UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

SCHOOL OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Universidad de El Salvador

Hacia la libertad por la cultura

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

The Influence of Academic Background Knowledge on the English Language Proficiency Level of Advanced Students at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, year 2015.

PRESENTED BY:

De León González, Cecilia Guadalupe   **DG09001**
Ortiz Castro, Marvin Ernesto   **OC09025**
Salguero, Fátima Gabriela   **SS09042**

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:

Bachelor of Arts in English with emphasis in Teaching

MsE. Miguel Ángel Carranza Campos
ADVISOR

M. Ed. Manuel Alexander Landaverde
COORDINATOR OF GRADUATION PROCESS

Main University Campus, San Salvador, February 19th, 2016

AUTHORITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

ING. José Luis Argueta Antillón
RECTOR

Not elected to the date
ACADEMIC VICE-RECTOR

ING. Carlos Villalta
ADMINISTRATIVE VICE-RECTOR

DRA. Ana Leticia Zavaleta De Amaya
SECRETARY GENERAL

AUTHORITIES OF THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

LIC. José Vicente Cuchillas
DEAN

LIC. Edgar Nicolás Ayala
VICE-DEAN

M.A. Rafael Ochoa Gomez
ACTING SECRETARY

AUTHORITIES OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

MTI. José Ricardo Gamero
HEAD OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

M. Ed. Manuel Alexander Landaverde
COORDINATOR OF THE GRADUATION PROCESS

MsE. Miguel Angel Carranza
ADVISOR

PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I want to thank God without him, I could not be here. Thanks to give me patience and the courage to continue in this career, despite the difficulties.

I also want to thank my dear parents, Ana Cecilia González and Maximiliano De León for always being there when I needed them. Everything I have and what I am, is because of them. I want to thank to all my siblings, Silvia, Luis and Karla because all their help and support.

To my professors who taught me in this time. Specially Lic. Francisco Rodriguez, Lic. Ricardo Garay and Lic. Rhina Franco, because they had a big legacy in my career. Of course I want to thank to my advisor, Lic. Miguel Angel Carranza for all the time and support; without his help the final graduation project would not be possible.

Finally, I want to thank all my dear friends; specially Gaby, Jenifer and Marvin; without their help this goal would not be possible.

Cecilia Guadalupe De León González

PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to almighty God who has given me the blessing of finishing my major. Also provide all his wisdom, support and love.

I also want to express a special thank to my mother Sandra Yanira Castro who has been my greatest inspiration to complete my major, providing me all her patience, economical support and principally her inconditional love. Also I want to thank my honorable father Luis Ernesto Ortiz for his advice, support, emotional help and love during the major.

Beside that, I would like to thank my dear sister Marla Yessenia Ortiz Castro and family who has been always there for me all of the time providing   support, advice and courage to finish my major. I also want to thank my loved girlfriend Jessica María Hernández who has shared her inconditional support, emotional help, comprehension and love the majority of time in the major.

I wish to express my sincere thank to my advisor Lic. Miguel Ángel Carranza who shared all his knowledge in order to complete this graduation project. I aslo want to thank all the teachers who taught me during this major; specially Lic. Claudia Vides, Lic. Francisco Rodriguez and Lic. Nicolas Ayala.

Finally, I want to thank my dear friend because during five years providing me support, help and friendship; a special mention to Ceclia De Leon and Gabriela Salguero for their all inconditional support, patience and respect during this graduation project and major.

Marvin Ernesto Ortiz Castro

PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I want to express my deepest gratitude to God who has been the unconditional support along this path, granting me his love, wisdom, kindness, patience and mercy. Also for providing me the strength when I felt like quitting more than once and reminding me that if I had him in my life, I had it all.

I also want to thank my mother for her sacrifice and being there by my side all the time providing me the strength, support and love I always needed and encouraging me along this journey. For making of me the woman I have become with her example of courage, sacrifice and bravery. For inspiring me to be a professional and a better human beign every single day.

My father, his wife and family have been also one of my biggest inspirations in my life. Through their example, I have learned how to have special gratitude for life, plus that helping others provides special satisfaction that fulfills anyone´s life.

To my godmother, sister and an amazing woman María José Márquez, who has always been my support since I was a little girl, I want to express my gratitude for always granting me with support, love, kindness and encouraging me all the time to keep going no matter what.

Afterwards, I want to thank my lovely boyfriend Mario Rivera, for showing his unconditional support, love and patience all this time. For being by my side along this journey and encouraging me since the very beginning of my major believing in me many times but I in myself. To make of me a better person every day with his love and company. I also want to thank my lovely friends and sisters Karen Castellanos, Fátima López, Karen Guzmán and Estela Ávalos who have provided me the strength I needed every time I felt I could not go any further, and for making my obstacles look like a new challenge to achieve.

To my advisor, Mr. Miguel Ángel Carranza who has been a strong motivator along this path teaching how enjoyable and priceless is "Teaching" through his admirable example. Also to those teachers who have left their mark at some point through this major like Mrs. Claudia Guzmán, Mr. Francisco Rodríguez and Mr. Nicolás Ayala.

To my dear classmates and friends who have been that special support along this way sharing every single moment in our major trying to be there every time we needed it, specially to my lovely team, Marvin Ortiz and Cecilia De León who have made of this last mile an enjoyable experience that has taught me a lot. I am deeply grateful and proud of our team which has made our bond of friendship even stronger.

Fátima Gabriela Salguero

INTRODUCTION

It is widely known that the extent to which students learn new content depends on factors such as the skill of the teacher, the interest of the student, and the complexity of the content itself. What students already know about a content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they will learn new information related to that content.

According to Robert J. Marzano, (2004) in his book titled "Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement" there are some scenarios that demonstrate the dramatic impact of academic background knowledge on success in school. Students who have a great deal of background knowledge in a given subject area are likely to learn new information readily and quite well.

The terms background knowledge and prior knowledge are generally used interchangeably. For purposes of the present study, **_Academic Background Knowledge_** (**ABK**) is understood as a combination of the learner's preexisting _attitudes, experiences,_ and _knowledge of a specific subject acquired during previous academic years plus socioeconomic status, that combines parents´ educational level, occupational status and income level._ In this regard, Academic Background Knowledge is different from other background knowledge terms.

It is important to know that Academic Background Knowledge is a factor which plays a role to achieve successfully a second language , in this particular case, on advanced English students from the Foreign Language Department; that is why, any students in the English classes have a level of ABK. For that reason, this research tries to identify the levels of ABK from advanced English students in order to correlate it with their English language proficiency.

The purpose of this research is to identify the influence of Academic Background Knowledge (ABK) on the English Proficiency level of advanced students from the Foreign Language Department; for that reason, several techniques have been applied: a survey and a placement test were administered in order to collect the data that is needed to identify those factors that affect students when learning a new language, and then the data collected was analyzed by the researchers with the help of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

This research deals with the influence of academic background knowledge on the English language proficiency level of advanced students at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. The research was also the relationship that socioeconomic status has on learning in general, and how this influences students to be successful in their academic achievement of a given English level. Many researchers have demonstrated the importance of factors like prior knowledge of English, motivation, and teaching-learning methodology in orde to achieve higher levels of proficiency in the acquisition of a second language.

Students develop background knowledge through the interaction of two factors: (1) the ability to process and store information, and (2) the number and frequency of our academically oriented experiences. The ability to process and store information is a component of what cognitive psychologists refer to as fluid intelligence. As described by Cattell (1987), fluid intelligence is innate. One of its defining features is the ability to process information and store it in permanent memory. High fluid intelligence is associated with enhanced ability to process and store information. Low fluid intelligence is associated with diminished ability to process and store information. Our ability to process and store information dictates whether our experiences parlay into background knowledge.

It is important to acknowledge that some people assert that schools can make little difference in overcoming the background factors that negatively affect student academic achievement. John Hattie, Professor of Education and Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute at the University of Melbourne, Australia,

developed a way of ranking various influences in different meta-analyses according to their effect sizes. In his ground-breaking study, he ranked those influences which are related to learning outcomes from very positive effects to very negative effects on student achievement. Hattie studied six areas that contribute to learning: the student, the home, the school, the curricula, the teacher, and teaching and learning approaches. But Hattie did not merely provide a list of the relative effects of the different influences on student achievement. At the extreme end of the continuum are theorists like Jensen (1980) and Heurnstein and Murray (1994), who make the case that the differences in knowledge and skill students bring to the classroom are largely due to genetic aspects of aptitude that are impervious to change. However, these arguments dramatically underestimate the importance of nongenetic background factors mentioned in the previous discussion. They also ignore the research indicating that innate intelligence is not as strongly related to academic achievement as once thought.

Some students learn a new language more quickly and easily than others. This simple fact is known by all who have themselves learned a second language or taught those who are using their second language in school. Clearly, some language learners are successful by virtue of their sheer determination, hard work and persistence. However there are other crucial factors influencing success that are largely beyond the control of the learner. These factors can be broadly categorized as internal and external. It is their complex interplay that determines the speed and facility with which the new language is learned.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

Academic Background knowledge seems to play a strong role in the achievement of the English Proficiency of advanced students at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador; when individuals have knowledge about a particular topic, they are better able to recall and elaborate on the topic, making the learning process easier. Conversely, when students are not familiar with the topic, do not have prerequisite information; the process of learning can be more challenging. For that reason, students with diverse cultural and educational backgrounds during the major in the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador exhibit certain level of ABK related to English, meaning that some students may have a high degree of academic schooling in their target language when they arrive in the University, but do not have the words to express what they know in English. Other students may have had interrupted formal schooling, or their background knowledge may not match the perspective presented in the classroom. This poses a particular challenge and demonstrates the importance of the Academic background knowledge in order to achieve the English proficiency that advanced students are required in their major at the Foreign Language Department. That is why, the research teams has developed the hypothesis: Students with strong Academic Background Knowledge have more possibilities to achieve the English proficiency that the majors of the FLD demands than students who do not.

This research was about the importance of academic background knowledge and socioeconomic status and how this influence students to be successful in their academic achievement. If the knowledge and skills that students from advantaged backgrounds possess is learned rather than innate, then students who do not come from these elitist backgrounds can learn it too. Indeed, even aspects of intelligence once thought to be genetically based appear to be amenable to change through schooling; schools can indeed make a difference.

According to Robert J. Marzano, (2004) in his book titled "Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement" there are some scenarios that demonstrate the dramatic impact of academic background knowledge on success in school. Students who have a great deal of background knowledge in a given subject area are likely to learn new information readily and quite well.

The background knowledge that students carried from high school is very important for the learning process at the first semester of studies in the major. It takes many years to get a good knowledge of the English language due to the resources that there exist in the process. Behind this phenomenon, there are many factors that cause this contra productive behavior in the students, among them it can be mentioned the more frequent: the students do not have the tools such as internet at home, they have no cable TV to watch movies and series in English to get a richer vocabulary, but getting a good number of words does not mean that the student is going to be able to produce very good oral presentations and pieces of writing. There are other sub-factors which make the problem even more extensive. All of these factors are influencing students not to participate and to feel vulnerable in their presentation in classes.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 General Objective

- To analyze the influence that Academic Background Knowledge has on the English level of advanced students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To demonstrate the importance of Academic Background Knowledge on advanced students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

- To determine the importance of Socio Economic Status on the Academic Background Knowledge on advanced students from the Foreign Language Department.

- To state what academic major exhibits stronger English proficiency level: English Teaching major or Modern Languages major.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1 General Research Question

- How does Academic Background Knowledge influence the English level of advanced students from the Foreign Language Department?

1.4.2 Specific Research Questions

- What is the importance of Academic Background Knowledge on advanced students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador?

- What is the importance of Socioeconomic Status on the Academic Background Knowledge of advanced students?

- What academic major has stronger English Proficiency Level, English Teaching major or Modern Languages major?

1.5 JUSTIFICATION

Some students learn a new language more quickly and easily than others. This simple fact is known by all who have themselves learned a second language or taught those who are using their target language in school. Clearly, some language learners are successful by virtue of their sheer determination, hard work and persistence (Paul Shoebottom, 2006). However, there are other crucial factors influencing success that are largely beyond the control of the learner. These factors can be broadly categorized as internal and external. It is their complex interplay that determines the speed and facility with which the new language is learned.

Academic Background knowledge seems to play a strong role in the achievement of the English Proficiency of advanced students at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador; when individuals have knowledge about a particular topic, they are better able to recall and elaborate on the topic, making the learning process easier. Conversely, when students are not familiar with the topic, do not have prerequisite information; the process of learning can be more challenging. For that reason, students with diverse cultural and educational backgrounds during the English major in the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador show an ABK's level related to English, meaning that some students may have a high degree of academic schooling in their target language when they arrive in the university, but do not have the words to express what they know in English. Other students may have had interrupted formal schooling, or their background knowledge may not match the perspective presented in the classroom.

The background knowledge that students carried from high school is very important for the learning process at the first semester of studies in the major. It takes many years to get a good knowledge of the English language due to the resources that there exist in the process. Behind this phenomenon, there are

many factors that cause this contra productive behavior in the students, among them it can be mentioned the more frequent: the students do not have the tools such as internet at home, they have no cable TV to watch movies and series in English to get a richer vocabulary, but getting a good number of words does not mean that the student is going to be able to produce very good oral presentations and pieces of writing. There are other sub-factors which make the problem even more extensive. All of these factors are influencing students not to participate and to feel vulnerable in their presentation in classes.

This poses a particular challenge and demonstrates the importance of the Academic background knowledge in order to achieve the English proficiency that advanced students face in the English major at the Foreign Language Department. That is why the research teams has also developed the hypothesis: students with strong Academic Background Knowledge have more possibilities to achieve the English proficiency that the majors of the FLD demands than students who do not.

The researchers applied several strategies such as a survey and a placement test in order to have accurate information that could demonstrate how Academic Background Knowledge can affect the English proficiency achievement during the learning process on advanced students. Also this research may show how important the Academic Background Knowledge is on the English proficiency level, and besides that, how advanced students could possibly improve their English proficiency level.

1.6 DELIMITATION

- This research was developed in Advanced English I students from the Foreign Language Department of University of El Salvador, San Salvador, El Salvador.

- This research was developed during semester II year 2015 in the Advanced English I classes from the Foreign Language Department of University of El Salvador.

- Finally, this project was developed by the researchers:

  Fátima Gabriela Salguero

  Cecilia Guadalupe De León González

  Marvin Ernesto Ortiz Castro

CHAPTER II

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Learning a foreign language has become an important tool because of the social requirements such as better jobs opportunities, chances to study or work abroad and others. That is why many people have the desire to learn another language since it has many advantages. When learning a second language, the students present different types of English levels in the same course such as basic, intermediate and advanced. However, the factors that influence the levels they have may vary. The students from the Foreign Language Department have their own factors which influence them to achieve and demonstrate an English level so; this framework clarifies the main academic and students factors that students present.

Some of the biggest factors that help students to be proficient in a second language depend on the skill of the teacher, the interest of the student, and the complexity of the content itself. What students already know about content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they will learn new information related to that content.

Among the factors that influence language learning are background knowledge and socioeconomic status. These factors influence students to be successful in their academic achievement. If the knowledge and skills that students from advantaged backgrounds possess is learned rather than innate, then students who do not come from these elitist backgrounds can learn it too. Indeed, even aspects of intelligence once thought to be genetically based appear to be amenable to change through schooling; schools can indeed make a difference. In this respect, to accomplish such a task, academic institutions must be willing to dedicate the necessary time and resources to enhancing the academic background

knowledge of students, particularly those who do not come from affluent upbringings.

Nowadays English level become an important role at the moment to studying a second language and background knowledge define it as the performance of students for that reason researchers assumed that teaching English as a foreign language is a headache for many teachers; a considerable amount of time they spend correcting the work of their students only to find that their comments and corrections have been ignored. Despite the arduous work of the teacher, the students written English is still not idiomatic, poorly organized, insufficiently developed, grammatically awkward, no variety in the structure of statements and weak in the use of vocabulary (Wang).

The academic literature supports one compelling fact: what students already know about the content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they will learn new information relative to the content. Commonly, researchers and theorists refer to what a person already knows about a topic as "Background Knowledge." Numerous studies have confirmed the relationship between background knowledge and achievement (Nagy, Anderson, & Herman, 1987; Bloom, 1976; Dochy, Segers, & Buehl, 1999; Tobias, 1994; Alexander, Kulikowich, & Schulze, 1994; Schiefele & Krapp, 1996; Tamir, 1996; Boulanger, 1981). In these studies the reported average correlation between a person's background knowledge of a given topic and the extent to which that person learns new information on that topic is.

Students acquire background knowledge through the interaction of two factors: (1) our ability to process and store information, and (2) the number and frequency of our academically oriented experiences. The ability to process and store information is a component of what cognitive psychologists refer to as fluid intelligence. As described by Cattell (1987), fluid intelligence is innate. One of its

defining features is the ability to process information and store it in permanent memory. High fluid intelligence is associated with enhanced ability to process and store information.   Low fluid intelligence is associated with diminished ability to process and store information. Our ability to process and store information dictates whether our experiences parlay into background knowledge.

It is important to acknowledge that some people assert that schools can make little difference in overcoming the background factors that negatively affect student academic achievement. John Hattie, Professor of Education and Director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute at the University of Melbourne, Australia, developed a way of ranking various influences in different meta-analyses according to their effect sizes. In his ground-breaking study he ranked those influences which are related to learning outcomes from very positive effects to very negative effects on student achievement. Hattie studied six areas that contribute to learning: the student, the home, the school, the curricula, the teacher, and teaching and learning approaches. But Hattie did not merely provide a list of the relative effects of the different influences on student achievement. At the extreme end of the continuum are theorists like Jensen (1980) and Heurnstein and Murray (1994), who make the case that the differences in knowledge and skill students bring to the classroom are largely due to genetic aspects of aptitude that are impervious to change. However, these arguments dramatically underestimate the importance of nongenetic background factors mentioned in the previous discussion. They also ignore the research indicating that innate intelligence is not as strongly related to academic achievement as once thought.

According to Robert J. Marzano, (2004), there are some scenarios that demonstrate the dramatic impact of academic background knowledge on success in school. Students who have a great deal of background knowledge in a given subject area are likely to learn new information readily and quite well. There is an

extensive terminology to describe different kinds of knowledge. The terms background knowledge and prior knowledge are generally used interchangeably. For example, Stevens (1980) defines background knowledge quite simply as "…what one already knows about a subject… (p.151)." Dochy & Alexander (1995) provide a more elaborate definition, describing prior knowledge as the whole of a person's knowledge, including explicit and tacit knowledge, metacognitive and conceptual knowledge. This definition is quite similar to Schallert's (1982) definition.

