

UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL DE LAS AMÉRICAS
VICERRECTORIA ACADÉMICA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

***VOCABULARY ACQUISITION AND PRIOR KNOWLEDGE
ACTIVATION AS STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE READING
SKILL IN NINTH GRADERS AT OUR LADY OF SION HIGH
SCHOOL DURING THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2018***

Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English with Concentration in Teaching

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NOVIEMBRE, 2018

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Dedication

To my parents and friends who supported me in all ways possible.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this project could not have been possible without the commitment and support of many individuals, some of whom I would like to acknowledge for their help in this journey:

My mentor, Catalina Guerrero Troyo for her ongoing support, kindness, and never-ending smile that kept me going through this project. My reviewer, Margarita Pérez Roig, for proofreading my thesis project and for her loving smile when listening to my doubts and questions. Sigurd Ramos Marin, high school principal at Our Lady of Sion for allowing me to carry out my thesis project at this renowned institution.

Abstract

The current project investigated the reading problems of the ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School during the third quarter of 2018. The instruments used to gather information were observation checklists, pretests, reading activities, and posttests that allowed the analyzes of the different exercises to list the reading problems of these participants.

The researcher decided to carry out a qualitative study, along with the application of instruments that were concerned with two strategies: vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge exercises that would help with their literature lessons. Some of the outcomes showed different reading problems, such as difficulties in rhyming some of the words, difficulty understanding directions, making sense of what was read, among others. This study started with one main idea that was using reading as the skill applied in it, but the researcher found that reading could involve all the other skills of the English language when applying vocabulary and prior knowledge activation exercises.

Resumen

En el actual proyecto, se investigó los problemas de lectura de los estudiantes de noveno año del Colegio Nuestra Señora de Sion durante el tercer trimestre del 2018. Los instrumentos que se utilizaron para recolectar información fueron listas de observación, pruebas preliminares, ejercicios de lectura y pruebas de evaluación posterior que permitieron el análisis de los diferentes ejercicios para enlistar los diferentes problemas de lectura de los participantes.

La investigadora decidió llevar a cabo un estudio cualitativo con la aplicación de instrumentos que se preocupaban por dos estrategias: adquisición de vocabulario y la activación de conocimiento previo que podrían ayudar en las lecciones de literatura. Algunos de los resultados mostraron algunos de esos problemas de lectura como la dificultad en el ritmo de las palabras, dificultad para entender instrucciones y de lo que fue leído con anterioridad, entre otros.

Este trabajo empezó con la idea principal de usar la lectura como la habilidad usada en este, pero la investigadora se dio cuenta que la lectura podía involucrar todas las otras habilidades del inglés al aplicar ejercicios de adquisición del vocabulario y activación del conocimiento previo.

Chapter I

Introductory Framework

The purpose of this paper is to examine one group of ninth grade and identify the different problems those students present in the reading skill. Moreover, it is necessary not only to identify the problems, but also to apply different strategies to help the participants in this investigation to improve their reading abilities. In this case, the study is going to be placed at Our Lady of Sion High School in Moravia, Costa Rica.

As a way to introduce the purpose of this investigation, the researcher will explain the reason why reading as a skill should be taken into consideration in this private institution. Reading is an activity with a purpose, which means that reading activities must have a purpose, whether to comprehend or to infer from texts, magazines, articles, and so forth., and that will determine the strategy or strategies the reader must apply. Therefore, when the student is empowered with the correct reading strategies, he/she will be able to comprehend texts.

The idea for this investigation emerged from the observation sessions that the researcher had previously done to the one group of ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School. The students have a pre to intermediate level in English and some even an advanced one, but the lack of time to teach reading as it should be is not established as a priority. Therefore, the reading skill is taught only for reading comprehension (read the text and answer the questions drills) without any exercises to activate prior knowledge or cultivate vocabulary. It was then when the researcher decided to focus on that skill of the English language.

One of the issues the students presented in the reading class was the lack of time, since most of the teachers focused only on question and answer drills because the books are too extensive and there is one lesson per week to cover the book in one trimester. The second issue was students' language level which was high enough to let them work on their own without the necessity of guidance from the teacher at times. The third issue was that there were times in which the students needed to read from the book aloud and the observer could witness the level of English of some students, while some other students were lost in some parts of the book because they did not have enough vocabulary to comprehend parts of the texts.

The fourth issue showed up, the students had to read aloud with a good pronunciation. They were supposed to read appropriately and for doing so the teacher had to help them pronounce minimal pairs, homophones, and homographs. The fifth issue was putting all the words together to get the meaning of the sentences. Finally, the most interesting aspect for the observer was that, even though some of the students did not have a fully well-versed vocabulary background or prior knowledge about the topic; they all showed enthusiasm when they had to read and they were willing to participate even if it was difficult.

In addition, it is of great importance to emphasize on the reasons why the researcher chose top-down strategies. First of all, it is called top-down strategies because the reader goes down from general information and meanings to the specific ones of the text. Therefore, vocabulary cultivation and prior knowledge activation are part of this category in the sense that both extract the students' knowledge, emotions, experience, and culture to the printed world. The students are entitled to match the stimulus presented in the text to concepts already stored in their brains (Brown, 2001). Also, the reading skills, as cognitive processes

the students bring with them, make sense of a text by applying all these strategies taught by instruction. It is a matter of repetition and doing, so the students feel part of the reading learning process.

For these reasons, the researcher will focus on the improvement of the reading skill of one group of the ninth-grade students by emphasizing on two main strategies: vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation. The main objective will be to implement different activities to improve the vocabulary bank and to activate knowledge from the same and evaluate the result these two strategies will have on the students' reading skills.

1.1 Research question

The research question provides the reader with the main points that are going to be developed through the different chapters of this work. It reads in the following way: How can vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation help to improve the reading skill of ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School during the third trimester of 2018?

1.2 Objectives of the investigation

The researcher must state the objectives of the research project to establish guidelines of what to do and what not to do, in order to guide the reader.

1.2.1 General objective

To analyze the use of vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation to improve the reading skill of the ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School during the third trimester of 2018.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

- ✓ To identify what reading problems the ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School have.
- ✓ To apply vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation as strategies to promote the reading skills of the ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School.
- ✓ To evaluate vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation as strategies in the development of reading skills of the ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School.

1.3 Justification of the study

The relevance of this investigation is based on the lack of reading strategies of the ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School. One of the main issues observed was that the students only had one strategy: reading by themselves and then answering questions related to the text. That strategy can be of great help when the students have an advanced level and do not need any guidance, but in this context, the necessity of learning how to comprehend, analyze, infer meaning from the context, activate prior knowledge, motivate students, read aloud to comprehend, among others, is important.

The researcher will try to improve the reading skill of one group of the ninth-grade students by applying only two reading strategies: vocabulary cultivation and activation of prior knowledge. These two strategies will have relevance on the students who have little vocabulary and do not know how to infer meaning from context, and on the ones that have difficulties getting a general understanding of the texts.

The researcher has found some advantages for the institution in which she is doing the practice. First, the observation and identification of the reading problems presented by these students. Second, the reduction of planning time by the teachers for this same objective. Third, the accumulation of different reading activities that have relation to the two strategies already mentioned. Fourth, the creation of different material to cultivate vocabulary and activate prior knowledge by using guessing games and flashcards. Finally, the production of a reading rubric or post-test to evaluate the progress of the students. Consequently, with these actions, the research will try to improve the ninth-grade students' reading skills.

The reasons why these strategies will be valued are mostly related to problems of newness. This is the first time these teachers are teaching Literature as part of their curricula; therefore, it is all a bit new for them. Second, they only have one lesson to read the book during the week, which is not enough time to work in Literature. Third, some of the students tend to get lost in the middle of the readings because they have to read too fast in order to finish one chapter per lesson. Fourth, the reading comprehension exercises are the only strategy they use to evaluate Literature. Therefore, at the end, this is mostly a passive lesson plan, in which the students read and answer questions.

Moreover, it is important to mention the reasons why the researcher is developing this work. In the first place, it is a requirement for any student who wants to get his/ her bachelor degree in English teaching. Second, it is a good way to practice teaching in front of a real class and not in front of classmates at the university. Third, the feeling of creating rubrics, instruments, or the application of strategies supports the idea of the researcher of becoming a teacher. Fourth, to provide the institution with material created by the researcher, so the

students can work with it in the future, creates a feeling of accomplishment. It is a great opportunity to be able to do this work in a real teaching environment.

1.4 Antecedents

The effects of vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation on reading comprehension are well known. Some of the studies previously done are the following:

a) Prior knowledge and comprehension

Anderson and Pearson (1984) studied three different ways in which prior knowledge affect comprehension. They stated that prior knowledge helps students make inferences about what they read, it helps direct attention towards information in a knowledge domain and provide a plan for recall. Let us discuss each of the parts: inferences are known as the domain knowledge that helps put ideas together in a text. Domain knowledge can be stated as the individualized information one might have about some ideas that are known as extralinguistic information. Then, the attention that a person with a higher domain knowledge has helps them eliminate trivial or unimportant information from what they are reading.

In the Chiesi et al. (1979) study, participants tended to remember more important aspects of a situation than the ones that have a low domain knowledge. Finally, recall also helps prior knowledge depending on the perspective of the reader. This was found in a study made by Anderson & Pichert (1978) where they read a passage of homebuyers/ burglars and the results added that the findings depended on the readers' perspective where the learners pay more attention to things they are more interested in.

b) Vocabulary and Comprehension

There is a lot of research done on the effects of vocabulary knowledge on reading comprehension. Graves (1986) affirmed that children who have more vocabulary knowledge understand better the text than those with low vocabulary bank. Omanson et al. (1984) applied two different models on the effects of unknown words when reading. In the first model, the students were asked to change a known for an unknown word based on the information on the text and in the second model the learners were asked to suppress the sentence or statement in which the unknown words were placed. The results of these two studies were that the second model helped less in the recall stage. Some of the results also showed that vocabulary difficulties resided on the individual's proposition level at a surface level and not at a global level as it was demonstrated in the Chiesi et al study (1979) where learners with low topic knowledge but enough vocabulary knowledge tended to produce as many propositions as high topic knowledge learners. On the other hand, the propositions that the low topic domain knowledge learners produced were not as important as the ones from the high topic domain learners.

c) Prior Knowledge and Vocabulary

It is said that individuals with a low knowledge domain, but with a high in vocabulary knowledge may compensate for their lack of knowledge domain and vice versa. According to Freebody & Anderson, 1983; Stahl & Jacobson, 1986; Stahl, Jacobson, Davis & Davis, 1989, even though most individuals refer to the previous statement as a fact, there is not a link between vocabulary knowledge and knowledge domain.

Most authors refer that vocabulary and prior knowledge have their own individual effects on learning and comprehension (Kintsch & Van Dijk, 1978). Knowledge domain refers to the macrostructure (the most important part of the passage). For example, some of the tasks that

affect are: summarizing passages, rating the importance of information in texts, and performance (Freebody & Anderson, 1983). On the other hand, when it is emphasized on vocabulary difficulty, most of the times is due to the microstructure (individual parts of the sentences connected with cohesive links). Some of the activities that this affects are: performance on cloze tasks, written or recall of main or supporting details, and identifying the order of events (Stahl et al., 1989).

1.5 Scope

Every investigation has different goals the researcher must accomplish to fulfill the objectives of the study. This part has a complete description of the same to take them into account while doing this research. As a way to describe the situation of the students better, let us begin with a description of the school in which the researcher is doing the study, a description of the class that will be observed, the different problems that the researcher will need to deal with, and the goals of the same research, so the reader can have a better scope of the situation.

Our Lady of Sion High School is located in Moravia, Costa Rica and it offers to its student body a lot of extracurricular activities, religious worships, civic acts, celebration of different holidays, among others. Therefore, these celebrations are factors to consider when applying the lesson plans for the reading classes because they can disturb the schedule of them. First, this school offers the students extracurricular activities like soccer, basketball, volleyball, band rehearsal, tutoring time, among others. This causes that the totality of the students will not be present during the class. Second, this a catholic school; that means that at certain moments classes will be interrupted to attend mass. Third, most of the civic acts are done during class time and at different hours that can alter the time of the reading lesson.

Fourth, the students are in charge of the celebration of various holidays and at times, they need to interrupt classes to sell food, promote an activity, or present a speech about a specific topic, and this may happen at any time. These factors are being contemplated in this research to avoid wasting time.

Moreover, the researcher will need to observe several literature lessons to identify the different reading problems and to get to know the students. Therefore, at the end the observer had to invest time in the observation because she could not get involved before the proper permission from the high school. In addition, the necessity of having a good rapport with the students was important, so they could trust the person who was going to apply the reading strategies. These items were also taken into consideration in the student's schedule for this research.

The population that was observed was one group of the ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School. The researcher will have one lesson, 40 minutes, with the one group of this generation to introduce, develop, and evaluate the activities (pre and post-tests and the reading exercises) with the implementation of the strategies: vocabulary cultivation and prior knowledge activation. The researcher finds the short time a serious limitation because the different activities to be carried out are divided. It will take the researcher 20 or more minutes to introduce the first activity, another 20 minutes to develop the strategy, but there is not going to be enough time to evaluate the result of the strategy until the next lesson and that delays the schedule.

Another factor is time, due to the rush of high school chores, most teachers have to find time to complete their lessons when they are interrupted, so these teachers complement

their lack of time to teach reading and writing by using the literature lesson. The student has already taken these two factors as part of the situation in this school. Finally, the factor that is the most important is holidays. The instruments will be applied during the last two months of the school year, which results in the lack of time of the teachers to let students participate in the lesson.

The principal factor of this limitation is the time invested asking for the permission to do the research in this school. It took different steps to get the permission granted by the two principals and nuns' permission because a congregation of the sisters of Sion runs this institution. In addition, the school has requested to be on the time established, that means, they gave the researcher a time window to do this research.

Now that the different problems the researcher will have to face during the realization of this study have been established, the goals this research has considered to better understand the usefulness of it will be described. It has been observed that the teachers need a bank of instruments they can use to identify, work on, and evaluate reading problems such as: observation checklists, a pre-test, a reading test, and a post- test of the different activities in the literature lesson. This research aims to add these materials and obtain an appropriate feedback to help the continuity of the process with the students. In addition, the researcher also wants to propose different activities that refer mostly to vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation of the different texts studied in class by the students. As a final step, the researcher will evaluate the progress of the learners in the time given by the institution. The researcher is well aware that time and extracurricular activities are the pitfalls of this research, but the schedule established provides enough lessons to promote the different activities foreseen by the student.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

This research is part of a line of studies attending to inquire different theories about vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation. First, let us explain how vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation are important in real contexts. Let us imagine that a group of teachers is on a conference and in the same day, they have different lectures expected. One of the speakers starts talking about teenage pregnancy, the teachers will start brainstorming about babies, pacifiers, milk, and so forth. Those words activated something in the teachers' brains that helped them reach words they already knew about the topic, but what would happen if the speaker starts talking about things that a pregnant woman can suffer during her last days of the pregnancy such as: eclampsia or preeclampsia without given any extra information than only referring to the words.

The activation of prior knowledge did not happen because the teachers had never heard words like those before and there was no connection of previous knowledge that could help them. Something like this happens to our students when the facilitators do not activate prior knowledge and start talking about something they do not have knowledge domain or vocabulary knowledge to help themselves to even describe a situation or a word, just as what happened to the teachers in the previous example about eclampsia and preeclampsia. The teachers did not even know what words to use to explain them because they might not even know what those two words were related to. Therefore, the activation of prior knowledge and vocabulary acquisition are two strategies that influence reading comprehension in any case, that is why the researcher wants to investigate what the most common definitions of prior knowledge and vocabulary acquisition are, how those two strategies affect reading

comprehension, explain some common theories of different authors, and describe activities that can help activate them in a real classroom environment.

Let us start by comprehending what reading is. It can be said that reading is the most academic language skill. Carrell (1981) states that reading receives a special focus on foreign language teaching because it is considered as one of the students' most important goals. Some definitions of reading obtained from different researches are: The Oxford Dictionary (2008) refers to reading as a way in which something is perceived. Moreover, Carrell (1981) assumes reading as getting the meaning from printed or written message, which means that the reader reads, interprets, and gets meaning from the same, but the ways something is understood differ according to each individual. In addition, Rumelhart (1977) understands reading as the ability to combine the new information from the text to the information the reader already carries in his memories. In all of the definitions previously shown, what is always clear is that reading leads to reading comprehension.

Reading is conceived as an individual receptive skill through which the students obtain knowledge through reading or listening, this is then internalized in the brain and it transmits knowledge as a product in a written or speaking form (Goodman, 1967). Long time ago, reading was known as a passive process where the reader was just a recipient of new knowledge (Billmeyer & Barton, 1998) but nowadays, many researchers have proven reading as an active process where the reader interacts and constructs meaning from the text. It is important to mention that a text does not carry meaning by itself, the student is the one that adds the knowledge to interpret the text and that is why it is considered an active process.

Moreover, one can safely say that reading comprehension is a successful interaction between a reader and a text. According to Driscoll (2008) reading comprehension has two main components: perceiving the reading matter and comprehending what one perceives. The

first one refers to the moment when the eyes see the visual stimuli (photos, headlines, titles, or symbols from the text). Those eye movements are called saccadic movement in which the eyes move through a line with pauses (fixation) and then they move on. There is a different kind of movement that is called regression that happens when the eyes go back to re-read a word or group of words. Finally, there is a return sweep of the eyes that happens when they move from one line to another. These movements lead to put everything together in our minds. Comprehending what is perceived is to understand the ideas expressed in the texts using the students' culture, feelings, past experiences, memories to join the new input to the stored one. The students also use verbal memory and word recognition to know how words are joined in a text to understand the meaning of any given word. These two elements are important to assimilate how reading comprehension works in the mind of the students.

On the other hand, it is safe to say that reading comprehension also has cognitive factors that affect it: background knowledge, vocabulary, fluency, active reading skill, and critical thinking. According to Oster (2012) prior knowledge is what the students bring to the text and that helps connect the new input to the previous one. Oster believes that prior knowledge is what the students know, what they believe, and what they have experienced. Then, vocabulary refers to knowledge of word meaning (Oster, 2012). Next, the American National Reading Panel (2002) refers that fluency is the ability to read orally with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Moreover, students apply active reading when they monitor their reading comprehension and overcome comprehension problems; they also apply strategies before, during, and after reading. Finally, critical thinking refers to the ability to determine the main ideas, supporting details, the sequence of events, and the structure of the text and even more important, it helps to deepen comprehension. All those elements can interfere

reading even comprehension, that is why it is important to work on them before beginning a reading class.

Based on Anderson & Pearson (1984) there are three ways in which prior knowledge can affect comprehension: it enables students to make inferences about the reading, it directs attention to important information in knowledge domain, and it provides a plan for recalling. In the first item, inferences are important because most authors do not specify all the information needed to understand a text, some domain knowledge is necessary to understand the relations among the ideas in a text, for example, the following sentence contains an inference, "The student hit the ball out of the park." One may infer that the student hit the ball with a bat, but it is never mentioned because the readers already possess this information or should already possess this information. In the second item, the researcher expresses that Chiesi et al (1979), explained a selective attention hypothesis that suggests that people who have more relevant domain knowledge know what information is important and what is trivial. For example, the study explains that if a subject were observing a baseball game, the subject with high domain knowledge would know what to observe in that game: steals, strikeouts, or base hits. On the other hand, a subject with low domain knowledge would identify the size of the crowd as important. As for the third item, it is shown that prior knowledge helps in the recalling of information, but not in the part of decoding the input. It is safe to say that reading comprehension involves a high domain knowledge while reading to process the information correctly.

Before enlisting different concepts of prior knowledge, there is a need to explain the term *Tabula Rasa*. Many people used to believe that students were passive recipients of any given text, restating the phrase of them being an empty shell, but Piaget (1968) disagreed with the

tabula rasa notion of the child's mind. He proposed that young children gradually develop cognitive structures to make sense of the world; therefore, it reinforces the idea of this research that students have a bank of knowledge that needs to be unlocked before making them interact with any fictional or real contexts.

