the objectives, MINEDUC states that "*Fundamental Vertical Objectives are those referring to certain levels which call for the attainment of learning experiences related to sectors or sub-sectors (former courses) of the primary and secondary education curriculum".* (Mineduc*, 2011)*

MINEDUC continues to explain that *"Fundamental Transversal Objectives are those that have a comprehensive and general character, whose success is based on the formative work of the whole curriculum".* (Curricular Framework, Ministry of Education, 2011)

According to the Ministry of education, the most important objectives for adults' education are as follows:

> *"Understand simple instructional, descriptive and narrative texts of at least 300 words. Understand instructions, questions and oral expressions for common use. Express orally by greeting, answering questions, asking for and giving information. Express in writing by responding with simple short sentences to provide information. Recognize at least 350 words related to everyday life and social and interpersonal relationships. Expand the students' view of the world through the access to foreign language texts. Develop a receptive and respectful attitude towards the approaches, ideas or*

values derived from the texts, learning to appreciating cultural diversity". (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers)

Students have to meet all these requirements in order to learn about cultural diversity and to achieve the objectives set by the Chilean Ministry of Education.

1.4 Minimum Compulsory Contents

Minimum compulsory contents refer to *"specific and practical knowledge that schools must teach, cultivate and promote, in order to get the skills and attitudes to achieve the fundamental objectives set for each level"* (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers)

Thus, the Minimum compulsory contents are *"the set of conceptual knowledge and practical performance abilities (knowledge and practice of procedures), that students require to learn and which are deemed necessary for each sector and sub-sector of learning to achieve the fundamental objectives"* (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers). According to the Chilean Ministry of Education, the minimum compulsory contents refer to specific and practical knowledge that should be developed by each sub-sector during each grade, i.e. every student is expected to acquire all these minimum compulsory contents.

1.4.1 The minimum compulsory contents for the First and Second levels of adults' education

For the first and second levels of adults' education in the English subject, the minimum compulsory contents have been divided and organised around:

"A variety of text types which represent different discursive genres, allowing students to be exposed to a wide variety of topics related to their interests and needs. Skills, strategies and techniques which are necessary for effective reading comprehension. Functions and linguistic, morphosyntactic and lexical content, to facilitate access to texts related to the selected text types" (Mineduc, 2011)

1.5 Second level of adults' education

The Fundamental Objectives in the second level of adult education in the English subject state that *"at the end of the Second level of High School, the students will have developed the ability to comprehend and interpret written instructional, descriptive and narrative texts of a higher linguistic or thematic complexity, and a variable length according to the communicative purpose of the text.* (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers)

Besides, students will be able to:

"Produce oral speech in communicative situations resembling everyday life and the working world. Express in writing by

completing personal or business information and/or writing simple answers on questionnaires. Recognize at least 500 words related to everyday life. (Vocabulary related to social and working environments). Expand the students' view of the world through access to information contained in texts showing new ways of thinking and acting. Appreciate the contribution of a foreign language to their integral formation and assess the relevance of this new information to the acquisition of skills which will be beneficial to their future job performance". (Mineduc, 2011) (Translation by researchers).

It means that students at second grade high school should fulfill the fundamental objectives set by the Ministry of Education, with the purpose of developing skills and improving their performance in the foreign language.

1.6 The learning of English as a second language

1.6.1 What is the difference between a foreign language and a second language?

Cook *(2008) states that "FL learners are people who are in the process of learning a language in the classroom or by themselves and L2 learners are people who use a language learned later in life for real purposes"* (p.50) Continuing with Cook's idea, both notions are associated to similar ways to pick up a language, but Ellis (2004) explains that the distinction among the

two conceptions is the difference between the setting where it takes place (p. 12). For example, a Spanish person learning English in Spain is directly associated to foreign language, but a Spaniard who wants to learn English and travels to UK is a second language learner.

But the location is not the only aspect to have in mind at the moment of defining the distinction between foreign and second language, because according to Ellis (2004), it is also necessary to make the difference *"between naturalistic and instructed second language"* (p. 12) which refers specifically to whether the language is learnt through communication in a social context or in a classroom following formal instructions.

Ellis (2004) quotes Klein (1986) who suggests that a spontaneous and guided process of acquiring a language other than the mother tongue (taken from Ellis 2004, p. 12) and explains, on the other, that in both scenarios, to pick up a language, the learner will always focus to some extent on the language system. For this reason, it is impossible to relate the difference between a naturalistic and conscious process to a psycholinguistic aspect.

The previous definitions coined by Cook (2008), Ellis (2004) and Klein (1986) make the distinction between foreign and second language, but at the same time, they refer to the moment; the necessity and the way in which a person learns a new and foreign language.

1.6.2 Do adults acquire or learn a foreign language?

Ellis (2004) explains that most of the knowledge related to the study of how a person learns a second language (L2) belongs to the twentieth century and continues illustrating that great part of the influence to carry out this study has been connected to the Internet, which at the same time, is connected to the globalization and the importance of developing knowledge in a second language (p. 3), English in particular, with the idea of being connected with the rest of the world. But this is not a subject related only to children or adolescents, because adults are also able to learn a foreign language or any other language different to their mother tongue, but not in the same way as children do. For this reason, a lot of specialists have developed a series of theories related to this matter.

One of the most popular linguists that has written about this subject is Krashen (1977) who postulates that *"adult second language learners have two means for internalizing the target language"* (taken from Brown 2007, p. 294). Those two means are acquiring and learning. And he continues to explain that the first one refers to a subconscious process that consists in constructing a system of language, while learning is a pick-up process that implies memorizing rules while paying attention to the form and figure of the new language that the speaker is learning. Both theories were developed in his famous "Input hypotheses" which expounds that *"fluency in second*

language performance is due to what we have acquired, not what we have learned" (Krashen, 1981, taken from Brown 2007, p. 99). That is to say, adults can do as much as they can to develop fluency being aware of the rules that a language has, but they will never acquire a new language. To Krashen (1982) *"our conscious learning processes and our subconscious acquisition process are mutually exclusive"* (Taken from Brown 2007, p. 294) Therefore, acquisition can become learning but learning cannot become acquisition.

But that is not the only view about the subject, because Ellis (2004) also refers to it by saying that "*L2 can be defined as the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom"*, (p. 3) and continues to explain that it is possible to pick up a second language at any time or age. Furthermore, he gives an example related to a thirty-one-year-old Japanese person who had some notion about the English language; for working reasons this person had to move to Hawaii where he could interact with native English speakers and he improved simultaneously his production in the foreign language.

According to Ellis the difference among acquisition and learning between adults and children refers specifically to the way in which they internalize the new language, because if a person takes classes, he or she will be able to internalize more grammatical structure. On the contrary, in a real context he

or she will be able to talk or write, but will not be conscious about the grammatical constructions he or she is acquiring.

1.7   Error correction

Brown (2007) explains that "*learning is fundamentally a process that involves the making of mistakes*" (p. 257) and continues to explain that learning a new language is like learning to swim, because you have to start by taking one step first, then jump into water, next move your legs and arms, until you discover how you can swim. The same process happens in the learning process of a foreign language, because you also have to take one step first and this is to learn a first language or mother tongue, in order to have knowledge and structure of a language.

But mistakes are not the only problem that appears when a person is learning a foreign language, because there are also errors and Ellis (1997) makes a big distinction between both concepts:

> *"Errors reflect gaps in a learner's knowledge; they occur*
> *because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes*
> *reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because,*
> *in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what*
> *he or she knows" (p. 17)*

According to Ellis (1997) *"Errors…can have different sources"* (p. 19). One of them can be the omission, which refers to when a learner leaves out an article, a possessive or the plural in a sentence. Another example of error making is when someone uses a specific rule in different contexts, i.e. she or he overgeneralizes a grammatical structure. A third and important problem that usually occurs is to confuse the mother tongue with the new language that has been learnt. That is to say, most of the time learners tend to translate a sentence from the first language into the second one, producing a wrong translation and, consequently, confusion in the new language learner.

1.8 Factors that influence second language learning

Most people can learn a different language and sometimes more successfully than others and this statement is related to many factors which affect second language learning. However, according to Ellis (2004) and Littlewood (2002) we need to consider two important aspects of L2 learners: External factors and internal factors of the learner.

1.8.1 External factors

There is a strong relationship between the culture and second language learning, because Ellis (2004) explains that a successful learning of a new

language depends on some variables such as: sex, social class, ethnic identity and age.

1.8.1.1 Sex, social class and ethnic identity factors

First of all, Ellis (2004) mentions that the sex or gender of people who are learning a new language have been studied for many authors such us Gardner and Lambert (1972), and Spolsky (1989). All of them claim that women are superior to men because of the positive attitude and predisposition that every learner has when they are learning a new language. Ellis (2004) explains this by saying that "*women are more sensitive to new forms and more likely to incorporate them into their speech*" (p. 202). However, the same author mentions that some studies have shown that men performed better on two tests of listening vocabulary, but generally it suggests that females are better than men.

Secondly, social class is another external factor, and Ellis (2004) indicates that in relation to some evidences, learners whose families have a lower status than the culture in which they are learning the target language making a slower progress.

Thirdly, according to Ellis (2004), ethnic identity is a significant factor because he explains that there is a relationship between different ethnic groups and the success in L2 learning, because he remarks that there is a key concept

and that is *"the distance between the cultures of the native and target languages"*, *the idea being that the more distant the two cultures are, the more difficult second language learning is and, therefore, the lower the achievement levels* (p. 207). Thus, the cultural distance will be a crucial factor to learn the target language affecting people with different customs and attitudes. Nevertheless, the same author claims that the learner's attitude towards their own culture and the target culture can *"develop a strong motivation and high levels of L2 proficiency while also maintaining their own L1"* (p.210).

1.8.1.2 Age factor

On the other hand, the age of the learner is very important in L2 learning because there is a ´critical period theory` which is described for many authors, such as Littlewood (2002), and Ellis (2004), among others, as a biological factor and the main responsible for language learning to occur naturally and easily. Likewise, the same authors explain that the critical period hypothesis postulates that there is a certain time to learn, and after that, the language learning becomes much more difficult and demands much more effort. In fact, Ellis (2004) explains that when the period of puberty finishes,

adolescents and adults do not achieve the complete and natural learning of a new language.

Nevertheless, Brown (2007) claims that there are a lot of investigations into the critical period hypothesis which describe it as a process that occurs around puberty and establish that after that period people are unable to acquire L2. However, he argues that the statement is incorrect, because *"by the age of 12 or 13, you are "over the hill" when it comes to the possibility of successful second language learning"* (p.58). Also, he mentions that in order to examine these issues, neurological and phonological aspects must be considered.

1.8.1.3 Hemisphere Lateralization

As part of neurological considerations, there is a term called Lateralization of the brain. According to Brown (2007) this lateralization is a key to answer many questions related to L2 learning, because he says that "*there is evidence in neurological research that as the human brain matures, certain functions are assigned, or "lateralized", to the left hemisphere of the brain, and certain other functions to the right hemisphere*" (p.58)

Alternatively, Brown (2007) quotes Eric Lennerberg (1967) who suggests together with other linguists that lateralization is a slow process, which

originates approximately at the age of two and is concluded around the age of thirteen. Thus, it can be determined that by around puberty language acquisition becomes really difficult.