Thus, while scholars' definitions of these two terms are often worded differently, they typically describe the same basic concept. In the context of schools, background knowledge can be defined as the knowledge students have, learned both formally in the classroom as well as informally through life experiences. In an academic sense, background knowledge also includes content knowledge, academic language and vocabulary necessary for comprehending content information. For purposes of the present study, Academic Background Knowledge (ABK) will be understood as a combination of the learner's preexisting attitudes, experiences, and knowledge of a specific subject acquired during previous academic years plus Socioeconomic Status, that combines parents´ educational level, occupational status and income level.

It is important to know that Academic Background Knowledge is a factor which plays a role for students to acquire successfully a second language; that is why, any students in the English classes demonstrate a level of ABK. The English level proficiency measurement is an important aspect of English language learner´s academic development as the output of such measurement determines their future professional achievement. One of the most common models followed in the assessment of the English language is *The Common European Framework* for the purpose of describing the levels of proficiency required by existing standards,

tests and examinations in order to facilitate comparisons between different systems of qualifications. The Common European Framework divides learners into three broad divisions which are *Basic User, Independent User and Proficient User*. These common reference levels can be divided into six that are **A1** (Breakthrough or beginner), **A2** (Way stage or elementary), **B1** (Threshold or intermediate), **B2** (Vantage or upper intermediate), **C1** (Effective Operational Proficiency or Advanced) and **C2** (Mastery or Proficiency); for each level, it describes what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing.

Learning a foreign language is different from learning other subjects; language is part of the identity of human beings, which implies a transformation. It is not about conventions, but a new culture, new way of being, etc. Crookall and Oxford (1988-136) indicate that "learning a second language is ultimately learn to be another social person." From similarly, (Gardner 1985-146) states: "Languages differ from other subjects in pertaining to the acquisition of skills and behavior patterns characteristic another community. ¨ Result, he argues, success is determined in particular attitudes toward the community of speakers of that language.

To understand the impact of student socio-economic status on academic performance in a second language acquisition the researchers   understand the impact of student socio-economic background on academics performance interfere of the performance at the moment to studying a second language of course social economics status can make the difference; families from low resources communities are less likely to have the financial resources or time availability to provide children with academic support. This last idea may be also having an impact on first generation college students at UES, particulary in those who have low grade point average (GPA).

Socioeconomic status combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income and education, and occupation (Marmot, Michael, 2004) indicates when analyzing a family's social economic status, the household income, earners' education and occupation are examined, as well as combined income, versus with an individual, when their own attributes are assessed.

Researches indicate that children from low economic sources households and communities develop academic skills more slowly compared to children from higher social economics status groups (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier, & Maczuga, 2009). Initial academic skills are correlated with the home environment, where low literacy environments and chronic stress negatively affect a child's preacademic skills. The school systems in low social economics status communities are often underresourced, negatively affecting students' academic progress (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). Inadequate education and increased dropout rates affect children's academic achievement, perpetuating the low-SES of the community. Improving school systems and early intervention programs may help to reduce these risk factors, and thus increased research on the correlation between SES and education is essential.

One of the factors that interfere with the academic success of foreign students is parent's educational level. If parents are working long hours it limits the time they have to help their kids and if a good education and achieving good grades are not important to the parents then that is what will be passed on to their children lack of education on parents' part. When students come to the University, they present seriues deffieciencies as consequence of poor backgrounds.

CHAPTER III

3 TYPE OF STUDY

There are some factors that influence students to achieve the English level that the English teaching major and modern languages major demand; for this reason, this investigation has focused on how Academic Background Knowledge influences advanced students to achieve a successful English level in the Foreign language Department. This investigation is a quantitative study.   According to Bell (2010), a quantitative research is a study that collects facts, and studies the relationship of one set of facts to another, and it uses numerical data, structured and predetermined questions, conceptual frameworks, designs and techniques that are likely to produce quantified and, if possible generalizable conclusions. Therefore, this approach has gathered the data that is important and necessary for this research project.

According to the nature of this research, it has been based on two types of studies. The first one is the descriptive study. This type of study is about to specifying properties of people, groups, communities or any phenomenon that is submitted to analysis, and it measures or evaluates dispersed aspects, dimensions or components of the phenomenon to be researched (Pankhe, 1986). After that, the research team used the correlational study because the investigation consisted of measuring the degree of relation that exists between two or more variables.

The reason why this research is descriptive and correlational, it is because at the beginning of the investigation it was important to describe each aspect related to the phenomenon. For that reason, the investigation was descriptive because it helped the research members to find and describe the different aspects or variables that interfere in the Academic Background Knowledge of advanced Students on the English language proficiency level at the Foreign Language

Department of the University of El Salvador. However, later on the study became correlational to try to understand the relations between the variables of the research. For these reasons, the research team used these two types of research.

CHAPTER IV

4 HYPOTHESES

4.1 General Hypothesis

- Advanced students who have strong Academic Background Knowledge level have an advanced English proficiency level.

4.2 Specific Hypothesis

- Advanced students who graduated from a private school have a higher English proficiency level than advanced students who graduated from a public school.

- Advanced students who have a higher socioeconomic status have better opportunities to achieve the English level in order to finish their major successfully.

CHAPTER V

5 RESEACH DESIGN

Most students face the experience of being affected by the acquisition of a second language once they start studying at the University, that is why is really important to focus on the influence that Academic Background Knowledge (ABK) could have on the English language proficiency level of advanced students at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. As researchers, It was needed to develop some techniques and activities such as survey and a placement test in order to collect the data that was needed to identify those factors that influence advanced students to achieve the English level in order to finish their major successfully; also the selection of the sample and the data gathering process with its analysis were developed.

It is stated that a non-experimental design is one that is done without manipulating the variables deliberately. It is an investigation where we do not intentionally vary the independent variables. What we did in non-experimental research was just to observed phenomena as occur in their natural context, for its later analysis (Kerlinger 2002). That is why, the researcher observed the facts in their natural environment without manipulating and an important thing to note was the fact that there was a main different design of non-experimental research, which was: Cross-sectional design. This type of design used different groups of people who differ in the variable of interest but who share other characteristics such as socioeconomic status, educational background, and ethnicity. Cross-sectional design is observational in nature and are known as descriptive research. Researchers record the information that is present in a population, but they do not manipulate variables and also the data ghatering process takes place at a single point in time (Gratton, C., & Jones, I. 2004). According to this, our study was

considered cross-sectional due to the research group to administrate a survey; being this administered once to each advance English I groups.

This research followed some techniques and activities. First of all, as researchers of this project; a topic was selected, which was interesting to find out the importance of the Academic Background Knowledge on the English proficiency level of advanced student from the FLD. Second, the team searched for the literature review, theoretical framework, articles related to this topic. Third, the researchers needed to develop some techniques and activities such as surveys and administrate the *Interchange* placement test in order to collect the data that was needed to identify those factors that affect students when start learning a new language.

Also, the researchers selected the sample; approaching the stratified random sampling with the systematic listing, in which consists on a probability sampling technique where in the researchers divided the entire population into different subgroups or strata, then randomly selected the final subjects proportionally from the different strata.   According to this, the sample was 170 students between the groups of the advanced English I, semester II, 2015. Finally, the data collected was analyzed by the researchers with the help of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which was a statistic program, in order to conclude and as well to prove the issue that the research project presented at the beginning.

CHAPTER VI

6 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

6.1 POPULATION

The current research was done in the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, on semester II-2015, San Salvador, El Salvador. The population was students from English teaching major and modern languages major; taking the course advanced English I.

6.2 SAMPLE

The sampling technique was non-probabilistic. It is not a product of a randomized selection processes. Subjects in a non-probability sample are usually selected on the basis of their accessibility or by the purposive personal judgment of the researcher.

The method of non-probability sampling applied in this research was Convenience sampling. It means that the sample was selected because its accessiblity to the researcher. That is why the convenience sampling was taken from the students who were studying the advanced English I; in which there were 3 groups from English teaching major, 3 groups from Modern languages major and 1 group with students of both majors; making a total of 7 groups with 170 advanced students. Those groups were selected because their subjects were studying in the Advanced English I course and had suppostly an advanced English level.

CHAPTER VII

7 DATA GATHERING PROCESS

Due to the complexity and the purposes pursued to the topic selected, the instrument considered by the research group for the collection of the data were the Survey and a placement test (the Interchange Third Edition Passages Placement and Evaluation Package). Those were considered the best instruments to collect the information needed in order to understand better the phenomenon and give possible solution or recommendations to the beneficiaries.

The survey was used by the research members with the selected of the sampling in order to know the academic background knowledge (ABK) and its factors influence the advanced students to achieve the English level that the English teaching degree and modern languages degree demand. Also, Interchange Third Edition Passages Placement and Evaluation Package is used by the researchers to measure and determine the English level that the advanced English students from the foreign language department have currently.

With those instruments, the research members expected to collect all the necessary information with the purpose to provide some facts and recommendations to the selected problem.

CHAPTER VIII

8 DATA ANALYSIS

8.1 STATISTICAL PROCEDURE

According to the nature of this investigation, the research members used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which is a statistic program, that helps to analyze and interpret the data obtained from the instruments in a better, ordered, and easier way. This is one of the most popular statistical programs taking into account their ability to work with a large database and a simple interface for most of the analysis.

The first statistical procedure was a socio-demographic analysis. It shows general aspects like gender, age, marital status, place of residence, etc. Besides that, an univariate analysis was performed. It means that researchers designed a graphic for every question which the survey has and bar charts for the result of the placement test of each advanced English I group.

In addition, the second statistical procedure of analysis was bivariate. In this case researchers analyzed the combination of two questions of the survey or the combination of two questions with the results of the placement test in order to answers the research questions and hypothesis.

Finally, researchers with the help of the data analyzed by the SPSS program explained and clarified the outstanding findings of the research with the idea to give possible solutions and recommendations of the research problem.

8.2 UNIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The following socio-demographic analysis and bar charts showed the results obtained by the survey and the objective placement test C (Interchange Third Edition Passages Placement and Evaluation Package) administered to the corresponding sample. Every statistic graph contains its analysis of the influence of academic background knowledge (ABK) on the English language proficiency level of advanced students at the Foreign Language Department. These findings helped researchers to know what the academic background knowledge level of the student is and clarify how this phenomenon influences them to achieve the English level which the English Teaching degree and Modern Languages Degree demand. These results are shown in the next data analysis pages.

Socio-demographic analysis:

According to the information gathered in the survey administered to the English Advanced Students from the Foreign Language Department, from 170 students tested, 107 of them are women and the rest 63, are men. From those 170 people, there are 91 that are 21 to 25 years old, 63 of them are 15 to 20 years old, 8 people 26 to 30, and the rest which are 8 people are older than 30 . Another important fact about the people interviewed is that 159 are single, 6 are married and the rest which are 5 people, they are in a free unión; this data gathered can tell us that the majority of the population do not have any other responsability (children, husband/wife) to take care of and they have more opportunities to succed in their major. The majority of the population which are 138 students answer that they live in the city and the rest which are 32 students, they live in the countryside. Another important data gathered is that most of students which are 142, they live with their parents, 17 with relatives, 5 with roommates and the other 6, they live alone. As researchers, it can be infered that those 6 people who live alone are the ones who said they are married before, and also asume that the ones who live with their parents are the ones who are single. According to the question: Do you have any children? from 170 people interviewed, 159 answered they do not have any and the rest which is represented by 11 students, they said they do have at least one. In the following question, which was: Do you have a job? the majority of the students which are 137, answered they do not have a job. The rest which are 33 people, they said that they have a job. It which may give us the idea that those students that work, are the ones that are part of the ones who are married; the ones who said they have a child, they live alone and they do not have any economic support but themselves. Also, 126 students said they graduated from a public school and the rest which are 44, and they said they graduated from a private one. Finally, in the question about PAES score, according to the information gathered, 92 students got from 7.5 to 8.0, 68 people got from 6.5 to 7.0 and the rest which are 10 students, they said they got from 8.5 to 9.0

Graphic # 1
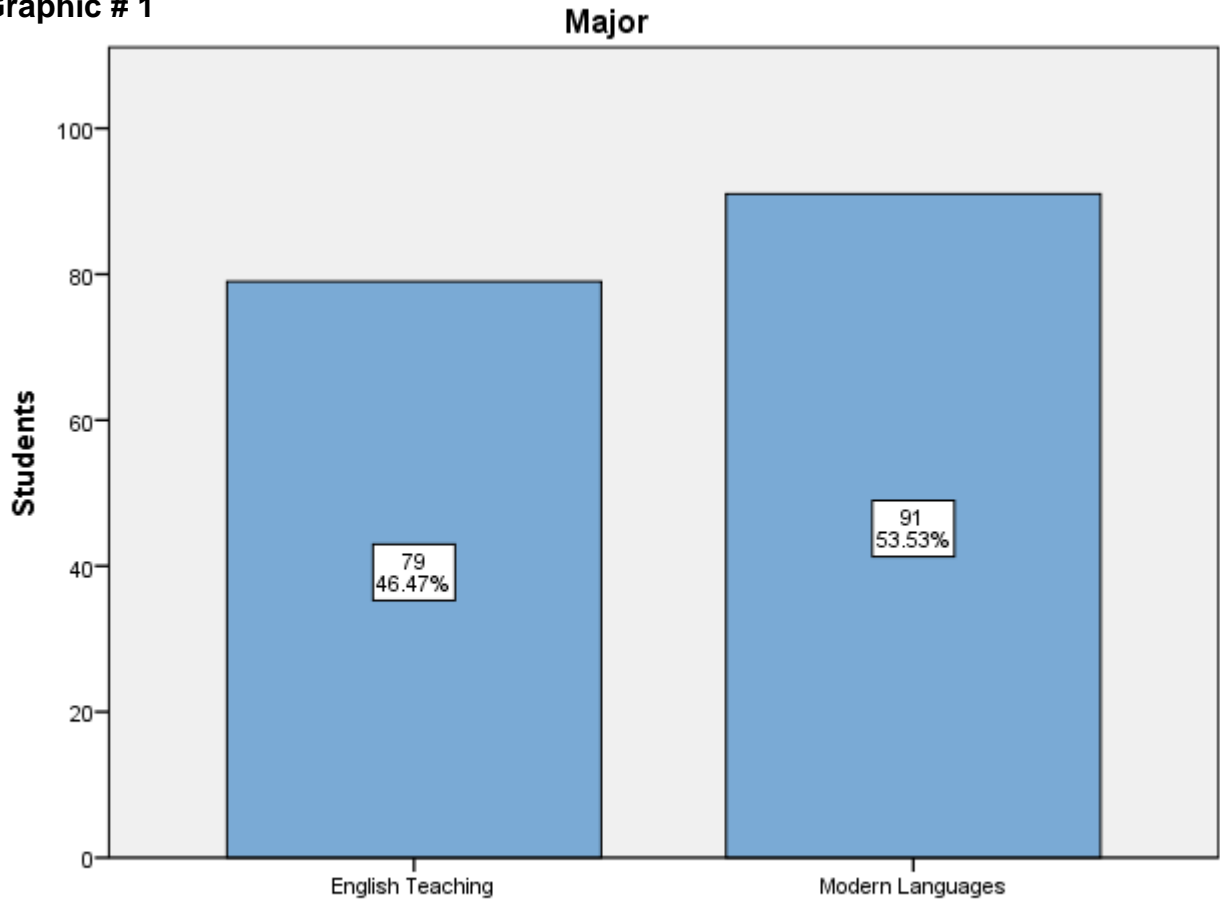
Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: This graphic contains the results of the survey administered to the students of advanced English I courses at the FLD, and it shows that 46.47% are students from the English Teaching Major and the other part   53.53% represents students from the Modern Languages Major.

Graphic # 2

Have you ever changed major?

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: This graphic contains the results of the survey administered to the students of advanced English I courses at the FLD and it shows that a big percentage of the population which is the 56.47% has changed major at least once and the rest which is the 43.53% has not. So It can be noted that 40 students from English teaching degree have changed major and 56 students from modern languages also have changed major.

Graphic # 3

Mothers educational level

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: This graphic shows that 38.24% of the population answered their mothers have elementary Studies, 35.88% of their mothers have high school education; 12.94% of the students´ mothers have University Studies, and the rest, 12.94%, has a Technical Degree. The information gathered might tell us that the percentage of mothers that has university studies are the ones who support their children the most and the ones who support them economically. As researchers, it can be mentioned that only 22 students, out of 170 are clasified as second generation college students when it comes to parent's educational level.