According to Stevens (1980) background knowledge and prior knowledge are generally interchangeable. Marzano (2004) & Stevens (1980) provided different opinions on the meaning of prior knowledge, they said that it is what one knows about a subject, whereas others state different and more complex definitions. Based on Biemans & Simons (1996), background knowledge is all the knowledge learners have acquired when entering a learning environment that is potentially relevant for acquiring new knowledge. Also, Dochy & Alexander (1995) claimed that prior knowledge is the whole of a person's knowledge, including explicit and tacit knowledge, metacognitive, and conceptual knowledge. As it has been shown before, prior knowledge is the raw material that conditions learning.

In addition to prior knowledge, the vocabulary can be added. According to Johnson & Johnson (2004), vocabulary is a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or set of words that individual speakers of a language may use. One can say that the vocabulary that an individual possesses differs from the one that another person has. It is said as well that when people think about vocabulary, the focus is on two things that are not interchangeable: word recognition and word meaning (Chall, 1983). According to Chall (1983), word recognition is the list of words that individuals are able to say while they see it in a printed form and word meaning includes the speaking list of words. Vocabulary has been left behind when it comes to research, but it has taken some importance due to Krashen's input hypothesis.

Krashen's input hypothesis (1983) refers to how human beings acquire languages by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input. He also mentions that students' progress in a natural way by understanding the input that vocabulary and grammar structures have slightly above their level, Krashen calls it $i + 1$ input. Learners are able to understand unacquired grammar structures and vocabulary through the help of contextual clues, that means, the knowledge the learner offers to the text: extralinguistic information, knowledge of the world, and previously acquired competence.

Consequently, Manzano (2004) believes that teaching vocabulary is synonymous with building background knowledge. There is expected that as the students read, they will increase the number of words they will understand; therefore, readers high in domain knowledge but low in vocabulary knowledge may use their domain knowledge to compensate for their lack of word knowledge and vice versa. This is because students bring both, vocabulary and prior knowledge, when they are trying to comprehend a text. On the other hand, several studies failed to find an interaction between domain knowledge and vocabulary knowledge and ended up believing that domain knowledge and vocabulary knowledge have independent roles and separate effects on reading comprehension (Freebody & Anderson, 1983; Stahl & Jacobson, 1986).

Moreover, the models of reading to understand how a person starts assimilating and integrating words and reach comprehension of the reading can also be added. The three main models that exists are: bottom-up, top-down, and the interactive approaches. Berardo (2006), refers to bottom-up processes as getting the meaning through reading word for word, letter for letter while paying attention to vocabulary and syntax. The same idea is shared by

Goodman (1970), who affirms that in bottom-up reading the learner recognizes the linguistic signals such as letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, and grammatical clues.

As it can be understood, this approach is focused on breaking down the words on a page without caring the involvement of the reader who provokes predictions and interprets information (Eskey, 1988). On the other hand, the top-down approach needs to activate the prior knowledge of the readers to bring meaning to the text and when this happens the learners jump from general to specific information in the text. Finally, the interactive approach offers a combination between the bottom-up and top-down approach. It is a mixture of orthographic, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and schematic processes that are used while reading (Eskey, 1988). In other words, learners use every mean possible to discover meaning.

Furthermore, it is important to introduce the two types of reading that are linked in a deeper level in the way learners acquire prior knowledge and vocabulary: intensive reading and extensive reading. Driscoll (2008) believes that extensive reading is related to pleasure reading or recreational reading. On the other hand, he refers to intensive reading as the reading in which the learner requires to pay close attention to ideas and details. According to Grellet (1981), extensive reading is referred as to read longer texts for the person's own pleasure. It has many characteristics to add like: the learners read materials that are well beyond their linguistic competence, avoidance of a dictionary, and freedom to choose the books. Intensive reading or focused reading is referred to a slow and careful reading where students read shorter texts to extract specific information. It has many characteristics to add like: it is concentrated and less relaxed, it is focused on the language rather than the text, and it is often called study-type reading. Most research has proved that extensive reading is the most efficient way to acquire vocabulary and enhance comprehension.

In addition, it is important to mention the two main reading strategies that learners can use when reading: skimming and scanning. These strategies help readers comprehend information in a more efficient way. According to Nuttal (1996), skimming is the rapid glance over the text to get the overall understanding of the same. The learner neglects unnecessary data and details are overlooked. On the other hand, scanning mostly refers to quick reading of the text to find a particular piece of information (Grellet, 1981). It can be said that these two strategies help the learner make sense of what they read.

Moreover, there exist devices that help the learner interpret the reading avoiding failures in the reading process. Those devices are the reading activities that are divided in three main types: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. It is said that the pre-reading stage is the most effective when it comes to activate the learner's prior knowledge. Based on Brown (1994) the pre-reading stage allows students to be engaged by introducing the topic and preparing the texts for the learners. This stage also helps the learner identify and compensate their lack of knowledge in terms of social, conceptual, and cultural information. Some examples of activities that can be carried out in this stage are: brainstorming, class discussion, semantic mapping, visual aids, predicting, among others.

Second, the while-reading stage is used to teach comprehension through making connections, generating questions, and determining importance by guiding the reader (Brown, 1994). Finally, the post-reading stage is used to test students' understanding of a text. It requires students to go back to the text and verify information; the learners connect new input with their background knowledge. These stages permit the readers describe, explain, and analyze the new information by using any means necessary to prepare the learner in the learning process.

In this section of the research, some important theories related to prior knowledge and vocabulary acquisition will be shown. The writer will try to emphasize on the different strategies to improve those two aspects of the research as well. First, let us introduce some of the important concepts and factors that influence prior knowledge on learners. As revised before, prior knowledge, background knowledge or schema is what the learners already know about one topic suggested, but they are different ways in which the teacher can activate it.

2.1 Prior knowledge activation through reflection and recording

In this method, learners have an active role because they need to bring what they know into mind and record it. Questioning students what they know about a topic orally or on paper is an exceptional way of doing this. Some of the studies that support this idea have stated that they have had an impact on reading comprehension (Carr & Thompson, 1996). Some other studies showed some benefits on text recall as well (Peeck et al., 1982). In other words, recording students' own thoughts and ideas about a previous memory have some impact on the comprehension of the text they are reading.

Spires et al., (1998) stated that activating background knowledge through reflection and oral elaboration during this stage was more effective than taking notes on the main ideas and details. Moreover, it can be mentioned the study of Peeck et al., (1982), where it was mentioned the importance of activating relevant schema rather than no activating it at all or activating the wrong schema on the text recalling and reading comprehension. In addition, Walraven et al., (1993) expressed that including direct instruction in the prior knowledge activation within a reciprocal teaching approach (interaction between the text and the reader) promoted reading comprehension better than not doing it at all. If it is analyzed, prior knowledge activation can trigger reading comprehension and the effects of the same can

roughly last four weeks after instruction, implying that the effects on restating can have lasting effects (Spires et al.,1998). To sum up, reading comprehension is linked deeply with the activation of prior knowledge.

2.2 Prior knowledge activation through interactive discussion

In the approach mentioned before, the students recollected prior knowledge by recording what they knew about the topic with little or no discussion from peers or teachers; on the other hand, this approach is based on the addition of interaction discussion. Doyle et al. (1991), implemented an activity with students where they had to think and record their prior knowledge and with the help of the teacher they were encouraged to participate into an active discussion of the topic.

With that said, it is important to mention that there is not research that supports the interactive approach as beneficial. Some of the studies mentioned that students' performance on comprehension tests were not better than that of peers who engaged in general discussion on the topic before reading or were part in no prereading activity. It can also be said that there is not evidence that the interactive approach was better than the direct instruction approach, but it can be said that the direct instruction method was only better with the familiarity of the words and topic (Doyle et al. 1991). It would be interesting to know under what conditions the interactive approach is beneficial in the prior knowledge activation stage.

2.3 Prior knowledge activation through answering questions

Rowe & Rayford's research (1987), suggested that teachers can help the activation of background knowledge by having students answer questions before and/or while they read the new reading material. In this study, the researchers implemented an activity where the

students needed to respond questions to a three series of purpose questions and they were asked to make predictions about the passage and end-of the passage questions. The students, here, were also placed in the test-taker's position and were asked to think about what they would try to find out while they read. The results were encouraging, they reflected that guided questions did in fact help to activate prior knowledge.

Some studies have also investigated the relation between the activation of background knowledge and answering questions to improve reading comprehension. Some of the research found reflects on the fact that generating answers eases deep processing and high-level knowledge construction which results in learning (King, 1994). King supported the idea that guided reciprocal peer questioning and answering method increased better lesson comprehension than untrained questioning. The main point of this study was the effectiveness of guided question and answering drills in reading comprehension.

Pflaum et al (1982) did some research on a different question-answer drill approach. In this study, the researchers asked the students five different questions before and during the reading process. The questions were made to ask about the topic, construct links between topic matter and prior knowledge, identify the role and location, and identify the topic's importance. The results suggested that this strategy is good for some readers because it depends on their reading abilities.

Pressley et al., (1992) stated that explanatory answers to questions about the content of the reading material leads to learning. Some of the approaches they used were: guided reciprocal peer questioning, asking students to respond to prequestions accompanying text, elaborative interrogation where students generate elaborations in response to why questions

about to-be-learned facts, and asking students to generate explanatory answers to questions as part of group learning. To sum, they emphasized that the most effective approach was the one that constructs a deep processing of knowledge and links the text to the schema.

2.4 The K-W-L strategy for activating prior knowledge

Based on Ogle (1986), this strategy helps students extract information before reading. K-W-L stands for accessing what I know, determining what I want to find out, and recalling what I learned. According to the author, in the first two steps the teacher and the students engage in oral discussions on the topic and then reflect about what they know about it, and in the last step the students share what they have learned about the subject. Informal feedback has established that this strategy increases the retention of topic read and motivates students to be engaged in the reading topic, but it lacks research to confirm the benefits on reading comprehension and prior knowledge activation.

2.5 CONTACT-2, computer-assisted activation of prior knowledge

This approach is the opposite from the ones discussed that required paper and pencil and face to face interaction. Biemans et al., (1996) inquired into a computer assisted approach for activating preconceptions, comparing and contrasting these preconceptions with new information, and formulating, applying, and evaluating new conceptions. The results of this approach were beneficial to the activation of the schema because they developed higher thinking conceptions than students who were not working with this approach and the outcome was still be present two months after the usage of this approach. This fomented the idea that linking prior knowledge to the new input is a good learning strategy and that a computer system can be as effective as one face to face.

2.6 Prior knowledge activation through interpretation of topic-related pictures

Croll et al. (1986), outlined an approach that builds and activates prior knowledge. This approach relies on the usage of topic-related pictures and the only study found was of two students that improved in the reading comprehension area in both text and pictures. This approach already shows certain disadvantages: lack of research on small and big groups to demonstrate the validity of the same.

As it has been mentioned before, there are many different strategies and approaches that can be used to facilitate learning to the students, but what are the things that need to be considered to secure the effectiveness of the strategies to activate prior knowledge?

- a) Grade level: most of the students across our country have or will face the application of different prior knowledge activation strategies and that there is no correlation that establishes that it is not effective in any of the levels.
- b) Student characteristics: There is an importance to the level of familiarity of the text that the students are reading. Carr et al., (1996) discovered a different pattern of results depending on the familiarity of the text topic to the students: unfamiliar passages made difficult to activate prior knowledge because the students were limited in the topic area, so it can be said that the activation of prior knowledge led to improvement of the text familiarity in these cases. On the other hand, some studies have shown that the activation of prior knowledge may interfere with learning when learners are confronted with the new input different from their preconceptions. When students have this clash of feedback, they tend to perform bad in tests of recalling and comprehension than those who do not activate prior knowledge (Alvermann et al.,

1985). It was shown that students tend to disregard prior knowledge when it does not match the new input and they start constructing more accurate meanings than using the inconsistent schema to produce feedback of what was read.

- c) Text characteristics: most of the texts used are expository and narrative texts. Most of the evidence recollected added that the strategies of prior knowledge activation are more effective with informational texts than the others (Carr et al., 1996).

In addition, it is important to continue talking about the second item of this research which is vocabulary acquisition. There is a distinction made between vocabulary learning and vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary learning can be inferred that is the conscious study of a word and meaning and vocabulary acquisition the picking up of a word through exposure (Ellis, 1985). The first one can be found in formal or instructional settings like when the students are asked to use the dictionary or find the meaning through context, like in the classrooms. On the other hand, vocabulary acquisition occurs in informal or natural settings like when learners use words in conversations or interact with native speakers because they have already acquired the meaning of some word. So, in this research the usage of natural settings will be used to refer to vocabulary acquisition and instructional or formal to refer to vocabulary learning.

It is important to mention the distinction between the first language and a second language, and a foreign language. In the first language or mother tongue, it is safe to say that is the one that children learn from birth, although there are many who learn more than one mother tongue. When it comes to the second language or foreign language the main difference is the geographical context in which the language is spoken. An ESL (English as a second language) refers to a situation in which English is vastly used in education,

administration, commerce, and so forth., but an EFL (English as a foreign language) situation is when the learner does not have the geographical context to continue using the language after classrooms (Johnson & Johnson, 2004).

To even start talking about vocabulary learners need to know how it is to learn a word. As learners read, they recognize words and internalize them into their mental lexicon. In these cases, readers have different channels for input or output (I/O). To understand speech the auditory input lexicon must understand and designate a sound pattern for the same (it will differ from languages, dialects, and so forth.), to read the word the visual input lexicon has to learn how to identify the new orthographic pattern (in an alphabetic language, grapheme and phonemes classifications to access phonology and then match the word in the auditory input lexicon); to say the word the speech output lexicon must match the word's pronunciation programs, to write the word the spelling output lexicon has to blend with the orthographic structure. So, every single ability has to be in tune of the input and output connections, so the process is well learned or produced.

Now that there is an idea of how the mind works when it is learning a new word, let us ask ourselves how students acquire new vocabulary. The vast majority of the words most learners know are not learned from looking them up in the dictionaries, but from context (Sternberg, 1987). There are two estimates made by Seashore and Eckerson (1940) and Nagy and Herman (1987) that suggest the number of words a college undergraduate should know. Both authors made different statements: the first one stated that a college student knows approximately 156,000 words and that most of these words were 58,000 'basic', 96,000 'derived,' and 2,000 'rare; the second author was more conservative when he mentioned that

a learner knows about 40,000 words. So, at the end it can be confirmed that the majority of the words were not taught.

Reading also leads the way to vocabulary acquisition. Krashen (1989), estimated that students had learned about 45 new words simply by reading a novel. Reading also provides the reader with the whole language, and not only with isolated words. This a clear opposition to the idea that most vocabulary trainings have, which is the obsession with items and their definitions (McCarthy, 1984). There are two processes on how a person acquires vocabulary while reading: the implicit vocabulary learning hypothesis and the explicit vocabulary learning hypothesis. The first one explains that a word in a text is acquired due to the repeated exposure in multiple contexts. Based on Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1989), he reflects that people acquire language by communicating: "language is subconsciously acquired - while you are acquiring it, you do not know you are doing so; your conscious focus is on the message, not on the form. Thus, the acquisition process is identical to what had been termed 'incidental learning.' Also acquired knowledge is represented subconsciously in the brain - it is what Chomsky has termed 'tacit knowledge'."

On the other part, the explicit vocabulary learning hypothesis is attached to metacognitive strategies like: identifying unknown words, trying to get the meaning from context or consulting dictionaries or vocabulary banks, and finally trying to understand the meaning with the help of repetition, semantic map, or imagery techniques. These two learning hypotheses help the researcher understand that vocabulary acquisition is a frame between subconsciously learning and a conscious effort to respond to unknown words.

In addition, Henriksen (1999) investigated three dimensions in which words are learned. These three dimensions are: partial to precise knowledge, depth of knowledge, and receptive to productive use ability. The first dimension is closely related to the number of vocabulary words with different levels of difficulty; the second one refers to the learners' profound knowledge of the vocabulary word; and the third one introduces the distinction between comprehension and production. Also, Aitchison (1994) did some research on how a person acquires a vocabulary word and he explained that a reader goes into three different stages: labeling, packing, and network building. At the labeling stage, the student places meanings and constructs an imagery vision of the vocabulary word; on the second one, the reader classifies the acquired words into one group (actions, people, things, etc.); and finally, the third one intends to link the words together.

Second and foreign language students followed certain types of vocabulary exercises (Paribakht and Wesche, 1996). Selective attention, recognition, manipulation, interpretation, and production are the exercises that follow a certain order in mental processing that a reader needs while doing vocabulary exercises. As the word says it, selective attention is mostly focusing students' attention on the targeted words; recognition is basically the intention that the facilitator has for the students to recognize the words introduced in the first step as they are expected to know partial or complete meaning of the same; manipulation entails the morphological and grammatical knowledge that leads to a more profound usage of the words; interpretation requires from students to understand the links of the vocabulary words in multiple contexts; and production means to apply everything that has been learned in certain exercises and producing accurate expressions using the aimed words. To sum up, the mental

processes in these exercises to acquire words are necessary in order to get the correct grasp and usage of them.

Laufer & Hulstijn (2001) submitted a statement that affirmed that Need, Search, and Evaluation, play an important role in vocabulary acquisition. The need component is known as the motivational step that a student requires to achieve success. The search step is the necessity a student has to grasp the meaning of a word or the attempts shown to seek a word meaning (the usage of a dictionary or the instruction's questioning about a word). The evaluation component is the ability the student possesses to assess if a word is correctly used in a context or not, or analyzed the word meanings in different scenarios. When all the components are used together, the involvement load takes place and the authors make the statement that when a student has a higher involvement load, they will retain the word meaning better.

Moreover, it can be added the many factors that exist in vocabulary acquisition through reading. In the next items, the writer will try to list and explain the main points that vocabulary acquisition entails.

2.7 Effect of repetition and L1 lexicalization

Words repetition in reading while acquiring a second or foreign vocabulary targeted items and L1 Lexicalization have been greatly researched. Chen and Truscott (2010) investigated 72 Mandarin- speakers whose level of English was intermediate. Some of the results of this research emphasized on the importance that repetition has on word retention, productive knowledge, orthographic knowledge, and semantic knowledge. In other words, the learner will learn to retain a word meaning faster and use the aimed words better if the

frequency of the targeted words is increased. Also, the use of the mother tongue greatly helps students in L2 lexicalization because the learners grasp the meaning better when they translate words to their L1.

2.8 Type of tasks and dictionary use

Hill and Laufer (2003) showed some interest in how the type of tasks and the use of the dictionary affected the retention of the aimed words. These authors studied 128 university students whose first language was Cantonese and the foreign language English. These students were tested with three different tasks: a form-oriented production task, a form-oriented comprehension task, and a message-oriented task. The learners needed to write their answers based on the electronic information and the use of the dictionary was tracked in the three tasks. The results of this study were the following: the message-oriented task was less effective in retaining the target words due to the fact that the oriented task demanded from students to know more word meanings than the message-oriented task. Also, the usage of the dictionary was more obvious in the oriented-task than in the message-oriented task. This is because in the latter, the students could get the meanings of the words more easily from context.

The writers also viewed some good results of the use of the dictionary in vocabulary acquisition: the use of the dictionary helped the students to translate the words into their L1 tongue and the more the learners used the dictionary, the more it helped them acquire the words. So, it can be concluded that the tasks are more effective when they required students to use dictionaries more frequently.

2.9 Marginal glosses and dictionary use

The combination of marginal glosses and dictionary usage underwent through a close look to see how they affected the relationship between frequency of words and provision of meaning. Hulstijn et al. (1996) investigated 78 Dutch university students who lived in France and their French level was advanced. The activity consisted on placing the students into three different groups with different reading conditions. The first group had the condition of using marginal glosses where difficult words were translated, the second group had the condition of using the dictionary if necessary, and the third group that was called *control* because that group could not use the dictionary or had marginal glosses in their reading passage. In the reading passage, there were sixteen target words that were intended to be seen once or three times during the reading. The results of this activity were: the more frequent the target words were, the easier was for the learners to acquire new words when they had the meaning of unfamiliar words through the marginal glosses and dictionary usage. The authors also added two important statements: the students retain the words better with marginal glosses than with the dictionary use and that the use of dictionary use helps with the process of incidental vocabulary learning.