1.8.2 Internal Factors

1.8.2.1 Motivation

The individual language learner brings with him or her particular learning situations, and this is known as internal factors. Littlewood (2002) talks about that term and he also refers to motivation as an influencing factor in second language acquisition. Similarly, he claims that *"in order to learn a second language, motivation is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he perseveres"* (p. 53). In the same way, the same author mentions two aspects which he deems significant for second language learning: *"communicative need and attitudes towards the second language community"* (p. 53).

1.8.2.2 Communicative need

Communicative need is described by Littlewood (2002) as the necessity of the learner to use language for communicative situations. He also adds that there is a difference between people who learn a second language from those who learn a foreign language, because most people learning a L2 live in a social community (India or Belgium) where it is very normal and part of their

lives to learn a second language. While, there is another group of people whose culture is monolingual and a new language is learnt with communicative purposes. Similarly, Littlewood (2002) adds that whether a Pakistani in Great Britain wants to fulfill a professional desire or seeks to cultivate social contacts at work, *"he must develop an adequate system for communicating with it"* (p. 54).

1.8.2.3 Attitudes towards the second language community

On the other hand, Littlewood (2002) also talks about the learner's attitudes towards the second language community. And he explains that a learner who is trying to adopt a new language or new speech patterns will give up their own identity to assume those of the new cultural group. Also, the same author claims that if a learner is "*agreeable to this process"* (p. 55), he will improve. But, *"if not, it can be a source of resentment and insecurity"* (p. 55). Those statements indicate that positive as well as negative attitudes influence the learning process in L2.

1.8.2.4 Integrative and Instrumental motivation

Littlewood (2002) mentions two important features that influence L2. However, he also talks about Gardner and Lambert (1972) who claim that there are two types of motivations: Integrative and Instrumental motivations which in general are commonly known as ´intrinsic` and ´extrinsic` motivation.

According to Littlewood (2002) a learner with integrative motivation (or intrinsic motivation) is one who has a "*genuine interest in the second language community*" (p. 57), enjoys language learning and is confident that he will make a good progress. On the other hand, the same author claims that a learner with instrumental motivation (or extrinsic motivation) has more interest in how L2 learning will be significant to fulfill other goals such as obtaining something like *"a necessary qualification or improving employment prospects*" (p. 57).

1.8.2.5 Personality

All people are different; therefore, students learn in dissimilar ways and the personality characteristics of each learner are important because, according to Littlewood (2002), people's personality has a link with L2 learning abilities. In fact, the same author explains that it is often suggested that a more outgoing student makes more progress and "*is well suited to second language learning*" (p.64). Moreover, he adds that, people who are extrovert "*may enjoy certain advantages*" (p.64), because they are involved in more social communication, i.e. they will take risks. Therefore, they will not worry about making mistakes.

Alternatively, Littlewood (2002) refers to some studies made by Guiora (1975) who claims that learners who have "a high capacity for empathy (that is, appreciating other people's thoughts and feelings)" (p.65) "may perform better

in at least one aspect of a second language: pronunciation" (p.65). Therefore, the way in which a learner speaks is strongly connected with his or her personality. Thus, it can be pointed out that empathy helps learners feel close to new patterns of behavior which allows the acquisition of a new language.

1.9   Receptive and productive skills

It is very important to identify two important terms to understand how people use their receptive and productive abilities. The first aspect is production, and according to Brown (2007) it refers to the realization of a competence which is directly observable and is related to speaking and writing, while the second aspect is comprehension and the same author defines it as a *"willful act"* (p. 38), using Saussure's terms, which is related to listening and reading.

Similarly, Brown (2007) explains that many research studies have demonstrated that comprehension has superiority over production, because generally, "*children seem to understand "more" than they actually produce"* (p.38). Therefore, children can understand a sentence but they cannot repeat it or produce it again. Thus, Brown (2007) says that "*adults understand more vocabulary than they ever use in speech"* (p. 38). Hence, adults recognize more syntactic difference than they produce. Equally, the same author refers to some research findings and he claims that:

"There is wide evidence of children's ability to comprehend quantitatively more language than they can produce. The same is true of adults, in both foreign and native languages. We can take in words, phrases, grammar, styles, and discourse that we never actually produce" (Brown, 2007, p. 39)

Consequently, Brown (2007) asserts that although the grammatical and lexical instances of production appear to be few in number compared to the comprehension, it cannot conclude that all aspects of language comprehension facilitate its production.

1.10.1 What is methodology?

Methodology can be referred to *"as set of methods and principles used to perform a particular activity"* (Oxford Advanced Lerner's Dictionary, 2000). Also, it can be defined as:

1."The analysis of the principles of methods, rules, and postulates employed by a discipline. 2. the systematic study of methods that are, can be, or have been applied within a discipline. 3. A documented process for management of projects that contains procedures, definitions and explanations of techniques used to collect, store, analyze and present

information as part of a research process in a given discipline. 4.

Studying or description of methods". (Herrman, 2009)

In this chapter, different points of view are exposed about methodology and strategies, in order to teach English as a foreign language in the Chilean context.

Some features of methodology can be defined as follows:

1.10.2 Approach refers to *"theories about the nature of language and language learning that serve as the source of practices and principles in language teaching"* (Richards and Rogers, 1986, p. 16). Also, *"an approach describes how people acquire their knowledge of the language and makes statements about the conditions which will promote successful language learning"* (Harmer, 2007, p. 78).

1.10.3 Method is defined as *"a practical realization of an approach"* (Harmer, 2007, p. 78). It is important to take into consideration the context in which teachers are involved. i.e., teachers must be careful when they are going to apply a method inside the classroom so as to develop the correct approach in that particular scenario.

1.10.4 Procedure *"is an ordered sequence of techniques"* (Harmer, 2004, p. 78). Basically, it indicates that when a teacher plans a class, at the same time

he must be conscious about the logical order that is required to be coherent during the learning process.

1.10.5 Techniques are understood as different strategies used by teachers with the aim of teaching either in an interesting or significant way. For example, Harmer (2007) mentions some techniques: The first one is '*Silent Viewing'* in which *"the teacher plays a video without sounds"* (p.62-63) in order to make predictions about the vocabulary through images; and the second one, *'Finger Technique'* in which the teacher *"holds up his hand and allocates a word to each of his five fingers"* (p. 62-63) which helps students to put words in a logical order.

These techniques mentioned can be considered to help students learn their subjects by making the learning process appealing and interesting to them.

1.11 Popular methodologies to teach English as a foreign language

There are some very popular methodologies in the educational realm. According to Harmer (2007), the institution previously mentioned works in different contexts and adjust to learners' needs. Some of them are:

1.11.1 Audio-Lingual method which certainly relates to living creatures which can be trained through a system of reinforcement. Accordingly, this can be

received as a positive or negative feedback. In order to make knowledge more significant, there are simple tips such as repeating phrases or statements in audio-lingual drills. In fact, the *"Audio-Lingual methodology owed its existence to the behaviorist models of learning"* (Harmer, 2007, p. 79) which refers to skills that all humans can develop.

1.11.2 PPP: *"The PPP Approach to Communicative Language Teaching stands for Presentation, Practice and Production"* (TEFL Survival, 2011). It is a useful method that comprises three different aspects to organize the class. Firstly**,** during **'**the presentation stage' the teacher explains the aims of the lesson, so the children know what they are going to learn and the objective(s) of the class. At this stage, the teacher explains the new language including meaning and form, and how to say it or write it correctly. A good presentation is very important, because it should be interesting and easily understood according to the context of the children. Secondly, the teacher gets the students to repeat the sentence (Harmer, 2007, p. 81). For example:

> *"The teacher points to the man and attempts to elicit the phrase 'He's swimming' by saying: Can anybody tell me …. He's ….? Or asking the question what he is doing…. anybody? The teacher then models the sentence (He's*

swimming) before isolating the grammar" (Harmer, 2007, p.81)

The teacher by asking questions and eliciting answers from the students will get pieces of information from them without providing extra information about the action. Then, according to Harmer's example, it is understood that students can react according to the gestures or clues provided by the teacher.

Then, the teacher tries to give examples so that students are able to copy the model having in mind some examples. Next, the teacher explains what they did.

'The practice stage' helps students use the new language that the teacher has just explained to them. The teacher can ask the students to produce sentences or answer questions that they have understood and now know how to use the language correctly.

In other words, *"the teacher gets the students to repeat the sentence 'He's swimming' in chorus. Teacher may then nominate certain students to repeat the sentence individually, and she corrects any mistakes she hears"* (Harmer, 2007, P81). After that, the teacher tries to maintain the focus of the class on repeating sentences.

Finally, 'the production stage' can help motivate children to communicate meaning with the new language. Children should have the opportunity during this stage to experiment with language. In fact, some trainers have called this stage *'immediate creativity'* because *"students are asked to use the new language in sentences of their own"* (Harmer, 2007, p.81).

1.11.3 The Communicative Approach: According to Harmer, *"The communicative approach … is the name which was given to a set of beliefs which included not only a re-examination of what aspects of language to teach, but also a shift in emphasis in how to teach".* (Harmer, 2007, p. 84).

It is understood as a desire to communicate with a purpose focusing preferably on content rather than form. Also, it is focused on language variety showing no control over materials and without the intervention of the teacher. Larsen-Freeman pointed out that the goal of the communicative approach *"is to have students become communicatively competent"* which *"has been the stated goal of many of the other methods…"* (p. 131). It means that students have enough competences to be able to express their ideas clearly, be autonomous and work on their own, without the constant supervision of the teacher.

1.11.4 Task-based Learning:

Harmer (2007) refers to task-based learning, as follows:

"Students are given a task to perform" (p. 87) then teacher will discuss when they finish it and he/she can make corrections and adjustments *"which the students' performance of the task has shown to be desirable"* (p. 87). This task can be applied as homework, because it was designed to produce and to measure progress from L2 learners. For that reason, it is considered as a good strategy to be used for teachers, and consequently, to focus attention on learner's progress.

1.11.5 Four Methods: There are four well-known methods developed in the 70's, and 80's and they had a considerable impact. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001)

Such methods are the following:

- Communicative Language Learning: It "*is best understood as an approach, rather than a method"* (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) in which students work together to develop what aspects of a language they would like to learn.

Brown (2007) describes four main characteristics:

> *"1. Classroom goals are focused on all of the components of*
>
> *CC (communicative competence) and it is not restricted to*

grammatical or linguistic competence. 2. Language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. 3. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques. At times, fluency may have to take on more importance than accuracy in order to keep learners meaningfully engaged in language use. 4. In the communicative classroom, students ultimately have to use the language, productively and receptively, in unrehearsed contexts". (p. 241)

These steps refer firstly to the communication between teacher and students; secondly, to giving a purpose and a real use to the language by connecting it with context. Thirdly, fluency and accuracy take on a high importance to express real feelings and to be clear with the ideas. Finally, the aim is to practice the language in unrehearsed contexts.

- The Silent Way is a method in which *"teaching should be subordinated to learning. This principle is in keeping with the active role ascribed to the learner in the cognitive code approach"* (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 51) .Then we can say that this method is focused on the autonomy of the learner, and

the teacher's role is to monitor the students' efforts. We can consider that students are encouraged to have an active role in language learning.

- Suggestopedia *"sees the physical surrounding and atmosphere of the classroom as of vital importance"* (Harmer, 2007, p. 89). The same author posits that teachers should be sure that students are feeling comfortable, confident and relaxed. In conclusion, when the affective filter is lowered, the learning is enhanced.

