

EFFECT OF META-LINGUISTIC FEEDBACK ON ORAL PRODUCTION

by

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### *Abstract*

Although feedback is an important feature in the teaching-learning process, little research has been undertaken in this field. In this study, the effect of meta-linguistic feedback on oral production was analyzed. This research focused on four different types of errors: grammar errors, lexicon errors, pronunciation errors and the interference of L1. The application of meta-linguistic feedback permitted the contrast of a different type of error correction with the traditional types of feedback, which allow teachers to choose a correction method when teaching languages.



## *Resumen*

Aunque Feedback entendido como corrección de errores es un rasgo importante en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, poca investigación ha sido emprendida en este campo. En este estudio, se analizó el efecto de Meta-linguistic feedback en la producción oral. Esta investigación se enfocó en cuatro tipos diferentes de errores: errores en gramática, errores en léxico (vocabulario), errores en pronunciación e interferencia de la lengua materna.

La aplicación de Meta-linguistic Feedback permitió el contraste de un tipo diferente de corrección con los métodos tradicionales lo cual facilita a los maestros la escogencia de un método de corrección cuando se enseñe idiomas.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### Introduction to the Problem

The increasing interest in the process of learning a foreign language such as English has heightened the need for studying difficulties that students may experiment. One of those difficulties is the way students' errors are corrected by the teacher; sometimes the correction provided by the teacher is not appropriate and does not permit students' progress. (Tsui, 1995) It is explained that a large exposure on negative feedback causes a "sense of failure and frustration among students".

It is interesting to observe how an error has been corrected by the teacher many times, but students continue using the wrong structure or word. Moreover, sometimes the way the teacher corrects the students' errors is not as successful as it should be. That is, correction is effective if students stop producing errors or if students are able to follow the teacher's recommendations.

These issues and others have produced a great deal of research in the field of error correction and feedback. Some of those studies showing the importance of feedback in the learning process were examined in this paper (e.g., Cohen 1981, Fisher 1985, Cronin M. 2000, Fisher and Mandl 1988).

Further research has shown the importance of error correction and also when it should be carried out. Examples of those studies are the ones presented by Tsui 1995, Chaudron 1993, Brown 1994. Additional pieces of research such as those by Chaudron 1988; Lightbown & Spada 1999; Schachter 1991, Long 1996 and Ellis 1997 see feedback as error correction and some of them even classify and analyze some types of corrective feedback. Those studies are the focal point by which experimentation on a new type of feedback was decided. This new type allowed students to learn by means of their own errors. This type of corrective feedback is

called meta-linguistic feedback.

As it can be seen from the precedent summary, research has demonstrated that in learning a foreign language, errors are addressed using different types of corrective feedback that can be categorized in: recasts, repetition, explicit and implicit correction. Lyster & Ranta's study 1997 (as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 1999) but none or little evidence of meta-linguistic feedback was found. Thus, it is essential to test another type of correction which allows students to perceive their own errors and correct them; in other words, to apply meta-linguistic feedback, taking as a principle that "the least effective technique for correcting a student incorrect language use is to simply give them the answer" (Brown, 1994).

#### Problem Statement

At all academic levels, it is necessary to correct student's errors so that, students acquire competency in the foreign language to communicate and to develop a significant learning of it. Besides, it is important to provide correction to students' errors to avoid fossilization, that is, to prevent students from internalizing errors or wrong structures as right ones, which become difficult to correct and which prevent students from attaining a high proficiency in the foreign language. However, teachers might not be aware of the types of feedback they have at their disposal and they might apply explicit feedback to learners who would benefit more from implicit feedback. Teachers might also apply only one type of feedback to learners with different backgrounds, levels of proficiency, ages and purposes, which again, may not be very beneficial for the learners' progress in oral production.