2.10 Influence of instruction and synonym generation

The influence of synonym generation has been studied as to how it affects L2 vocabulary learning during reading. Barcroft (2009) carried out a study where two learning contexts were given: incidental and intentional learning contexts. The study was based on 114 Spanish speaking university students who were learning English in Mexico City: fifty-nine of those were in low-intermediate level and 55 in high-intermediate level. One of the following conditions was randomly given to each of the participants: incidental condition (students were asked to read the meaning of some aimed words), intentional condition (the students were asked to read the meaning, instructed to try to translate the word, and then take

a post-test based on the words), incidental-semantic condition (learners were asked to read the meaning of the word and generate synonyms in their L1 tongue), and intentional semantic condition (the readers were asked to learn the word by translating it into their L1 tongue, generate a synonym for the same, and ask to take a post-test of the same words). Afterwards, there were two types of post-tests to remember the studied words: first language (L1) to second language (L2) and vice versa. The results were the following: they proved that the intentional method was more helpful to acquire new words than the incidental because it gave word-oriented instructions and it helped the fact that the learners could translate the words into their L1 , they also added that generating synonyms badly affected the acquisition of vocabulary in both the intentional and incidental methods because the learners cannot fully focus on the memorization and mapping (connecting word and meaning) of the words that were studied.

2.11 Effect of word class

The effects that repetition has on vocabulary acquisition has been studied, but Kweon and Kim's study (2008) states that there is something more important than repetition such as word class. This study consisted of twelve Korean-speaking university students in an intermediate English reading course. The study had different steps: first, the students were asked to take a pre-test to check their knowledge of their target words; then, in a five-week time of the reading course, they were asked to do several extensive reading activities, later to take two post-tests: on their last day of their course (post-test 1) and one month after the course (post-test 2). The results of this study were the following: all of the students showed an obtained benefit that was the acquisition of the target words in the post-tests and the authors affirmed that it was easier to retain nouns than verbs. The writers stated that nouns

are simple particles to memorize, but verbs need to have a direct connection to a noun to be acquired.

2.12 Effect of contextual clues

In this case, Webb (2008) studied how the context of the target words is used to acquire vocabulary. The study presented is basically of fifty Japanese-speaking university students who had learned English as a foreign language. The activity was carried out by dividing the group in two and ten words in different contexts were given to each group. The first group was called *experimental* and they had more cues of the word meanings than the second group that was called *comparison*. After they were done, the participants needed to take a vocabulary quiz to evaluate several things such as: recalling of form and meaning and recognition of form and meaning. The results were clear that the text with enough cues of word meanings helped to recall and recognize meaning, but not to recall or recognize form.

2.13 Learner proficiency level and word frequency

This case study is based on the effects that a learner's proficiency level and word frequency have on vocabulary acquisition. Tekmen & Daloglu (2006) conducted an investigation on ninety-nine university students whose first language was Turkish and English their foreign language. These students were divided into three groups according to their levels of proficiency in English: intermediate, upper- intermediate, and advanced levels. Different things happened in this experiment: the learners took a pre-test and a post-test after every class for two weeks and then another post-test after two weeks later; the use of dictionaries was not allowed, so no other sources could help them acquire the vocabulary words. The results were very predictable: the students gained new vocabulary words from reading, the higher proficiency group showed better results than the low proficiency group, and as usual, the higher the exposure of the vocabulary words, the more they acquired the

target words. They also mentioned that the exposure of the words was more benefiting for the low proficiency group than for the higher levels because they believed that those students needed to access, in any possible way what they knew about the words they were reading, which were higher in number.

2.14 Text comprehension and topic familiarity

This time the author wanted to prove if there is a relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition and if topic familiarity helps in the intake, gain, and retention of a word or not. Pulido (2007) took as a sample ninety-nine Spanish-speaking university students taking three distinct university courses and for whom the first language was English. Some of the things that happened in this research were that a survey and a test about test familiarity and reading comprehension were administered before and after the vocabulary activities and they also evaluated the intake, gain, and retention of the aimed words. The results of doing these activities were that when it came to reading comprehension, the participants showed an increased in the three-phased process mentioned before and when it came to topic familiarity, it demonstrated that topic familiarity is linked to lexical intake, that means that if a student is more familiarized with the words, the easier is to understand the text.

2.15 L1 translation method

This method is mostly used at the beginning stage of the learning process, but it is proven that is useful in the recall and retention of the vocabulary words. Ramachandran & Rahim (2004) emphasized on the non-translation method where it is already given the meanings of the target words, instead of looking the words up in the dictionary in the L1. The authors took as participants sixty ESL learners aged 16 from a secondary school in Penang, Malaysia to test their performance in the two methods: translation and non- translation. The

results were surprising for the writer because they showed that the students did better when they translated the words into their L1 (translation) forms and not while having the meanings of the words in the L2 form (non-translation).

2.16 Effect of multimedia annotations

Vocabulary acquisition can be obtained by many sources and one of them can be by using multimedia as stated by Chun & Plass (1996). This study focused on how words were exposed: text definition only, text and picture, and text and video. Taking these three conditions into consideration, the authors found 103 German students who were attending a university in California to study English as a second language, and asked them to do several activities: the participants needed to read a short passage in which eighty-two words were shown using multimedia in the three different conditions mentioned before. After that, they were asked to do a vocabulary test with only thirty-six of the eighty-two words previously seen. The results presented that students remembered the words better when shown in pictures and texts. More specifically, video and text helped to acquire vocabulary, but not text definition.

2.17 Reading while listening

Reading, reading while listening, and only listening to stories were studied to see the effects on vocabulary acquisition. Brown et al. (2008) took as a sample of participants thirty Japanese-speaking university students in Kyushu, Japan. The conditions the students went through were: they were divided into three different groups under one of the modes of reading (reading, reading-while-listening, and only listening). They were also evaluated by two different post-tests (multiple choice exercise and a translation from L2 to L1 exercise) in specific times: one immediate, one week after, and a three-week post-test. Some of the results showed that the best reading mode was reading while listening and the least effective one

was the listening only mode, but when it came to retention of words neither of the reading modes worked in the last run.

2.18 Explanation, initial L2 vocabulary, and frequency of reading

Reading exercises, an ample explanation, and pre-reading vocabulary exercises greatly intervene with the acquisition of vocabulary. Collins (2010) investigated eighty preschoolers whose native language was Portuguese and English their second language. The results were tested on how good those three elements were on the retention of the target words. The findings showed that the three elements were helpful when the vocabulary words are fully explained, when students guess the meanings of words in pre-vocabulary exercises, or when the target words are frequently repeated in the reading text.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

In this part of the investigation, the researcher will explain the different methods, approaches, types of investigation, collection of the data, and some analyses of the study to give a better scope. In order to introduce the topic, the researcher wants to explain the different meanings of several words that are important in this study, those are, the approach method, and instruments such as the observation checklists, pre-tests, post-tests, and reading tests.

According to Creswell (2008), an approach in a research is the plan and procedure that considers all the steps from the general to the specific details of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. There are three main important approaches: the qualitative, the quantitative, and the mixed method. In this study, the qualitative method is the one that has been applied. On the other hand, a research method is conceptualized as all the methods or techniques that the researcher proposed to collect, analyze, and interpret information. Finally, there is a brief introduction of the instruments: an observation checklist that refers to a list of items where is checked the implementation of vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge exercises, a pre-test that collects the data from the students at the beginning stage of the study and that always has an important goal. The reading tests or exercises are used to evaluate the ongoing progress of the students who participate in this study; and finally, a post-test that provides an overall view of how much the students have advanced from the beginning of the research to the end of it.

3.1 Research Approach

There are three different research approaches that can be mentioned when it comes to this stage: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approach. Let us talk briefly about the three of them.

Sampieri (2006) believed that in the quantitative approach, the researcher tries to evaluate, compare, interpret, establish prior- research, and determine causes and implications. In other words, it is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables (Creswell, 2008). Some of the characteristics this kind of research must have are the delimitation of the problem, relationship between variables, formulation of the question, and the establishment of a measurable and observable problem. It can also be mentioned the quantitative strategies that this method uses: experimental designs and non-experimental designs as surveys. In the first one, the researcher applies one specific action to influence an outcome. In other words, the researcher applies one specific treatment to a group and withholds from the other and then, it assesses how both groups have done and provides a score. In the survey research, the researcher provides a numeric description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population and the point is to generalize from that sample to a population (Fowler, 2002).

On the other hand, Creswell (2008) states that a qualitative research is the exploring of human behavior ascribe to a social problem. Some of the characteristics this research has are the presence of emerging questions and procedures. The data is typically collected on the field and it is typically inductive from particular to general themes and the interpretation of the collected data. In regards to this investigation, this is the method that is going to be used on the field. Finally, the mixed method research is an approach where both quantitative and qualitative methods are used to get a better understanding of a problem than either of those methods alone (Creswell, 2008).

In the next table, there is a summary of the different research approaches used in any investigation. The different characteristics previously conversed on this matter are shown in it.

Quantitative Methods	Mixed Methods	Qualitative Methods
Pre-determined	Both predetermined and emerging methods	Emerging methods
Instrument based questions	Both open- and closed-ended questions	Open-ended questions
Performance data, attitude data, observational data, and census data	Multiple forms of data drawing on all possibilities	Interview data, observation data, document data, and audiovisual data
Statistical analysis	Statistical and text analysis	Text and image analysis
Statistical interpretation	Across databases interpretation	Themes, patterns interpretation

Table 1. Quantitative, Mixed, and Qualitative Methods. (Creswell, 2008).

3.2 Research method

There are different research methods that can be mentioned as part to introduce the research method for this investigation: ethnography, narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory, and case studies. The first one considers people and the nature of phenomena. It accounts the nature of phenomena and works with unstructured data and also analyses the data through interpretation. It is also conducted during a stipulated period of time. Also, it gathers data through detailed observation of the participants within a specific context. The data that are usually gathered through participant observation is taken via field-notes and unstructured interviews, among others. Moreover, it requires extensive fieldwork commitment and it is time consuming because the researcher needs to be on the field observing and taking notes (Crotty, 1998).

The narrative research is a design of inquiry from the humanities that studies the lives of individuals and questions one or more people about their lives' stories (Crotty, 1998). Then, the researcher retells the stories in a chronological way and compares their stories in a collaborative way. The phenomenological research describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. In other words, a collection of experiences by the people who have lived the phenomena. For matters of this research, this is the research method that is going to be used throughout it.

Grounded theory refers to the general view of a process, actions, or interactions from the participants. This research involves multiple stages of data collection and interrelationship of different categories. Finally, the case study research tries to analyze a case (event, program, process, one or more individuals). Sustained procedures are used to collect data during the period of time allotted (Stake, 1995).

In the next table, there is a summary of the different research methods used in any investigation. The different characteristics previously described on the subject are shown in it.

Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental designs • Nonexperimental designs, such as surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative research • Phenomenology • Grounded theory • Ethnographies • Case study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convergent • Explanatory sequential • Exploratory sequential • Transformative, embedded, or multiphase

Table 2. Quantitative, Mixed, and Qualitative Methods. (Creswell, 2008).

3.3 Information sources

Data collection has been done through primary and secondary sources. A primary source of information is always the one that has been evaluated and researched over time. Some of the sources are the books used in this research: *Investigation Methodology* by Sampieri et al (2014) and *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* by John Creswell (2008). In the first book, the researcher could read information about the different approaches and methods of a research, research designs, and characteristics of them. In the second book, it added information to the already valuable one from the Sampieri book. In addition, the participants of this study are the ninth-graders at the Our Lady of Sion High School, where they take Literature lessons on the fifth lesson every week and most of their readings are based on the book *Dracula*.

A secondary source will always be the one that analyzes or interprets a primary source of information. Some examples of this category are the key informants such as PDF documents of articles, dissertations, education reports, among others that were used to find information about the topic. In the first place, it can be considered the Technical Report n°526: “Defining the Role of Prior Knowledge and Vocabulary in Reading Comprehension” written by Steven A. Stahl (1991). This report gave the writer a clear understanding of prior knowledge and vocabulary and how those two factors affected reading comprehension in class. Second, “Factors in Vocabulary Acquisition Through Reading” by Yunjung You (unknown). This article provided some of the factors considered when teaching or activating vocabulary in reading exercises. Third, the National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum: “Background Knowledge” by Nicole Strangman and Tracey Hall (unknown). This article stated some of the strategies mostly used in the classrooms to activate prior knowledge. Moreover, it can be added that the literature book that is going to be used in this research is *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (2009) on which the researcher of this study will base

most of the activities and also the eagerness from the students that let the writer know they wanted to learn some more.

3.4 Analyses Categories

This research will apply different categories, such as observation checklists, one for prior knowledge activation and another for vocabulary acquisition, a pre-test, a post-test, and a reading test. The first category is an observation checklist and it was applied during three different literature lessons. During those lessons, the writer will take into account different things like the activities or materials proposed by the teacher to activate or acquire the main strategies.

Then, there is the pre-test related to the *Dracula* book of Bram Stoker that relates a story of a count who tries to expand his territory on the expense of human lives. Some of the activities to be applied will consist of vocabulary and prior knowledge strategies to implement them on the *Dracula* abstracts of the book. The same thing can be said about the post-test that will state a review of the different activities done in the pre-test and evaluate and interpret the progress of the students.

Moreover, the reading test will be applied as part of the whole scheme of activities to incorporate vocabulary and prior knowledge activation through the different exercises. In this part, the researcher will try to incorporate exercises that assess both vocabulary and prior knowledge acquisition in the items to use the information found in the previous chapters.

3.5 Data collection and instruments

A research instrument is a tool used to collect data on a specific population sample with certain characteristics. Some of the instruments and their structure are the following: the observation checklists, a test before and after reading activities, and a reading exercise based on stories related to the *Dracula* book. These four instruments will be applied to a group of

ninth-graders that have a pre- intermediate, intermediate, and advanced level. The research instruments will also be related to the vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation.

3.5.1 Observation checklists

The observation checklists are based on different items closely related to activities, materials, application of a pre-test, a post-test, or reading activities that will be applied on the first three days of the weeks allotted. These checklists, as any other instrument provided in this study, will have a headline with the name of the university, the name of the student doing this study, the level of the group, and the topic of the exercise on the first part of the checklist. Then, the instructions will be clear and punctual, so the writer does not lose focus on the main idea of the instrument. In addition, there will be some scales of grading which are the following: excellent, good, or deficient. Finally, there will also be a part where the researcher can write different observation comments that explain important ideas, recommendations, or praising.

3.5.2 Pre -Test

Furthermore, the tests applied before and after reading activities will be related to the main topics: vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation. The pre-test will have a part where the students can activate prior knowledge with some content pictures about the scenes from the book *Dracula*, so the students can guess what happened in the scenes. Also, there will be a part of open questions where the students share their prior knowledge in a K-W-L chart about the *Dracula* book, so the researcher can have a clear idea of the students' view on this book. Moreover, there is a part mentioned that applies to vocabulary where the students have to read some abstracts of the book, analyze the words in bold, grasp the meaning from the context, and write it down on the space provided for such activity. As well, there is a part where the students will have to write down the meaning of the isolated words.

Finally, there will be a part in which the students can match some words to their meanings to verify their understanding of some basic words taken from the book *Dracula*.

3.5.3 Post -test

In the post-test, the students will have a very similar exercise to the one in the pre-test, so the writer can evaluate progress. This test will have the same exercises with some differences on the content to see if they have gained some new knowledge based on the pre-test and reading exercises also proposed for this study. This test will be applied on the last day of the sessions allotted in the institution and with the permission of the teacher in charge.

3.5.4 Reading tests

The reading exercises will be also an instrument used in this study to promote reading comprehension. These exercises will be closely related to the book *Dracula*, but they will be about different topics such as: the movies about Dracula, readings about vampires or bats, assumptions about the count Dracula and Transylvania, and different versions of the story in pocket size. Taking into account all of those items, the researcher will elaborate different reading exercises where reading comprehension exercises will be the main focus. These reading exercises will take at least from two to three literature lessons which the students already have scheduled. Also, the same exercises will be applied every week in the literature lessons, so the researcher can promote and verify progress while doing the mentioned above.

3.6 Collection data processes and data analyses

In this part of the study there will be shown how the useful collection of data will be processed and how it will be analyzed. To introduce this part, the researcher would like to refer to the whole process undergone to achieve the measurement of the students' level and progress at the Our Lady of Sion High School. As it was established in the previous item, the instruments needed a population to be applied to, so the researcher asked for the help of the

nuns' congregation and the high school principal's permission to conduct this study in the last four months of the year 2018. The nature of this study was fully explained and questions related to the main focus of this study were answered. It was understood that this study can be a great tool among the many instruments the school already possesses to help teachers in their lessons and to evaluate the students' process in the reading skill. The researcher was also introduced to the head teacher of the level and explanations were given about the interest of this study which could lead to an establishment of a set of rules when it came to evaluate students in the reading skill, considering vocabulary and prior knowledge within the reading exercises.

In the first stage, good rapport was achieved by the researcher with the students. It was clear that that one group of ninth-graders was between pre- intermediate and advanced level. The students were informed on the reason why the researcher was there and understood the fact that the tests or activities of this study did not affect their final evaluation with the head teacher, so the atmosphere completely changed with that piece of information.

While doing the three different observation sessions, the students felt at ease with the presence of the author of this paper. Once the researcher noticed that, the necessity of taking advantage of that level of rapport was taken. The first instrument which was the pre-test of the book *Dracula* was applied between the fourth and fifth week of being the researcher in the institution. These tests had taken different parts of the book to evaluate vocabulary and prior knowledge. The attitudes of the students were favorable because they found the test as a way to be able to interact with each other and ask questions aloud. The researcher had already given the instructions and it had been established that no talking was allowed while doing it.

Before the test, necessary precautions were taken, the researcher knew that some of the students were not going to be present and that it was necessary to apply all the tests to every student. So, the researcher talked to the head teacher and asked her the favor to apply the pre-test to students that had been absent. While doing the test, it was explained to them that there were no right or wrong answers as well as the fact that this test did not affect their final score. The objective was to obtain honest and free answers to the different exercises.

The researcher is still on week 6th; therefore, the reading activities are being applied and collected to carry out a further analysis. Some of the students referred to the writer that they had liked the activities proposed because it was stressed free and they could answer and be themselves. The post-test will be applied on the last session and the researcher expects some improvement in both of the reading comprehension strategies: vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation.

The data analysis of the observation checklists will be done via explanatory sessions due to the fact that it considers the items presented on the lists and the observation notes taken after the application. This instrument will establish a good starting point from which the researcher links: the teacher and students. Vocabulary and prior knowledge activation require the ability of the teacher's knowledge and the pedagogical implementation. The interpretation of the pre and post tests will be shown in a table in which the analysis of the same will be tabulated and explained to understand furtherly the validity and progress of the students. The reading exercises will also be analyzed and interpret; therefore, they will also be tabulated and described in the next chapters.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

Most of the students are used to reading one book per trimester in the English class following two kinds of strategies: reading for answering questions and writing a summary of what they have read. The idea in this study is to show them how to analyze what they have read by applying two different strategies: vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation.

In this case, there were different ways to obtain information from students: an observation checklist where the researcher could mark what they did during the literature class and add comments that might be useful to the head teacher. Second, a pretest was applied (related to the book *Dracula* and it was based mostly on vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation) after some time observing the class and the interactions with the teacher. Third, the learners also read and answered some questions based on different texts related to the book *Dracula* to know how well they did at identifying specific parts of the texts and inferring. Finally, the students also had to do a post-test that evaluated prior knowledge, vocabulary building, and reading comprehension exercises. It is important to say that these students were fully aware of the usefulness of this study and understood that the exercises were based on their level, so they did not have problems while doing such activities.