- Total Physical Response was developed by James Asher in the 1970s. This method is said to be similar to the way in which language acquisition takes place in children. It is stated that *"if children learn much of their language from speech directed at them in the form of commands to perform actions, then adults will learn best in that way too"* (Harmer, 2007, p. 90). Accordingly, Harmer continued to add: "if teacher *asks students to respond physically to the language they hear, language processing is thus matched with physical action"* (Harmer, 2007, p. 90)

1.11.6 The Lexical Approach is based on the assertion that *"language consists not of traditional grammar and vocabulary but often of multi-word prefabricated chunks"* (Lewis, 1997, p. 3). This approach takes into account an important part of what learning a language is about, i.e. being able to understand and produce lexical phrases as chunks. Lewis (2007) keeps

stating that students are thought to be able to perceive patterns of language. Considering Lewis's statements, grammar has a meaningful set of words usages at their disposal, and when they are taught in this way; instruction is focused on fixed expressions that occur frequently in dialogues.

1.12 Methods for Adults

There are a lot of methods and approaches in order to teach English in classrooms focused on Adult Learners, some of them are quoted in Harmer (2007) and they will be showed above.

1.12.1 What type of methodology should be used?

If we see the world of methodology, "*with so many different approaches and methods available, many teachers are unsure of which to choose and how to go about making that choice*" (Harmer, 1998, p. 93)

There are very similar comments among authors with regards to language teaching: *"We need to see English language teaching as located in the domain of popular culture as much as in the domain of applied linguistics"* (Pennycook, 1998, p. 162). According to this author, English should be seen as part of culture and not just as a set of words.

1.13 The Learners

Adult learners, as well as their conditions, also have special characteristics. Harmer (2001) describes adult learners in the following way:

> *"They can engage with abstract thought. Those who succeed at language learning in later life. They have a whole range of life experiences to draw on". They have expectations about the learning process, and may already have their own set patterns of learning. Adults tend, on the whole, to be more disciplined than some teenagers, and crucially, they are often prepared to struggle on despite boredom. They come into classrooms with a rich range of experiences which allow teachers to use a wide range of activities with them. Unlike young children and teenagers, they often have a clear understanding of why they are learning and what they want to get out of it.* (Harmer, 2001, p. 40)

Harmer claims that adult learners have an "abstract thought" and mentions that they have a predisposition to learn a second language, thanks to their experiences and the fact that their commitments are superior to younger learners.

About this same topic, Williams and Burden (1997) continue to state that:

"They have characteristics that sometimes make learning and teaching problematic, they can be critical of teaching methods"(p. 32) it means that they have some problems through the process. "*Their previous learning experiences may have predisposed them to one particular methodological style which makes them uncomfortable with unfamiliar teaching patterns."* (p. 32) it refers to adaptation or try something new, they can feel unfamiliar and not something that they have used to see, try or be. *"They may have experienced failure or criticism at school which makes them anxious and under-confident about learning a language. Many older adults worry that their intellectual powers may be diminishing with age – they are concerned to keep their creative powers alive, to maintain a 'sense of generativity"* (p. 32)

This last quote depicts how, many times, adult learners feel that they are not inserted in a "school context", because they are part of an old generation, so this is the reason why adults may sometimes feel outside the system.

Although experiences are important, sometimes they can be negative because, when students face different learning patterns or new strategies to

acquire a foreign language, they may react badly or feel uncomfortable or even insecure about their own skills.

1.14 Making choices

As we have seen, it is extremely hard to have a final conclusion about which approaches and methods are the best, or the most appropriate for our own teaching situations. However, theorists and practitioners agree with some characteristics. According to Harmer (2001) certain tips can be given:

> *"**Exposure to language**: Students need constant exposure to language since this is a key component of language acquisition. **Input**: Students need comprehensible input but this is not enough in itself, unless there is some language study or some opportunity for noticing or consciousness-raising to help students remember language facts. **CLT**: Communicative activities and task-based teaching offer real learning benefits, though neither tasks nor communicative activities on their own are sufficient for a whole language program. **The affective variable**: Anxiety needs to be lowered for learning to take place. **Discovery**: Where culturally appropriate, students should be encouraged to*

discover things for themselves, as this is likely to lead to better retention in the long run. **Grammar and lexis***: Lexis is as important as grammar. Showing how words combine together and behave both semantically and grammatically is an important part of any language learning program.* **Methodology and culture***: Teaching methodology is rooted in popular culture. Assumptions that methodologists and teachers make are not necessarily shared by students from different traditions. Compromise may be necessary".* (p. 96 - 97)

These recommendations are focused on the learners' characteristics because they can have influence over affective variables or even on the students' level of production. It is understood that the process goes from a low to a high level. For this reason, students need to be exposed to the foreign language and everything related to it all the time. In addition, they need a supervised input. It is important to point out that teachers must consider the context in which students are involved in order to improve their skills by paying attention to their social contexts and to what they already know.

1.15 Lexical Approach

Firstly, to understand the meaning of the lexical approach, we have to understand what an approach is. As Lewis (1993) states: *"An approach is an integrated set of theoretical and practical beliefs, embodying both syllabus and method"* (p. 2)

In his book, Lewis (1993) makes reference to two concepts: 'syllabus' and 'method'. Accordingly, Lewis (1993) claims that *"A syllabus defines the content of a teaching programme. However it is specified, it is concerned with what is to be learned"* (p. 1). He then continues: *"The term syllabus is used in contradistinction to method which is about how the teaching is to be conducted"* (p. 1). Thus, this author makes a connection between these two concepts, and he claims that 'method' is related to how the teaching is conducted and he adds that "the English word 'method' in language teaching is about classroom strategies". (p. 1)

Consequently, we have to take into account Lewis' definitions for these concepts in order to consider what he finally understands as an approach. Thus, *"If syllabus is the 'what' of language teaching, and method the 'how', approach is the 'why'. An approach provides principles to decide what kind of content and what sorts of procedures are appropriate"*. (Lewis, 1993, p. 2)

It is relevant to consider another important definition that this same author provides in his book what an approach is. He adds: *"If syllabus is about what teachers present, and method is about the techniques by which they present it, approach is about what teachers value."* (pp. 3-4)

Lewis (1993) explains essential key principles in his lexical approach to understand what it is about. He begins by stating that:

"The Lexical Approach develops many of the fundamental principles advanced by proponents of Communicative approaches. The most important difference is the increased understanding of the nature of lexis in naturally occurring language, and its potential contribution to language pedagogy" (p, vi)

Lewis (1993) gives the following order to the key principles of the lexical approach*:*

1. *"Language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar".* (p. vi)

In his key principle Lewis put emphasis in lexis, not in grammar as a main component to develop language.

2. *"The grammar/vocabulary dichotomy is invalid; much language teaching consists of multi-word 'chunks'".* (p. vi)

Lewis refers to grammar as an invalid dichotomy, because the author considers that language teaching consists of chunks.

3. "*A central element of language teaching is raising students' awareness of, and developing their ability to 'chunk' language successfully*". (p. vi)

The author continues stating that students' awareness is relevant in the process of language teaching, since Lewis considers the appropriate develop of chunk in language.

4. "*Although structural pattern are acknowledged as useful, lexical and metaphorical pattering are accorded appropriate status*". (p. vi)

The author considers important the fact of having an appropriate status, through lexis and metaphorical patterns as a useful implication.

5. "*Collocation is integrated as an organizing principle within syllabuses*". (p. vi)

Another important principle that Lewis claims is the use of collocations as an organizing principle*.*

6. "*Evidence from computational linguistic and discourse analysis influence syllabus content and sequence*". (p. vi)

Another implication that Lewis claims is the fact of syllabus content and sequence are influenced by some linguistic features like discourse analysis.

7. "*Language is recognized as a personal resource, not an abstract idealization*". (p. vi)

Another lexical approach's principle refers to language has to be considered as a personal resource not like an abstract idealization.

8. "*Successful language is a wider concept than accurate language*". (p. vi)

Lewis denotes that the concept of having a successful language has major implications than an accurate language*.*

9. "*The central metaphor of language is holistic –an organism; not atomistic –a machine*". (p. vii)

Lewis considers that the core of language has to be seen like an organism not like a machine.

10. "*The primacy of speech over writing is recognized; writing is acknowledged as a secondary encodement, with a radically different grammar from that of the spoken language*". (p. vii)

According to Lewis statement speech, spoken language is over writing due to its own nature writing is recognized as a secondary type of encoding, because it is achieving by different grammar codes, unlike spoken language is.

11. "*It is the co-textual rather than situational elements of context which are of primary importance for language teaching.*" (p. vii)

That is to say, factors that are implied inside the classroom at the moment of teaching are not important to take into consideration as opportunities of teaching.

12. *"Socio-linguistic competence -communicative power- precedes and is the basis, not the product, of grammatical competence".* (p. vii)

According to Lewis, grammar does not precede socio-linguistic competences, and they are a product of them.

13. *"Grammar as structure is subordinate to lexis. Grammatical errors are recognized as intrinsic to the learning process".* (p. vii)

By this point of view, lexis is a product of the learning process thanks to grammatical patterns. Besides, grammatical errors are not considerate as mistakes; they are part of the learning process.

14. *"Grammar as a receptive skill, involving the perception of similarity and difference, is prioritized".* (p. vii)

The discrimination abilities are more important in the process of learning.

15. *"Sub-sentential and supra-sentential grammatical ideas are given greater emphasis, at the expense of earlier concentration on sentence grammar and the verb phrase".* (p. vii)

Lewis says that the sentence grammar and the verb phrase are taken aside, by taking into consideration the sub-sentential and supra-sentential grammatical ideas.

16. *"Task and process, rather than exercise and product, are emphasized".* (p. vii)

Lewis adds that task and process are over the exercise and product, emphasising the learning and production process.

17. *"Receptive skills, particularly listening, are given enhanced status".* (p. vii)

According to Lewis's point of view, receptive skills are emphasises, taking into consideration the silent period, in order to give input to students.

18. *"The Present – Practise -Produce paradigm is rejected, in favour of a paradigm based on the Observe – Hypothesise - Experiment cycle".* (p, vii)

One important feature that Lewis exposes is the change of paradigm inside the classes, leaving the PPP aside, and focusing into the production without taking mistakes as errors. He states that, mistakes are part of the learning process.

Finally, as Lewis (1997) claims: *"The Lexical Approach argues that language consists of chunks which, when combined, produce continuous coherent*

text". (p. 7) That is to say, when prefabricated sentences join together, oral and written production emerge.

1.16   Lexis

1.16.1 What does lexis mean?

Nowadays, there are a lot of authors that have a different idea of what lexis is, such as Lewis, Pinker, Halliday, Coleman, and Jackson, among others. They can provide a precise definition of the term 'lexis'. By the way, according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995) lexis is *"all the words in a particular language, or that a person knows, or that belong to a particular subject"* (p. 630). But the English lexis has not been a static subject. In fact, as Dufresne (2007) explains: the English language has developed a constant evolution and has intensively employed in word formation. In addition, language, and specifically the lexicon, has new features to analyze. As Lewis (1983) claims *"Language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar"* (p. 89). Therefore, lexis is an essential component in the language teaching process.