Graphic # 4

Fathers educational level

Students

- 42 / 24.71% — Elementary studies
- 67 / 39.41% — High School
- 28 / 16.47% — Technical Degree
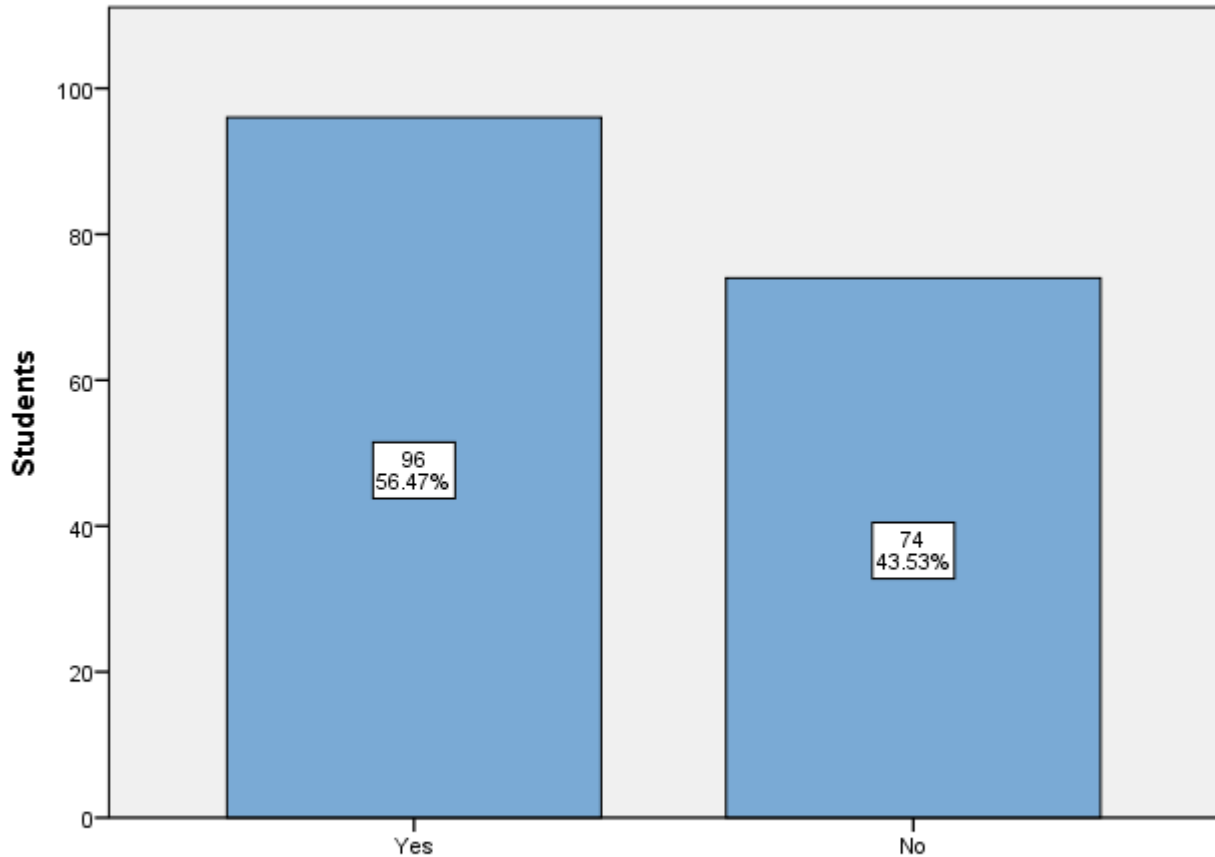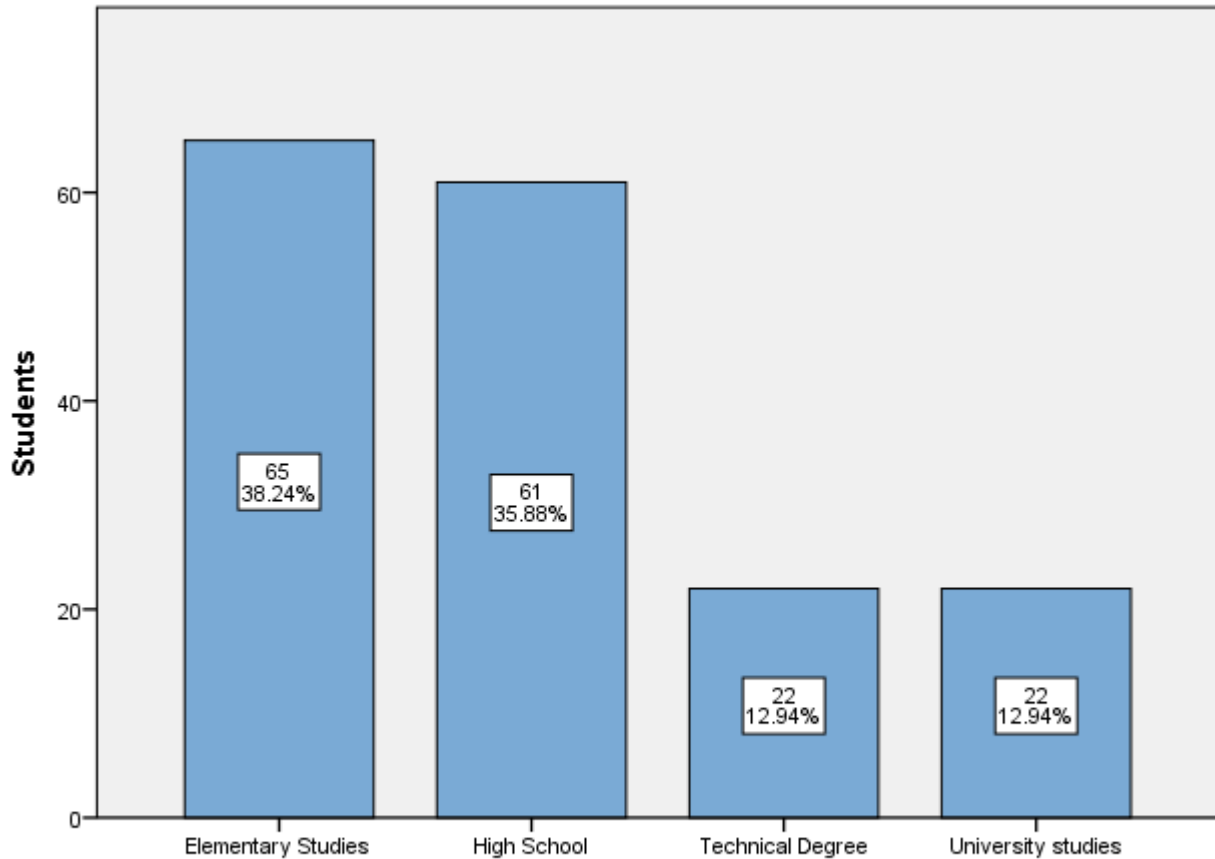- 33 / 19.41% — University Studies

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: This graphic contains the results of the survey administered to the students of advanced English I courses at the FLD and it shows that 39.41% of the population answered their fathers got high school studies, 24.71% of their fathers have elementary studies, 19.41% have university studies and the rest which is the 16.47% have a technical degree. It can be argued that 33 students are clasified as Second Generation when it comes to Parents Educational Level.

Graphic # 5

Did you receive English classes as part of after school classes (Superate, Access, other.) in High School?
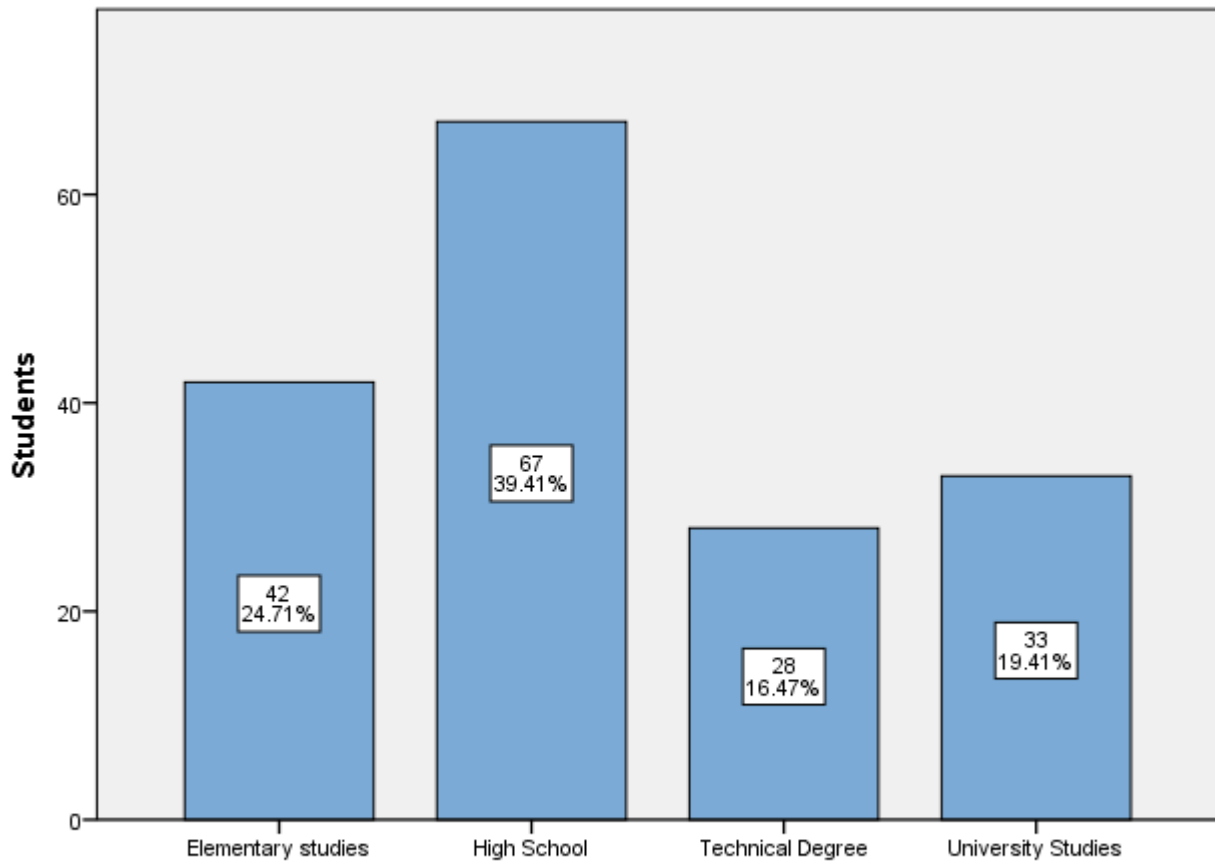
Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: According to the data collected in the question: Did you receive English classes as part of after school classes (Superate, Access, other.) in High School? The 31.18% of the interviewed said ¨Yes¨ regarding to the previous question about if they received English classes as part of after school clases in high school. And the 68.82% of the interviewers answered ¨No¨, so it means that the majority of the students in the Foreign Languages Department did not receive Engish classes as part of after school clases in high school.

Graphic # 6
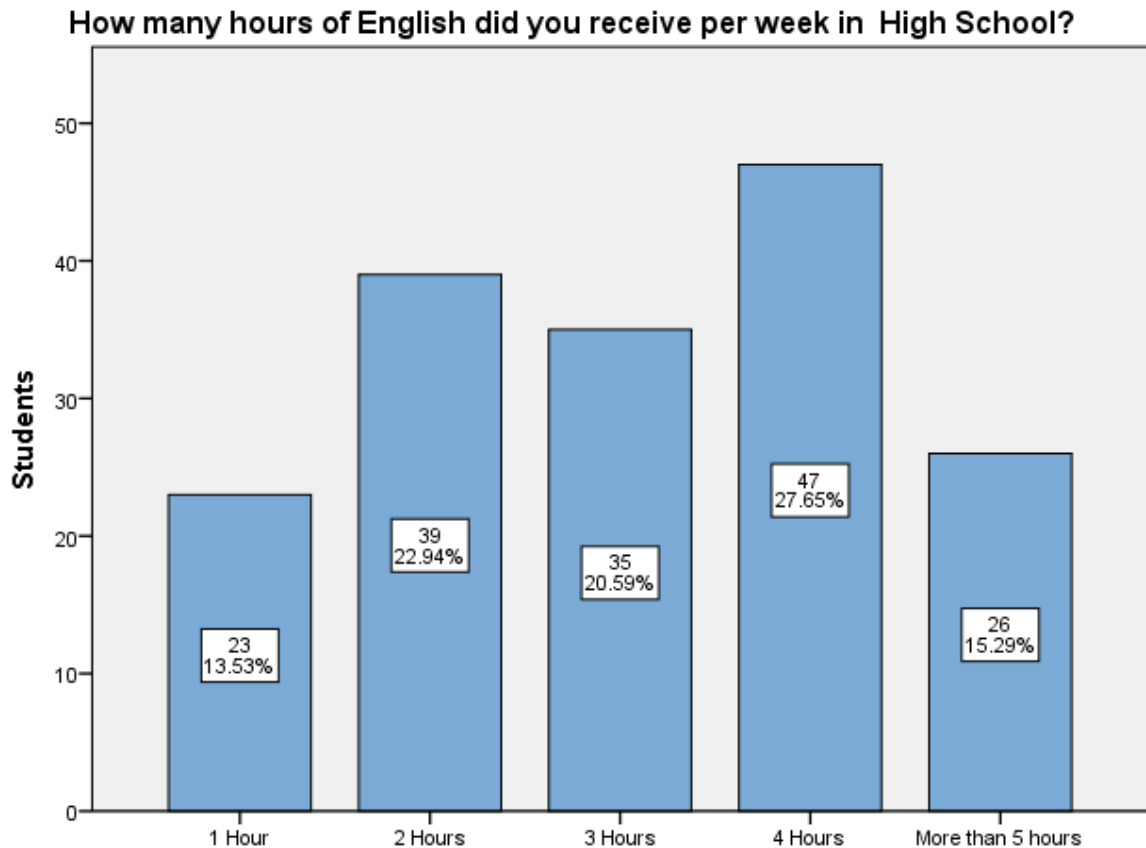
How many hours of English did you receive per week in High School?

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: In the question: How many hours of English did you receive per week in High school? The information collected shows that 13.53% of the students received 1 hour of English classes per week, the 22.94% of the students received 2 hours, the 20.59% of the students received 3 hours, the 27.65% of the students received 4 hours and the 15.29% received more than 5 hours. According to these percentages, all the students received at least 1 hour of English classes per week, which is really good because it means that they have knowledge of English as a second language and show a level of ABK.

Graphic # 7
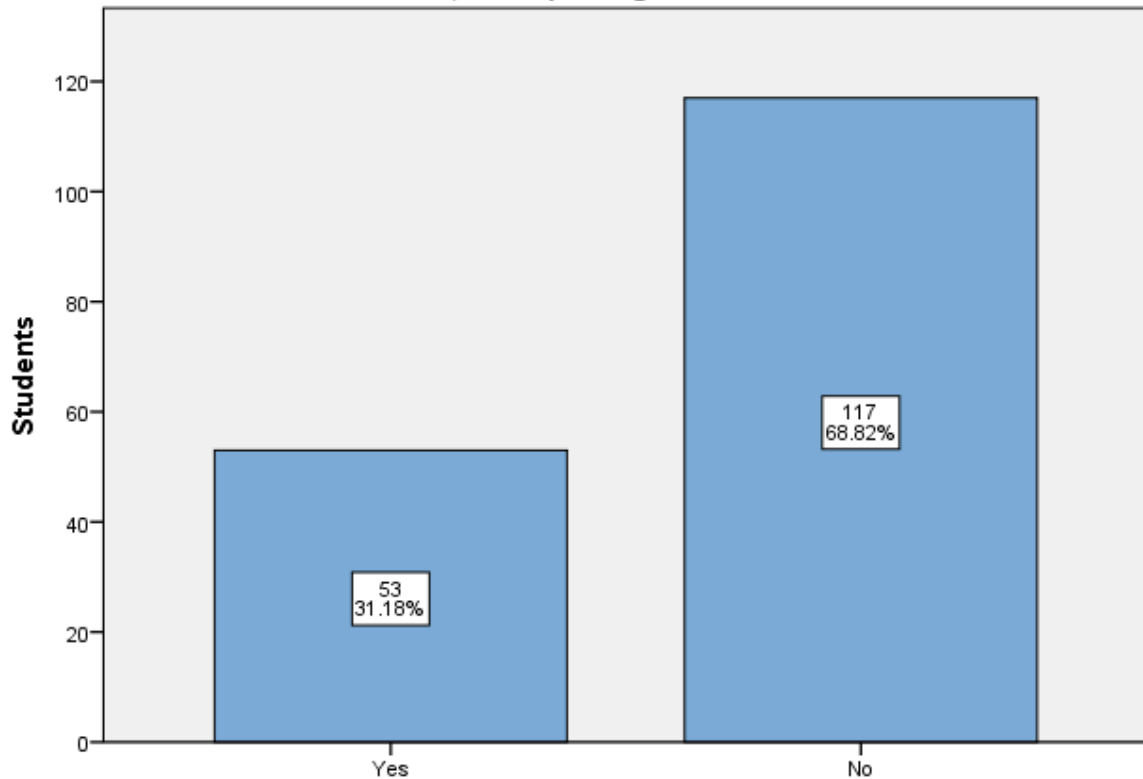

Have you ever traveled to another country?

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: Concerning question 5, which deals with students´ having traveled or not to another country, the graphic shows that the 28.24% of the interviewed answered that they have traveled to another country. On the other hand, 71.76% answered that they have not traveled to another country. It can be concluded that the majority of the students have not had the opportunity to travel to another country because they do not have the economic capacity to do so. The countries visited by students have been Central American countries, Mexico and the United States, being the last one a great opportunity to practice their English for 21 students.

Graphic # 8

Has the English level you got in high school helped you to succeed in your English courses?

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: Regarding question 21, which is: Has the English level you got in high school helped you to succeed in your English courses? 65.88% of the students answered ¨Yes¨ referring to the English level that they got in high school has helped them to succeed in their English courses. Meanwhile, 34.12% of the students answered ¨No¨ showing that the English level that they got in high school leaning process did not help them to succeed their English courses.