Let us mention the participants of this study. The ninth-grade students, specifically the 9C group (10 females and 5 males), at Our Lady of Sion High School who have been learning English since pre-school, others have enrolled since primary school, and others have been enrolled since seventh or eighth grade. Most of the students have acquired communication skills to be able to produce the language and interact with one another. The

production part seemed to be highly important for them due to the fact that they required from students to interact with teachers and other students in English outside the classroom.

The written part was also important in the English class because of the number of topics needed to be taught and learned, so the teacher had an incredible classroom management and rapport with the students. The attitude was also a great factor when it comes to the English class, the students showed an amount of respect towards teachers that influenced the way students learned. On the other hand, the literature class has been taken from their already hectic schedule one lesson per week which means that teachers have to read, develop exercises, apply instruments, and evaluate progress, in the short time available. There is a reason why the writer of this research wanted to do this study in this high school, the possibility of being able to work with students with a high English level and a positive attitude to participate in the exercises and activities during class.

4.1 Analysis and interpretation of results

The analysis and interpretation of the results were divided into four different stages taking into account the two main strategies involved in this study: vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation. The four stages were: the application of the evaluation rubric during the observation sessions, the pre-test, the reading activities, and the post test that will be explained in isolation afterwards.

4.1.1. Observation checklists

The first instrument applied was the observation checklist that considers items related to prior knowledge and vocabulary acquisition. The checklists of prior knowledge evaluated items such as worksheets or materials used in the class; for example, the activities or exercises related to the topic that activate prior knowledge, revising topics or main ideas from

previous lessons, application of a pre or posttests, and techniques used in class to activate prior knowledge.

Moreover, some of the different items presented in the checklist of vocabulary acquisition were the examples given by the head teacher when asked about meanings, the application of a pre-test and a post-test, as well as the different exercises and strategies used to activate or acquire vocabulary. These instruments were applied on the first three weeks of this study and it gave the researcher some feedback on how the head teacher conducted the literature class. With the results of both rubrics, the researcher will be able to explain how the head teacher tried to conduct a literature class taking into account some of the strategies already investigated, so it can be compared with the theory the different techniques used in it.

4.1.1.1 Observation checklist – Prior Knowledge

It can be said that the researcher observed the lesson three times. The head teacher evaluated the activities before each unit of the *Dracula* book. This book contains pre-while, and post activities which the teacher used to activate the students' knowledge domain of the next chapter about to be reviewed. Some of the times, the head teacher provided some minutes to brainstorm the main ideas of the previous chapter because the book was supposed to be read in class and the goal was to have a timeline of the ideas already read. With this said, it is valuable to add that the teacher obtained in the three different observation sessions an *excellent* when providing materials to activate prior knowledge and a category of *good* when revising the main ideas of the previous chapters; this was not because the teacher did not want to, but because there was not a necessity from the students to do so.

Furthermore, the application of a pre or post-tests was basically done with the exercises the *Dracula* book contained. Some of the exercises done before reading the chapter were to review the different images the chapter provided to make a prediction of what was

going to happen in it. Then, there were also different matchings that contained difficult or unknown words with their correspondent definitions for the students' level. The students were used to doing these exercises before every chapter. As mentioned before, some of the techniques the researcher could observe during the observation sessions that activated prior knowledge were: discussion sessions related to previous chapters, question and answer drills where the teacher asked questions related to previous chapters aloud, so the students could answer them, and the interpretation of pictures that were shown in the chapters to be read. In the application of pre and post tests and techniques that activated prior knowledge the head teacher obtained an *excellent* which means that those two activities were always applied.

4.1.1.2 Observation checklist – Vocabulary Acquisition

There were four different items observed in this observation checklist. The first one corresponds to the examples given by the head teacher when asking about the meaning of a word. Most of the times the teacher tried to explain the word and gave an example of it or asked aloud, so that the students would explain the meanings, other times she asked the students to use the dictionary and if the students could not understand the meanings in it, asked the teacher. The grading category for this item was *excellent* due to the many examples, explanations, use of dictionary, among other ways, the teacher used to provide the meaning of the words.

The second issue of the observation checklist refers to the application of a pre or a post-test. The different exercises worked on before each unit referred to both vocabulary and prior knowledge. In this case, the way the head teacher applied a pre-test about vocabulary domain was with the picture related exercises where there were word/meaning matchings and the building of glosses of the words the students would find more challenging. There was no evidence that the head teacher would apply a post-test related to vocabulary building up. The

Dracula book also provided different reading exercises that showed the meanings of the words as the students were reading. One important strategy was that the head teacher usually played the CD-ROM of the literature, so the students could follow the reading. In these items of the observation checklist (vocabulary knowledge exercises and strategies to build up vocabulary), the result was *excellent* in both due to many techniques and exercises related. On the other hand, the pretest was the only evidence in the observation session; therefore, the grading category was *good* due to the absence of a post-test.

4.1.2 Pre-test

The pretest reflected *Dracula* content based on the two main strategies presented in this study. This test also considered a reading comprehension exercise where the students could practice further and put into action different strategies of the prior knowledge activation and vocabulary acquisition. This test was applied on the fourth and fifth weeks of the visits to the high school. This test was evaluated with an analytic rubric where the categories were *excellent*, *good*, and *deficient* and with the possibility of writing some comments or praising for further improvement.

4.1.2.1 K-W-L chart

The results of this part of the pretest were the following:

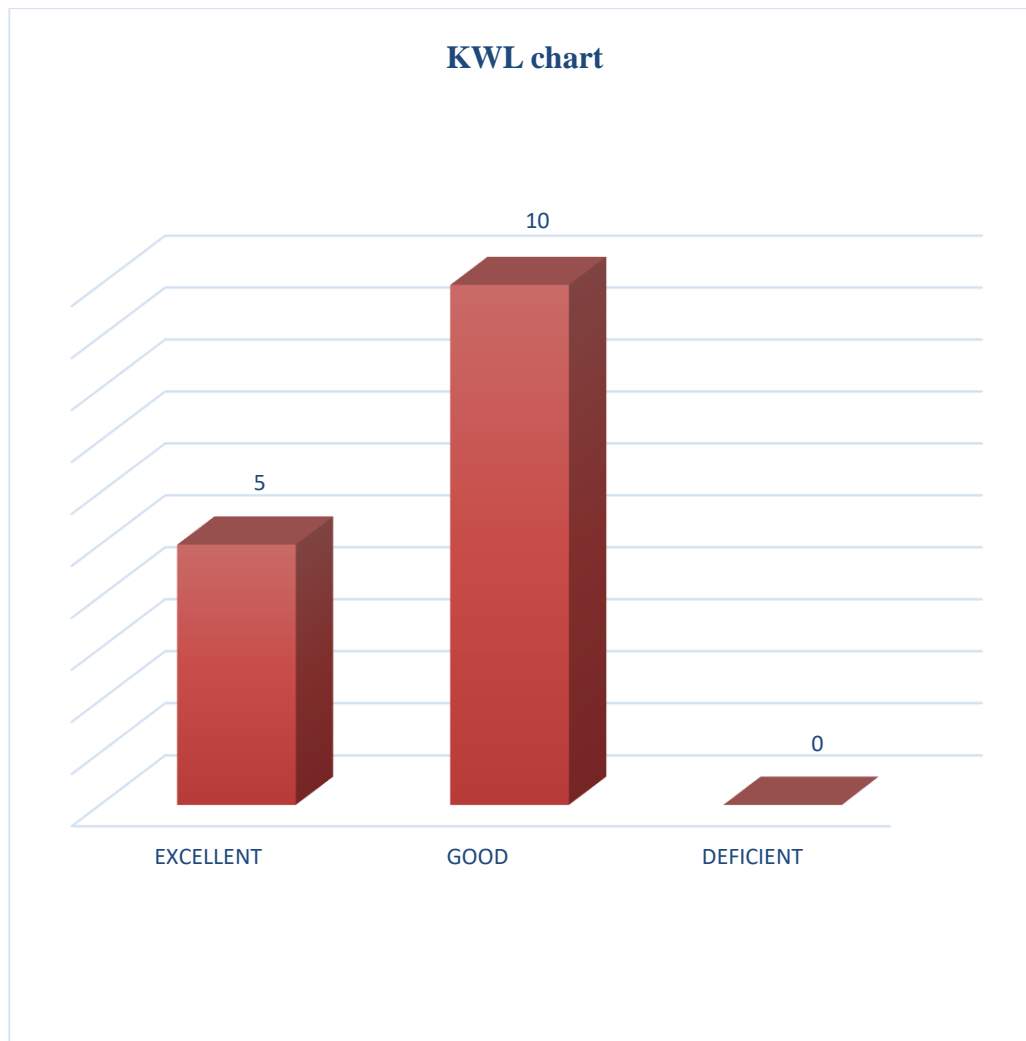


Figure 1. K-W-L chart. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

This part of the pretest referred mostly to the students' opinions on what they knew, what they wanted to learn, and what they had learned throughout the *Dracula* book. The premise read: the students could write down their own opinions about the *Dracula* book with coherent ideas and correct grammar, spelling, and subject-verb agreement. It is understandable that ten of those students did not reach the *excellent* mark due to the different mistakes in writing that made difficult to understand what the students wanted to express.

Some of the students were able to communicate in a written form, but because of the mistakes in structure, they could not reach the *excellent* mark. Now, the five students that

reached the excellent mark were able to complete the chart with full ideas, produce more than they were asked while considering all of the other items requested like: grammar, spelling, coherent ideas, and subject-verb agreement. It is important to mention that none of the students obtained a deficient score to the level of readiness on the topic.

4.1.2.2 Words production

The results of this part of the pretest were the following:

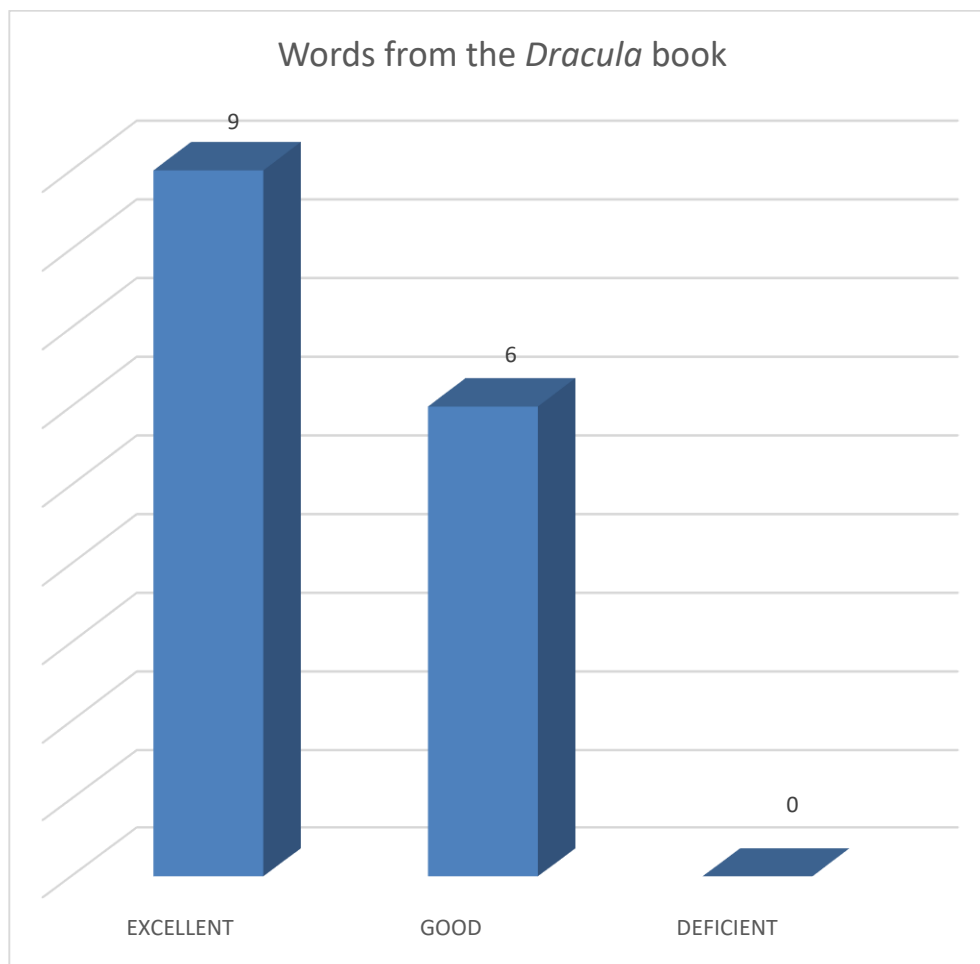


Figure 2. *Dracula* words production. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

This second part of the pretest considered the easiness with which the students could write down words related to the *Dracula* book. The premise of this part was to see if it was possible for the students to write down content words with the initial letters of their names

and the correct spelling. Six students obtained a *good* mark because they could write down words that enable the teacher to understand them, some others needed to ask what word to write to other students, and others just looked for a word in the *Dracula* literature book. Other students could produce the words that started with the initial letters of their names, but did not know how to write them down. Also, some other students, not knowing what to write, helped themselves with words that were not content words, such as prepositions, articles, conjunctions, among others. On the other hand, nine students reached the *excellent* mark by stating clear words; that means, spelling was correct and all of the words were content words.

4.1.2.3 Reading comprehension exercise

The results of this part of the pretest were the following:



Figure 3. Reading comprehension exercise. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

This third part of the pretest was based on a reading comprehension exercise in which the students needed to read and analyze the text and then classify the statements as true or false. Nine students obtained a *good* mark due to the fact that they did not fully understand the premise that was asked or confused the question for something else asked, for example, one of the statements read, “The count Dracula has only appeared in a few films.,” whereas in the text reads, “The character count Dracula has appeared in more than 200 films.” Most of the students wrote this statement as true and it was false. Some others did not find easy to understand most of the words, so they relied mostly on the teacher or dictionaries.

Other times, mistakes were made because the students did not take their time to commit to these exercises, the researcher could see they were only responding as fast as they could to finish early. On the contrary, six students obtained an *excellent* mark because their vocabulary knowledge was vast, these students did not reach the teacher that frequently or asked for a dictionary, instead they tried to get the meanings from context which was the most advisable thing to do.

4.1.2.4 Word/meaning matching

The results of this part of the pretest were the following:

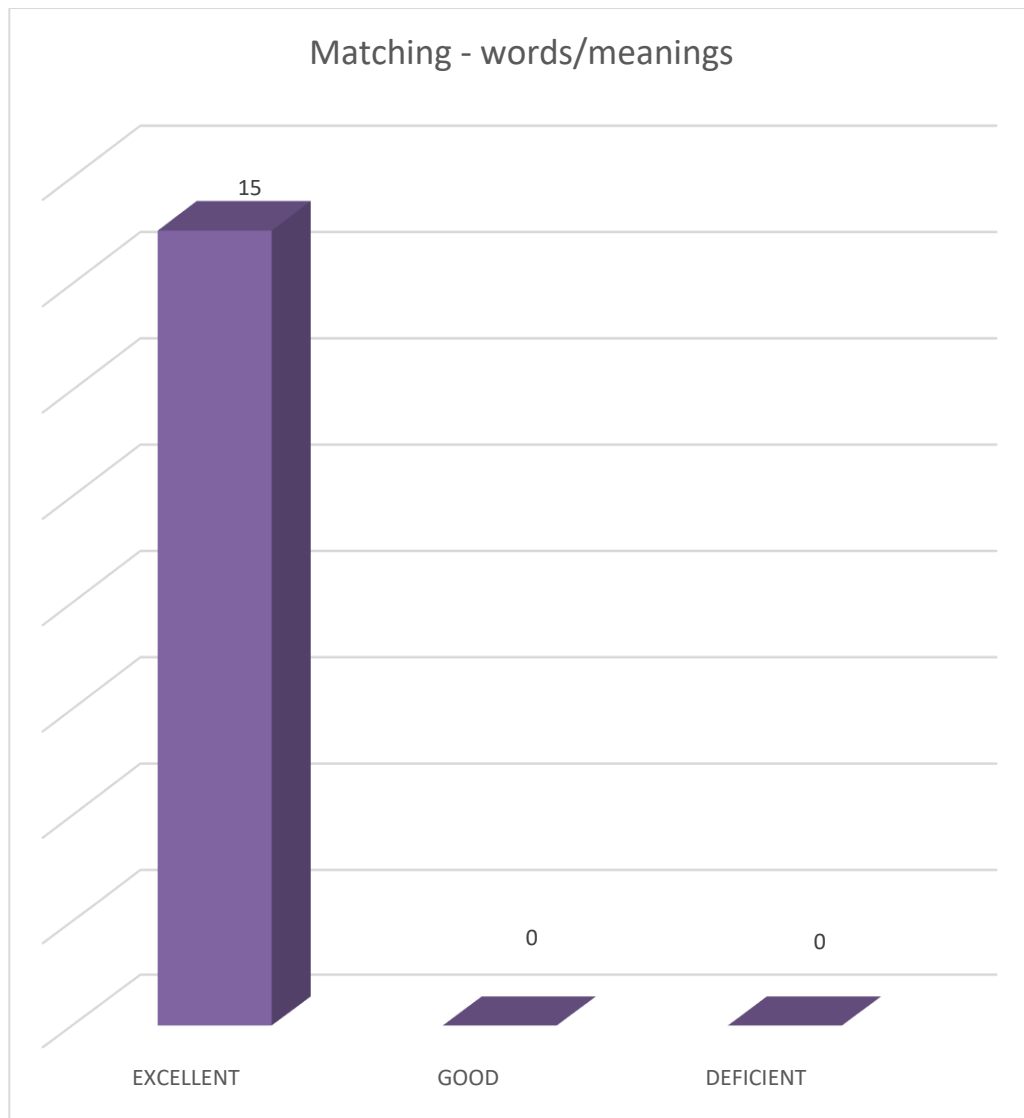


Figure 4. Word-meaning matching. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

The fourth part of the pretest was based on a matching that contained words previously shown in the reading comprehension text. All of the students obtained an *excellent* mark in this category due to the different strategies they had already learned from the teacher such as: the use of dictionary, asking classmates or teacher aloud, getting the meaning from context, and so forth. This shows that the students relied on different items when finding the meaning of unknown words.

4.1.2.5 Characters' names/ pictures matching

The results of this part of the pretest were the following:

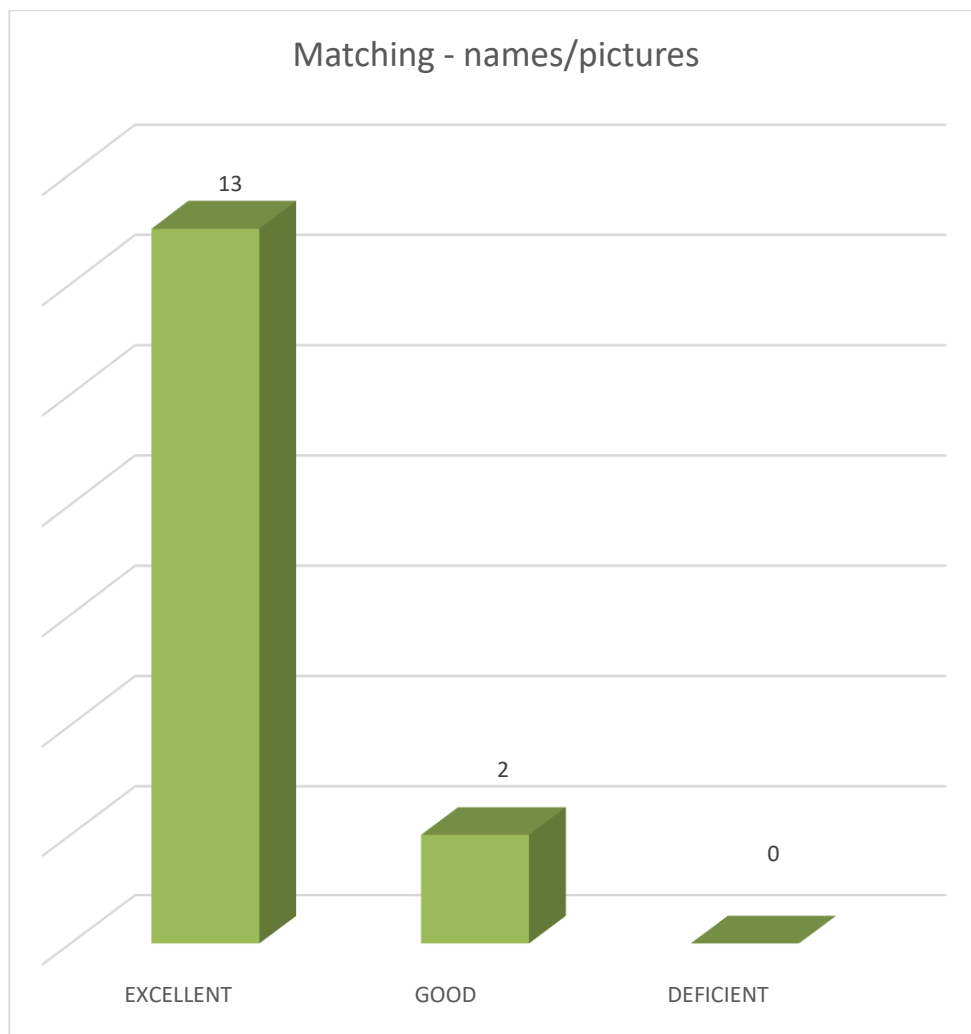


Figure 5. Name-picture matching. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

The fifth part of the pretest was closely related to the main characters of the *Dracula* book. The premise of this section was to write down the name of the character on the corresponding picture. The names of the characters were: Mina, to whom the picture described as a beautiful woman with certain social status; Lucy, to whom the picture described as a young woman lying on the bed; Jonathan, to whom the picture described as an attractive young man; Count Dracula, whose image is described as a man with the usual

description of a vampire; Dr. Seward, who is represented as a man giving blood to a woman (Lucy); and finally Renfield, who showed the features of a mental ill person.