It is important to take into account that the two types of corrective feedback most commonly used in language learning settings are "explicit and implicit correction". Explicit feedback refers to a correction which is direct, the teacher goes

directly to the errors, interrupting the student's utterance (sometimes with a no) and tells the students the right form (Lightbown & Spada, 1999), then it is difficult for students to remember what they were saying and are unable to continue (Tsui, 1995). The other type, implicit correction, includes confirmation checks, repetitions, clarification requests and facial expressions (Schachter, 1991). According to Long (1996) implicit correction has been an incidental error correction in response to a wrong student's utterance. One of the implicit corrections is meta-linguistic feedback, which was applied, in this pre-experimental research. It consists on providing the students with information about the error committed. That information permits students to recognize and correct their own errors. In no case the teachers give the students the right utterance, so teachers only provide some hints to get the right answer or form.

#### Research Question

¿What is the effect of meta-linguistic feedback on oral production?

#### Hypothesis

The use of meta-linguistic feedback has a positive effect on oral production.

#### Justification

In school environments it is important to provide learners with the right forms on grammatical structures, pronunciation, lexicon and the use of L1. However exposing learners to the right forms may not be enough for obtaining the desired results and an appropriate oral performance and then, some type of feedback is needed to enhance learning. This research was carried out in order to know more about the different types of feedback and their main function, which is error correction. Ultimately, one type of feedback was chosen to be applied to examine its results. Through this study pros and cons of the meta-linguistic feedback were studied in

order to analyze the possibility of continuing applying it in different contexts or avoiding it.

Providing students with feedback is one of the major roles teachers play in the classroom encouraging students to improve their output. However, having a strong background on feedback would help novice and experienced teachers make educated and more effective decisions in their professional practice. In fact, not only teachers, but also student-teachers should be aware of the types of feedback and select those, which benefit students' oral production. Pica (1994) affirms that one of the biggest teacher's concern is how to correct student's errors to avoid bad use of the utterances learned, and expresses that this is one of the ten most common questions when teachers carry out a piece of research.

In addition, this study is relevant because in it, a different type of feedback was tested and the results of this experience might tell teachers what should and should not be done in an EFL setting like Pasto with a specific audience. Also, this study can provide teachers with information regarding differences among types of feedback, which may help them be aware of the downsides of each type. It cannot be forgotten that error correction is an important issue that the second language teacher has to address because it permits students to modify the use of non target language forms. Furthermore, it allows students to set their target language knowledge. (Pica, 1994).

## Objectives

### *General Objective*

To determine the effect of meta-linguistic feedback as a form of error correction for oral production

### *Specific Objectives*

To observe the level of oral production while using a traditional error correction

To apply meta-linguistic feedback for oral production

To determine advantages and disadvantages of the use of meta-linguistic feedback for oral production

To compare the types of feedback commonly used and the meta-linguistic feedback

### Definition of Terms

*Feedback:* Lightbown & Spada (1999) interpret feedback (corrective feedback) as “an indication to the learners that their use of L2 is incorrect”

Ellis (1995) sees feedback as “the response to the efforts by the learner to communicate. He adds, “Feedback can involve functions such as correction, acknowledgment and requests for clarification”. Besides he says that “feedback plays a major role in helping students to establish hypothesis they have formed about the rule system of the target language”.

Long (1996) suggests that feedback can be divided into two big categories: Positive evidence refers to provide the students with examples of what is grammatical and acceptable; negative evidence refers to provide students with direct or indirect information about what is unacceptable.

Chaudron (1998) refers to feedback as a “treatment of error” that can be summarized to “any teacher behavior following any error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error”. In addition, he considers that feedback is a major means by which to inform learners of their accuracy in both their target language production and their classroom behavior and knowledge. Feedback is a potentially successful promoter of target language improvement.

Angelo, T. & Cross, K. (2001) affirm that feedback plays a very important role

in the learning of a foreign language because it serves as a vehicle to know about what, how much, and how well the students are learning.

In the ELT journal volume 48/3, July 1994, Rinvoluceri points out that “feedback is the central guiding element when teaching to students in a learner-centered teaching.