1.16.2 Lexicon

As Celce-Murcia (1999) posits, the lexicon: *"...has been characterized as a mental inventory of words and productive word derivational processes"* (p. 29)

under this statement, there is an umbrella of concepts that derive from lexicon:

a) Single words:

A 'single word' according to the Oxford dictionary online is: *"a single distinct meaningful element of speech or writing, used with others (or sometimes alone) to form a sentence and typically shown with a space on either side when written or printed".* Thus, it may be inferred that single words play a critical role in the building of a sentence structure.

b) Contractions:

The Oxford Dictionary online defines contractions as" the process of shortening a word by combination or elision". On the other hand, Lewis (1197) explains that they are"…independent lexical items, that is, they are single words." (p.22) and he even provides a couple of examples:

a) "I can't tell you anything more about it" (p.22)

b) "Don't wait for me" (p.22)

c) Compound words:

According to Celce-Murcia (1999), a compound word is obtained by *"...putting together existing words to form a new lexical unit"*. (p. 35). In fact, if we look at

the following definitions, taken from the Oxford Dictionary only, we may confirm the aforementioned statement:

"Seat: a thing made or used for sitting on, such as a chair or stool".

"Belt: a strip of leather or other material worn around the waist or across the chest, especially in order to support clothes or carry weapons".

Seatbelt: (n) a belt or strap securing a person to prevent injury, especially in a vehicle or aircraft.

d) Polywords:

Polywords can be explained by addressing Michael Lewis's description (1997) in which he refers to them as "words-with-spaces-in-them". These Polywords have exactly the same status in the language as individual words". (p.22).

Here we can see examples of polywords given by the same author:

a) Sentence adverbs: on the other hand, in some ways.
b) Expressions of time: the day after tomorrow, every now and then.
c) Prepositions of place: on either side of, upside down.

e) Idioms:

Curry (1999) defines an idiom as:*" new meaning to a group of words which already have their own meaning"*. Namely, an idiom is an expression made by

two words with a different meaning, but when they are used together, they form a new meaning with a particular connotation. For example, let us take a look at the following sentence:

"*When he saw the damage to the car, my father went straight **up in the air***". (p.98)

Subsequently, to find out the real connotation of this group of words in bold, the author makes some accurate references to the specific topic in the following explanation: when a non native speaker first reads or hears this sentence, he/she will probably think that this expression means that the person flew, or he jumped very high, but the true meaning is:*" in great anger or excitement".* (p. 98). Indeed, according to the author we can think that either a beginner EFL student or any non native speaker could think that the person mentioned in the example sentence above is actually jumping. Besides, Curry adds*: "The more idioms that a non-native speaker of English can use in the right context in conversation with native Americans, the more easily will he be able to establish a communicative relationship..."* (p. 99)

f) Metaphor:

The Longman Dictionary says that 'metaphor' stands for *"(the use of) a phrase which describes one thing by stating another thing with which it can be compared (as in the roses in her cheek) without using the words "as" or "like"*

(p. 681). In other words, metaphors are expressions that can be used in order to express an idea by linking two concepts: A tangible one, which is more concrete in its meaning and the other one less tangible, which is more conceptual in its nature, or a thought.

g) Grammar:

The Oxford Dictionary defines grammar as" *the whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology (including inflections) and sometimes also phonology and semantics".* Another important point of view is given by Celce-Murcia (1999), who claims that there are two usages of the term 'rule', in connection with grammar: On the one hand, rules have always got exceptions. And on the other, grammar rules, often appears to be arbitrary formulations" (p. 3)

II.   Chapter 2: THE STUDY

2.1   The objectives

The objectives of this research project are separated into general and specific:

2.1.1 General objective

To determine the relationship between the lexical development in English as a foreign language obtained by a particular group of students from secondary school attending evening classes and their subsequent oral production in this language.

2.1.2 Specific objectives

- To determine the subjects' level of English before beginning the training period.

- To determine the relationship between the level of input which students received, and the results obtained by the subjects at the end of the research study.

- To ascertain the students' level of English at the end of the training period.

2.2   The hypotheses

2.2.1 H(i): There is a positive correlation between the lexical development in English as a foreign language obtained by students of secondary school attending evening classes and their subsequent oral production in this language.

2.2.2 H(o): There is not a positive correlation between the lexical development in English as a foreign language obtained by students of secondary school attending evening classes and their subsequent oral production in this language.

2.2.3 H(a): There is a positive correlation between the increasing exposure to the target language (L2) in students of secondary school attending evening classes and their subsequent increase in oral production.

2.3   The type of research study

The research study was **correlational,** because it attempts *"to establish the relationship or degree of associations between two or more concepts, categories or variables in a particular context"* (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2010:81, translation by researchers). It was a **quasi-experimental** type of study, due to the fact that all individuals who were analyzed had already been defined. That is to say, they were previously set as a group before the

research began with our action plan. In addition, the type of research was **quantitative-qualitative** because the results obtained required these two approaches *"with the aim of obtaining a clearer picture of the phenomena"* (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2010:546, translation by researchers).

2.4 The methodology

2.4.1 The subjects

The subjects included in the experiment consisted of a group of students which were attending evening classes, in order to finish their secondary studies in a high school which was placed in 'San Bernardo', Santiago, Chile.

In total, thirty-two subjects were taken into account to perform the whole process. Likewise, the students' ages were considered with the aim of collecting more data. Accordingly, the subjects were placed within an age range of seventeen to forty-five years old.

In addition, the previous knowledge of the English language that the subjects showed at the beginning of the study was basic. That is to say, they were not able to build and produce a whole sentence in English, neither in written nor orally. They were only able to use a very limited vocabulary, such as single words, some basic colors and some animals since they had had a first

encounter with this language either in primary school, or in some cases, in secondary school.

Moreover, all of them had one characteristic in common. All of the subjects had left school before reaching their legal age, so their learning process had been affected. As a result, they had not continued studying English in the formal regular educational system (daytime), because of several reasons, such as working conditions or family matters, among others.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the subjects were assessed with two tests, which were carried out during the training period, in order to determine the students' current knowledge of the English language.

Consequently, some actions were taken in relation to the students' previously mentioned background. Such actions were corroborated by the school through an external file which contained detailed information. (See appendix Nº 2)

2.4.2   The Instrument

The subjects answered a pre-test in order to determine the lexical knowledge that they had of the English language, and to measure their oral production in this language. The pre-test consisted in asking students to watch a picture of a famous person or celebrity and giving their description, i.e. appearance and mood. The test included different pictures for each group member, and they

had to choose between three images which portrayed men and women with different characteristics. Then, each answer was tabulated according to a rubric which had five different levels with different scores.

Table 2: Description of criteria

Level	Description of each criterion
5. Excellent	A good performance without major mistakes.
4. Good	A good performance with only some mistakes.
3. Regular	Not a bad performance, but with a few serious mistakes.
2. Sufficient	A performance with only some serious mistakes.
1. Insufficient	A bad performance with a lot of mistakes.

The first criterion represented an excellent performance and was assigned 5 points. The second criterion considered a good presentation and was assigned 4 points, the third one recorded a regular performance and was assigned 3 points, the fourth one was deemed sufficient and received 2 points, and the last one was deemed insufficient with only 1 point. Then, the points obtained were added from up to down (see appendix), and after that, the final score was related to a grade.

Table 3: Description of each indicator

Indicator	Description
Oral production	Students' oral production in terms of fluency (how easily and well English is spoken) and accuracy (correct production of segments in English).
Coherence	Every part of students' speech fit together well.
Lexis	Students show a good command of specific vocabulary related to a given topic.
Grammar	Students make correct use of the structures of the English language (phrase structure rules) to join words into sentences.

As can be seen in Table 2 the criteria to take into account at the moment of evaluating the students' performance in the English language included pronunciation, coherence, lexis and grammar. Additionally, each criterion showed five different levels (as shown in Table 1 above) which depicted the students' overall performance during the pre and post-tests

2.5 Collection of data

Once all subjects took the pre-test, a training period started. It was intended to increase the subjects' lexis in the English language. Moreover, it was anticipated that the students would achieve oral proficiency through activities

promoting oral production. Thus, all activities were especially focused on vocabulary and some grammatical structures to describe people. Therefore, lesson plans which are attached at the end of this dissertation paper correspond to the classes given during the training period .Once such period was finished, the subjects took the post-test which was exactly the same as the pre-test. After that, their answers were tabulated with a rubric which contained a set of criteria as shown in Tables 2 & 3 above.

III. Chapter 3: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1 General results

To begin with, the survey was applied to thirty-two subjects. All of them were students who were completing their high school education in order to improve their opportunities in life. Moreover, the survey was carried out in a period of two months. During the process, a pre and a post test were applied, and the results obtained by the subjects were analyzed using a rubric (see Appendix) with the aim of measuring the students' production of English.

Before starting with the analysis of the graphs, it is important to point out that the grading scale was related to 20 points in which the minimum mark was represented by 2 and the maximum by 7, as the research was made in an educational institution. Therefore, it was decided to take into consideration the Legislation of the Ministry of Education, which declared the official rules by which to measure the results. In addition, it is also necessary to denote that the different marks obtained by subjects were classified according to the following table that shows achievements of the students.

Graph N° 1: Evaluation Scale
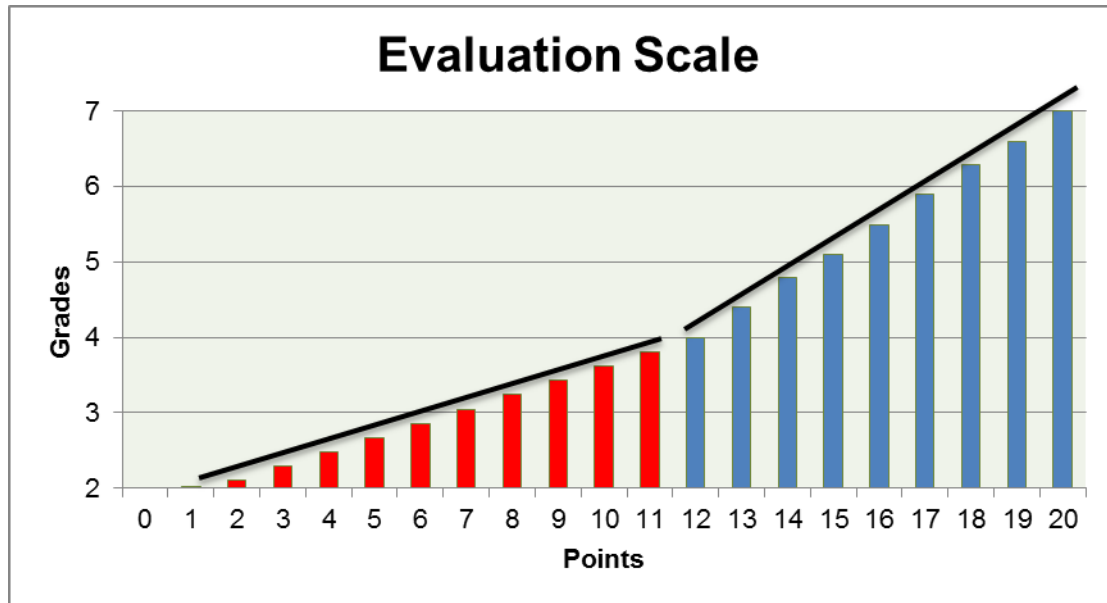
Graph N° 1 represents a scale composed of points from 1 to 20 which were taken from a rubric where the grade represented different levels of achievement.

The results were broken down as follows: from 2.0 to 3.9 meant an insufficient result; from 4.0 to 5.9 meant a sufficient performance; the highest grade was from 6.0 to 7.0 which represented an excellent result.