This exercise helped to revise the timeline and descriptions of the characters, because the learners needed to know that the girl lying on the bed was Lucy, that Dr. Seward was the man giving blood because he was the only character in this exercise that had provided blood to Lucy while sick. One key factor to do this part well was to have read the book and have understood it, so the students could relate what they had read to the pictures.

4.1.2.6 Meaning production

The results of this part of the pretest were the following:

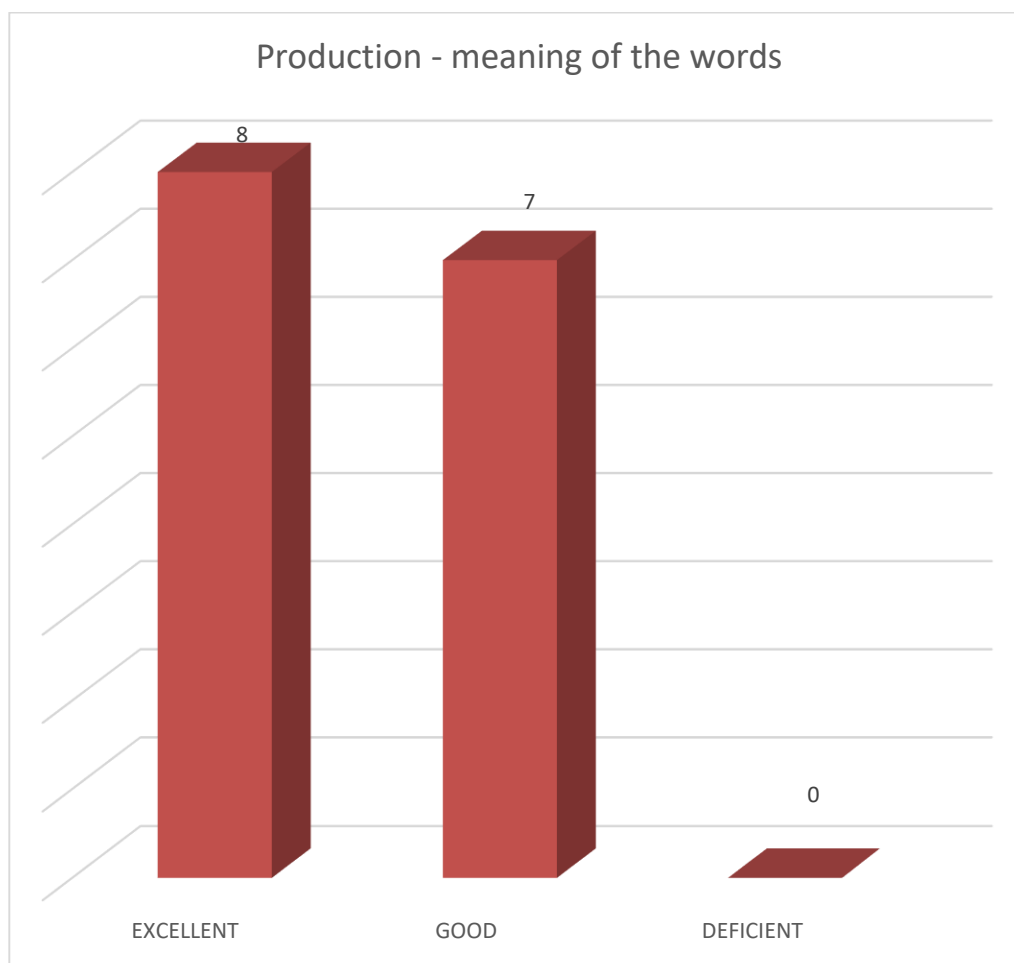


Figure 6. Meaning production. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

The sixth part of the pretest was based on writing the meaning of the given words which were the following: count, howl, crates, crucifix, and ivory and that needed to be written with their appropriate spelling and grammar. The eight students who obtained a *good* mark were the ones who could not describe the proper meaning of the word or the ones who, in their descriptions of the items, were not able to describe the meaning with the proper words.

It was confusing sometimes to read some of the meanings, the researcher concluded that the learners tried to combine some of the alternative meanings of the words, but could not reach just one to explain themselves because they had retrieved the meaning from the world wide web, dictionaries, or other students' assumptions of the meanings, as well as they had used the Spanish version of the word which was not a downside, but that was not said in the instructions.

4.1.2.7 Dracula story production

The results of this part of the pretest were the following:

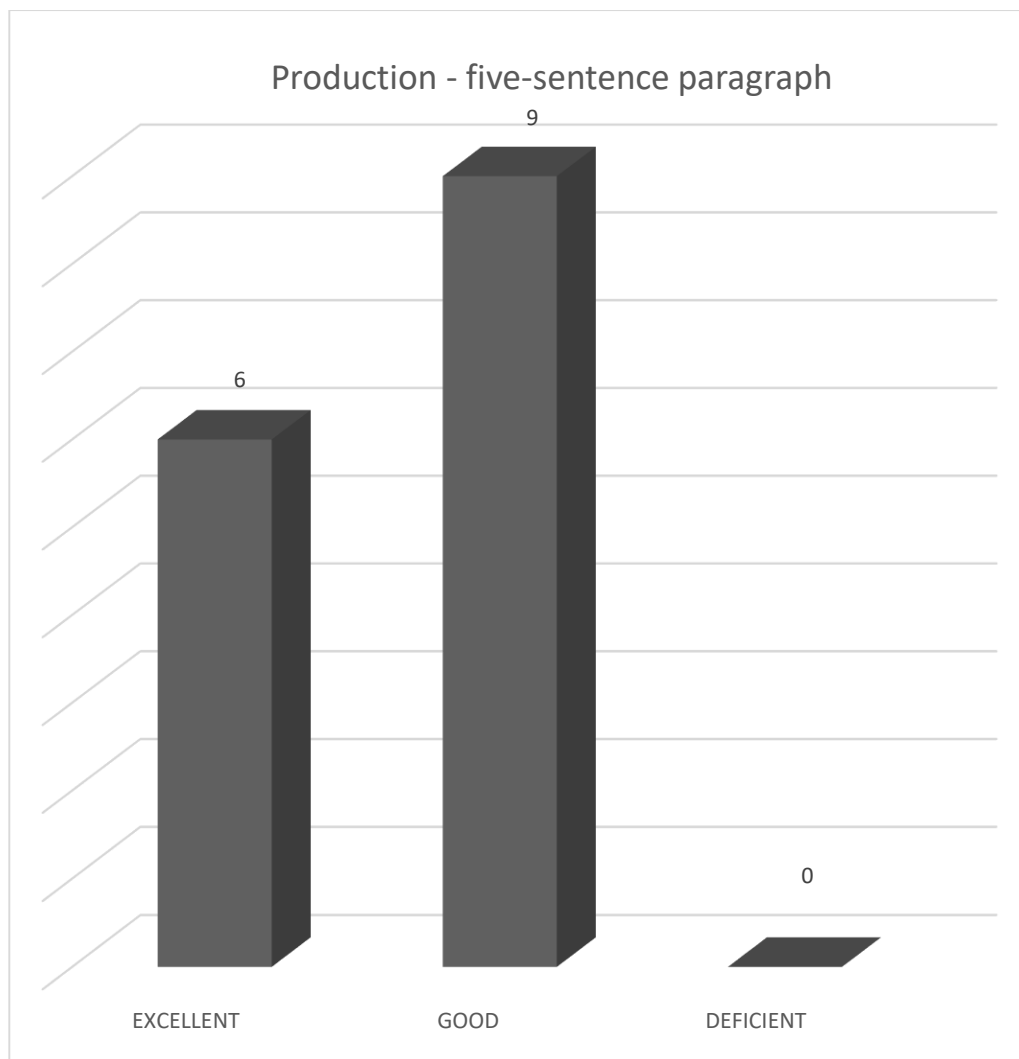


Figure 7. Dracula story production. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

Finally, the last part of the pretest consisted on a five-sentence paragraph which the students needed to write with their own words considering spelling, grammar, coherent ideas, subject-verb agreement, and the conclusion of the story in five sentences. Some of the observation notes resulted in the following: the nine students that obtained a *good* mark were able to communicate in a written way, but with lack of cohesion in their ideas. Also, the lack of vocabulary knowledge ended-up in the repetition of some content words; it was also shown that they wrote the words as they pronounced them, and the sequence of verb tenses led to some confusion as to what was in the past or in the present. The other nine students

who scored an *excellent* mark fulfilled the items requested in the evaluation rubric of the paragraph.

4.1.3 Reading exercises

The reading texts considered Dracula related content as the main focus of the readings. These texts were based on stories related to Dracula where the students needed to read them and analyze if the statements given were true or false for both texts. This instrument was also analyzed with an analytic rubric where the categories were *excellent*, *good*, or *deficient* with the possibility of writing some comments on it. Let us start revising some of the issues evaluated in these exercises.

4.1.3.1 Question/answer agreement

The results of this part of the reading exercise were the following:

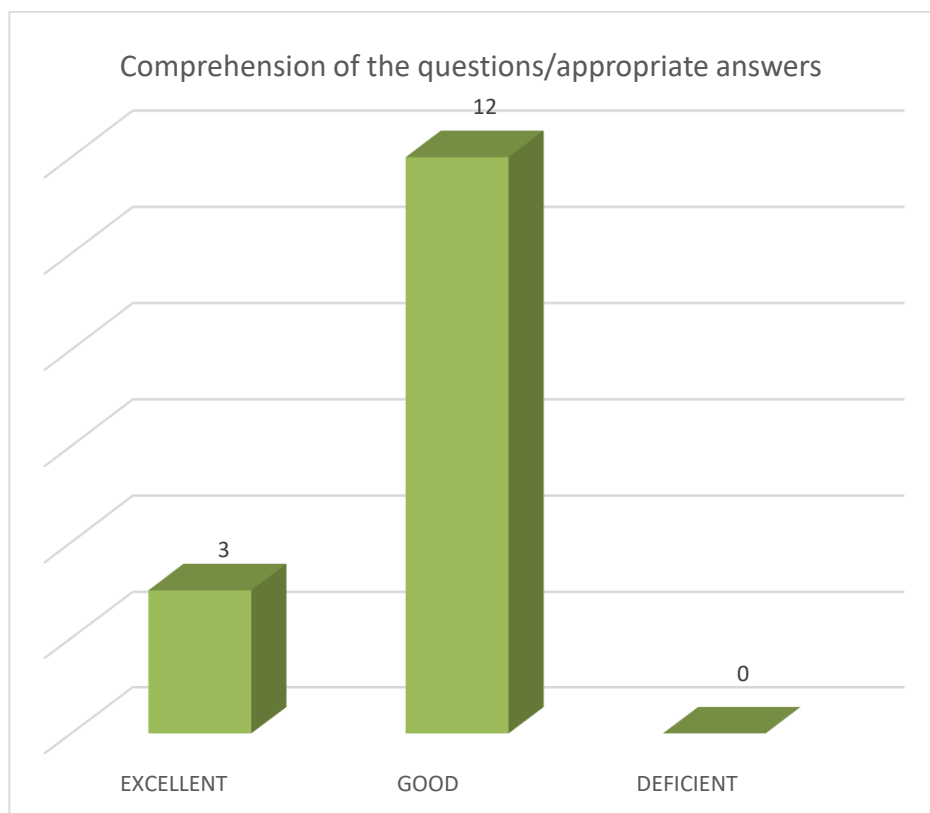


Figure 8. Comprehension of the questions/ appropriate answers. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

The reading comprehension exercises were based on two different texts in which the students needed to read and analyze them and then answer the questions appropriately. Some of the issues that the researcher wanted to verify were the correspondence of questions and answers in these items, among others. Thirteen of these participants had some difficulties correlating the question and answer; for example, one question read, “What do vampire bats use their infrared detectors for? Some of the students related that question to describe what an infrared detector was. It is important to mention that most of the students who obtained a *good* score made mistakes in two or three questions, so the answers did not match the questions.

4.1.3.2 Students’ own words/exact words from the text

The results of this part of the reading exercise were the following:

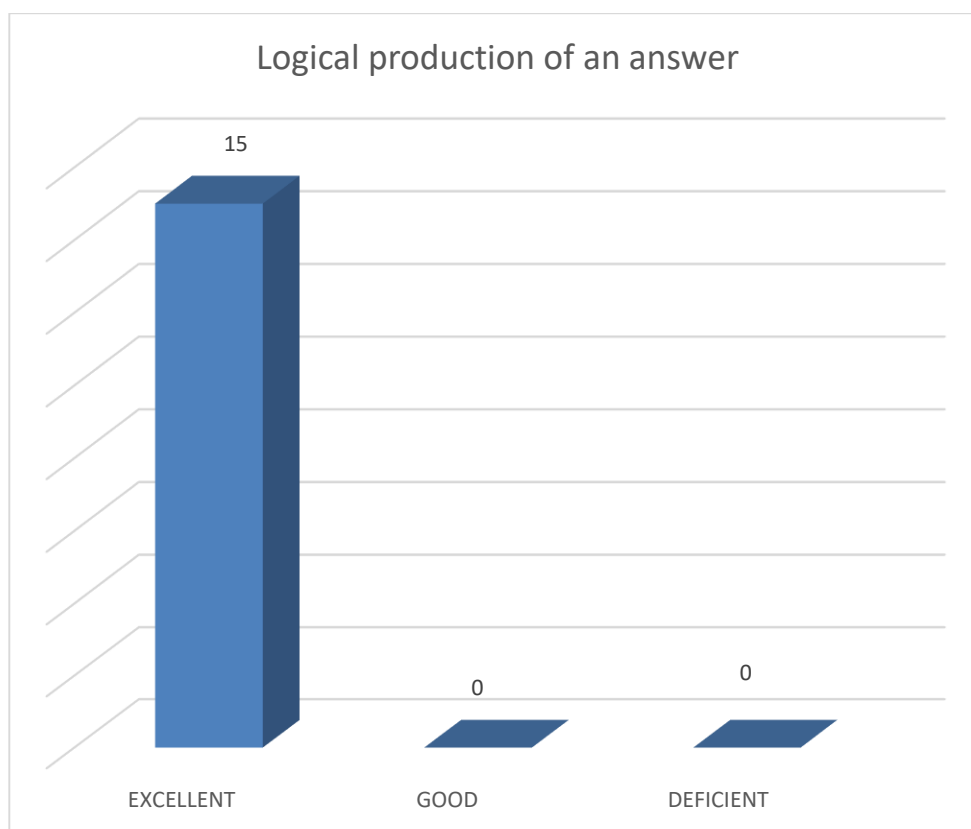


Figure 9. Logical production of an answer. Source: Researcher’s own creation (2018)

This part of the evaluation consisted on the analysis of the coherence of the answers whether to be the exact words from the text or the students' own explanation. The results showed that all the students obtained an *excellent* score although the answers could have had some grammar or spelling mistakes, but the intended communication existed; therefore, it was considered correct. Most of the answers showed that the students felt more comfortable using the text's exact words than using their own words to provide the answer.

4.1.3.3 Long/short answers

The results of this part of the reading exercise were the following:

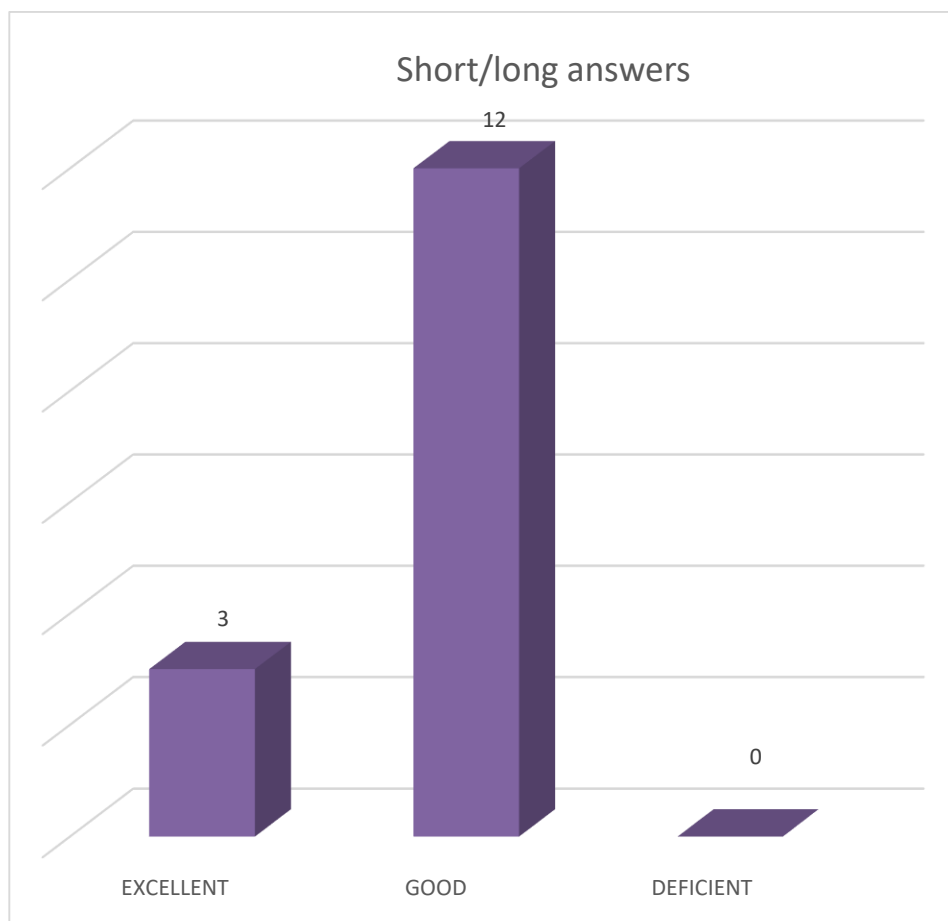


Figure 10. Long/short answers. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

This part of the evaluation is based on the premise on how well the students could provide a long or short answer and still be accurate with it. Some of the results of this part of

this study agreed on the fact that twelve students were able to answer most of the questions using specific details, but they did not take into account if the answers were well written, most of the responses were answered with one word, and the detailed ones did not have a full description of what was required in the premise. On the other hand, there were three different students who provided a full sentence-response to all the questions with an accurate answer. The conclusion of the researcher was that most students do not feel comfortable with the written skill, so they try to write as little as possible.