Graphic # 9
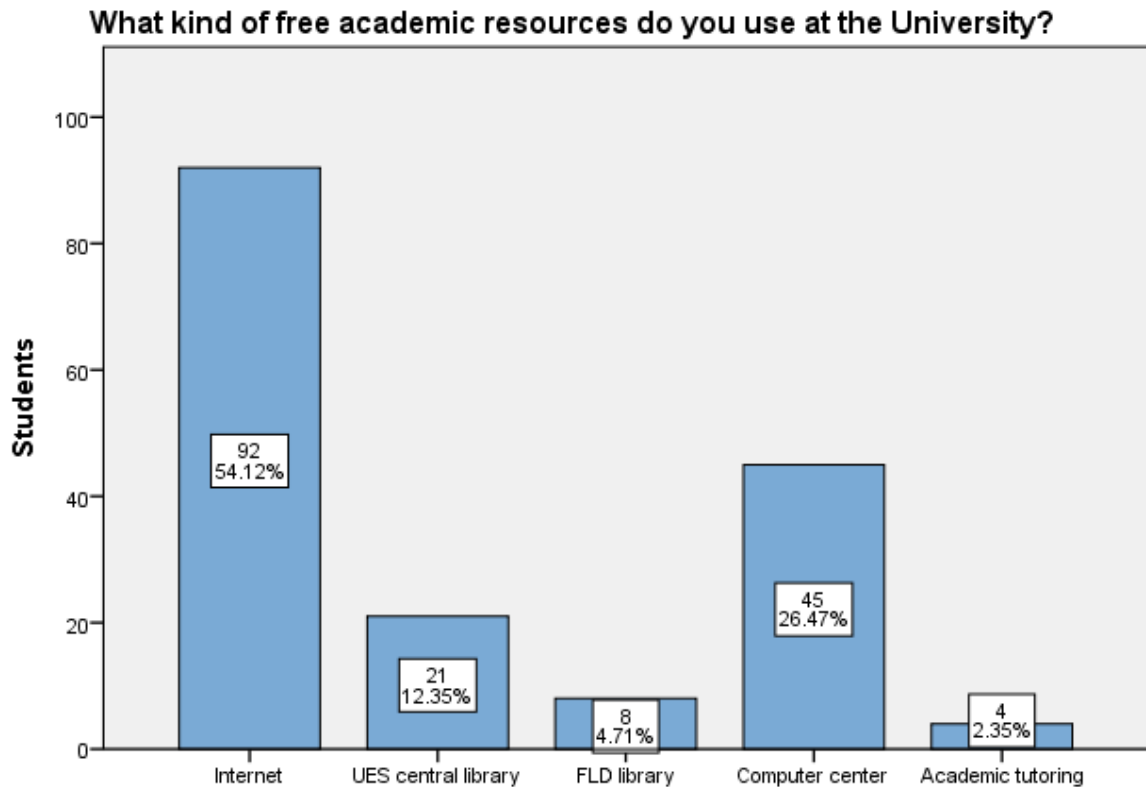
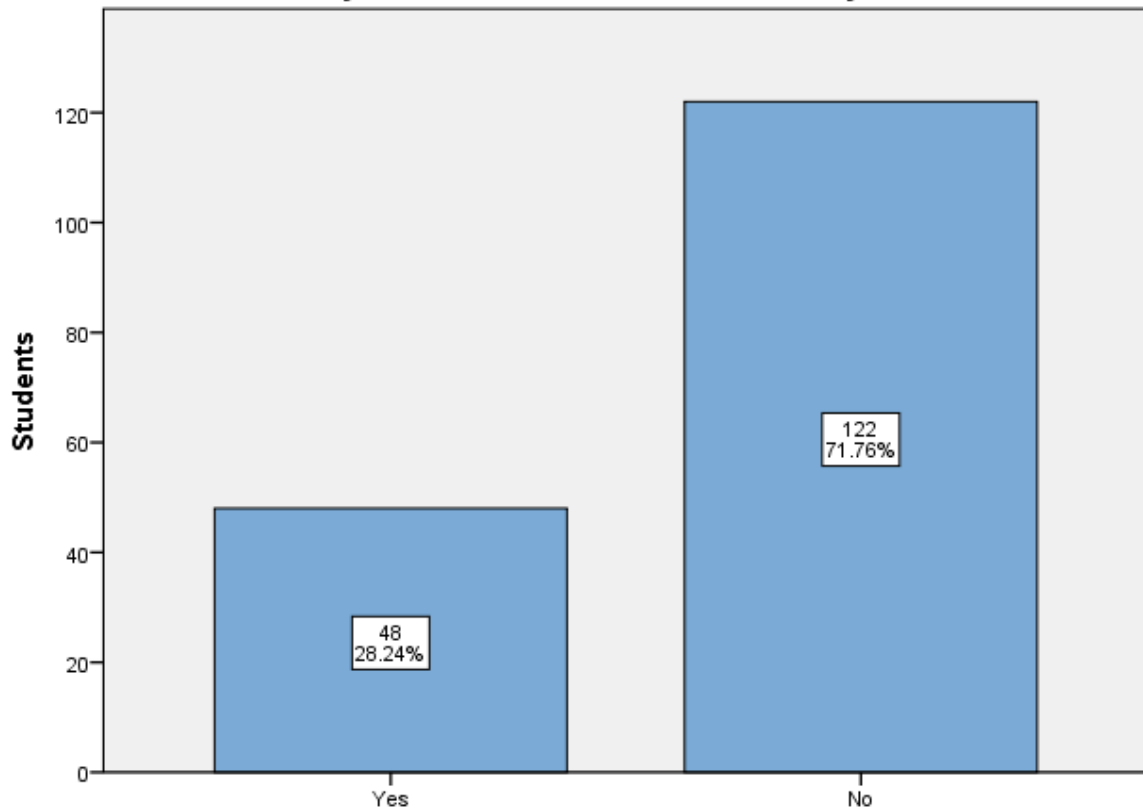What kind of free academic resources do you use at the University?

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: Focused on the results of question 24, the students from advanced English I courses provided information about what kind of free academic resources they use at the university. So as researchers found that the 54.12% of the students use the internet as the most useful resource, the 12.35% use the UES central library, the 4.71% of the students use the FLD library, the 26.47% use the computer center and the rest of the students in which is the 2.35% ask for academic tutoring. This graphic shows that all the interviewed students use all the resources that the University provides to them in order to improve and increase their English level and to achieve the English courses successfully.

Graphic # 10

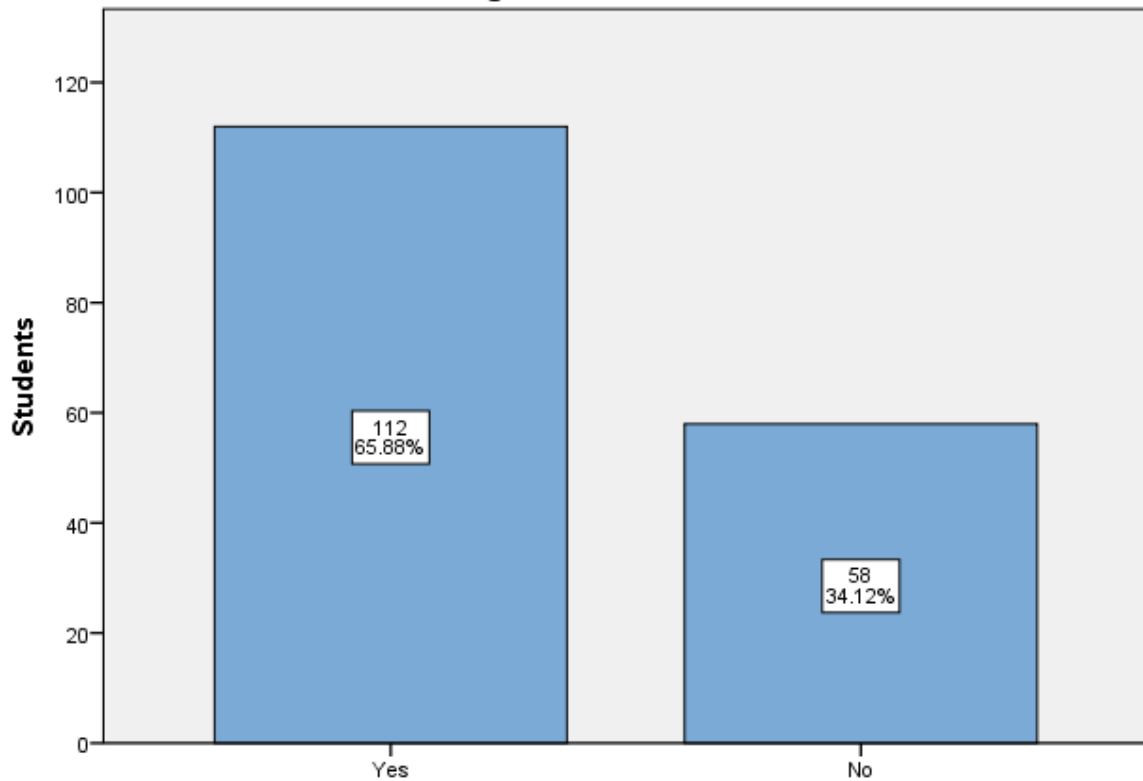At some point in your career, have you attended tutoring?

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: The information gathered in the question: At some point in your career, have you attended tutoring? The researcher team found that the 26.47% of the students answered that they have attended and receive a tutoring. The majority of students which is the 73.53% answered that they have not attended any tutoring yet. It can be concluded that at a big percentage of students have not worried about attending tutoring sessions. On the other hand, 26.47 of the students have felt the need to improve their English level and achieve successfully their English courses.

Graphic # 11

What is the current rank of your Grade Point Average (GPA)?

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: According to the data collected in question: What is the current rank of your grade point average (GPA)? 4.12% of the students have a score from 6.0 to 6.5, 20.00% has from 6.6 to 7.0, 27.06% of the students have from 7.1 to 7.5, 33.53% has from 7.6 to 8.0 and 15.29% of the students have a GPA more than 8.0. So the information collected shows that most of the students have a good GPA which means they have done a very good job so far and it might have to be with the activities they have evaluated previously.

Graphic # 12

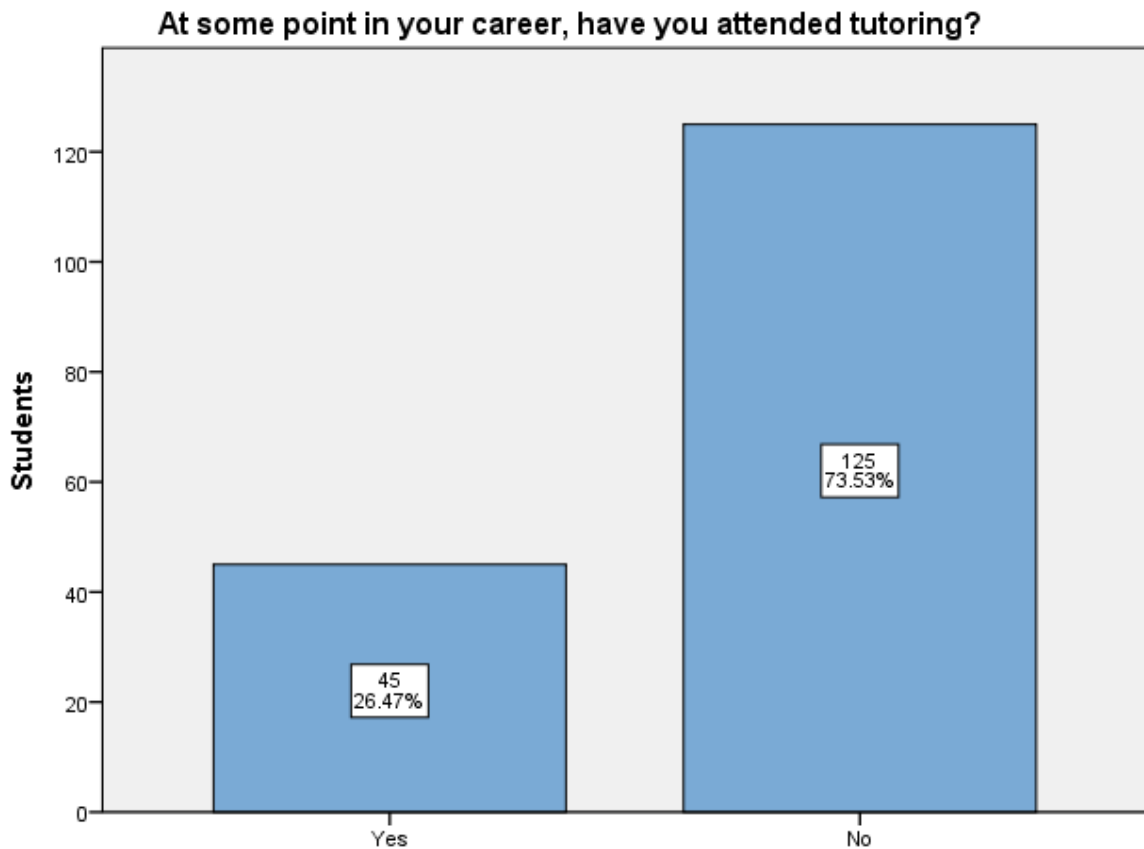What kind of activities do you use to practice and improve your English?

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: Regarding question 29, which is: What kind of activities do you use to practice and improve your English? 22.94% of the students improve their English as a second language by listening to music, 21.76% of the students practice talking in English, 11.76% of the students practice watching movies, 15.29% of the students practice watching YouTube videos, 11.76% of the students practice reading English books, 15.88% of the students practice surfing in the internet and the 0.59% of the students improve their English as a second language practicing by following English speaking sites of social networks. As researchers, it can be stated that according to this information all the students apply self-taught activities because they feel that it is important to improve the English.

Graphic # 13

Have self-taught activities (movies, music, internet, books) helped you to get the English level that you have now?
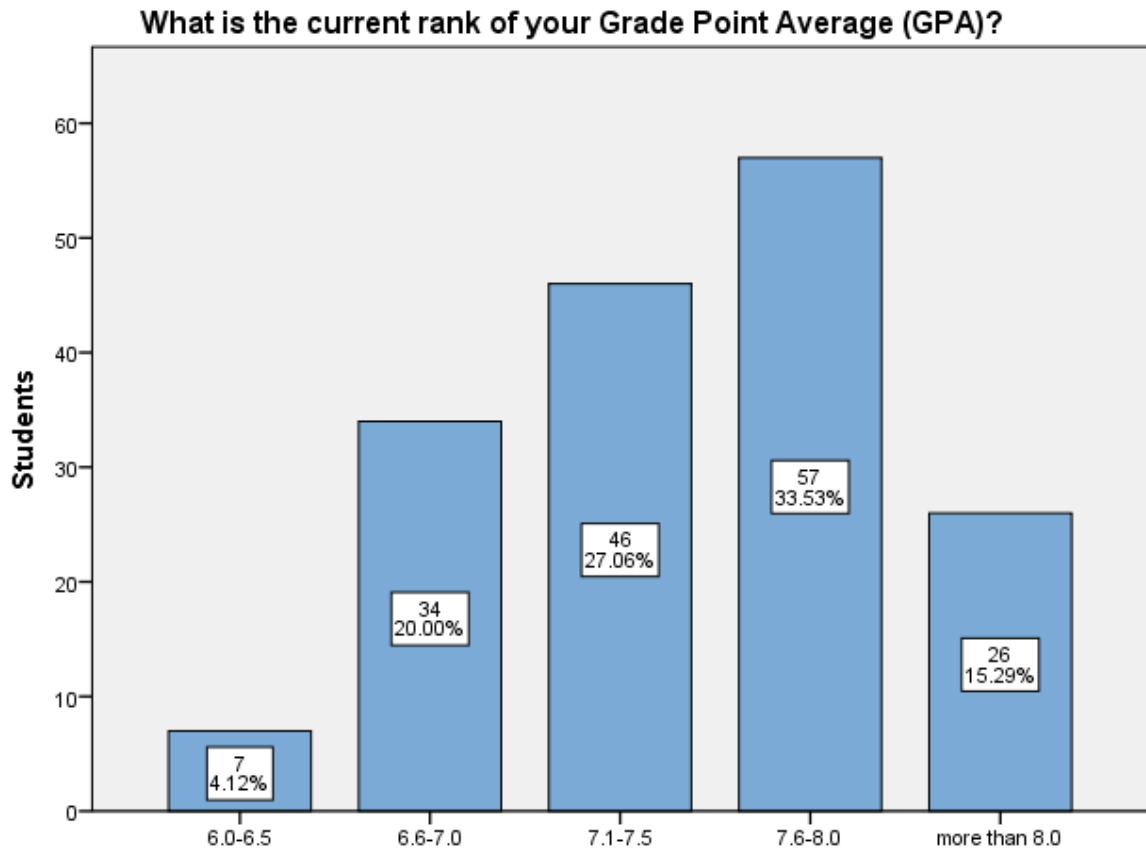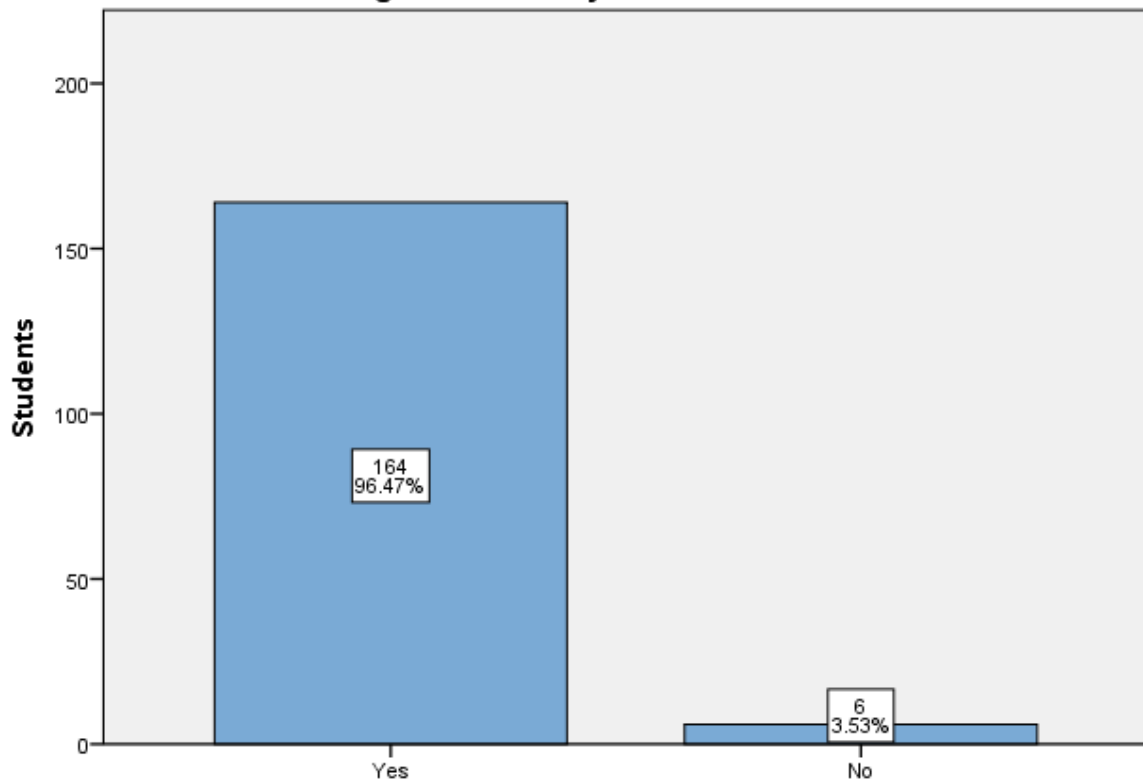

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: According to question 26: Have self-taught activities (movies, music, internet, books) helped you to get the English level that you have now? This graphic shows that the 96.47% of the interviewed answered that the self-taught activities have helped them to get the English level that they have now. On the other hand, 3.53% of the students considered that self-taught activities have not helped them to get the English level that they have now. As a conclusion, a great percentage of the students apply many self-taught activities, making them autonomous students.