Furthermore, this scale had a requirement of 60 per cent, as established by the Chilean Ministry of Education, which corresponds to a 4.0.
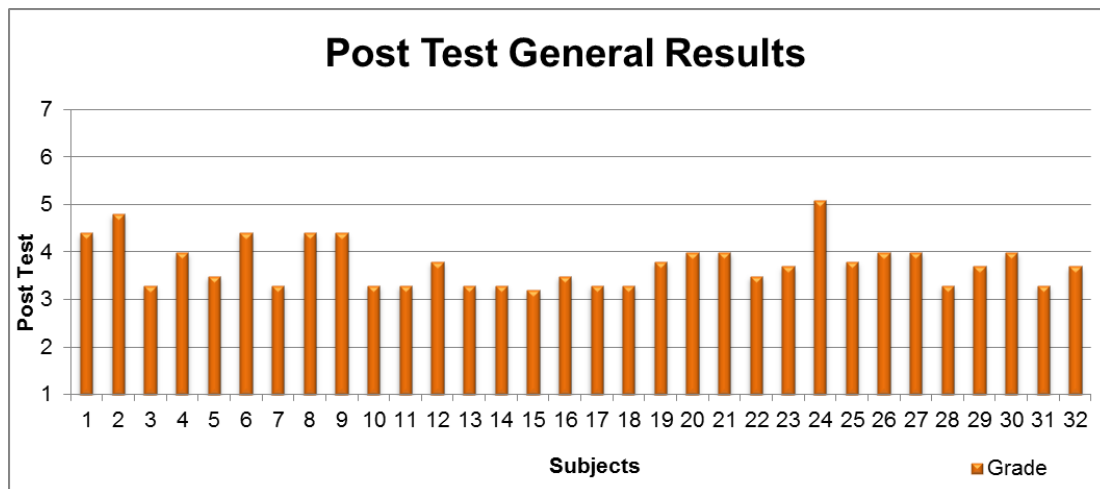
3.1.1 Pre Test General Results
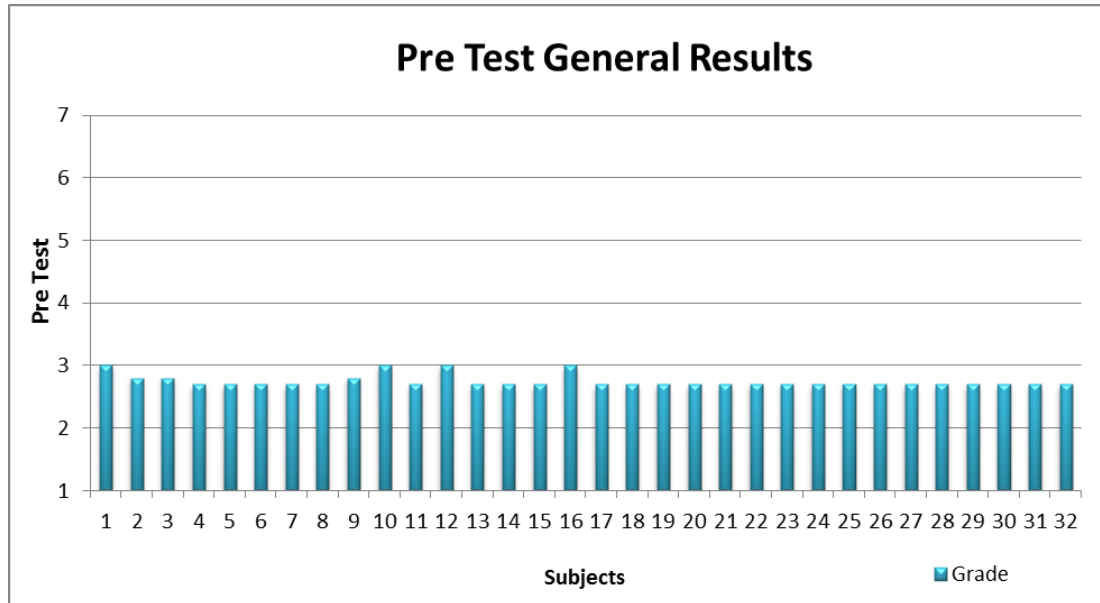
Graph 2: Pre Test General Results

First of all, graph 2 shows the real level of English that students had when the research began. The results obtained by each subject in the pre-test, which was taken by thirty-two students, were represented by a scale from 1 to 7 corresponding to academic marking.

As can be perceived, twenty-five students reached a 2.7 mark, (which is equivalent to 73.5 per cent of subjects). Three participants, (9.37 per cent) obtained a 2.8, while only four students (12.5 per cent) obtained a 3. Consequently, the results have shown an insufficient achievement. This shows that more than twenty-five students received a mark below 3, which means that they had a very low knowledge of the English language.

3.1.2 Post Test General Results
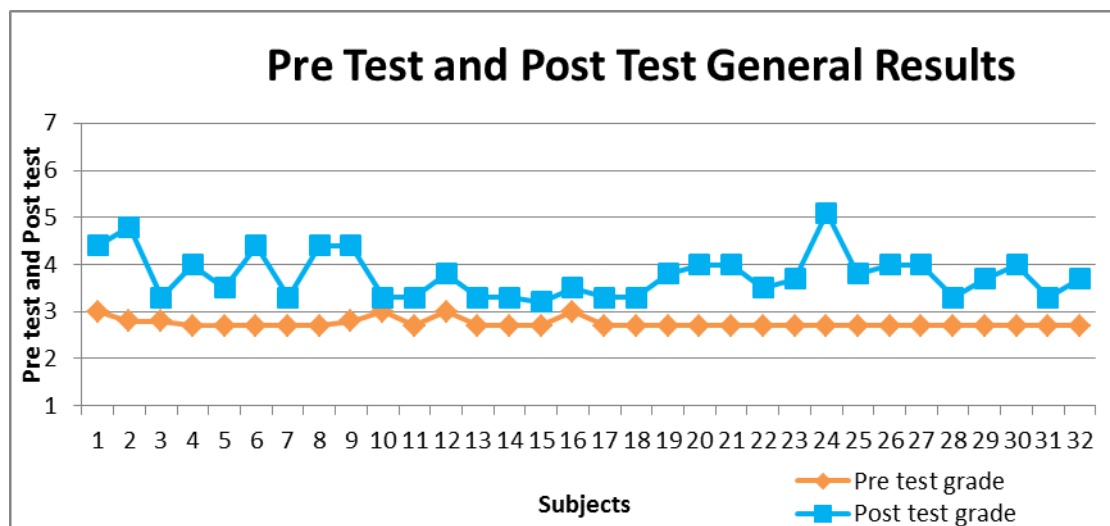

Graph 3: Post Test General Results

Graph 3 measured the level that students achieved after being exposed to classes, meaning all the lexical knowledge and oral production that was practiced by students. It shows the average of each answer regarding the post test, which was taken by the same thirty-two subjects of the pre test. Vertical numbers represent the marks obtained by students, and the horizontal data shows the number of students to which the post test was applied.

The results showed that only one subject was able to obtain a 5.1 mark, which is a sufficient achievement. Specifically, it illustrates that just one student (3.12 per cent of participants) obtained a 3.2, and ten participants (31.25 per cent) obtained a 3.3. Furthermore, three students (9.378 per cent)

received a 3.5, three (9.375 per cent) a 3.7, other three subjects obtain a 3.8, whereas six subjects obtained a mark of 4.0 mark which is equivalent to 18.75 per cent. Moreover, four subjects (12.5 per cent) achieved a 4.4, one (3.125 per cent) a 4.8, and finally, the highest mark was a 5.1 which represents a 3.12 per cent of the subjects.

As a conclusion, twelve students to whom the post test was applied obtained a mark over 4.0, which represents a sufficient achievement, while the rest of the subjects obtained insufficient marks.

3.1.3 Pre Test and Post Test General Results

Graph 4: Pre Test and Post Test General Results

Graph 4 shows that thirty two subjects did the pre-test and post-test. The results that were obtained by subjects determined an improvement in their grades; such results are expressed as follows:

In the pre-test results, twenty five students (78.125 per cent) obtained a 2.7 grade, which represents an insufficient result. However, in the post-test different results were obtained:

- One (3.125%) from twenty five subjects made an improvement, because the average student grade was 3.2.

- Eight subjects (25%) obtained the same grade, which represented an increase in their performance. Since, a 3.3 grade was obtained.

- Two subjects (6.25%) obtained the same grade, which represented an increase in their performance, a 3.5 grade was obtained.

- Three subjects (9.375%) improved to a 3.7 grade.

- Two subjects (6.25%) improved to a 3.8 grade.

- Six subjects (18.75%) improved to a 4.0 grade.

- Two subjects (6.25%) improved to a 4.4 grade.

- One subject (3.125%) improved to a 5.1 grade.

Apart from twenty-five students, two (6.25 per cent) obtained a 2.8, and only one of the subjects improved to a 4.4 grade, whereas the other students received a 4.8 grade in the post test.

In the pre-test, five (15.625 per cent) of the thirty two subjects obtained a 3.0, two students (6.25 per cent) improved to a 3.3 grade, one (3.125 per cent)

obtained a 3.5 grade, whereas one student (3.125 per cent) reached a 3.8 grade and two (6.25 per cent) improved to a 4.0 grade in the Post test.

As a result, the graph shows that all the students had an insufficient performance in the pre-test, because none of them were able to obtain a mark over 3.0. On the other hand, the post-test indicated a difference. Since twenty subjects were able to improve their grades, training seems to be still insufficient. However, there were twelve learners who did make progress, due to their results, which were essentially good grades.

3.2 Results by Category

Before the achieved results are analyzed by category, it is important to emphasize that the results will show the score obtained by subjects, according to the different criteria measured in the pre and post-test rubric evaluation. Therefore, comparisons between results obtained in each oral examination will be shown according to categories and the students' increasing results.

Table Nº 4: Categories by color

Graph category	Color
Oral production	**Red**
Lexis	**Blue**
Grammar	**Orange**

Table Nº 4 shows the colors that each graph measured by categories. In this case, blue was assigned to lexis, green to coherence and orange to grammar criteria.