4.1.4 Post-test

The post-test also reflected the same structure of the pre-test but with different content to see if the students had made some progress along the way. This test also reviewed prior knowledge, reading comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition exercises, such as image description, true and false statements, matching, and so forth. This test was applied on the last day in the institution with the authorization of the head teacher. This instrument was also analyzed with an analytic rubric where the categories were *excellent, good, or deficient* with the possibility of writing some comments on it.

4.1.2.1 Image description

The results of this part of the posttest were the following:

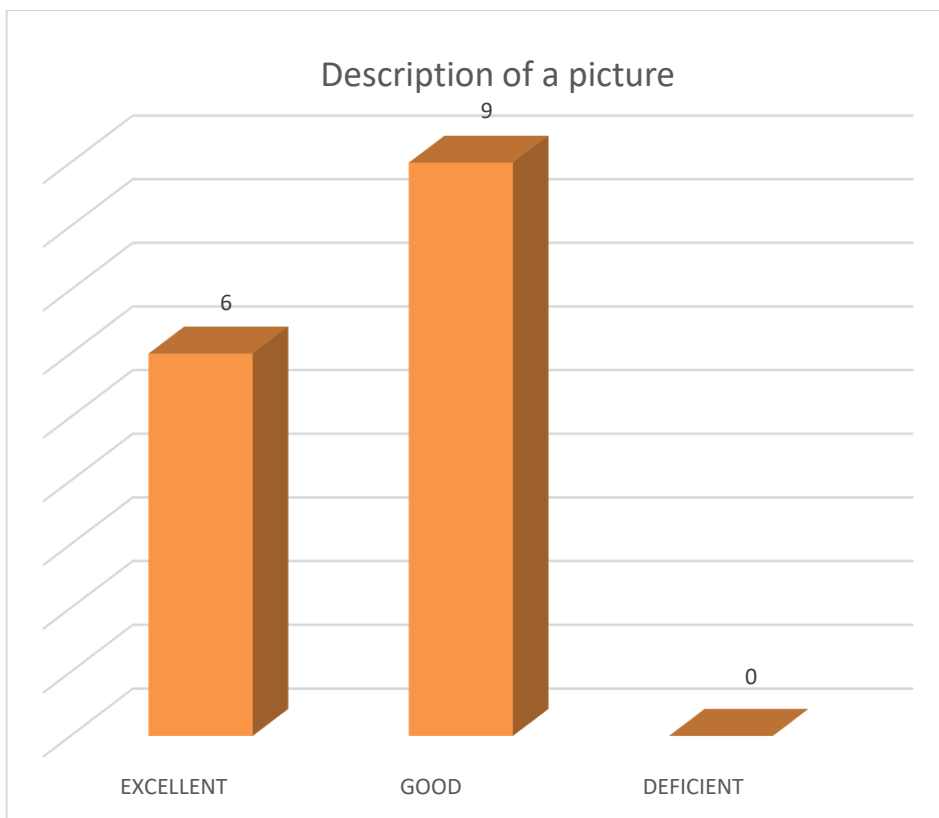


Figure 11. Description of a picture. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

This first part of the post-test consisted on the description of images presented in different parts of the book that could lead into a full explanation from the students. Some of the results that were shown from the nine students that obtained a good score were: one-word answers, sentences with no coherence, answers that were not related to the image, and lack of knowledge of the content of the book *Dracula*. These four were constantly repeated on the post-test and it showed how little their background knowledge was on the book. On the other hand, there were six other students that completed this exercise with all the items requested: a complete description of the image that incorporated spelling, grammar, coherent ideas, and subject- verb agreement properly.

4.1.2.2 Words production

The results of this part of the post-test were the following:

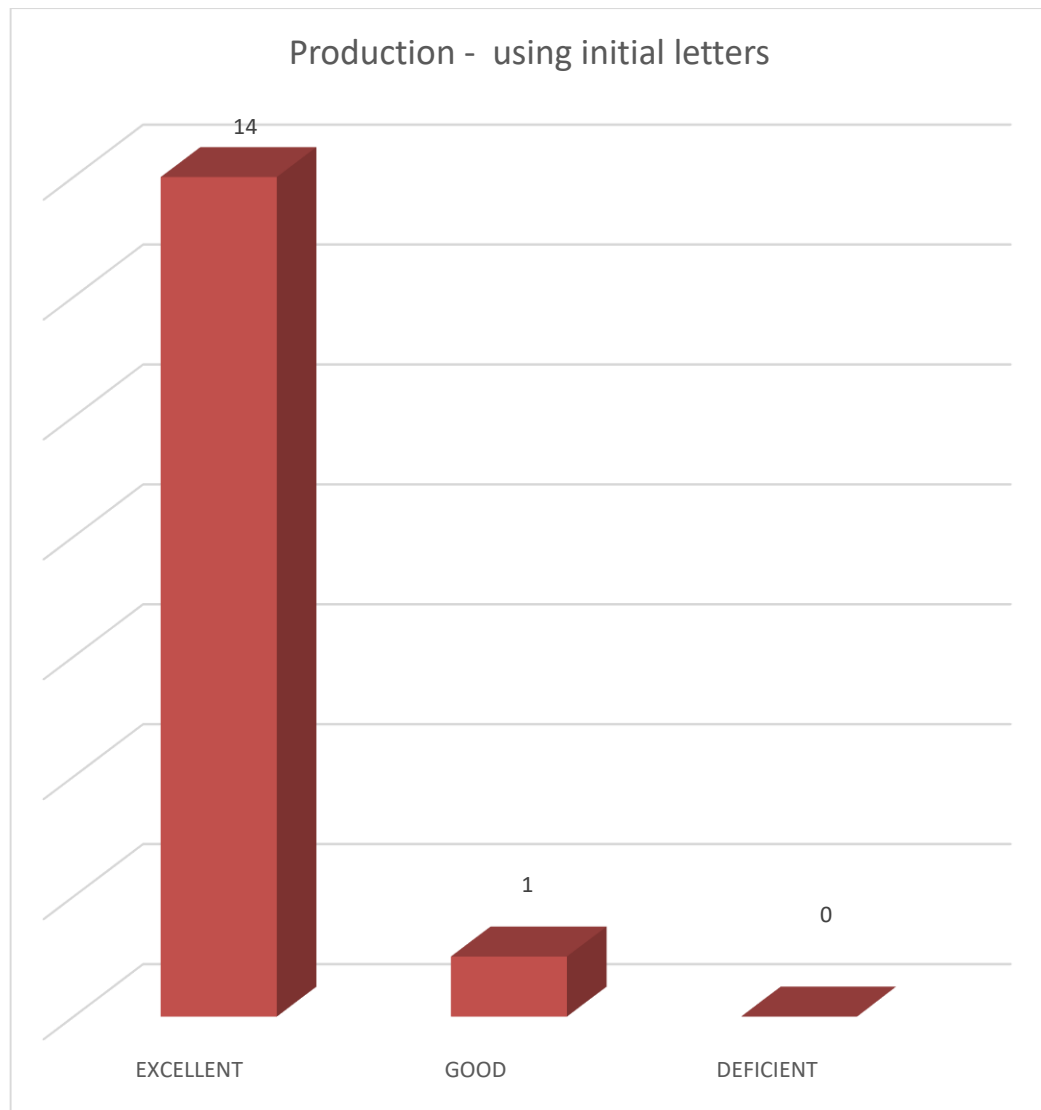


Figure 12. Words production. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

This part of the post-test was about writing words with the initial letters of the word *Dracula*. Most of the students in this part obtained an *excellent* mark because they avoided several factors: words that were not content words, instead they contained prepositions, conjunctions, or phrases that started with the letter requested. Also, spelling was one of the other issues; even though the students used dictionaries, they still misspelled the words. As a conclusion, the researcher can add that these students do not lack knowledge, but they trust too much on it and do not double check what they are writing.

4.1.2.3 Reading comprehension exercise

The results of this part of the post-test were the following:

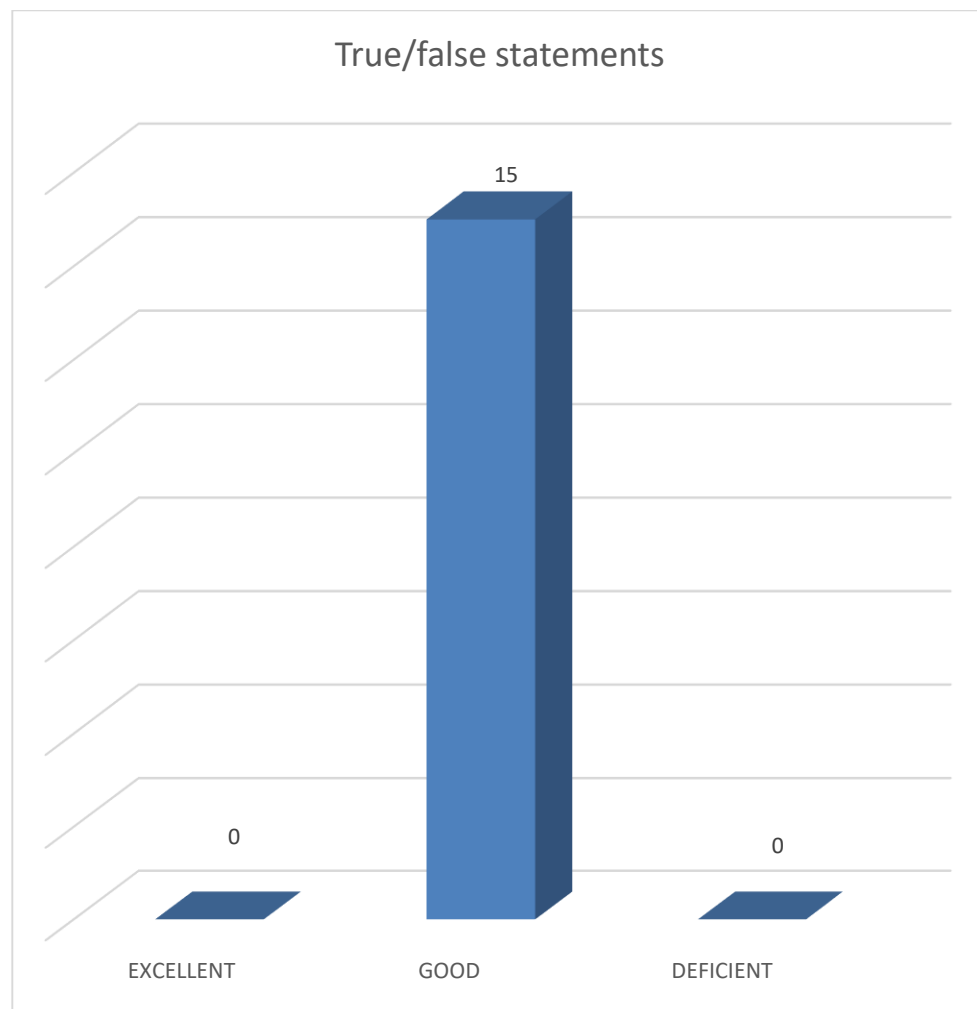


Figure 13. Reading comprehension exercise. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

This part of the posttest has been considered throughout the different instruments and it consists on the analysis of a text and then categorize the statements as true or false. All of the students in this case obtained a good mark due to several factors, such as, lack of vocabulary knowledge, deletion of unknown words from the sentence and answered based on what they had understood, avoidance to contextualize the unknown word (s), and tendency to rush during the written exercises. These were the reasons why all the students obtained the previous mark.

One important item to emphasize is that these students needed the activation of prior knowledge to have an idea of what the text was about before they started reading, so learning could be facilitated; for example, before every reading comprehension exercise, there was a brainstorming of ideas, so the students could understand more what they were about to read. Nevertheless, there were students that took a passive role and did not participate in any of the drills.

4.1.2.4 Word/meaning matching

The results of this part of the post-test were the following:

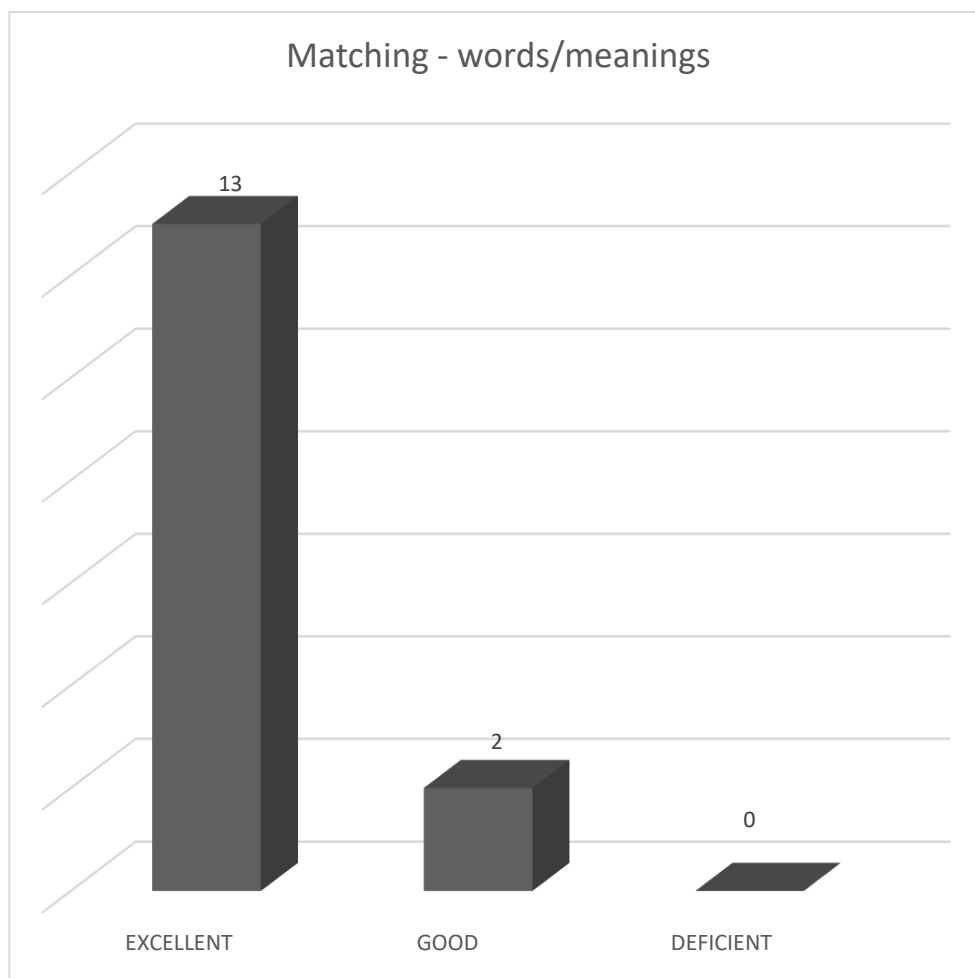


Figure 14. Word/meaning matching. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

The main idea of this part of the post-test was to contextualize the words and obtain the meaning from it. Thirteen students obtained an *excellent* score which meant that they could relate meaning and word by different means, the one that was observed the most was the use of dictionaries, as well as discussing the different terms according to their own ideas.

4.1.2.5 L1 translation exercise

The results of this part of the posttest were the following:

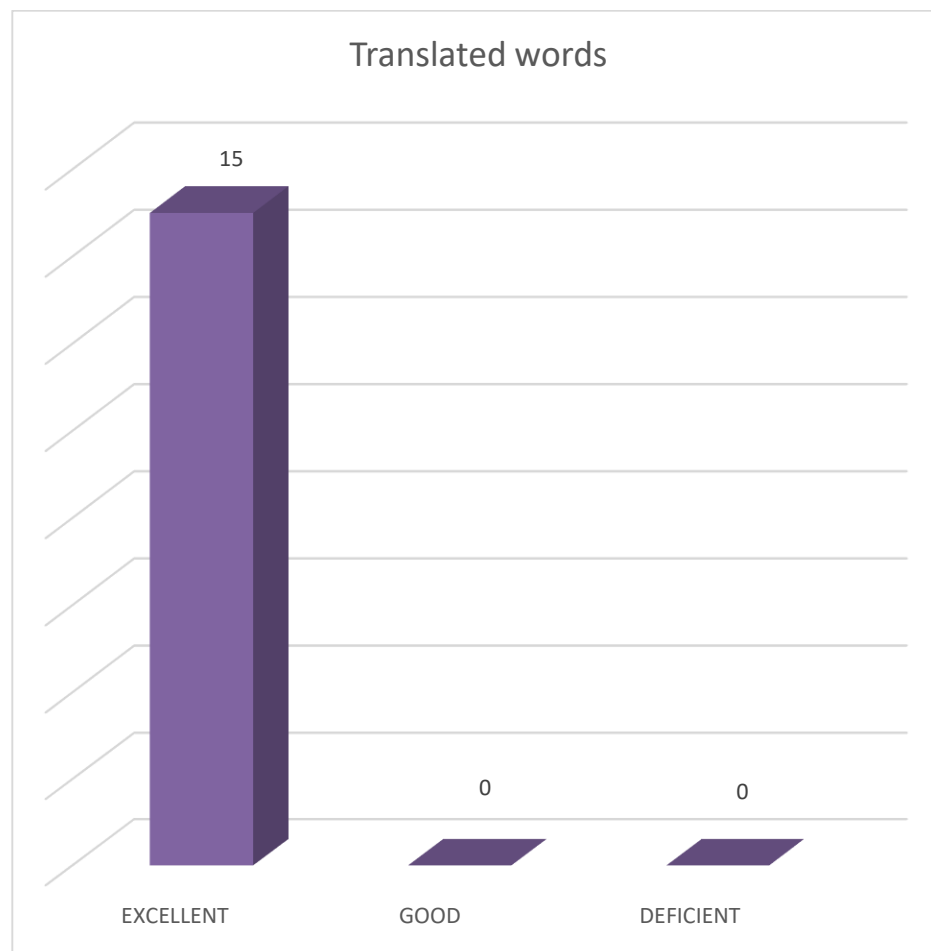


Figure 15. Translated words. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

This part of the post-test considered the translation of the provided words into the students' L1. All of the students obtained an excellent mark which states the students' easiness while doing this exercise. Some of the things observed and that were also shown in

the written exercise were the following: most of the students needed to remember the context in which the word was placed because some of them had several meanings, most of the students needed to use the dictionary at least once because there were one or two words that were unknown to them, and the learners also showed the tendency of relying on a classmate to verify the meaning of the word in Spanish.