Graphic # 14

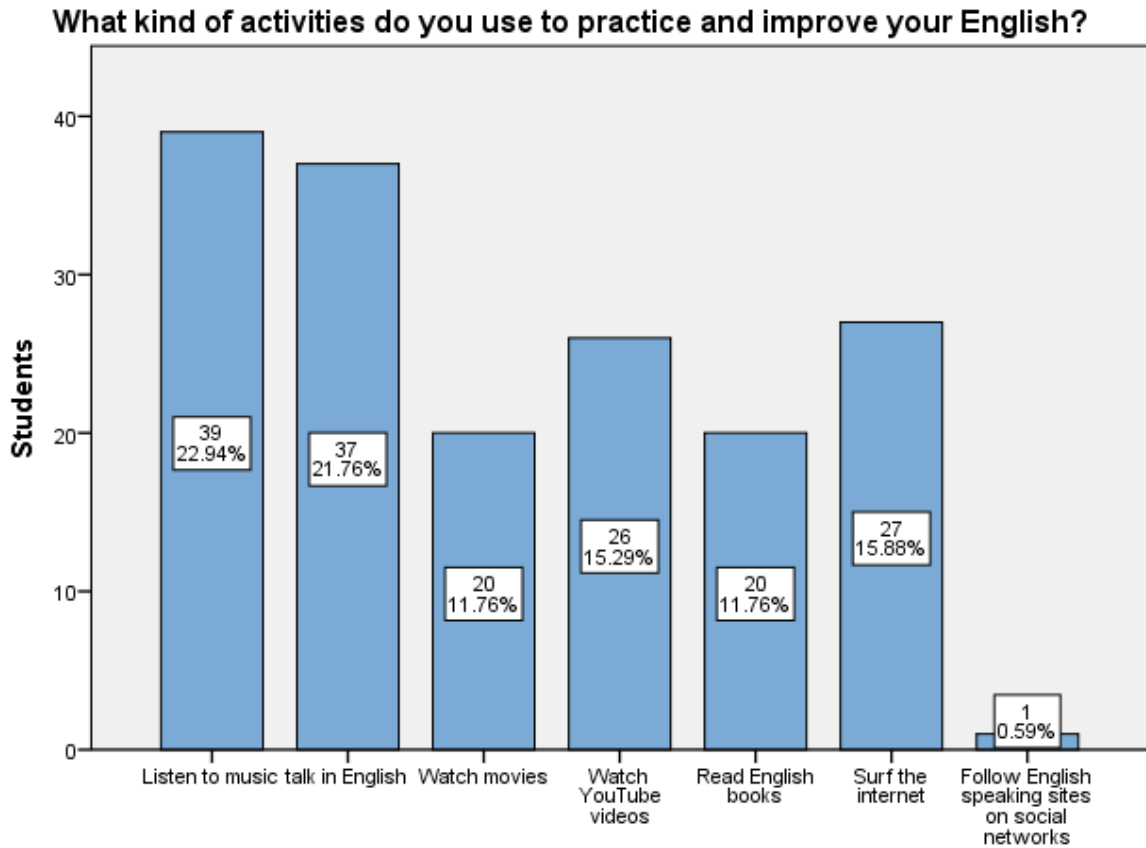Do you consider that you have the English level that the subject demands?

Source: Survey administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: According to the information collected in the question: Do you consider that you have the English level that the subject demands? The 38.82% of the students considered that they have the English level that the English subject demands, the 23.53% of the students considered that they do not have the English level that the subject demands and 37.12% of the students considered that they possible have the English level that the subject.

.

Graphic # 15

English language proficiency level of advanced students from seven groups of advanced English I
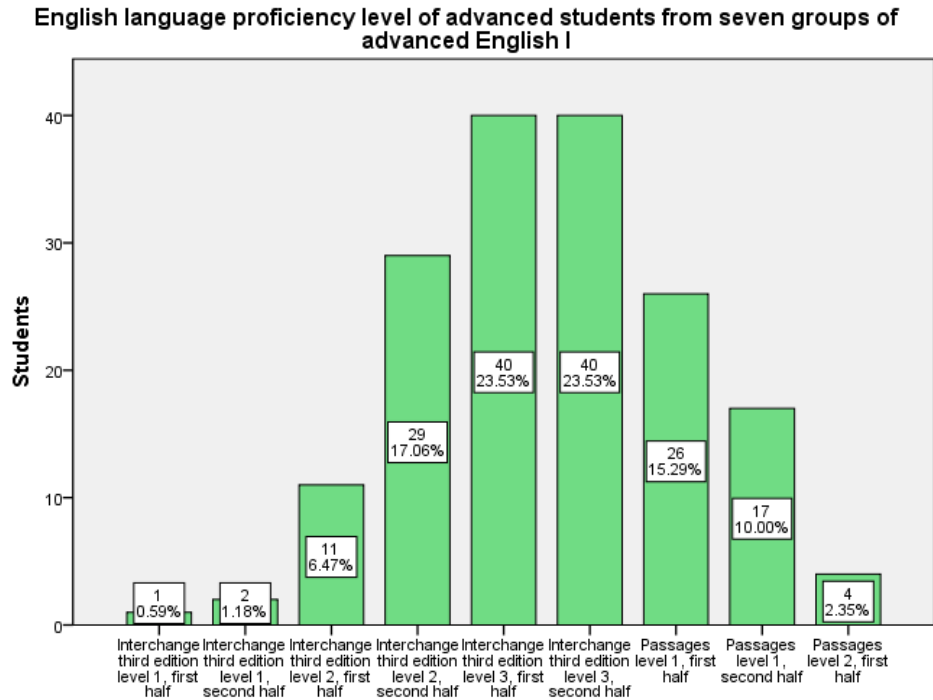
Source: Objective placement test C from Interchange Third Edition Passages Placement and Evaluation Package administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: According to the information gathered in the placement test administered to the seven advanced groups, making a total of 170 students, the data shows that 40 students are placed in the Interchange, level 3, first half; followed by 40 students placed in the Interchange, level 3, second half. Then 26 students are placed in Passages, level 1, first half; 17 students are placed in Passages, level 1, second half; and finally, 4 students are placed in Passages, level 2, first half. Also this graphic shows that 1 student is placed in the Interchange, level 1, first half; 2 students are place in the Interchange, level 1, second half; 11 students are placed in the Interchange, level 2 first half; finally, 29 students are placed in the Interchange, level 2, second half. It can be argued that 47.06% of the students interviewed are placed in the Advanced Level, which is the level that they are supposed to belong at this point of the major. There is a significant 27.64% of the population who have a higher level than the one required in Advanced English level. On the other hand, there is a 25.30% of the population that are not in the level that the major demands at this point.

8.3 BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

8.3.1 Research Questions

8.3.1.1 General Research Question

- How does academic background knowledge influence in the English level of advanced students from the Foreign Language Department?

Graphic # 16

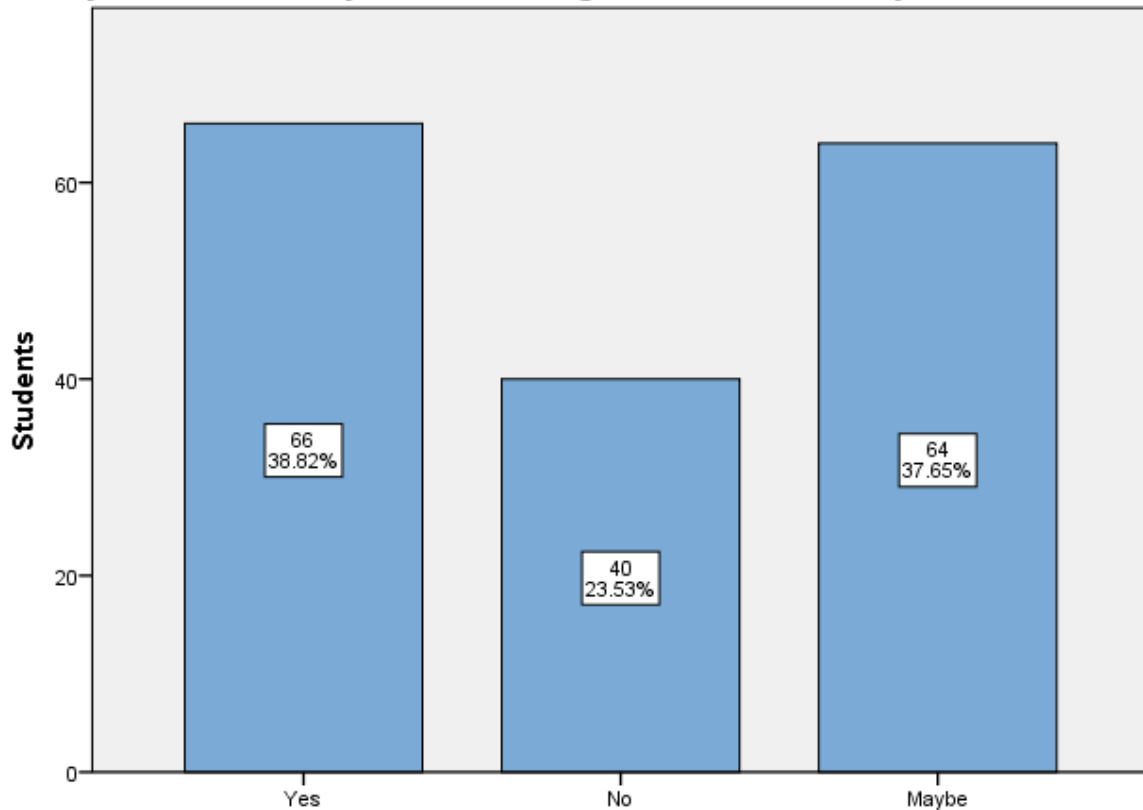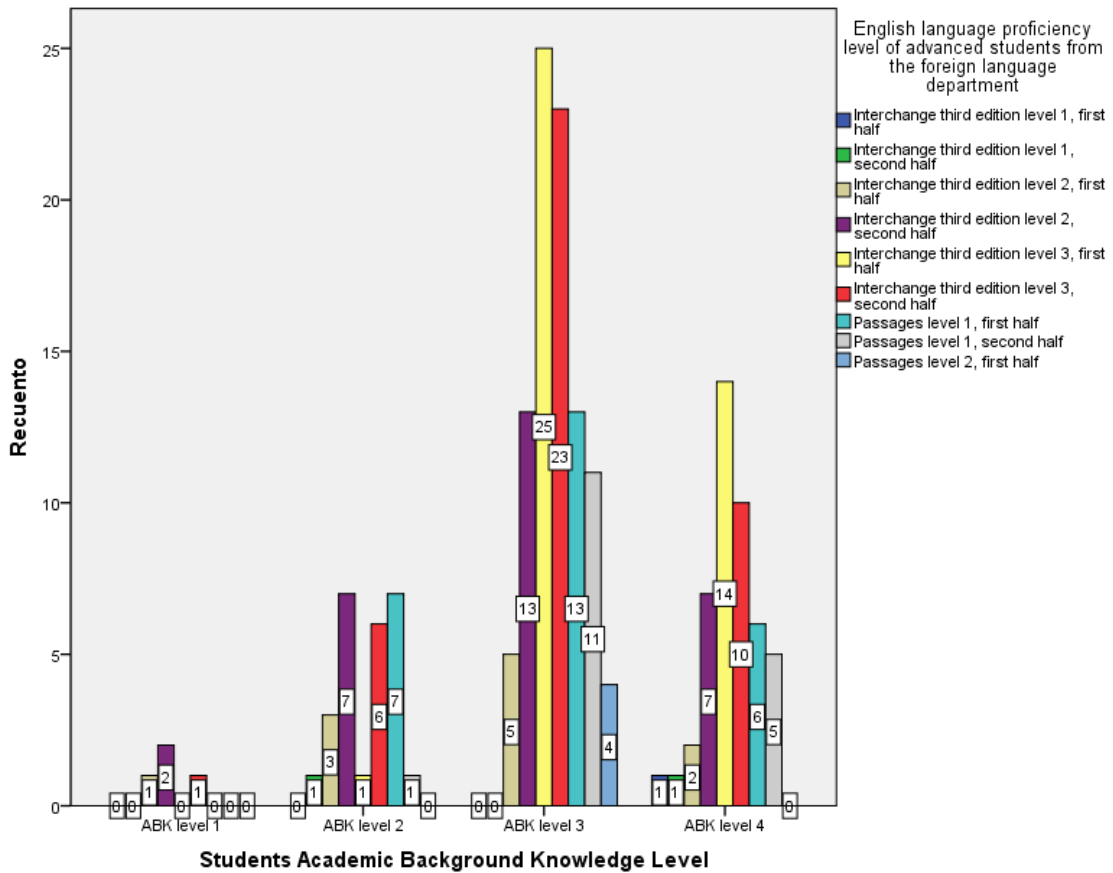Source: Survey and objective placement test C administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: According to this graphic, there is a big group of 94 students that had the opportunity to study English until high school and also they received extra English courses; these students show a significantly strong ABK level. The minority of students, 18, do not have a good level of English. However, there is a majority

making a total account of 76 students who have demostrated the average or a higher level of English. Also there is a group of 41 students who had the privilege to study English since they were very child, and it can called students with a strong ABK level. From this group, 11 students do not have the English level according to level the major demands at this level of the curriculum. And the rest, 35, students who showed that have a higher level of English. Besides, there is a small group of 4 students that show a weak ABK level, it means that they began to study English at the university; so there are 3 students that are not in the level required; however there is a student that is inside of the English level that the FLD demands. Finaly, there is another group of 26 students that began to study English in high shoo onlyl, in other words they show a considerable weak ABK level.

8.3.1.2 Specific research questions
- What is the importance of academic background knowledge on advanced students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador?

Graphic # 17
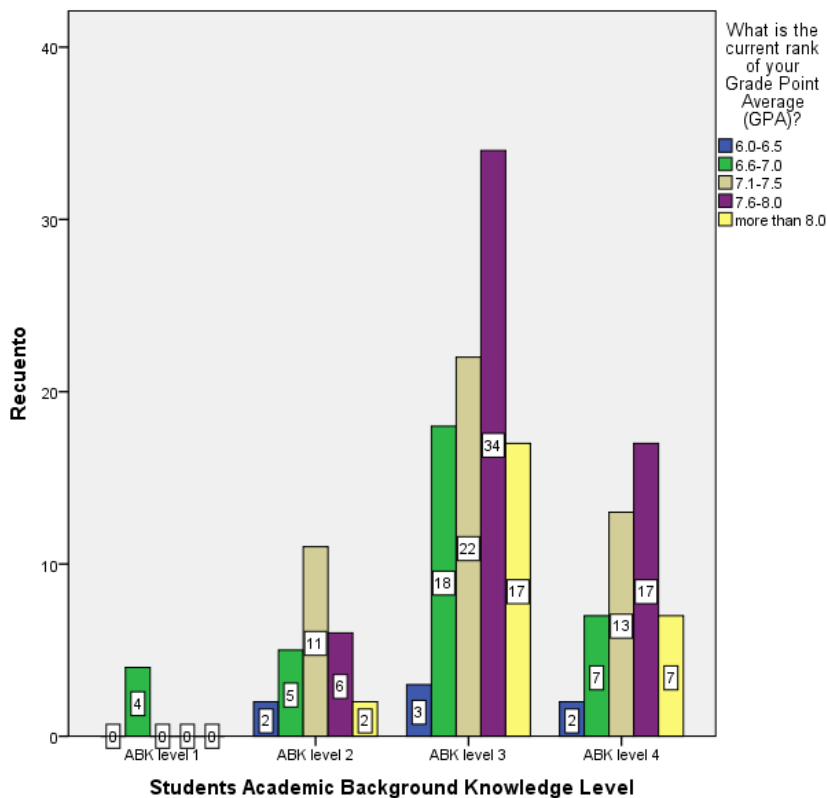
Source: Survey and objective placement test C administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: Based on this graphic, 4 students are in a weak ABK level, which means that those students had received English only at the university, with a GPA of 6.6-7.0. There is a population of 26 students that are in a below average ABK level, which means that those students just receive English in high school, so in this group we have 7 students with a GPA of 6.0-7.0. Another group of 17 students have GPA of 7.1-8.0; and the rest which are 2 students have a GPA of 8.0 or higher. Also there is a group of 94 students that shows an average ABK level, it means that those students had received English since elementary school. That is why 21 students have a GPA of around 6.0 -7.0. Besides, there are 56 students who have a GPA of 7.1-8.0. Finally, there is a total of 17 students that present a GPA of more than 8.0. And the last group of 46 students who show a strong ABK level because they had receive inglish since junior high school and some extra courses. That is why a small group of 9 students have a GPA around of 6.0-7.0. Also 30 students have gottten a GPA 7.1-8.0. And finally 7 students have a GPA more than 8.0.

- What is the importance of Socioeconomic Status on the Academic Background Knowledge of advanced students?

Graphich # 18

Source: Survey and objective placement test C administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: Concerning this graphic there is a group of 42 students who have a weak SES, it means that those students have parents who only finished elementary school and do not have much privileges like great incomes. So from those 42 students, 14 have a weak ABK; 28 students show a strong ABK level. Another group of 67 students still belong to a weak SES level. It means that those 67 students have parents who finished high school and maybe have the opportunity to get good incomes. So in this sample of 67 students, 7 students have a weak ABK level; and 60 students have a strong ABK level. Also there is a sample of students in which are 28, they are considered students with a significant strong SES level; it means that those students have parents that finished a technical degree with better incomes. So in this group of students, 3 have a weak ABK level, and 25 students show a strong ABK level. Finally there is a group of 33 students who present a strong SES level; it means that those students have parents who finished a University degree, becoming those students to second generation, and give more privileges with best incomes and educational orientation. So 6 student present a significant weak SES; in the other hand 27 students have a strong ABK level.

- What major has stronger English Proficiency Level, English Teaching major or Modern Languages major?

Graphic # 19

Source: Survey and objective placement test C administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

55
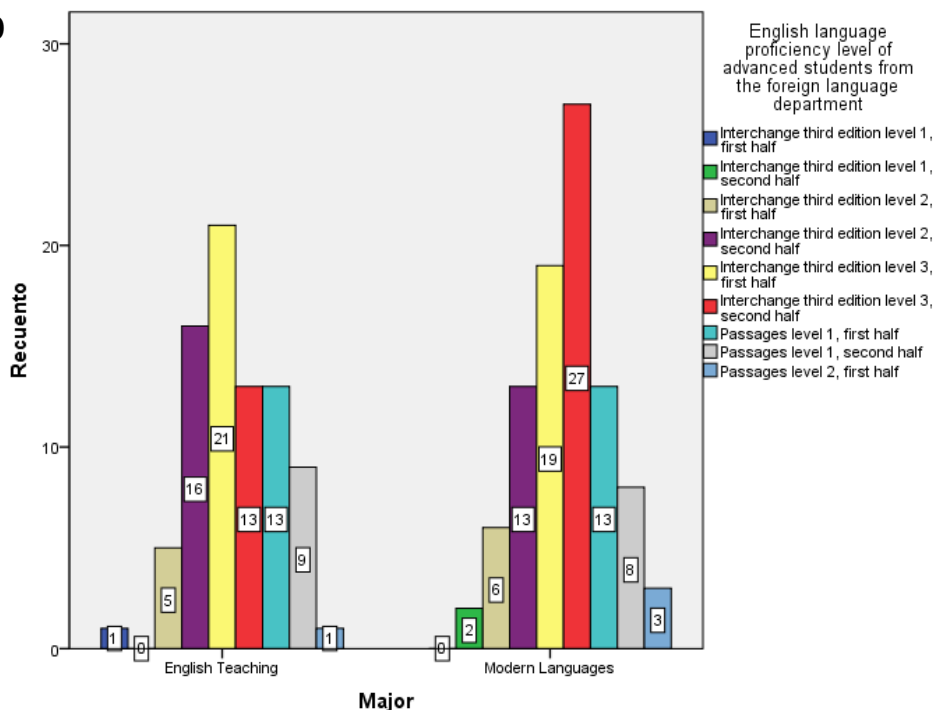
Analysis: This graphic shows the relationship between the English proficiency level of those students who are studying English teaching major and Modern Languages major. There are 79 students who are studying the English teaching major; in which a small group of 22 students who are in an intermediate English level and less than that. Also there is a group of 34 students who represent an advanced English proficiency level. And 23 students who show an above average of advanced English proficiency level. In the other hand, there is a group of 91 students who are studying modern languages major. Some of those students, 21, show an intermediate English level. 46 students present an advanced English proficiency level, which is the English level that they should have in this point of their academic major. And finally 24 students show a level above advanced English level.