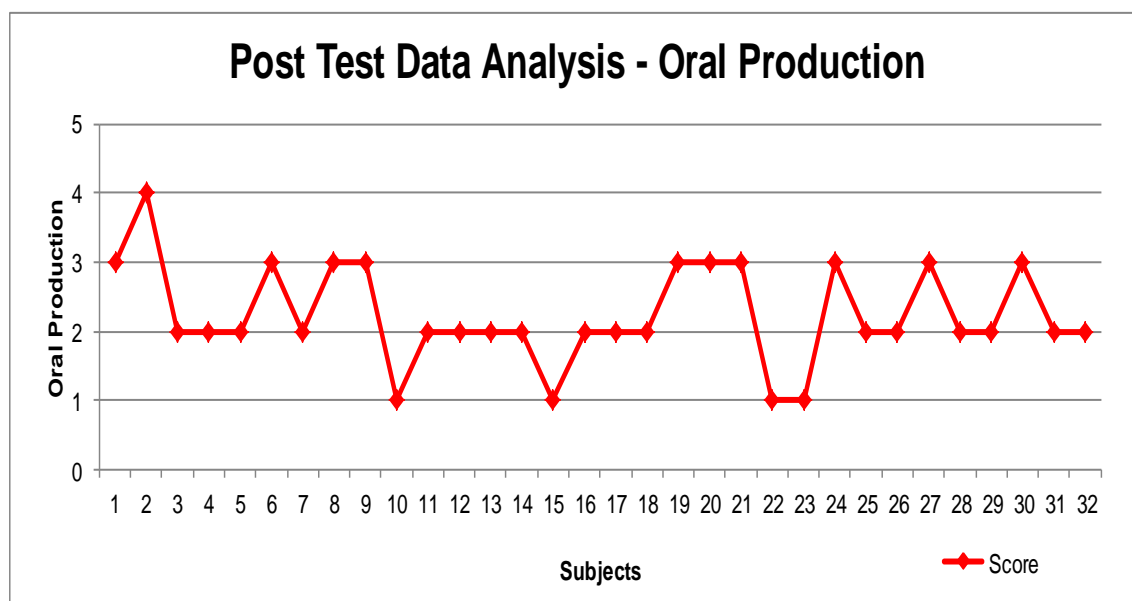### 3.2.1 Pre Test Data Analysis– Oral production
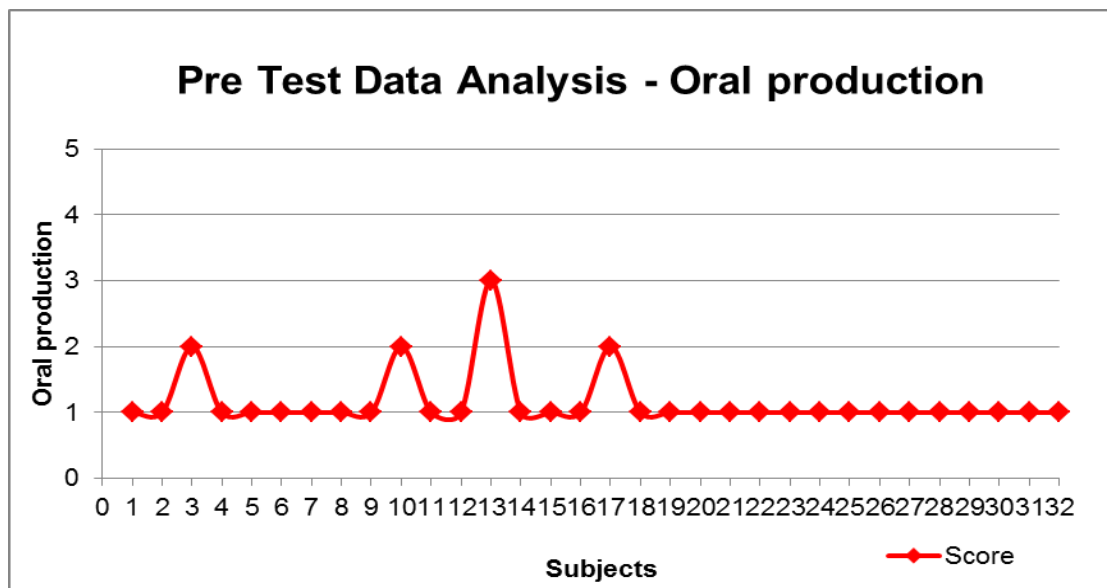
Graph 5: Pre Test Data Analysis – Oral production

Graph 5 shows the results obtained after analyzing the answers given in the pre-test by thirty two subjects who participated in the research. Vertical

numbers show the score that the students reached, and horizontal data shows the number of subjects which took the oral production pre test.

It is shown in the graph, that just one student (3.12%) obtained a 3 mark in this skill, which denotes the highest mark compared to the remaining production made by the rest of the group. Secondly, just three subjects (9.37 %) obtained a 2. Finally, twenty eight participants (the remaining 87.5 %) obtained one point which showed a poor oral production in English. In summary, results obtained in the oral production criteria were insufficient, due to the majority of subjects not reaching the basic level requested.

### 3.2.2 Post Test Data Analysis– Oral Production

Graph 6: Post Test Data Analysis-Oral Production

As can be seen in this graph, there was a variation in the subjects' performance. In addition, it is important to stress at this point that from 32

students that submitted the post test; just one subject (3.125 per cent) was able to obtain a 4.1 mark.

According to the graph shown above, there were four students (12.5 per cent) who obtained a score of 1 in this ability, which proved to be the lowest score in this test compared to the rest of the group. Moreover, seventeen subjects (53.125 per cent) showed an average score of a 2. The remaining ten participants (31.25 per cent) obtained 3 points which denoted regular production in English. Eventually, just one student from the group (3.125 per cent) was able to obtain 4 points, which represented a good performance in oral production.

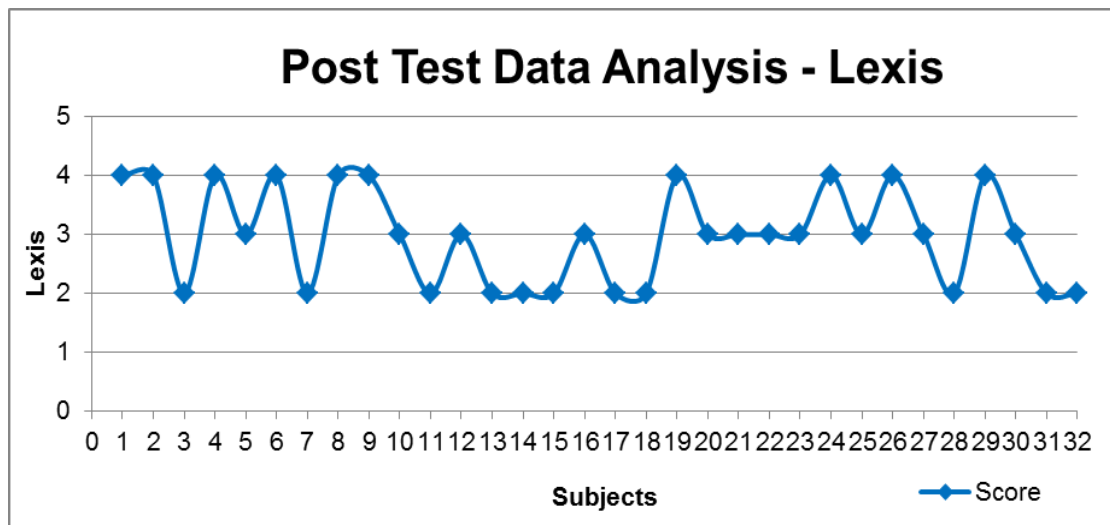### 3.2.3 Pre Test Data Analysis - Lexis
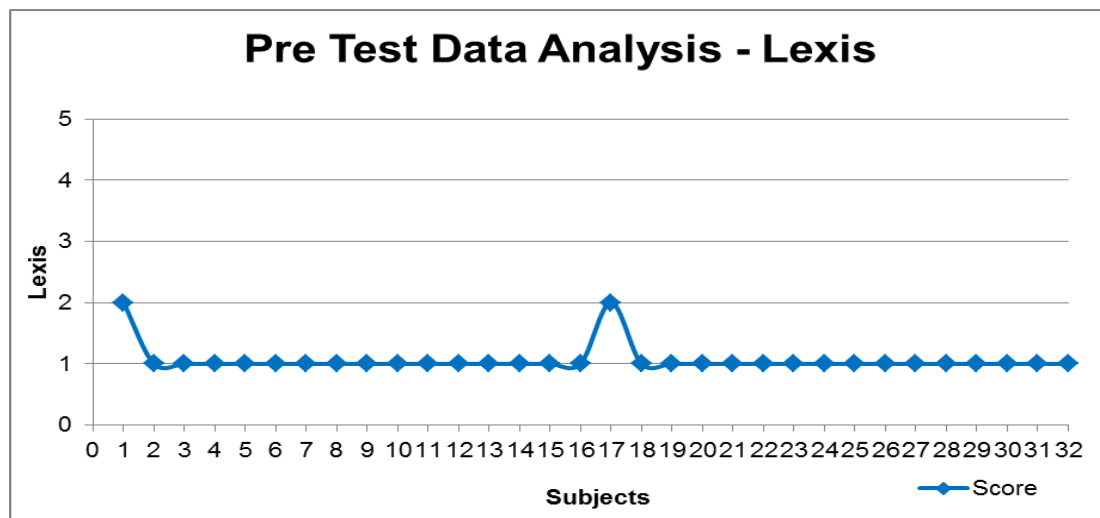
Graph 7: Pre Test Data Analysis – Lexis

Graph 7 corresponds to the data obtained from lexis criterion, which all students had at the beginning of the quasi-experiment after the pre-test was given. In addition, vertical numbers represent the score obtained by subjects and horizontal numbers represent the amount of students that took the pre-test.

As can be noted, only two students (6.25 per cent) were able to obtain a score of 2. The rest of students, which represent 94 per cent, were only able to reach a score of 1. Therefore, the results obtained in this criterion were insufficient, since thirty subjects did not exceed the minimal barrier in this criterion.

3.2.4 Post Test Data Analysis - Lexis

Graph 8: Post Test Data Analysis – Lexis

Graph 8 shows the results obtained after analyzing the answers given in pre-test by thirty-two subjects. In addition, the difference between lexis students' performances is shown.

As can be observed, eleven students (34.375 per cent) had a score of 2, which denoted that they had a previous knowledge about English language. Furthermore, eleven students obtained a 3 (34.375 per cent) which means regular knowledge about lexis in English. The remaining ten participants of the group, which represent 31.25 per cent, attained a mark of 4, which represented a good knowledge of the skill that they had developed in English language.
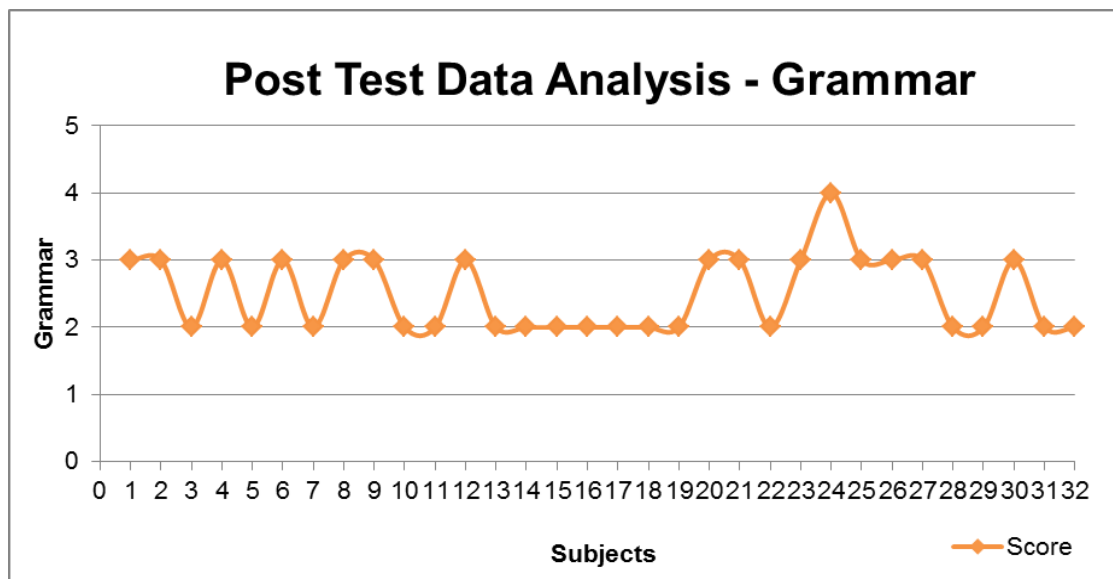
3.2.5 Pre Test Data Analysis - Grammar
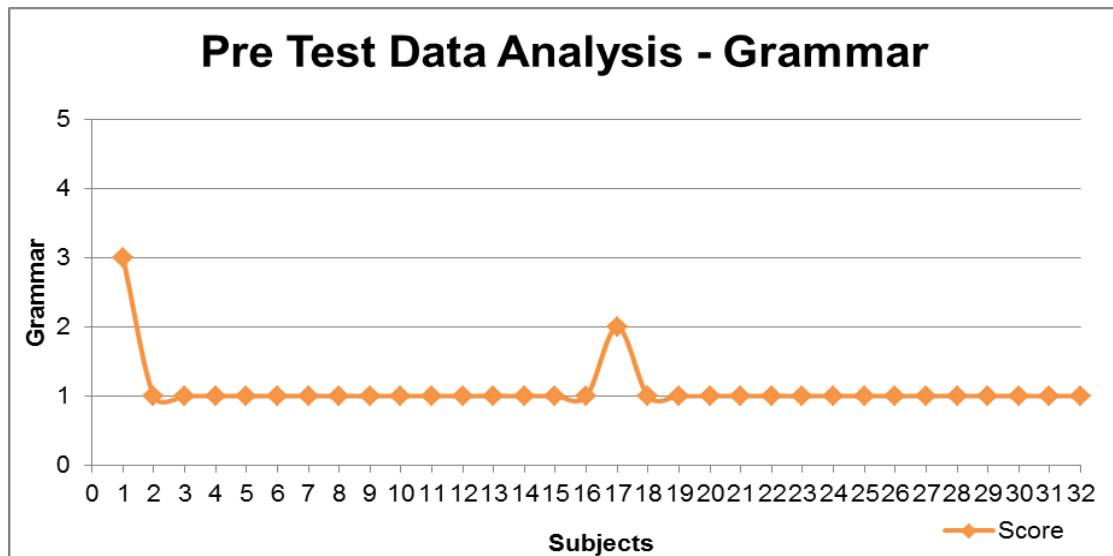
Graph 9: Pre test Data Analysis – Grammar