4.1.2.6 Meaning production

The results of this part of the posttest were the following:

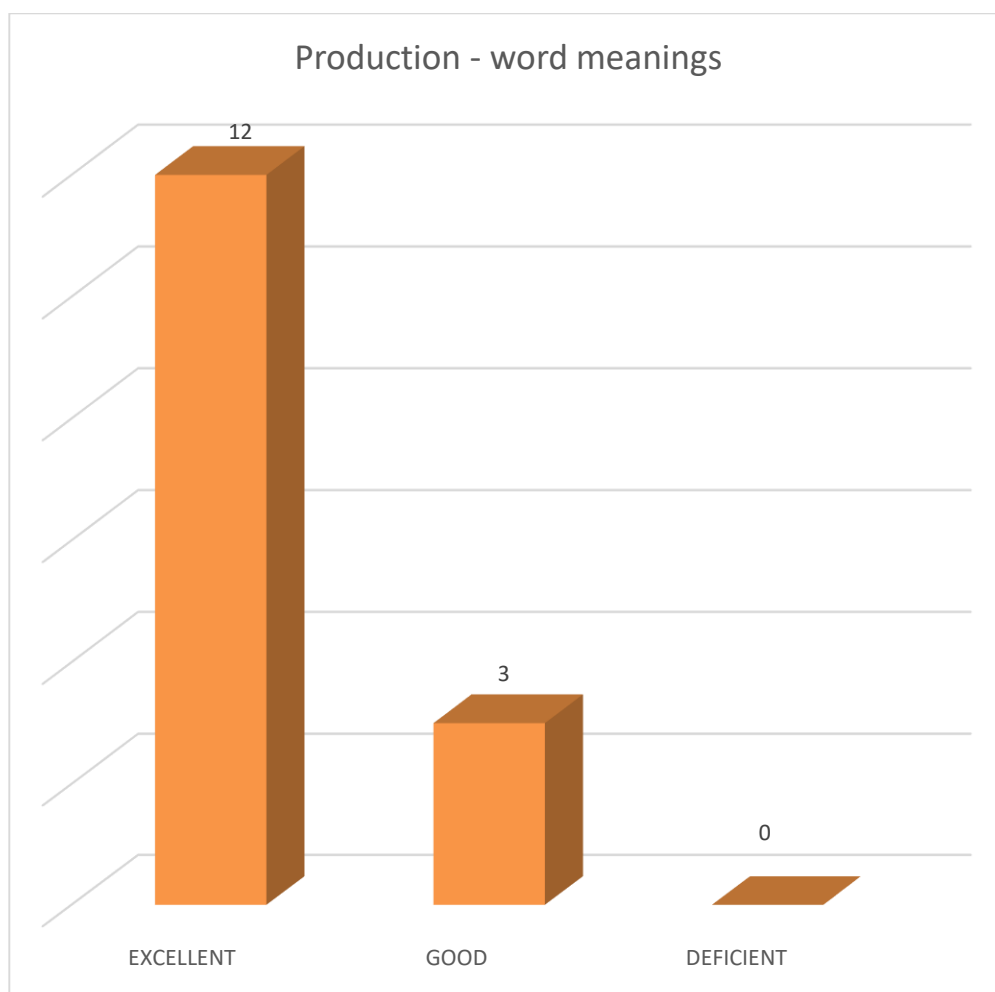


Figure 16. Word meaning production. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

The students needed to describe the meaning of a given word throughout an explanation. This was achieved by having all the items requested such as: coherent ideas,

grammar, spelling, subject-verb agreement that helped them reach communication in a written form. These students also showed the necessity of using long sentences to make their meaning conveyed. One important aspect of this part was that most of the students needed to have a background of the word; for example, how it was used in the book in order to describe it in their own words. On the other hand, there were three students that obtained a *good* mark because their ideas were not fully reached, some of the words were not the proper ones to describe the items or they just chose to write a word in Spanish that might have described its meaning.

4.1.2.7 Dracula ending production

The results of this part of the post-test were the following:

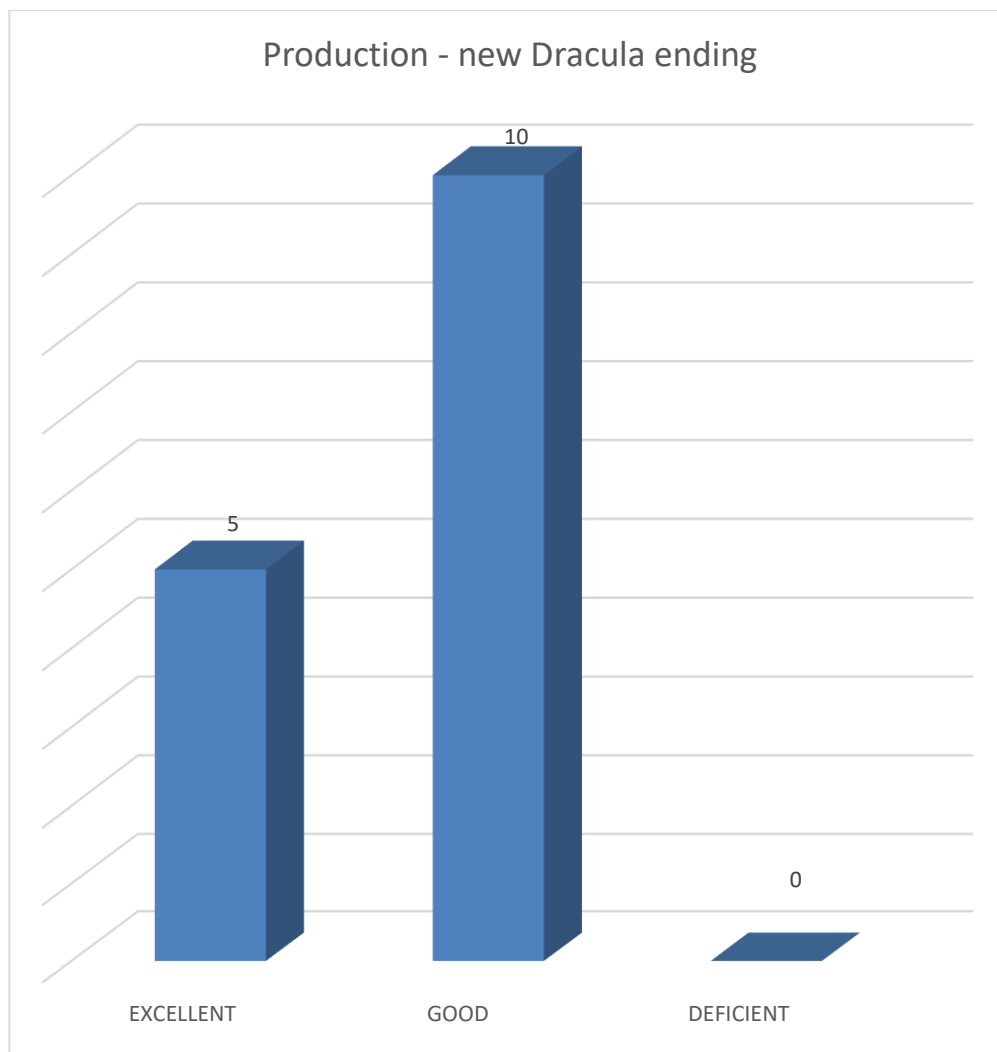


Figure 17. New Dracula ending production. Source: Researcher's own creation (2018)

One item that was always considered in these instruments was the part of production. In this case, the students needed to write a new ending for the story of *Dracula*. Ten of those students proved that they still needed help while writing in English. Some of the difficulties were the lack of vocabulary knowledge, writing the words as they sound and not as they are written, subject-verb agreement in the third personal singular, and lack of coherent ideas. These students possessed a high knowledge domain, but with little vocabulary domain that some of them tried to compensate, the final results were not the expected ones, comparing them with the ones with a higher knowledge command.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter is to introduce the researcher's final ideas and recommendations for further investigations closely related to the topic of this study. This investigation was conducted to find out the different reading problems the ninth-graders presented in the ten weeks provided for this study. The observation checklist, pre-test, reading activity, and the posttest helped with the gathering of information that led to the possibility of answering the specific objectives of it. In general terms, the researcher can conclude that the students changed their views on how to interact with reading exercises, how to react to certain reading problems, and with the addition of different strategies, to compensate their lack of knowledge or vocabulary in certain situations.

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 To identify what reading problems the ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School have

Some of the reading problems shown in the different sessions were the following: some of the students had some difficulty rhyming some of the words found in the Dracula story, for example, the students avoided saying or reading the words if they found them difficult to pronounce or if they found themselves under the scrutiny of their classmates. They had also some struggles to sound out most of the words and the majority of the students avoided reading or talking aloud.

Also, one of the problems the head teacher was really attentive to was the production of individual sounds. When the students showed some difficulty pronouncing the words, she would say them aloud and tried to separate them into individual sounds. Most of the times, the teacher would break-down the word and practice them saying it in small pieces.

Moreover, some students proved they did not fully understand the directions written in the instruments and the outcomes showed that. The head teacher always tried to incorporate oral instructions when the learners started doing the exercises. Some other students worked on their own, so they could develop their own learning process.

Furthermore, the learners tried to re-tell stories in an oral and written forms, but the outcomes showed that some of the students could not complete their ideas to make sense. The substitution of the English words for the Spanish synonyms was a strategy when retelling stories.

These mentioned reading problems were observed in the three different literature lessons before the researcher applied the instruments. In those weeks, the researcher could observe different strategies the head teacher used to introduce the book of *Dracula* to the students. The first item that called the attention of the researcher was that the lesson was introduced with a group discussion which seemed to be a joyful time for most of the students and which was basically communicative. Some of the students seemed to be committed with their learning process due to the fact that working in a group discussion could make them feel that the topic in the discussion was a product of their own decision.

The second one was that the students worked with the activities or materials that were taken from the literature book with no new realia. The students would use the pictures to describe scenes, work on the pre, while, and post reading activities from the book that were only on reading comprehension but never of vocabulary acquisition and because of the lack of time, sometimes some of those activities were skipped and not finished after that. The third one was that most of the times the students would read while listening to the CD-ROM or would read the chapter of the day alone which did not prove to the teacher if they had

understood the reading. The fourth one was the lack of checking time of the exercises done in class.

Taking these observations into account, the researcher applied three different tests that helped identify some of the reading problems; since the literature lesson was based mostly on group discussions and question-answer drills related to the chapters, the researcher could not have been able to identify all the reading problems from the observation sessions. In the next items of this study and based on the instruments applied, it will be explained some of the problems and strategies used to help learners improved their reading skill.

5.1.2 To apply vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation as strategies to promote the reading skills of the ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School

Every instrument provided a mean to collect data that could lead to a list of different reading problems always related to the main strategies, that are: prior knowledge and vocabulary acquisition. One of the important issues the researcher concluded was that when the reading skill is examined, the other three (writing, listening, and speaking) are not that far behind. All of the exercises in the different instruments conveyed the four skills in one way or another. Let us review some of the strategies used in this study and give a brief description of how the class was carried out.

5.1.2.1 Engaging all of the students into a group discussion

Question and answer drills were the best choice to engage the students' attention. Most students did not like to participate in this speaking activity because it required them to open their mouths and speak in a different language. Now, question and answer drills were always done orally, and it helped with the activation of prior knowledge and vocabulary

acquisition, so this did not mean the researcher was not evaluating reading, but as said before, reading requires the combination of skills. This activity became a necessity every time the researcher needed to activate prior knowledge during the reading comprehension exercises. Some other times, a heated discussion was embedded when the students shared different ideas on past experiences, for example, topics related to bats such as: books, movies, commercials, and so forth.

5.1.2.2 The use of the students' L1

The researcher also observed that talking in Spanish was welcomed if it meant that the students participated in this activity. The students seemed to feel more empowered with the information they handled, less anxious, and less evaluated; therefore, calmer which allowed them to participate more. There were exercises in the instruments that evaluated the use of the students' L1 and they seemed to use the word orally or in a written form more frequently, as shown in the production parts than when the students did not generate a synonym of the foreign word into their L1. Before this, the students applied two solutions for the unknown words: the students guessed the meaning or they just deleted the word from the context, that led to the confusion of question and answer drills in the reading comprehension exercises. Also, the students' use of their L1 helped them internalize words and grasped their meanings in both languages. There were translation exercises in the instruments and there was no a single student that missed a word, it was not because it was easier, but because the student could relate the word to a synonym in their L1; therefore, the construction of meaning started.

5.1.2.3 The use of new materials

Answering questions as a way to collaborate students' understanding of a topic was applied. Most students felt the necessity to use a dictionary while doing the reading comprehension exercises because they understood that a word could change the meaning of the sentences. Others responded as they thought it was appropriate with the grasping of some context or even deleting the unknown word, so they could continue with the exercise, but the exercises were answered and retaking in the next sessions.

Another strategy that helped with the activation of prior and vocabulary knowledge was the usage of pictures. The students were more engaged and collaborative with the usage of materials than without it. The researcher could see how they got into a discussion just by looking at a picture and finding where the picture was placed in the story of **Dracula**. Also, the usage of pictures was combined with writing (that is the result of reading) where the students needed to describe what was happening in the picture.

The use of dictionaries was of great help when it came to building-up vocabulary. Some of the situations in which it was more useful were the following: production items, reading comprehension exercises, questions containing unknown words, and so forth. The only issue was presented when the dictionary showed students multiple meanings in which they needed to analyze the context and match the correct definition of the word to the context. There were other times when the students used the context to connect the meaning of the word, but the researcher concluded that the students felt more comfortable when they had a punctual definition they could work with.

5.1.2.4 Vocabulary building-up exercises

Moreover, the repetition of words from the reading texts or literature book helped with the vocabulary acquisition. The instruments had different exercises that continuously

asked about words related to the *Dracula* book, to the texts used in the reading comprehension exercises, or to isolated words the researcher considered important to emphasize on. These exercises contributed with the bank of words the students learned because it helped them activate prior knowledge and at the same time to use words within contexts.

5.1.2.5 Production exercises

In addition, the production exercises helped the researcher identify some of the items that most readers required to understand a text: cohesive ideas, subject-verb agreement, spelling and grammar issues, among others. Some of the problems shown were the lack of vocabulary words and parts of speech (noun, adjectives, adverbs, and so forth) which were a main issue because it was repeated throughout the results of the instruments. The lack of familiarity of the context of a situation was also an issue when it came to developing coherent ideas. The researcher concluded that most of these students tried to communicate in a written form, but lacked order of ideas to make sense of them.

5.1.3 To evaluate vocabulary acquisition and prior knowledge activation as strategies in the development of reading skills of the ninth-grade students at Our Lady of Sion High School

After the instruments were applied, a comparison was made among them to gather some information about the outcomes of it. These results are listed as follows: first, most of the students were able to write down what they had learned from the *Dracula* story with their own words, some others needed some help with the part of coherence in order to make it communicative, so it had sense when reading it. Second, most students misspelled words in the part of production. These mistakes were mostly of not double checking what was written,

not reading the instructions properly, or using words that were not required. Third, most of the students comprehended the reading texts, but some of them had issues when relating the questions with their answers, and they tended to confuse some words; therefore, they gave incorrect answers. Fourth, several students could understand meanings from contexts, some others just tried to convey the best meaning for the word without using a dictionary or asking for the teacher or peers' assistance. Fifth, when it referred to write down the meanings with the students' own words, some issues surfaced such as: not clear ideas, not content words, confusion of some of the meanings, usage of Spanish words, and so forth. Finally, the worrisome part of the production was the lack of vocabulary content words these students presented that prevented them to produce better and logical sentences.

5.2 Recommendations

Some of the recommendations the researcher would like to share with future researchers that are interested in topics similar to this one are the following: the most important one is to always activate prior knowledge to recapitulate the topics from the previous lessons. Activating schema does not only help with the lesson plan, but also gives time to incorporate every single student in the conversation and reviews important issues that might not have come up before. It is necessary to take at least from 20 to 30 minutes before each class to activate prior knowledge and revise vocabulary words.

Another important aspect is to review spelling and grammar rules. Some of the exercises found in the instruments were of production in which the learners needed to describe with their own words several scenes from the *Dracula* book, explain what they have learned from the book, create new endings for the book, among others. In all of the mentioned exercises, the students needed to produce in a written form, and since reading

involves writing as a final form of learning, it is a good idea to practice paragraph production with the several items that entails spelling, grammar rules, subject-verb agreement, transitional words, capitalization, and order, as well as coherent ideas. It is advisable to take from 30 to 40 minutes to introduce, develop, and revise the written exercises that will help get better results in a study similar to this one.

Moreover, activating prior knowledge before every reading comprehension exercise helps to get better results in the reading comprehension part of the instruments. All of the instruments evaluated reading comprehension as a result of reading, but in some cases the outcomes were not as expected because the students did not possess the level to understand what they were reading. The researcher took from 20 to 25 minutes to review with the students the main ideas of the texts presented in the reading comprehension exercises and explain different words that might have some difficulty for the learners. Some handouts to evaluate what had been reviewed during the class incorporating words with the addition of marginal glosses helped improve the students' understanding.

Furthermore, having a discussion to activate their prior and vocabulary knowledge on the studied literature book before starting the lesson is advised. It was observed that some of these students did not possess the habit of reading; therefore, they found reading tedious, but when the reading lessons started with a discussion about what had happened with the characters and how the story line had passed by, the students who found it tedious were the first ones to participate in the lessons. The researcher also observed that maintaining an active period of listening/ speaking related to the topic helped with the coherence of ideas in the production part of the instruments. Most of the times, the researcher took, at least, from 20-30 minutes to start the class just talking about the *Dracula* book.

Also, incorporating realia to the literature lesson was important to maintain students' attention. During the different sessions the researcher had with the ninth-grade students, the use of different materials like the pictures provided in the literature book was necessary to maintain the students engaged. The interpretation of pictures enabled students to maintain the continuity of the events from the book and it also added more topics that helped develop critical thinking in them. The researcher enlarged the pictures shown in the *Dracula* literature book which they used to describe different scenes they had had in the post-test aloud before they started writing what they believed happened in the picture. This activity helped with the results because it opened their minds to ideas they already had, so they could put them in a written form easily. The researcher always spent about 10 minutes in the discussion session of the day to incorporate the interpretation of pictures.

One important aspect of the literature class that activated prior knowledge was reading while listening. The researcher observed that reading while listening with the CD-ROM of the *Dracula* literature book, the students were forced to maintain their focus on the reading. Some other things observed during these sessions were that students tended to get lost while listening the audio and then they tried to find the pace of reading again; other students just listened to the audio book without paying attention to the written book, and some others would lip mimic the reading. One instruction that was always observed was the highlighting or underlining of words the students did not understand. After the reading while listening session was finished, the students could ask questions to each other or go back to the dictionary right away, but it was more important for them to rely on the teacher's feedback for the meanings of the words.

These recommendations should help new researchers on how to activate prior knowledge to students with a pre-intermediate to an advanced level and how new vocabulary words can be thoroughly taught with group discussions and other techniques. These students seemingly adopted some of the habits performed during the literature lessons, but it all depends on how engaging the teacher is at the time of bringing into the table a new topic, word, or activity.

These instruments also seemed to improve the other English skills like writing, listening, and speaking. The students seemed to enjoy having time to express themselves as well as the time to read, write, or listen audios. They also seemed to have acquired different techniques, such as, the use of dictionaries, classmate collaboration, translation or synonym generation of the unknown words, among others. This made the researcher believe that these learners started recognizing their own weaknesses and strengths when referring to the reading skill.

The instruments also gave an idea on how to structure a pre-test, reading activity, or post-test and what to expect from them. Analyzing the different instruments to get an honest list of the students' weaknesses and strengths in the reading skill and how to start working on those items were the most challenging parts. The most important part was taking the time to know the reading problems and applying techniques to improve the weaknesses and evaluate progress; that is, the importance of a well-structured instrument.

One important aspect about this study is that it can be applied with the other language skills since all of them relate somehow to reading. Most of the instruments gathered exercises that evaluated reading comprehension, prior knowledge, and vocabulary acquisition with

activities that involved most of the language skills, but not forgetting the one this study aimed to test.