8.3.2 Hypothesis

8.3.2.1 General Hypothesis

- Advanced students who have a strong Academic Background knowledge level have a higher English proficiency level.
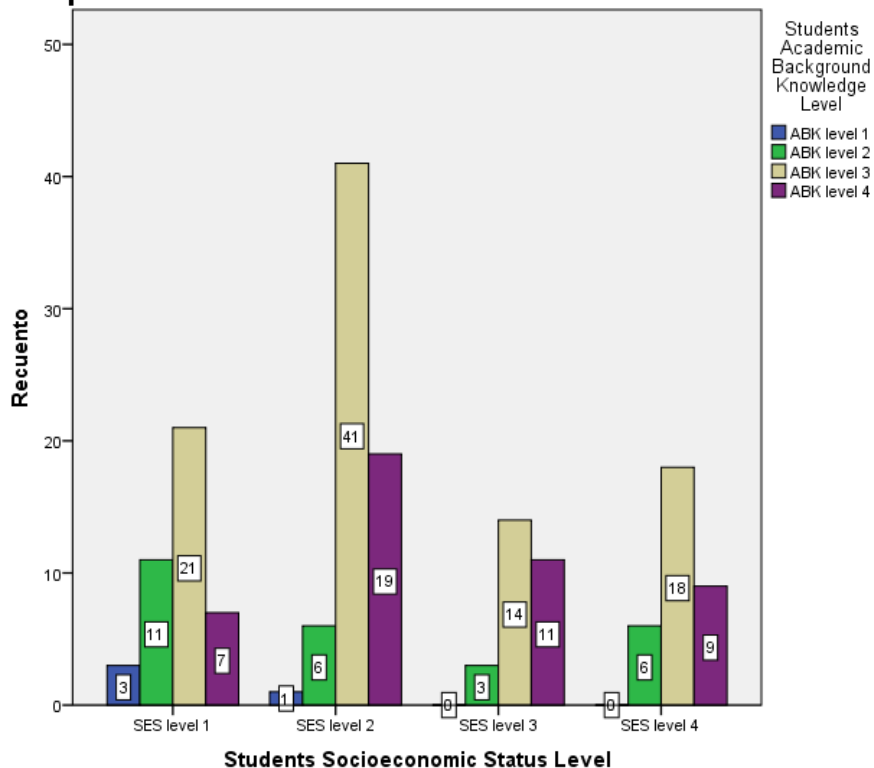
Graphic # 20
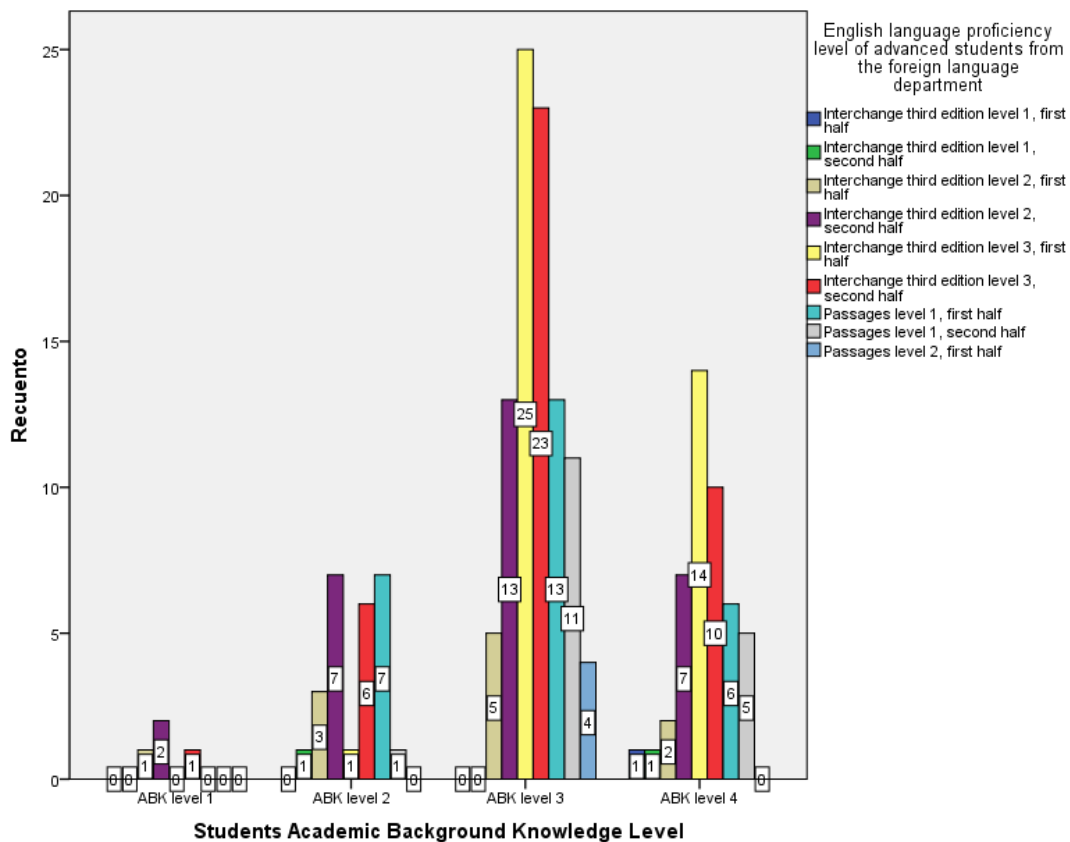
Source: Survey and objective placement test C administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: According to this graphic there is a small group of 4 students that that they began to study English at the university, it means that show a weak ABK level; so there are 3 students that are not in the level required; however there is a students that is inside of the inglish level that the majors demands. Also there is another group of 26 students that began to study English at high shool, in other words they show a considerable weak ABK level. From this group, 11 students are in an intermediate level which is not enough according to the course in which they are. On the other hand, there are 15 students who are in and above the level that

57

the major demans. Besides, there is a big group of 94 students who show a significant strong ABK level, it means that they had the opportunity to study English until high school and also they received extra English courses. The minority of students, 18, do not have a good level of English. However, there is a majority making a total account of 76 students who have demostrated the averege or a high level of English. And finally, there is a group of 41 students with a strong ABK level; it means that those students have had the opportunity to study English since they were little and received extra English courses. From this group, 11 students do not have the English level according to level the major demans. And the rest, 35, students who showed that have a high level of English.

8.3.2.2 Specific Hypothesis
- Advanced students who graduated from a private school have a higher English proficiency level than advanced students who graduated from a public school.

Graphic # 21

Source: Survey and objective placement test C administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

Analysis: This graphic shows the relationship between the English proficiency levels of those student who graduated from public and from private school. The majority of students, 126, come from public school. There is a small group of 31 students who are in an intermediate English proficiency level and lower than that. Also, there is a group of 58 students who represent an advanced English proficiency level. And 37 students who show an average higher than the advanced English level. On the other hand, there is a group of 44 students that went to private schools. Some of those students, 12, show an intermediate English level. 22 students present an advanced English proficiency level. And finally 10 students show a level higher than the advanced English level.

- Advanced students who have a higher Socioeconomic Status have better opportunities to achieve the required English level.

Graphic # 22
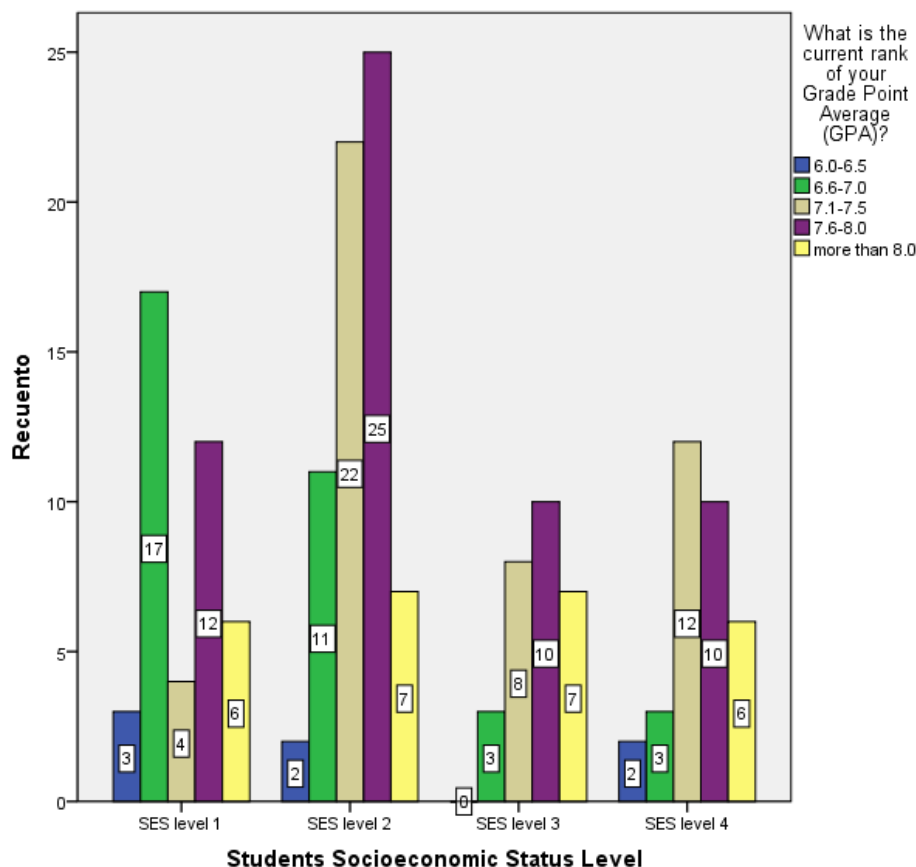
Source: Survey and objective placement test C administrated to students from advanced English I courses of English teaching degree and modern languages degree at the foreign languages deparment, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.
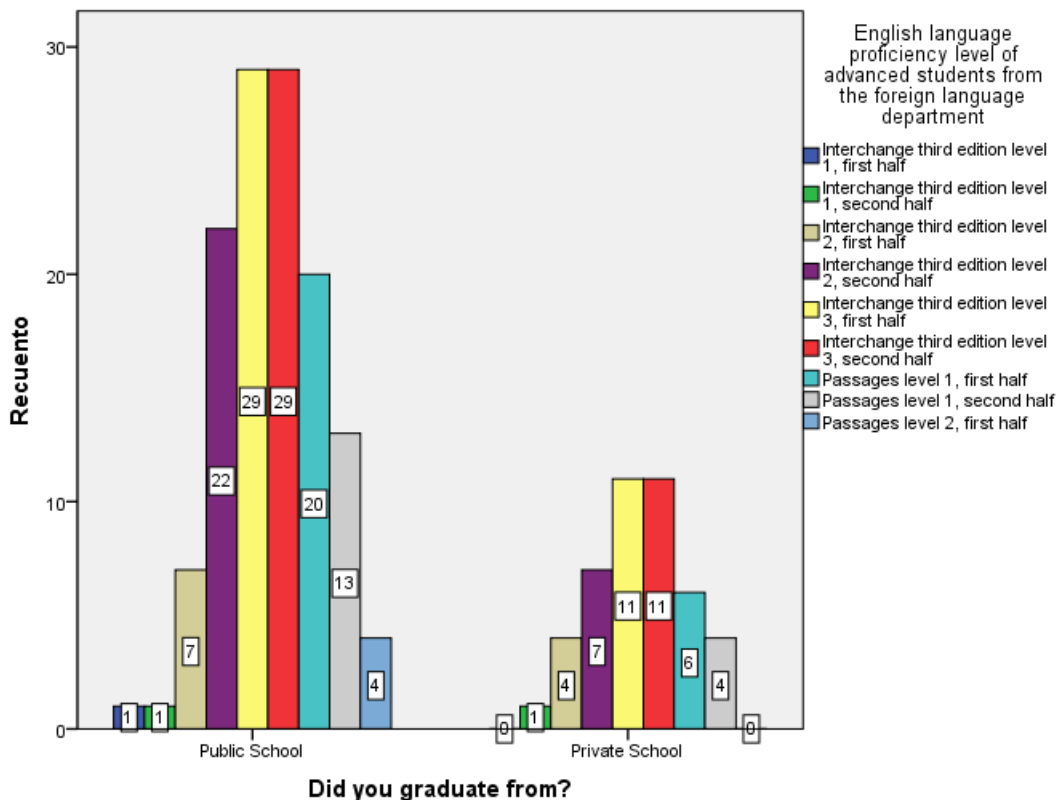
Analysis: Based on this graphic, 42 students are in a weak SES level, which means that those students have parents who only finished elementary school and do not have great incomes. That is why there are 20 students with a GPA of 6.0-7.0. Besides, there are 16 students who have a GPA of 7.1-8.0. Also there are 6 students who have gotten more that 8 of GPA. The population of 67 students still belong to a weak SES level. But those 67 students have parents who finished high school and maybe have the opportunity to get good incomes; so in this group there are 13 students with a GPA of 6.0-7.0. Another group of 47 students have a GPA of 7.1-8.0; and the rest which are 7 students have a GPA higher than 8.0. Also there is a sample of students in which are 28, they are considered students with a significant strong SES level; it means that those students have parents that finished a technical degree with better incomes. That is why 3 students have a GPA of 6.0 -7.0. Besides, there are 18 students who have a GPA of 7.1-8.0. Finally, there is a total of 7 students that present a GPA of 8.0 or higher. Finally there is a group of 33 students who present a strong SES level; it means that those students have parents who finished a University degree, making these students in second generation college students, and having more privileges with best incomes and educational orientation.

CHAPTER IX

9 FINDINGS

9.1 ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does Academic Background Knowledge influence in the English level of advanced students from the Foreign Language Department?

According to the analyzed data, it shows that Academic Background Knowledge plays an important role in order to help students to acquire the English level that the major demands. The graphic #16 shows that from a total of 170 students, there is a number of 30 students that shows to have weak ABK level, so it means that 30 students started studying English at the University and some of them in since High School. On the other hand, there are 140 students who have strong ABK, which are the ones who had the privilege to study English since their childhood or attended extra English courses. This results confirm how having strong ABK increases the opportunities to get an Advanced level of English.

- What is the importance of Academic Background Knowledge on advanced students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador?

After the information has been processed, in the graphic #17 it is shown that the stronger ABK, the higher the GPA is. According to this graphic, 110 students have a GPA score equal or higher than 7.1, and those students are shown to have a strong ABK at the same time, which means ABK helps students to increase their GPA. This is because they already had studied English previously or attended extra courses. On the other hand, 60 students are the ones who have a lower GPA which means they do not have a strong ABK that can support their

performance in English learning process. It can be said that having a strong ABK is really important, because it helps students to go through the English learning more successfully.

- What is the importance of Socioeconomic Status on the Academic Background Knowledge of Advanced Students?

According to the data processed, the graphic #18 shows that the higher the SES is, the stronger the ABK would be, because having the opportunity to afford an extra English course, travel abroad, educated parents, and the economic stability increased the opportunities for advanced students to acquire a strong ABK.

- What major has stronger English Proficiency Level, English Teaching or Modern Languages?

According to the information collected, graphic #19, it reflects that Modern Languages Major has a slightly higher English Proficiency Level in comparison to English Teaching Major. There are 79 students who are studying English teaching major; in which there is a small group of 22 students who are in an intermediate English level and lower than that level. Also there is a group of 34 students which presents an advanced English level, 23 students show a higher English proficiency level. On the other hand, in the Modern Languages Major there are 91 students. 21 students show an intermediate English level or lower than that. 46 students present an advanced English proficiency level, which is the English level that they should have at this point of their major. Finally 24 students show a higher English Proficiency level than expected.

9.2 HYPOTHESIS TEST

- Advanced students who have strong Academic Background Knowledge level have an advanced English proficiency level.

According to the information collected in the graphic #20, <u>the hypothesis is accepted.</u>   ABK influences on the English Proficiency level of advanced students bescause it has been proven that the stronger ABK, the higher English Proficiency level of advanced students would be.

- Advanced students who graduated from a private school have a higher English proficiency level than advanced students who graduated from a public school.

According to the information collected in the graphic #21, <u>the hypothesis is rejected.</u> The data gathered showed that 126 students graduated from a Public School and 44 from a Private one; however similar percentages from both majors show similar English Proficiency level. These results show that having graduated from a private school does not make a significant difference than having graduated from a public one, in terms of English learning.

- Advanced students who have a higher Socioeconomic Status have better opportunities to achieve the English level in order to finish their major successfully.

According to the analyzed data in graphic #22, <u>the hypothesis is accepted.</u> The results reflect that the higher SES students have, the higher GPA score would be. Socioeconomic Status increases the opportunities to have the English Proficiency level required in advanced students because it means those students who have a high SES have had the chances to afford to attend an extra English course, travel to another country and start studying English in Elementary School.

Those aspects contribute to support the ABK of students in order to achieve the English Proficiency level and finish their major successfully because families from low resources communities are less likely to have the financial resources or time availability to provide children with academic support.

CHAPTER X

10 CONCLUSIONS

- After all the data has been processed, Academic Background Knowledge does play a significant strong role in the achievement of the English Proficiency of advanced students from the Foreign Language Department. Having had extra English classes before entering their major, having parents who have studied at the university, having had the opportunity to travel, among others, do give students an advantage over others who have not had this opportunity,

- Socioeconomic Status has always influenced the Academic Achievement of students. Although getting a high English Proficiency level is depending on many variables like intelligence, personal characteristics, attitude, environment etc. Socioeconomic status is one of the major variable affecting the Academic Background Knowledge because families with high Socioeconomic Status often have access to a wide range of resources to promote and support student´s performance so it plays and importante role in order to get the English Proficiency level required in Advanced English.