As can be seen, Graph 9 shows the analysis which corresponds to the level of grammar which subjects knew before the quasi-experiment had started.

The vertical side of the graph corresponds to the level of grammar that students knew. The horizontal side of the graph represents the number of students who were analyzed. The graph shows that one student (3.12 per cent) obtained a score of 3, which represents a regular level of grammar. Another student (3.12 per cent) got a score of 2; that is to say, these subjects obtained a sufficient level of grammar. However, the rest of the pupils (94 per cent) got a score of 1, which represents an insufficient level.

3.2.6 Post Test Data Analysis - Grammar

Graph 10: Post Test Data Analysis – Grammar

Graph 10 shows the results which were obtained after analyzing the answers given by students in the post-test. Specifically, seventeen students (53,125 per cent) obtained a 2, which was the lowest score, and it represents a sufficient knowledge about English grammar structures.

Moreover, fourteen of them (43.75 per cent), obtained 3 points which indicated a regular knowledge about the structures in English. Only one participant (3.125 per cent) obtained 4 points in this criterion, which means that the subject received a good result in English grammar.

3.2.7 Oral production comparison between Pre and Post tests
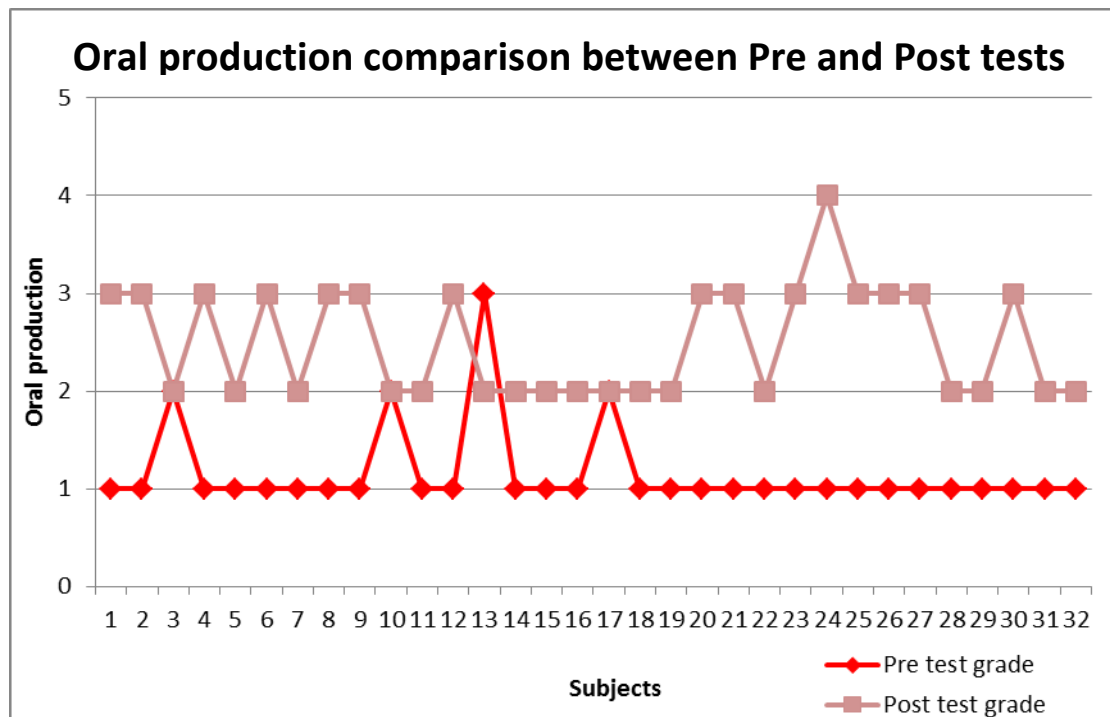

Graph 11: Oral production comparison between Pre and Post tests

This graph represents the results obtained by thirty-two subjects in the oral production criterion which corresponds to the pre and the post tests. The vertical axis shows the score that subjects achieved in the pre and post-tests. The horizontal axis shows the number of subjects who were evaluated.

It indicates that twenty eight students (87.5 per cent) received insufficient results; only three subjects (9.3 per cent) had a regular result and one student (3.12) reach a regular result, in the pre-test. Contrastingly, post-test results showed an increase in this criterion. Fourteen subjects (43.7 per cent) obtained a regular result in the oral production, seventeen students (53.1 per cent) obtained a sufficient result in their evaluation and only one subject (3.1 per cent) obtained a good result. Subject number thirteen had a peculiar feature. The students got a regular result in the pre-test and a sufficient result in the post test.

It is important to say that most subjects improved their results in this criterion. In fact, subjects learned words with its corresponding pronunciation, from not knowing how to previously pronounce them.

3.2.8 Lexis comparison between Pre and Post tests
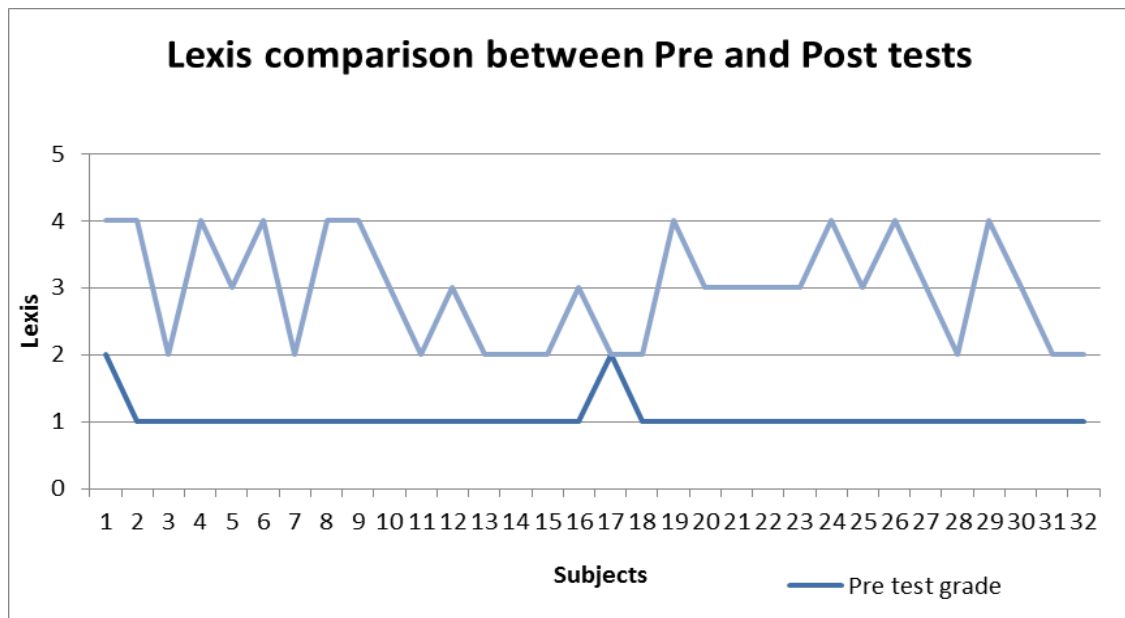
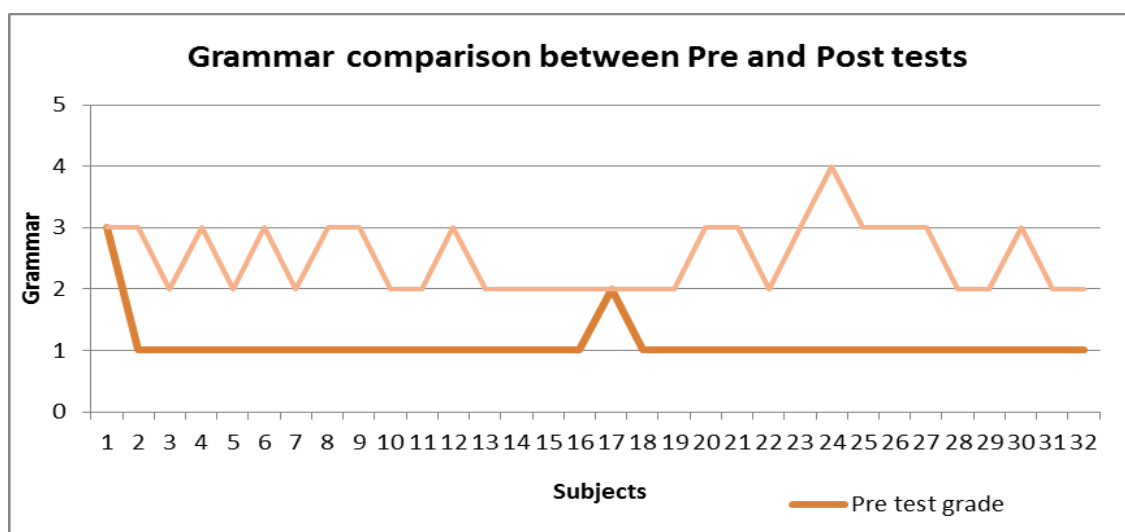**Graph 12: Lexis comparison between Pre and Post tests.**

Graph 12 shows the results obtained specifically in lexis criterion by the same thirty two subjects in the pre and post-test. It is important to highlight at this point, that numbers from 1 to 5 correspond to the standard stated in the rubric (see Appendix). Thus, 1 corresponds to an insufficient level of lexis, 2 is equivalent to a sufficient level of lexis, 3 indicates a regular level of lexis, while 4 symbolizes a good level of lexis and finally, 5 represents an excellent level of lexis. (see Appendix) This graph is explained as follows:

As can be observed, thirty subjects (93.8 per cent) obtained an insufficient level of lexis in the pre test, while only two subjects (6.2 per cent) achieved a sufficient level.