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Annexes

Official Documents

Instruments

Universidad Internacional de las Américas
 Student: Priscilla Meneses Vega
 Level: 9th grade
 Observation Checklist # _____
 Date: _____
 Literature class/Book *Dracula*

Prior Knowledge

Criterion	Excellent	Good	Deficient	Comments
The teacher gives worksheets that gauge relevant prior knowledge based on the book <i>Dracula</i>.	The teacher gives appropriate worksheets related to the book <i>Dracula</i> that contain exercises that activate prior knowledge. ()	The teacher provides worksheets related to the book <i>Dracula</i> that do not contain exercises that activate prior knowledge. ()	The teacher does not provide worksheets or any material about <i>Dracula</i> that activates prior knowledge. ()	
The teacher reviews chapters read in the previous lessons to activate prior knowledge.	The teacher provides some time during the class to revise all the chapters read before from the previous lessons and gives time to ask questions. ()	The teacher provides some time during the class to revise some of the chapters read before from the previous lessons and gives time to ask questions. ()	The teacher does not provide time during the class to revise the chapters read before from the previous lessons and does not give time to ask questions. ()	
The teacher applies a pre- test and a post- test during the literature lessons that assess prior knowledge.	The teacher applies a pre-test and a post-test during the literature lessons that evaluate the activation of prior knowledge based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	The teacher applies a pre-test but does not apply a post-test during the literature lessons that evaluate the activation of prior knowledge based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	The teacher does not apply pre-tests nor post-tests during the literature lessons that evaluate the activation of prior knowledge based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	
The teacher uses different techniques to assess prior knowledge during the literature lessons.	The teacher applies 3 more techniques that activate prior knowledge apart from the worksheets, exercises, and asking and answering questions. ()	The teacher applies 1 or 2 more techniques that activate prior knowledge apart from the worksheets, exercises, and asking and answering questions. ()	The teacher applies no other techniques that activate prior knowledge apart from the worksheets, exercises, and asking and answering questions. ()	

Universidad Internacional de las Américas

Student: Priscilla Meneses Vega

Level: 9th grade

Observation Checklist # _____

Date: _____

Literature class/Book *Dracula*

Vocabulary Acquisition

Criterion	Excellent	Good	Deficient	Comments
The teacher gives examples when asking about the meanings of words related to the book <i>Dracula</i>.	The teacher gives 2 appropriate examples to explain or describe the meaning of a word related to the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	The teacher gives 1 appropriate example to explain or describe the meaning of a word related to the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	The teacher gives no appropriate examples to explain or describe the meaning of a word related to the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	
The teacher applies a pre- test and a post- test during their literature lessons that assess vocabulary knowledge based on the book <i>Dracula</i>.	The teacher applies a pre-test and a post-test during the literature lessons that evaluate vocabulary building based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	The teacher applies a pre-test but does not apply a post-test during the literature lessons that evaluate vocabulary building based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	The teacher neither applies a pre-test nor a post-test during the literature lessons that evaluate vocabulary building based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	
The teacher applies written exercises that help with vocabulary building based on the book <i>Dracula</i>.	The teacher applies 3 written vocabulary building exercises during the literature lessons based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	The teacher applies 1 or 2 written vocabulary building exercises during the literature lessons based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	The teacher applies no written vocabulary building exercises during the literature lessons based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	
The teacher uses different strategies to assess vocabulary acquisition based on the book <i>Dracula</i>.	The teacher applies 3 or more strategies that activate vocabulary acquisition apart from the written vocabulary building exercises based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	The teacher applies 1 or 2 strategies that activate vocabulary acquisition apart from the written vocabulary building exercises based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	The teacher applies no strategies that activate vocabulary acquisition apart from the written vocabulary building exercises based on the book <i>Dracula</i> . ()	

Pre-test

Topic: *Dracula*

Strategies: Vocabulary Acquisition and Prior Knowledge

Student: Priscilla Meneses Vega

Level: 9th grade

Part A. Prior Knowledge Activation

A. **1. K-W-L Chart.** Complete the chart with your own ideas. Take into consideration: grammar, spelling, coherent ideas, and subject-verb agreement.

What I know about the book <i>Dracula</i> .	What I would want to know about the book <i>Dracula</i> .	What I have learned about the book <i>Dracula</i> .

2. Write down content words related to *Dracula* with the letters of your name.

For example: **A** (Arthur), **N** (neck), **A** (article)

Letters of your name									
Words related to the book that start with the letters of your name									

Bram Stoker

Adapted from the book *Dracula* (Bram Stoker, 2009)

Bram Stoker, who was born in Clontarf, Ireland in 1847, grew up listening to great horror stories. He was a sickly boy and his mother often helped him pass the time by telling him Irish tales of banshees, demons, and ghouls. Mrs. Stoker was also a writer, a social worker, and a feminist. She thought that the world's problems could be solved by equalizing the sexes. At first Bram accepted his mother's views, but when he wrote *Dracula*, he had already changed his mind. As you will see for yourselves, Bram thought women should be the servants of men. In fact, the character of Mina can be seen as Bram's ideal woman: courageous and intelligent, but always working to help her man.

Bram's father, a civil servant in Dublin, transmitted to Bram his passion for the theater, a passion that influenced Bram's life even more than his passion for horror.

He spent all his free time going to the theater and writing reviews for different newspapers. In 1867 Bram saw for the first time his own personal *Dracula*, the man who would suck out all of Bram's life and financial blood. This personal *Dracula* was Henry Irving, a great actor, the man who made acting the respectable profession it is today.

In the first drafts of Bram's novel, Count *Dracula* was called "Count Wampyr" but in 1897 Bram read a book by William Wilkinson about Vlad Tepes, a cruel Transylvania count also called *Dracula*, a name which means either Dragon or by extension "the Devil". He was never considered a vampire, but he was known for his incredible cruelty in war.

But the Count *Dracula* of the novel has little in common with this cruel count: rather, Bram's vampire is a clear descendant of the Gothic tradition in English and European literature. Gothic novels often had old castles and ghosts, and of course, lots of primitive passions. All sorts of psychological

conflicts which could not be discussed in any other way could come out in Gothic novels.

Bram Stoker's book has been interpreted in a myriad of ways, and his character Count *Dracula* has appeared in more than 200 films. Everybody knows who he is, from small children to adults without ever having read the novel. Unfortunately, he died in 1912.

Part B. Reading comprehension

Say whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. Bram Stoker had a healthy childhood. T____ F____
2. He did not like the stories his mother told him. T____ F____
3. Bram's mother was an independent woman with strong opinions. T____ F____
4. Mina, one of the characters in *Dracula*, is almost exactly like Bram's mother. T____ F____
5. Henry Irving had an important role in the history of theater. T____ F____
6. The historical Count *Dracula* was an incredibly violent man. T____ F____
7. The historical Count *Dracula* was closely modelled on the historical Count *Dracula*. T____ F____
8. The character *Dracula* has only appeared in a few films. T____ F____
9. Most people know who Count *Dracula* is, even if they have not read the novel. T____ F____
10. Bram Stoker died in 1897. T____ F____

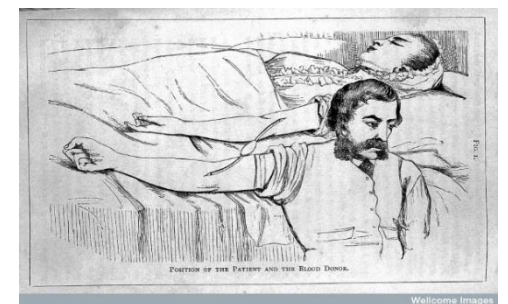
Part C. Vocabulary Building-Up

A. From the previous text, match the words to their correct meanings.

Column A		Column B
1. Sickly	()	women spirits in Irish folklore that appeared screaming in front of the house of a person who was dying
2. Descendant	()	often ill; in poor health
3. Feminist	()	a profession concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being
4. Banshees	()	evil spirits that rob graves and eat the dead bodies
5. Social worker	()	a person who believes in feminism, and tries to achieve change that helps women to get equal opportunities and treatment
6. Ghouls	()	a person, plant, or animal that is descended from a particular ancestor

B. Write in the space provided the names of the character from the book Dracula. Use the names from the box.

Mina, Lucy, Jonathan, Count Dracula, Dr. Seward, Renfield



C. Write down the meaning of the following words in your own words. Take into consideration: grammar, spelling, coherent ideas, and subject-verb agreement.

count:

howl:

crates:

crucifix:

ivory:

Part D. Production

Write down a 5-sentence paragraph where you tell the audience what the book Dracula is about.

Evaluation Rubric			
Criterion	Excellent The student has all the elements requested.	Good The student has some of the elements requested.	Deficient The student has none of the elements requested.
It has the five sentences requested.			
The sentences present coherent ideas.			
Correct grammar 1 to 5 mistakes: 1 point less 6 to 10 mistakes: 2 points less			
Correct spelling 1 to 5 mistakes: 1 point less 6 to 10 mistakes: 2 points less			

Post-test

Topic: *Dracula*

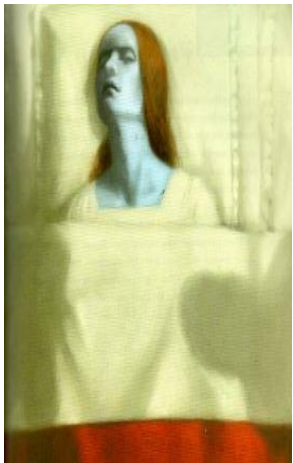
Strategies: Vocabulary and Prior Knowledge

Student: Priscilla Meneses Vega

Level: 9th grade

Part A. Prior Knowledge Activation

C. Explain what is happening in the pictures. Write down your answer on the space provided. Take into consideration: grammar, spelling, coherent ideas, and subject-verb agreement.







2.. Write down content words related to Dracula with the letters of your name.

For example: **A** (Arthur), **N** (neck), **A** (article)

Main Word						
D	R	A	C	U	L	A
Words related to the word Dracula						

Real Vampires

Adapted from the book *Dracula* (Bram Stoker, 2009)

In the early 1700s Europe experienced a vampire **mania**. All the newspapers of the age talked about them. A respected Biblical scholar named Dom Augustin Calmet (1672-1757) published an **enormous** book on vampires in 1746, and even though he did not exactly say that they really existed, he did not exactly say that they didn't exist either. The famous **philosopher** Voltaire (1694-1778) referred to them **ironically**. The great French biologist Comte de Buffon (1707-88) called a South American bat a "vampire bat". Then that there was every kind of proof to show that vampires really existed, there were government reports, church reports, legal documents and medical reports about vampires. And the really strange thing is, Rousseau was right, there were hundreds of official reports of all kinds talking about vampires. For example, in 1731 Johannes Fluchinger, a medical officer of the Austrian army, was sent to investigate a case of vampires in the village of Medvegia in Serbia. In his report he wrote: "I carried out the investigation with the assistance of two other doctors and a captain of the local infantry unit. They told me that a local soldier named Arnold Paole had said several times that a vampire had bitten him in Serbia Turkey. To free himself from the effect of the vampire he had eaten some of the earth from the vampire's grave and washed himself with its blood. Then, twenty days after Arnold Paole's death, various people said that he had come back from the grave to torment them, and four of these people actually died. So, following the advice of a local government official who was an expert in vampires, the villagers dug up Paole forty days after his death. They found his body intact. Fresh blood came from his eyes, nose, ears, and mouth. His shirt, shroud and the **coffin** were all filled with blood. The nails of the hands and feet had fallen off with the old skin, but new skin

and nails had grown in their place. From this they deduced that Arnold Paole was a **vampire**.

Part B. Reading Comprehension

Say whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. In the early 1700s, there was a veritable vampire mania in the big cities of Europe. T_____ F_____
2. Rousseau did not think there were any good reasons to believe in vampires. T_____ F_____
3. A belief in vampires was limited to Eastern Europe. T_____ F_____
4. The Austrian government did not take very seriously the various beliefs in vampires. T_____ F_____
5. Dom Augustin discredited the belief that vampires exist. T_____ F_____
6. Arnold Paole was believed to be alive. T_____ F_____
7. People believed that vampires were real. T_____ F_____
8. Paole's body was decomposing when they dug him up. T_____ F_____
9. People deduced that Paole was a vampire. T_____ F_____
10. Paole drank blood from the vampire. T_____ F_____

Part C. Vocabulary Building-Up

A. From the previous text, match the words to their correct meanings.

Column A		Column B
A. coffin	()	someone who practices philosophy, which involves rational inquiry into areas that are outside either theology or science
B. philosopher	()	a dead person who comes back to life and sucks blood from other people at night
C. ironic	()	extremely large
D. vampire	()	a funerary box used for viewing or keeping a corpse, either for burial or cremation
E. enormous	()	an excessive enthusiasm or desire; an obsession
F. mania	()	showing that you really mean the opposite of what you are saying

B. Translate the following words into Spanish. Use the dictionary if necessary.

1. count:

2. stake:

3. coffin:

4. castle:

5. coach:

6. ivory:

7. corpse:

8. blood:

9. howl:

10. wolf:

C. Write down the meaning of the following words in your own words. Take into consideration: grammar, spelling, coherent ideas, and subject-verb agreement.

ironic:

howling:

coffin:

crates:

safety pin:

Part D. Production

Write down a 5-sentence paragraph where you tell a different ending of the story *Dracula*.

Evaluation Rubric			
Criterion	Excellent The student has all the elements requested.	Good The student has some of the elements requested.	Deficient The student has none of the elements requested.
It has the five sentences requested.			
The sentences present coherent ideas			
Correct grammar 1 to 5 mistakes: 1 point less 6 to 10 mistakes: 2 points less			
Correct spelling 1 to 5 mistakes: 1 point less 6 to 10 mistakes: 2 points less			

Reading Activities

Topic: *Dracula*

Strategy: Reading comprehension

Student: Priscilla Meneses Vega

Level: 9th grade

Part A. Reading Comprehension

1. Read the text and then answer the questions based on it.

Vampire Bats

Adapted from the book *Dracula* (Bram Stoker, 2009)

Does a flapping of wings outside your window mean a vampire is near? Well, in Java there is a bat called the flying fox that has a wingspan of 1.7 meters and a body length of 42 centimeters. During the day it hangs upside-down from tree branches in groups of hundreds and thousands. When these bats finish their daytime rest and fly off into the night, it is a frightening spectacle, especially for those who have read *Dracula*. But there is really no reason to be afraid because these bats eat fruit, not blood.

Then there is a bat with large claws and big teeth, but this one eats fish. What about blood? Isn't there a bat that drinks blood? Well, among the more than 1,000 species of bats in the world, there are three that drink blood. They all live in the American tropics. They are a lot smaller than the flying foxes of Java, being only around eight centimeters long. They are incredibly agile, even when they are not flying. They can run on all four legs or stand up on their back legs, and jump very well too.

Like most bats, vampire bats locate their prey using echolocation or sonar; they emit acute sounds that bounce off objects around them and return to the bats as echoes. This sonar system of bats is so sophisticated that we can say that bats 'see acoustically'. When a vampire bat has located a sleeping cow, for example, it generally lands on the ground near the animal. Then with great agility, it runs quickly and quietly towards the animal, and then jumps on it like a frog. It then looks for an area with little fur, like on the legs or around the ears. Vampire bats

also have special cells in their noses that are used as infra-red detectors – in this way they can find where the blood of an animal is closer to the surface. Then the vampire bites the animal with its razor-sharp teeth. This bite is almost painless and the sleeping animal is not awakened. Once the animal is bitten, the blood comes out and the vampire bat licks it up. Also, there are special proteins in the bat's saliva which prevent blood from coagulating. Recent studies have shown that these proteins, which have been named "draculin" after the famous fictional vampire, may be very useful in treating people who have had heart attacks and strokes.

- 1) What do flying foxes eat?

- 2) How big are flying foxes?

- 3) How many different kinds of bats are there in the world?

- 4) How many kinds of vampire bats drink blood?

- 5) How big are vampire bats?

- 6) How do vampire bats find their prey?

- 7) What do vampire bats use their infrared detectors for?

- 8) What is a "draculin"?

2. Read the text and then answer the questions based on the same.

Victorians Villains, Monsters and Fears

Adapted from the book *Dracula* (Bram Stoker, 2009)

Bram Stoker’s great creation, the evil Count Dracula, was not just a pale, blood-sucking aristocratic vampire; he was also a great Romanian warrior. And, as is made clear in the novel, he is planning a massive invasion of England. Jonathan Harker himself realizes that the Count will create thousands and thousands of demons just like himself in London, in the heart of Britain. In literature this fear of invasion generally appeared with normal enemies as in the novel *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) by George Tomkyns Chesney, which gives a fictional account of a German invasion of Britain. Later H. G. Wells (1866-1946) imagined invaders from Mars in his frightening story *The War of the Worlds* (1898)

A fear that closely related to that of invasion is the fear of foreigners who contaminate the purity of the ‘British race’. This type of fear was very common in the late 1800s in all of Europe. One literary critic, Stephen D. Arata, called it the ‘anxiety of reverse colonization.’ In other words, just as the British brought their culture and customs to other countries, so other people from other countries came to England. Or, there was the fear that the British in foreign lands would adopt native morals, ideals and customs. This was known at the time as ‘going native’.

Both of these fears are not fears of being killed: they are fears of being transformed. This, of course, is exactly what Count Dracula does. His victims are not destroyed. They continue to exist but they too begin to suck blood and create more vampires. One of the Stoker’s models for Count Dracula was Svengali, an evil Jewish hypnotist from 1894 novel *Trilby* by George du Maurier. Its plot takes place in Paris of the 1850s. With his hypnotic powers, Svengali turns the totally unmusical Trilby O’Ferrall into a great singer called La Svengali. Like Count Dracula, Svengali comes from “the mysterious, the poisonous east”. Svengali also inspired another popular literary monster, the deformed Erik of the Paris Opéra in the 1910 novel *The Phantom of the Opera* by Gaston Leroux (1868-1927).

Besides the general fear of invasions and foreigners, Bram Stoker played with the fear of the animal inside of each one of us. After the great controversy surrounding the 1859 book *On the Origin of the Species* by the British Naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-82), people became aware of our close ties with all other living things. For many people, this created great anxiety and fear. They thought it showed that people were not better than animals or wild beasts. Stoker makes it clear that Count Dracula has very close ties to animals and that he himself is a kind of beast.

Another very popular book that played with this fear is *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) by Robert Louis Stevenson. In this story, Dr. Jekyll discovers a way of bringing out his animal side and repressing his civilized side. Dr. Jekyll’s evil side is called Mr. Hyde and he is similar to an ape.

- 1) What do the novels *The War of the Worlds* and *Dracula* have in common?

- 2) What was anxiety of reverse colonization?

- 3) What does “going native” mean?

- 4) Who is Svengali?

- 5) What monster, besides *Dracula*, was inspired by Svengali?

- 6) What fear was caused by Darwin’s *On the Origin of the Species*?

- 7) Who is Mr. Hyde?

- 8) Why were people afraid of the animal inside of us?

PRE-TEST

Criterion

Category	Prior Knowledge Activation Exercises	Reading Comprehension Exercises	Vocabulary Acquisition Exercises
	The students utilize the KWL Chart to write down their opinions about Dracula with coherent ideas, correct grammar and spelling, and appropriate use of subject/verb agreement.	The students can write down content words related to the book <i>Dracula</i> with the initial letters of their names using the correct spelling.	The students could identify statements as true or false based on a reading related to <i>Dracula</i> .
		The students could match the words to their meanings taken from the reading text that is closely related to the story of <i>Dracula</i> .	The students could match the names of the characters from the book <i>Dracula</i> to their pictures.
			The students could write down in their own words the meaning of the words taken from the book <i>Dracula</i> using correct spelling and grammar in their L2.
			The students could write a 5-sentence paragraph retelling the story of <i>Dracula</i> with coherent ideas, correct grammar and spelling, and appropriate use of subject/verb agreement.

Excellent
The student answered all the items requested.

Good
The student answered some of the items requested.

Deficient
The student answered none of the items requested.

READING ACTIVITIES

Criterion

Category	Reading Comprehension Exercises
	The students could understand what they were asked in the questions and formulated the correct answer based on a text related to the book <i>Dracula</i> .
	The students could write down the answers with their own words or used the exact same words from the text.
	The students wrote full answers with subject, verb, and object or wrote short answers but they still gave an appropriate answer.

Excellent
The student answered all the items requested.

Good
The student answered some of the items requested.

Deficient
The student answered none of the items requested.

POST-TEST

Criterion							
Category	Prior Knowledge Activation Exercises		Reading Comprehension Exercises		Vocabulary Acquisition Exercises		
	The students could identify the picture from the book <i>Dracula</i> and describe with their own words what happened in the picture with coherent ideas, correct grammar and spelling, and appropriate use of subject/verb agreement.	The students can write down content words related to the book <i>Dracula</i> below the initial letters of the word DRACULA using the correct spelling.	The students could identify statements as true or false based on a reading related to <i>Dracula</i> .	The students could match the words to their meanings taken from the reading text that is closely related to the story of <i>Dracula</i> .	The students could translate into their L1 the words taken from the book <i>Dracula</i> using any means necessary to aid them.	The students could write down in their own words the meaning of the words given.	The students could write a 5-sentence paragraph re-writing a new ending of the story of <i>Dracula</i> with coherent ideas, correct grammar and spelling, and appropriate use of subject/verb agreement.

Excellent
The student answered all the items requested.

Good
The student answered some of the items requested.

Deficient
The student answered none of the items requested.