- Having a high Socioeconomic-Status increases the opportunities to build a strong Academic Background Knowledge because for families, it means having more success in preparing their children for school because they have access to appropriate resourses and parents are able to provide their children with high quality care and facilities.

- Coming from a Private School not always means having better Academic Background Knowledge than coming from a Public one because according to the information collected, eventhough that the population who graduated from a private school is smaller than the one who graduated from a public one, almost the same percentage have a strong Academic Background Knowledge, adding that attending to a public school not always means having a low Socio-economic Status or the other way around.

- Both academic majors reflect having a slight difference on their English Proficiency level, which means that students have a strong Academic Background Knowledge that has helped them to succed on their learning process for different factors like traveling abroad, studying English since their were children, attending to extra English courses and receiving classes in High School.

- Having facilities of academic resources help advanced students to overcome the lack of Academic Background Knowledge because the use of the resourses in the Foreing Language Department provide students the the opportunity to increase their learning strategies to study like attending to tuttoring, surfing on the internet and doing research on the library what help them to keep building the Academic Background Knowledge they did not have before.

CHAPTER XI

11 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Learning Strategies workshops should be offered by the Department of the School of Sciences and Humanities. Workshops that can help those students with weak Academic Background Knowledge to learn new study habits, to increase their motivation, etc. In general, in order to help them to stremgthen the weak areas.

- The researchers recommend to create more opportunities to support students who have a low socio-economic status like creating scholarships in the FLD which can consist of rewarding the effort of those students who have a low SES and finish their semesters with the highest GPA by providing them with their books for the following semester. Probably, editorials, or embassies can contribute to this lofty goal.

- To improve resources that the Foreign Language Department already have like creating Conversation Clubs, tutoring not also for English but for pronunciation subjects, grammar, etc. in order to provide students more options to reinforce their weak and strong skills.

- Conversation Clubs that are mandatory for English subjects in order to improve the speaking skill to improve students´ weaknesses. Attending conversation clubs while taking a course can be really benefitial for students because they can reinforce their knowledge by sharing and practicing their pronunciation.

- There should be an office where students from the FLD attend to get information related to their major like the requirements to get schoolarships, the benefits they have if they have a high GPA, etc. Example: Schedule mettings in which authorities to provide information to the students related to their major, giving answer to common questions.

- For future research projects, a larger population or even the combination of two universities in order to gather more information and details about the Academic Background Knowledge phenomenon and the importance on the language learning.

CHAPTER XII

12 REFERENCES

- Berhanu, Girma (2011) **Factors Affecting Students' Quality of Academic Performance: A Case Of Secondary School Level.** Department of Education and Special Education, Västra hamngatan 25, 40530 Göteborg.

- Brown, H. Douglas; Abeywickrama, Priyanvada (2001) **Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices**. Pearson Longman.

- Chandra, Ritu and Prof. (Dr.) Azimuddin, Shaikh (2013) **Influence of Socio Economic Status on Academic Achievement of Lucknow City**. International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research, Volume 4, Issue 12.

- Gayton, Angela (2010) **Socioeconomic Status and Language-Learning Motivation: to what extent does the former influence the latter?** Scottish CILT.

- Lopez Montero, Rosberly; Quesada Chaves, María Jóse; Salas Alvarado, Jonnathan (2014) **Social factors involved in second language learning: A case study from the pacific campus, Universidad de Costa Rica.** Revista Lenguas Modernas, N° 20, 2014

- Marzano, Robert J. (2004) **Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement.** ASCD Member Book.

- Shoebottom, Paul (2006) **The factors that influence the acquisition of a second language.** Frankfurt International School.

- Strasbourg (2001) **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, assessment.** Cambridge University Press.

- Thomas, Wayne P.; Collier Virginia P. (2002) **A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement.** Dissemination Coordinator, CREDE/CAL, 464640th Street NW, Washington, DC 20016-1859.

APPENDICES

TIMETABLE

Nº	Activities	February				March				April				May				June				July				August				Sept.				Oct.				Nov.				Dec.			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1	Meetings with advisor				■																																								
2	Selecting the Topic				■	■	■	■																																					
3	Research Project Profile									■	■	■	■																																
4	Statement of The Problem													■	■																														
5	Profile Presentation																																												
6	Research Questions																■																												
7	Historical Framework																	■	■																										
8	Theoretical Framework																			■	■																								
9	Type Of Study																						■																						
10	Hypothesis																																												
11	Determination Of The Research Design																							■																					
12	Determination Of The Sample																									■																			
13	Elaboration Of The Data Gathering Instrument And Carry Out A Pilot Test																										■	■	■																
14	Improvement and Administration of the Final Instrument																														■	■												
15	Creation of the Data Base.																																	■											
16	Statistical Analysis Of The Data Collected																																	■	■	■									
17	Creating The Graphics With The SPSS Program And Analyzing Them																																				■								

18	Answering The Research Questions And Proving Of The Research Hypothesis																															▓						
19	Elaboration Of The Final Conclusions Of The Research.																																▓						
20	Final Recomendaciones																																	▓					
21	Elaboration Of The References List Used In The Research Project																																		▓				
22	Presentation Of The Final Report																																			▓			

CONCORDANCE TABLE

Topic: The Influence of Academic Background Knowledge on the English Language Proficiency Level of Advanced Students at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, year 2015.

Research question(s)	Objectives	hypothesis	Variables	Constructs	Indicators	Questions (instruments)	Technique
How academic background knowledge influence in the English level of advanced students from the foreign language department?	To analyze the influence that Academic Background Knowledge has on the English level of advanced students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador in order to understand the phenomenon and provide possible solutions.	Advanced students who have a strong Academic Background knowledge level, they have a higher English proficiency level.	-Academic Background Knowledge -English Proficiency Level	**-** Background knowledge. - Elementary school. - High School. - Parents educational level. - English as a second language. - The Common European Framework. - Basic user. - Independent user. - Proficient user.	- Previous knowledge. - Previous academic years. -Socioecomic Status. -Participation. -Grades. - English level.	From Q.12 to Q.21 From Q.22 to Q.31	• Survey This technique will help to collect the information of our research taking in to account the indicators that we consider useful. • Placement test Objective placement test C is used by the researchers to measure and determine the English level that the advanced English students from the foreign language department have currently.

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

ADVANCED ENGLISH STUDENTS SURVEY

Objective: To collect information about the influence that the academic background knowledge has on
The English level of advanced students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

The researchers thank you for your kind cooperation to objectively complete this survey.
All the information you provide will be kept in the strictest confidence and used specifically
for the objective of this research.

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

ADVANCED ENGLISH STUDENTS SURVEY

Intructions: Please, Read the following questions and check (✓) the answer which more match with your personal case and fill the blank in where is required.

1

1 Personal Information

1. Gender: Male ◯   Female ◯

2. Age: 15-20 ◯   21-25 ◯

   26-30 ◯   Older than 30 ◯

3. Marital Status: Single ◯   Married ◯   Divorced ◯

   Free Union ◯   Widowed ◯

4. Place of Residence: City ◯   Countryside ◯

5. Who do you live with?

Parents ◯   Relatives ◯   Roommates ◯   Alone ◯

6. Do you have any children?

   Yes ◯   No ◯   How many?_____

7. Do you have a job?   Yes ◯   No ◯

   Job:_____

8. Did you graduate from? Public school ◯ Private school ◯

9. What is your PAES score?

6.5 – 7.0 ◯   7.5 – 8.0 ◯   8.5 – 9.0 ◯   9.5 – 10 ◯

10. Major: English Teaching   ◯

    Modern Languages ◯

11. Have you ever changed major? Yes ◯   No ◯

12. What kind of economic support do you have?

Myself ◯   Parents ◯   Relatives ◯   Friends ◯

◯ Other:_____

13. What kind of educational level do your parents have?

Mother		Father	
-Elementary Studies	◯	- Elementary Studies	◯
-High School	◯	-High School	◯
-Technical Degree	◯	-Technical Degree	◯
-University Studies	◯	-University Studies	◯

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

ADVANCED ENGLISH STUDENTS SURVEY

2

2 Academic Background Knowledge

---

14. How old were you when you started studying English before your major at the University?

4-6 ○   7-10 ○   11-14 ○   15-18 ○   19-more ○

---

15. Did you receive English classes in Junior High School (Tercer Ciclo)?

Yes ○

No ○

---

16. Did you receive mandatory English classes in high school?

Yes ○

No ○

---

17. Did you receive English classes as part of after school classes (Superate, Access, other.) in High School?

Yes ○   No ○

18. How many hours of English did you receive per week in High School?

1 hour ○   2 hours ○   3 hours ○   4 hours ○

More than 5 hours ○

---

19. Did you have good grades when you studied English in High School?

Yes ○   No ○   Sometimes ○

---

20. Have you ever traveled to another country?

Yes ○   No ○

Where?:_____

---

21. Has the English level you got in high school helped you to succeed in your English courses?

Yes ○

No ○

77

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

FOREIGN LANUAGE DEPARTMENT
ADVANCED ENGLISH STUDENTS SURVEY

3

3 English Academic Achievement

22. How much time do you study English a day?

30 minutes ○   1hour ○   2 hours ○   3 hours ○

4 hours ○   5 hours ○

23. How much time do you spend studying per day for an evaluation?

30 Minutes ○   1 hour ○   2 hours ○   More than 3 hours ○

24. What kind of free academic resources do you use at the University?

Internet ○   UES central library ○

FLD Library ○   Computer center ○

Academic Tutoring ○

25. At some point in your career, have you attended tutoring?

Yes ○   No ○

26. What is the lowest score that you have so far in an English evaluation?

3.5 – 4.0 ○   4.5 – 5.0 ○   5.5 – 6.0 ○   6.5 – 7.0 ○

27. What is the highest score that you have so far in an English evaluation?

6.0 – 7.0 ○   7.5 – 8.0 ○   8.5 – 9.0 ○   9.5 – 10.0 ○

28. What is the current rank of your Grade Point Average (GPA)?

6.0 – 6.5 ○   6.6 – 7.0 ○   7.1 – 7.5 ○   7.6 – 8.0 ○

More than 8.0 ○

29. What kind of activities do you use to practice and improve your English?

Listen to music ○   Talk in English ○

Watch movies ○   watch YouTube videos ○

Read English books ○   Surf the internet ○

Follow English speaking sites on social networks ○

30. Have self-taught activities (movies, music, internet, books) helped you to get the English level that you have now?

Yes ○   No ○

31. Do you consider that you have the English level that the subject demands?

Yes ○   No ○   Maybe ○

Thank you for your time and kind cooperation !

Section I: Listening

In this section of the test, you will hear conversations and answer some questions about them. For each conversation, first read the situation and the question or questions. Then listen to the conversation. Answer the questions after you hear the conversation. Respond to the questions by marking the correct answer (a, b, c, or d) on your answer sheet.

Read the example situation and question.

Example

Situation: Ellen Fox needs to find a place to live. She calls Rooms for Rent to make an appointment.

Ellen can talk to someone _____.

    a. at 10:00 today
    b. later today
    c. tomorrow morning
    d. tomorrow afternoon

Now listen to the example conversation.

[EXAMPLE CONVERSATION]

Now answer the example question.

The answer for the example is *c, tomorrow morning*. The letter *c* is filled in on your answer sheet.

Now go on to page 3.

Situation 1: Ann and Tomas are at a coffee shop. They're talking when Yoshi comes in.

1. _____ are meeting for the first time.
   a. Ann and Tomas
   b. Ann and Yoshi
   c. Yoshi and Tomas
   d. Ann, Tomas, and Yoshi

Situation 2: Rick and Sharon are at a restaurant.

2. Sharon _____.
   a. usually eats fish
   b. is eating the chicken
   c. is going to have fish
   d. prefers fish to chicken

Situation 3: Sven calls Marcos's home. Marcos's roommate answers the telephone.

3. Marcos _____.
   a. comes to the phone
   b. is at a meeting
   c. will be home by 4:30
   d. will take a message

Situation 4: A reporter is giving today's weather forecast.

4. It's hot and dry in _____ .
    a. Colorado
    b. Florida
    c. Miami
    d. Boston

5. In Miami, it will be _____ .
    a. clear
    b. rainy
    c. dry
    d. cold

Situation 5: Dom calls Phil about playing golf.

6. Phil can't play golf tomorrow afternoon because he _____ .
    a. is meeting someone for lunch
    b. has a meeting until 4:00
    c. is getting ready for a meeting
    d. needs to leave a meeting early

7. They're going to _____ .
    a. have lunch together
    b. play golf next week
    c. go to a business meeting
    d. meet early in the morning

Situation 6: Sherry and Jill are both going on summer vacations with their families. They are talking about their plans.

8. Jill and her family usually _____.
   - a. stay at home
   - b. take a trip together
   - c. do different things
   - d. visit art museums

9. Sherry wishes she had time to _____.
   - a. visit Jill's family
   - b. read more
   - c. take a trip
   - d. go shopping

Situation 7: Melanie is talking to George about her laptop computer.

10. Melanie is angry because _____.
    - a. she can't use her computer
    - b. her friends don't have a computer
    - c. Carol doesn't want to return the computer
    - d. George won't lend her his computer

11. Carol _____.
    - a. lent her computer to a friend
    - b. broke Melanie's computer
    - c. borrowed a computer from George
    - d. just bought her own computer

12. George doesn't usually lend things because _____.
    - a. he doesn't have that much to lend
    - b. his friends don't need to borrow anything
    - c. lending things can change a friendship
    - d. it's better to borrow from a bank

Situation 8: Henry and Gloria are talking about their trips abroad.

13. Henry went to Mexico _____.
    a. by himself
    b. with his parents
    c. after school
    d. to visit a friend

14. Henry says he "would have liked to have seen Brazil." He means that he _____.
    a. went there, and he liked it
    b. went there, but he didn't like it
    c. wanted to go there, but he couldn't
    d. didn't want to go there, so he didn't

15. Gloria went to Poland because _____.
    a. she wanted to learn the language
    b. she traveled there with a friend
    c. her family moved there
    d. her sister invited her

16. Dottie _____.
    a. wanted to go home
    b. learned Polish quickly
    c. got a job in Poland
    d. loved new things

Situation 9: Barbara and Eddie are talking about their new jobs.

17. Before Eddie began his job at Delaney's, he had already _____.
    a. finished his classes
    b. had a job as a manager
    c. worked with Barbara
    d. sold clothes in a store

18. At Delaney's, Eddie works _____.
    a. on weekends and holidays
    b. in the jewelry department
    c. as a manager
    d. with a friend

19. Barbara always wanted to _____.
    a. get a job at Delaney's
    b. work in a jewelry store
    c. live with her grandfather
    d. become a nurse

20. Barbara _____.
    a. makes beautiful things
    b. takes nursing classes
    c. sells jewelry
    d. hates her job

This is the end of the Listening section of Objective Placement Test C.

Now go on to page 8 and begin the Reading section.

Section II: Reading

In this section of the Objective Placement Test, you will read some short passages and answer questions about them. Choose the word or words that best complete the sentence. For each item, fill in your answer on the answer sheet. You will have 20 minutes to complete this section.

Passage 1: What are you doing this weekend?

MARA: Sunday is the day when I usually have lunch with my friends downtown. But this week there's a concert on Saturday, so I'll see my friends then. Sunday I'm staying home.

21. This Saturday Mara's going to _____.
  a. stay at home
  b. have lunch downtown
  c. go to a concert
  d. fix lunch for her friends

Passage 2: What do you do?

EILEEN SWEET: I'm a hostess at a big restaurant. I greet people at the door and take them to their tables. Day after day, I always do the same thing. Someday I hope to have a more interesting job, but it's OK for now.

22. Eileen thinks that her job is _____.
  a. difficult
  b. interesting
  c. important
  d. boring

Now go on to page 9.

Passage 3: A vacation postcard

Dear Millie,

You wouldn't believe Costa Rica! It's really peaceful. Judy and I have been staying in a tent at a campground on the beach. We're studying a little Spanish with a cute guy who teaches English in school here, but I think he's learning more English than we are Spanish. Judy brought her guitar, so we enjoy singing around the campfire at night.

Love,
Sheila

23. Sheila and Judy are _____.

      a. traveling with Millie
      b. taking guitar lessons
      c. camping at the beach
      d. learning lots of Spanish

Passage 4: Concentration, a special talent

People who have the capacity for intense concentration have a great advantage. Such people have the ability to ignore stimuli (sights, sounds, or anything that can distract a person) and are more likely to stay with the task at hand and to solve it. This ability can make all the difference between winning and losing in certain situations – for example, for the championship runner competing for a gold medal at the Olympics.

24. In this reading, *concentration* refers to a person's ability to _____.

      a. stay in one place
      b. focus on a task
      c. hear certain sounds
      d. ignore instructions

25. Athletes who can concentrate are more likely to _____.

      a. compete
      b. win
      c. relax
      d. run

Passage 5: The Scot and the tea kettle

According to one story, a Scottish boy watched the steam lift the top off his mother's tea kettle and realized the power of steam to make machines work. That boy, James Watt, would then go on to invent the modern steam engine in 1769. Actually, the history of steam technology records the successful work of several scientists and engineers before Watt: For example, in 1698, Thomas Savery had introduced a simple steam pump to remove water from mines, and 14 years later Thomas Newcomen invented a better pump. But these pumps weren't efficient because they used so much fuel. In 1769, the Scottish boy, James Watt, figured out a way to save three-quarters of the fuel. To honor him, his last name became the name of a unit of energy.

26. The example of the boiling tea kettle shows that steam is _____ .
    a. useful
    b. efficient
    c. powerful
    d. necessary.

27. The first steam engines _____ .
    a. didn't pump water
    b. cost too much to build
    c. were difficult to make
    d. used too much fuel

Passage 6: Wide open spaces

Visitors to the United States, especially those from Japan or the smaller countries of Europe, are likely to comment on the size and scale of everything. Although the downtown sections of some of the older cities such as Boston and Philadelphia may look similar to their own larger cities, other aspects are likely to appear "out of scale." For example, the average American farm is huge in comparison with the typical family farm of Europe and Asia. Across the Great Plains, farmers use great machines to plant and harvest enormous quantities of wheat. Such farms offer a dramatic contrast to the tiny farms of Europe or Asia, where intense human labor is more important. The main cities of the United States are connected by a vast system of highways and superhighways moving endless streams of cars and trucks, while on the edge of the cities, suburban developments and shopping centers with huge parking lots stretch for mile after mile. It's as if Americans made everything larger, just to use up the available space.