However, the post test results showed that thirty-one subjects (96.9 per cent) increased from an insufficient level of lexis to a sufficient level (with the exception of one subject who increased from a sufficient level to having a good command of lexis). Other cases improved from a regular to a good level of lexis. In fact, there was only one subject (3.1 per cent) who maintained the same level of sufficient competence in lexis criterion. Therefore, it can be noticed that ninety-six per cent of the subjects achieved a sufficient level. Moreover, other subjects obtained regular and good lexical competence within a training period equivalent to two months.

As a result, it can be implied that although some subjects did not achieve an excellent level of lexis, there was an improvement that could be a trend if a further training period were to be ensued.

### 3.2.9 Grammar comparison between Pre and Post tests

Graph 13: Grammar comparison between Pre and Post tests

This graph shows the grammar results and comparisons obtained by thirty-two subjects in the pre and post test. The vertical axis shows the score of the pre and post-test. The horizontal axis shows the number of subjects who were evaluated. On the one hand, thirty subjects (94 per cent) in the pre-test achieved an insufficient result and one subject (3.1 per cent) had a sufficient result, another one (3.1 per cent) had a regular result.

On the other hand, an increase in correct grammar production can be noticed in the post-test. Thus, seventeen subjects (53 per cent) obtained a sufficient result in the grammar production criterion. Fourteen subjects (44 per cent) obtained a regular result in their evaluation and only one subject (3.1 per cent) obtained a good result. It is important to say that most subjects improved their results in this criterion and they were able to organize and make a correct use of words in their evaluation.

3.2.10 General Results reflected in percentages
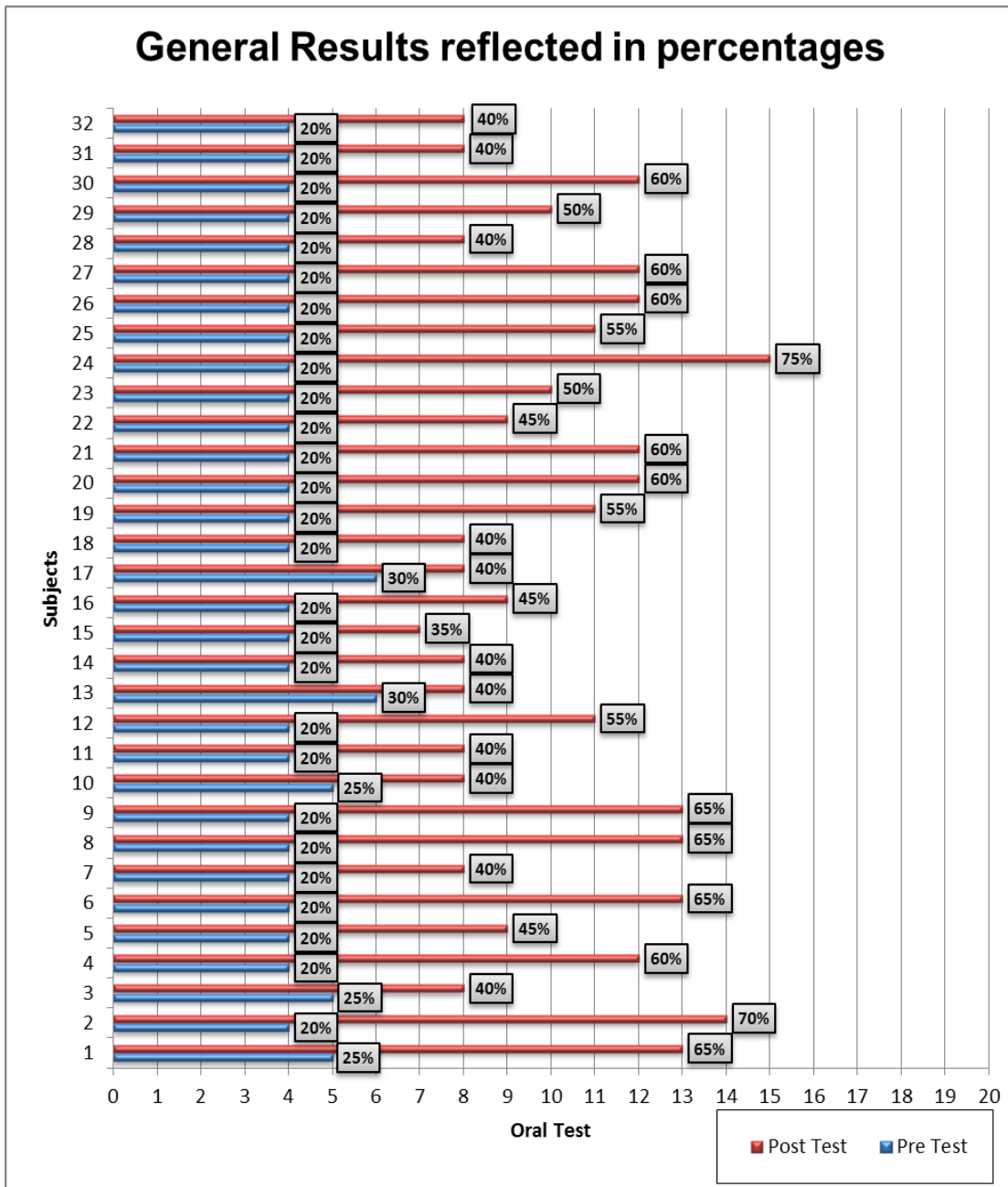
Graph 14: General Results reflected in percentages

Graph 14 shows the results obtained by each subject in both tests (pre and post test). Tests were taken by 32 students whose answers were evaluated according to a rubric which measured 5 criteria of evaluation, whereas the scores were represented by a scale from 1 to 20. To conclude, the quantity of points to pass was 12, while 11 points or less meant that the student failed.

It can be seen that there was a difference between the pre and post-test results. Thirty-two subjects (100 per cent) failed the pre-test. Nevertheless, after two months of training, the students' results changed. Results are explained as follows:

Twelve subjects (37.5 per cent) were able to pass the test, which represents an increase by percentages. In general, students improved their results although twenty subjects (62.5 per cent) did not reach the lowest percentage for passing. Furthermore, there were thirty-two subjects (100 per cent) who failed the pre test. Notwithstanding, there were twelve subjects (37.5 per cent) who passed and twenty (62.5 per cent) who failed in the post test.

Table 5: General results – Pre & Post Tests

	Passed	Failed
Pre test	0	32
Post test	12	20

IV. Chapter 4: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, a summary of the most relevant results, as well as an analysis of the hypotheses introduced in chapter 2 are presented. In addition, various issues that could be considered in a future research study are discussed herein.

The main aim of this research was to determine the relationship between the lexical development of English as a foreign language in adult students attending evening classes at a school in San Bernardo, Santiago, and their subsequent oral production in this language.

To accomplish this objective, thirty-two subjects were requested to choose one out of three flash cards provided by the teacher and issue a description of the character portrayed in that picture.

This pre-test was taken by thirty-two subjects, and the answers were collected and analyzed with a rubric considering different criteria such as oral production, lexis, coherence and grammar, and the results were graded according to a scale of twenty points. Then, after five weeks of classes with the group, subjects had to take a post-test which was graded according to the same rubric to contrast and compare the results obtained in both instances.

According to the results obtained from the analysis, the conclusions are as follows:

The average score obtained by all thirty-two subjects in the pre-test was 4.2 points, concluding that subjects in general did not reach the minimum passing score which was set at 12 points. These results evince deficient negative results; moreover, the average score obtained by the same subjects in the post-test was 10.25 points. According to these results, subjects still did not get the minimum average score to pass the evaluation, which confirms a poor performance on their part.

By comparing the average score obtained by subjects from the pre-test to the post-test, we can conclude that a general increase by 6.05 points was achieved, which demonstrates that after the training period, some subjects did obtain better results.

Accordingly, there was a 30 per cent increase from the pre-test to the post-test which evinces a significant and positive change in the subjects' oral production in the English language, although not enough to reach the minimum score to get a passing mark after the training period.

All in all, according to the specific outcomes obtained, it is relevant to point out that since each criterion scored five points as a maximum, it is then understood that the total score was twenty points per test. Additionally, the results in the research study were measured taking the data as a whole (general results), as well as according to each one of the four different criteria, i.e. oral production, coherence, lexis and grammar. Therefore, the average score obtained in oral production for the pre-test was 37 points (out

of 160), representing 23.1 per cent of the sample, while in the post-test, the average score was 72 points (45 per cent). According to these results, the increase was 35 points which corresponds to 21.8 per cent.

In lexis, the maximum score the subjects could obtain was also 160 points. However, in the pre-test, subjects scored an average of 34 points representing 21.25 per cent, while in the post-test, the average score reached was 95 points (59,37 per cent). Thus, the increase was 61 points, which corresponds to a 38.12 per cent increase.

In grammar, out of a maximum score of 160 points, subjects scored in the pre-test an average of 35 points, representing 21.87 per cent of the total score, while in the post-test the average score was 80 points (50 per cent). Accordingly, the results showed a 45-point increase from the pre to the post test which corresponds to 28.12 per cent.

The hypotheses were contrasted with the results and the conclusions are the following:

Students who attended evening classes increased their oral production in English. Thus, the **working hypothesis** has been confirmed because there is a positive correlation between lexical development and oral production. Consequently, the **null hypothesis** has been rejected. This can be observed by contrasting the results obtained in the pre and post-tests.

On the other hand, the **alternative hypothesis** has also been confirmed because according to the data obtained in the pre and post tests, through exposure to lexis a student may increase their oral production.

To sum up, according to the data obtained, it can be concluded that:

The students' previous knowledge seems to be important to learn new concepts, ideas and words. Therefore, it can be assumed that some subjects did not achieve good results in the tests because they did not have a sound basis in the English language.

Another point to be emphasized is that students' absenteeism could generate a decrease in subjects' performance and progress. In fact, the low attendance during the training period could have affected students' results since they did not receive the necessary input to pass the tests. Moreover, students' absenteeism could be closely related to their motivation which could affect their performance and their predisposition to participate in the learning process.

Another variable that may have affected the results of the research study was the fact that even though students attended classes regularly (in most cases), they did not have more than two hours of English lessons per week which seems low or at least insufficient to obtain better results in an EFL learning process.

On the other hand, it seems that the use of lexis during the lessons allowed the subjects to decrease their affective filter and, therefore, raise their self-confidence.

All in all, it can be concluded that although the results were not the best, the lexis and oral production criteria were strongly related, because of the increment of the criteria previously mentioned.

It is important to highlight that this research study may contribute to the ELT discipline, particularly to teachers who want to focus on adults' education through the use of lexis. In addition, this work may help analyze and reinforce the current adults' curriculum by promoting the development of productive skills.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that due to the short training period that led to the results obtained in the pre and post test, the evidence provided by the research work could be interpreted as not representative enough; furthermore, the results cannot be generalized since the sample of this study was too small. However, it would be interesting to carry out a more profound research study on this matter, including a different and a larger group of students.

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VI. APPENDICES