28. To visitors, everything in the United States seems _____.
    a. larger
    b. similar
    c. more expensive
    d. interesting

29. To Japanese and European visitors, the downtown sections of Boston and Philadelphia seem _____.
    a. out of scale
    b. the right size
    c. too old
    d. very beautiful

30. The typical American farm _____.
    a. is similar to farms everywhere
    b. uses a lot of machinery
    c. is run by large families
    d. doesn't require much work

31. The article implies that people in the United States are influenced by _____.
    a. the amount of available space
    b. the need to grow lots of food
    c. visitors' impressions of their country
    d. farming practices in Europe and Asia

People don't need to be in close physical-contact to feel "connected" emotionally. Over the years, various means of communication have been used to enable human beings to keep in contact with one another. Letters, telegrams, and telephones have allowed individuals located in different places to share news and to interact with family, friends, and business relationships.

In today's world, with more and more people on the move, long-distance communication has become even more important. At the same time, changes in technology, particularly the introduction of computers and the increasing use of electronic mail, have made it easier than ever to stay in contact. There are two main reasons why e-mail has become so widespread: time and money. Although mail service and telephones can be found almost everywhere, a letter can take a long time to arrive and phone calls are often quite expensive.

E-mail seems to be replacing other forms of communication for many purposes. As the use of computers has spread, many people use e-mail rather than regular mail to send personal messages. Because it has become so easy to send pictures and information via the Internet, it has also become commonplace to use e-mail in business. E-mail has even given rise to a new type of communication, the "chat room," where groups of people who do not know each other personally can talk about topics of mutual interest. While some people are enthusiastic about communication in the modern age, others regret the growing depersonalization brought on by the use of e-mail. Communication has become so easy and yet so removed from the normal process of face-to-face interaction that researchers have concluded that a whole new culture of communication may be forming.

32. The main idea of the article is that _____.
    a. these days people don't communicate enough
    b. modern means of communication cost too much
    c. letter and phone calls are more effective
    d. e-mail is changing the way we live

33. Modern communications enable people to _____.
    a. see each other more often
    b. write more letters and telegrams
    c. keep in contact with one another
    d. move from place to place quickly

34. In comparison with a telephone call, e-mail is _____.
    a. more acceptable
    b. more personal
    c. slower
    d. cheaper

35. _____ is a new type of communication made possible by e-mail.
    a. A personal message
    b. A chat room
    c. Long-distance discussion
    d. Sending information

Now go on to page 13.

Passage 8: Biofeedback

When biofeedback was first developed a number of years ago, it caused a lot of excitement. People hoped that biofeedback could be used to cure all kinds of physical and mental problems.

Biofeedback is the name for a medical technique that helps people treat certain problems by becoming more aware of their own bodies. In biofeedback, instruments that measure bodily functions such as muscle tension, temperature, and blood flow are attached to the body. The instruments produce signals – for example, a series of sounds (beeps) or a flashing light – that the person can hear or see. The patient then uses the information to help gain control over the function.

The most widely used biofeedback instrument is the electromyograph, or EMG. The EMG is used to measure muscle tension. It is made up of several electrodes, which are placed on the skin near a particular area, depending on the symptom. For example, for headaches, a symptom often caused by excessive tension in the neck muscles, the electrodes are placed on the forehead or near the back of the neck. When the tension is present, the EMG produces a signal and the patient is taught to respond by relaxing the appropriate muscles. In many cases, the relaxation of these muscles causes the headache to go away.

While biofeedback has not turned out to be a cure-all, it has been used successfully to treat a limited number of problems – especially those caused by chronic tension.

36. At first, people were very _____ biofeedback.
   a. nervous about
   b. interested in
   c. familiar with
   d. opposed to

37. Biofeedback instruments _____.
   a. act like a kind of medicine
   b. cause people to get excited
   c. are put on a patient's body
   d. teach people to exercise

38. Blood flow is an example of a _____.
   a. technique
   b. signal
   c. function
   d. problem

39. The EMG _____.
   a. relaxes the muscles
   b. measures tension
   c. causes movement
   d. produces symptoms

40. According to the article, biofeedback _____.
   a. is more popular than ever
   b. causes chronic tension
   c. cures all types of headaches
   d. has had limited success

Now go on to page 14 and begin the Language Use section.

Section III: Language Use

In this section, you will answer questions about the use of English. Choose the word or words that best complete the sentence. For each item, fill in your answer on the answer sheet. You will have 15 minutes to complete this section.

41. "Are the bags ready?"
    "Yes, _____ ."
        a. they're
        b. there are
        c. their
        d. they are

42. I live _____ 4040 Oak Avenue.
        a. on
        b. at
        c. in
        d. next

43. "I like to cook."
    "_____ do I."
        a. And
        b. So
        c. Also
        d. Too

44. David enjoys _____ sports on TV.
        a. watching
        b. watch
        c. to watch
        d. watched

45. _____ everyone I know plays a musical instrument.
        a. The most
        b. Almost
        c. All
        d. Most of

46. Yesterday's game caused a lot of _____ .
        a. excited
        b. exciting
        c. excite
        d. excitement

47. We hope _____ you again soon.

      a. see
      b. to see
      c. seeing
      d. that see

48. This apartment is _____ one we've seen all week.

      a. cheaper than
      b. the cheap
      c. the cheapest
      d. the cheaper

49. Tom's never bought a new car, _____ he?

      a. does
      b. is
      c. was
      d. has

50. The package still hasn't arrived. I wish I _____ it earlier.

      a. was sending
      b. had sent
      c. am sending
      d. have sent

51. Can you tell me where _____?

      a. is it the bank
      b. the bank is
      c. it is the bank
      d. is the bank

52. My suitcase would have been much lighter if I _____ all my books.

      a. don't pack
      b. not packing
      c. hadn't packed
      d. not pack

53. I met Carl many years ago. _____ him for a long time.

      a. I'm knowing
      b. I've known
      c. I'd know
      d. I'll know

54. This book is interesting. It's really worth _____.

      a. you read
      b. read
      c. reading
      d. being read

55. If fewer people drove cars to work, _____ less pollution.
   a. we've had
   b. we'd have
   c. we're having
   d. we'll have

56. Would you mind _____ down the radio?
   a. turn
   b. to turn
   c. you turn
   d. turning

57. Are you interested _____ shopping with me?
   a. to go
   b. in going
   c. go
   d. going

58. The washing machine needs _____.
   a. being fixed
   b. to be fixed
   c. to fix
   d. you fix it

59. By this time tomorrow, _____ in Montreal.
   a. I'm arriving
   b. I've been arriving
   c. I'd arrive
   d. I'll have arrived

60. You look tired. You must _____ hard today.
   a. worked
   b. have worked
   c. working
   d. to work

61. I am used _____ the bus to work.
   a. to take
   b. to taking
   c. took
   d. taking

62. The tie _____ costs only $10.
   a. that I like
   b. I like that
   c. what I like
   d. I like it

93

63. Everyone took an umbrella _____ me.
   a. only
   b. except
   c. unless
   d. instead

64. Before _____ to bed, I usually brush my teeth.
   a. going
   b. go
   c. to go
   d. that go

65. I bought an audio course _____ I could improve my French.
   a. in order
   b. so that
   c. that
   d. in order to

66. Maria is _____ intelligent girl in our class.
   a. most
   b. the most
   c. more
   d. the more

67. You'd better tell Joe _____ in here.
   a. not to smoke
   b. not smoking
   c. no smoke
   d. don't smoking

68. Susie feels really tired today. She should _____ to bed earlier last night.
   a. go
   b. have gone
   c. went
   d. be going

69. Barry's uncle recommended that he _____ more money.
   a. save
   b. saved
   c. saves
   d. will save

70. The more you practice speaking English, _____ it gets.
   a. easy
   b. the easiest
   c. easier
   d. the easier

Answer Key for Objective Placement Test C

Section I: Listening

Example: (a) (b) ● (d)

1. (a) (b) ● (d)
2. (a) (b) ● (d)
3. (a) ● (c) (d)
4. ● (b) (c) (d)
5. (a) ● (c) (d)
6. (a) ● (c) (d)
7. (a) (b) (c) ●
8. (a) (b) (c) ●
9. (a) ● (c) (d)
10. ● (b) (c) (d)
11. (a) ● (c) (d)
12. (a) (b) ● (d)
13. (a) ● (c) (d)
14. (a) (b) (c) ●
15. (a) (b) ● (d)
16. ● (b) (c) (d)
17. (a) (b) (c) ●
18. (a) (b) ● (d)
19. (a) (b) (c) ●
20. (a) (b) ● (d)

Section II: Reading

21. (a) (b) ● (d)
22. (a) (b) (c) ●
23. (a) (b) ● (d)
24. (a) ● (c) (d)
25. (a) ● (c) (d)
26. (a) (b) ● (d)
27. (a) (b) (c) ●
28. ● (b) (c) (d)
29. (a) ● (c) (d)
30. (a) ● (c) (d)
31. ● (b) (c) (d)
32. (a) (b) (c) ●
33. (a) (b) ● (d)
34. (a) (b) (c) ●
35. (a) ● (c) (d)
36. (a) ● (c) (d)
37. (a) (b) ● (d)
38. (a) (b) ● (d)
39. (a) ● (c) (d)
40. (a) (b) (c) ●

Section III: Language Use

41. (a) (b) (c) ●
42. (a) ● (c) (d)
43. (a) ● (c) (d)
44. ● (b) (c) (d)
45. (a) ● (c) (d)
46. (a) (b) (c) ●
47. (a) ● (c) (d)
48. (a) (b) ● (d)
49. (a) (b) (c) ●
50. (a) ● (c) (d)
51. (a) ● (c) (d)
52. (a) (b) ● (d)
53. (a) ● (c) (d)
54. (a) (b) ● (d)
55. (a) ● (c) (d)
56. (a) (b) (c) ●
57. (a) ● (c) (d)
58. (a) ● (c) (d)
59. (a) (b) (c) ●
60. (a) ● (c) (d)
61. (a) ● (c) (d)
62. ● (b) (c) (d)
63. (a) ● (c) (d)
64. ● (b) (c) (d)
65. (a) ● (c) (d)
66. (a) ● (c) (d)
67. ● (b) (c) (d)
68. (a) ● (c) (d)
69. ● (b) (c) (d)
70. (a) (b) (c) ●

Scoring Guidelines		
SCORE	RATING	PLACEMENT
1–5	1	*Interchange Third Edition* Intro, first half
6–11	2	*Interchange Third Edition* Intro, second half
12–17	3	*Interchange Third Edition* Level 1, first half
18–23	4	*Interchange Third Edition* Level 1, second half
24–30	5	*Interchange Third Edition* Level 2, first half
31–36	6	*Interchange Third Edition* Level 2, second half
37–42	7	*Interchange Third Edition* Level 3, first half
43–49	8	*Interchange Third Edition* Level 3, second half
50–55	9	*Passages* Level 1, first half
56–61	10	*Passages* Level 1, second half
62–68	11	*Passages* Level 2, first half
69–70	12	*Passages* Level 2, second half

Graphich # 23

Academic Background Knowledge Level
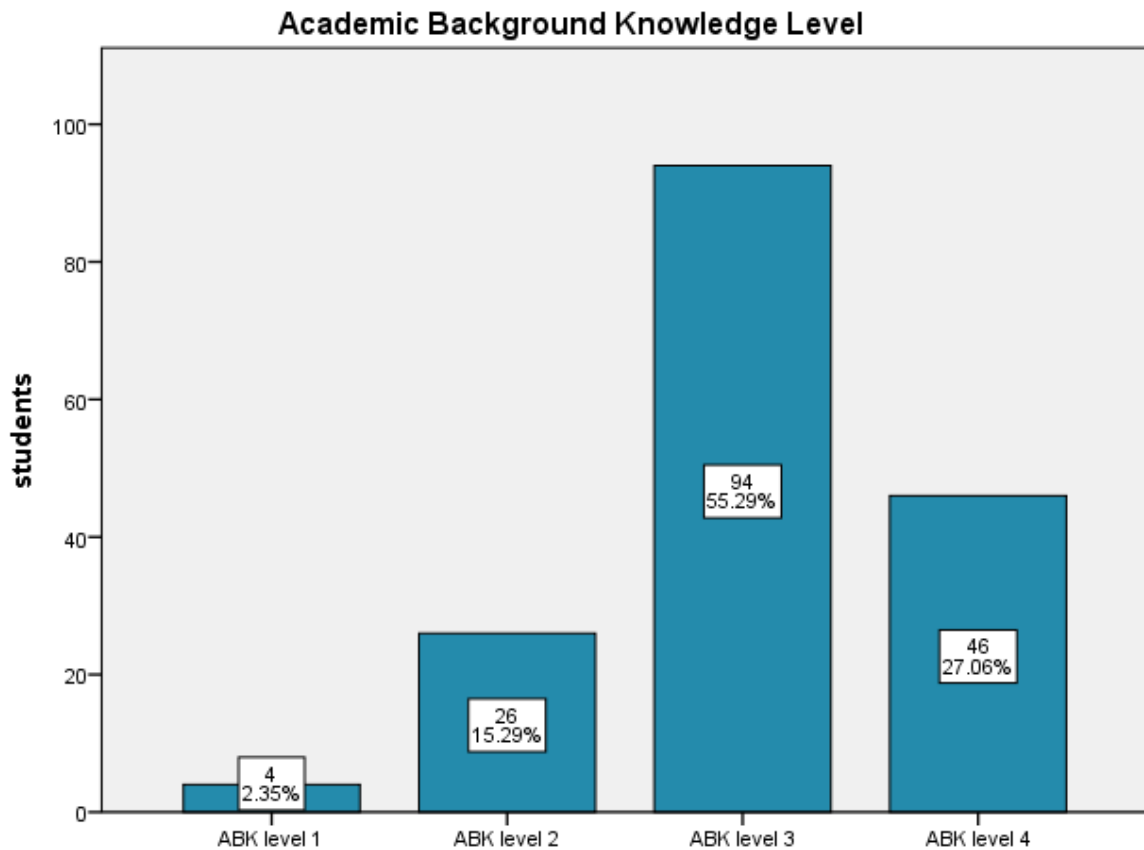
Source: The combination developed by the SPSS from questions #13, #14, #15, #16, #17 and #20 from the survey administrated to advanced students at the FLD, University of El Salvador, semester II-2015.

This graphic shows the classification of differents ABK levels that advanced student provided answering some questions related to Academic Background Knowledge for the administrated survey; so it was based on the SPSS. That is why, the different factors which have every ABK level are explaining in the following information.

ABK level 1: It means that students have a weak ABK because did not have the opportunity to studied English when they were child, their parents finished elementary school only, they did not have the opportunity to travel to another country and started to study English since the University. In addition: 4 students, out of 170, were belonging to this level.

ABK level 2: This level means that students have a considerable weak ABK level. Those students received English when they were in high school, their parents finished maybe elementay and high school, they did not have the opportunity to travel to another country and also those students started to study English since

they were around of 15 and 18 years old. Finally; 26 students, out of 170, were belonging to this level.

ABK level 3: According to this level; students have a significant strong ABK level. It means those students had the opportunity to study English since the ages of 11 and 14 years. In other words, they started to study English in elementary school, their parents had at least a technical degree. Students maybe had the opportunity to travel to another country. In addition, those students maybe had the privilege to attend extras English courses. Finally; 96 students, out of 170, in this research showed this ABK level.

ABK level 4: This is the top of the ABK level. It is because students had the privileges to study English since they were around 4 and 6 years old. Their parents had the opportunity to finish at least a technical degree or University studies. Also those students had the opportunity to travel to another country and the privileges to attend extra English courses in order to increase the proficiency. In addition, 46 students, out of 170, belonged to this ABK level.

The factors that influence the acquisition of a second language

Introduction

Some students learn a new language more quickly and easily than others.This simple fact is known by all who have themselves learned a second language or taught those who are using their second language in school. Clearly, some language learners are successful by virtue of their sheer determination, hard work and persistence. However there are other crucial factors influencing success that are largely beyond the control of the learner. These factors can be broadly categorized as internal and external. It is their complex interplay that determines the speed and facility with which the new language is learned.

Internal factors

Internal factors are those that the individual language learner brings with him or her to the particular learning situation.

- **Age:** Second language acquisition is influenced by the age of the learner. Children, who already have solid literacy skills in their own language, seem to be in the best position to acquire a new language efficiently. Motivated, older learners can be very successful too, but usually struggle to achieve native-speaker-equivalent pronunciation and intonation.
- **Personality:** Introverted or anxious learners usually make slower progress, particularly in the development of oral skills. They are less likely to take advantage of opportunities to speak, or to seek out such opportunities. More outgoing students will not worry about the inevitability of making mistakes. They will take risks, and thus will give themselves much more practice.
- **Motivation (intrinsic):** Intrinsic motivation has been found to correlate strongly with educational achievement. Clearly, students who enjoy language learning and take pride in their progress will do better than those who don't.
  Extrinsic motivation is also a significant factor. ESL students, for example, who need to learn English in order to take a place at an American university or to communicate with a new English boy/girlfriend are likely to make greater efforts and thus greater progress.

- **Experiences:** Learners who have acquired general knowledge and experience are in a stronger position to develop a new language than those who haven't. The student, for example, who has already lived in 3 different countries and been exposed to various languages and cultures has a stronger base for learning a further language than the student who hasn't had such experiences.
- **Cognition:** In general, it seems that students with greater cognitive abilities (intelligence) will make the faster progress. Some linguists believe that there is a specific, innate language learning ability that is stronger in some students than in others.
- **Native language:** Students who are learning a second language which is from the same language family as their first language have, in general, a much easier task than those who aren't. So, for example, a Dutch child will learn English more quickly than a Japanese child.

External factors

External factors are those that characterize the particular language learning situation.

- **Curriculum:** For ESL students in particular it is important that the totality of their educational experience is appropriate for their needs. Language learning is less likely to place if students are fully submersed into the mainstream program without any extra assistance or, conversely, not allowed to be part of the mainstream until they have reached a certain level of language proficiency.
- **Instruction:** Clearly, some language teachers are better than others at providing appropriate and effective learning experiences for the students in their classrooms. These students will make faster progress.
  The same applies to mainstream teachers in second language situations. The science teacher, for example, who is aware that she too is responsible for the students' English language development, and makes certain accommodations, will contribute to their linguistic development.
- **Culture and status:** There is some evidence that students in situations where their own culture has a lower status than that of the culture in which they are learning the language make slower progress.

- **Motivation (extrinsic):** Students who are given continuing, appropriate encouragment to learn by their teachers and parents will generally fare better than those who aren't. For example, students from families that place little importance on language learning are likely to progress less quickly.
- **Access to native speakers:** The opportunity to interact with native speakers both within and outside of the classroom is a significant advantage. Native speakers are linguistic models and can provide appropriate feedback. Clearly, second-language learners who have no extensive access to native speakers are likely to make slower progress, particularly in the oral/aural aspects of language acquisition.