And a final view is performed by Thenese J. (1997), she considers that error correction is a form of input. The input informs the students that their language knowledge needs repair and by this way students are “forced to try again” and in the process, students refine their use of the second language.

*Error:* Tsui (1995) sees an error not as something undesirable but as something that informs the teacher about students’ stage of their own language development.

Another important view of error is given by Norrish (1993), errors are seen as “a systematic deviation from the accepted code”.

Ellis (1995) defines errors in a similar outlook that Norrish does. “An error is a deviation from the norms of the target language”

Brown (1994) points out that an error is defined as “student incorrectness”, this incorrectness occurs when students do not have the knowledge or have some false knowledge which causes a faulty production. Brown considers that all the errors reflect the students’ language competence.

Chaudron (1993) concludes that errors are just processes in the learning and need to be analyzed according to their origin. Errors can be on grammar, lexicon, pronunciation, interference of L1, systematic errors, errors of competence, production errors and comprehensive errors. In general, errors are seen as all the incorrect forms produced by students which are caused by lack of knowledge about the target

language or by incorrect hypothesis about it.

*Meta-linguistic feedback:* According to Lyster & Ranta (1997) it refers to the well formation without providing explicitly the correct form. In addition they indicate that there are three main ways of providing meta-linguistic feedback: “comments that indicate that there is an error somewhere”, “information that provide either some grammatical meta-language that refers to the nature of the error”, and “questions that point to the nature of the error but attempt to elicit the information from the students”. In this type of feedback, it is very common to use meta-linguistic clues.

*Explicit correction:* Lyster and Ranta (1997) explain explicit correction as “the explicit provision of the correct form”, as teachers provide the correct form; they clearly indicate that what students had said was incorrect. There is one form of explicit correction, which is explicit feedback.

*Implicit correction:* Implicit correction is carried out by using comments, confirmation checks, repetitions, clarification request and facial expressions that express there is an error somewhere. (Schachter, 1991).

According to Lyster and Ranta (1997) there are five forms of implicit correction. They are clarification request, elicitation, repetition, recasts and meta-linguistic feedback; those corrections work with students’ ability to repair their own errors without giving them the right answer or form but some clues to find out their errors. Each one of these types of feedback has the same focus but different ways to carrying it out; their focus is the negotiation of form as a way to a successful second language development (Glew, 1998).

### Limitations

During the experimentation three main factors did not let the appropriate development of the research. These factors limited at some point the schedule and the



activities that were planned.

The experimentation was planned for three months and four hours a week, however the school had different activities such as meetings, festivities and celebrations, which did not allow us to develop the entire classes as they were expected and some changes were necessary.

The level of students and their cooperation as well, were other significant factors that did not permit the realization of the activities and the application of the treatment. During the treatment the students sometimes were not able to understand all the meta-linguistic clues and a translation to Spanish was necessary. At the same time, students were forced to work hard because their level at the beginning was not so good and they sometimes felt uncomfortable and they did not cooperate, as it was required.

On the other hand, in the control group, besides the low level of students they do not participate as was expected; as a consequence they sometimes were forced to participate and they did not do the best effort they could, showing the low compromise and interest they assume to their school activities.

In spite of those limitations and difficulties the treatment was applied and the research was successful during its course.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Feedback and its Functions

It is important to remark that there is not a single classification for the types of feedback existing and that there seem to be too many categories. In this review of literature there are present some of the most relevant categories, those which are the result of research.

In language acquisition, the term “feedback” refers to information given to learners, which they can use to revise their inter-language. Feedback is essential in the language learning process, due to the fact that it has the properties of informing, regulating, strengthening, sustaining and error eliminating (Han, 2001). In addition, feedback helps teachers modify and manage interaction in their classrooms. Lyster and Ranta (1997) consider that providing error treatment during the students’ interactions is more beneficial for the students in the long run.

There are two main types of feedback related to function; *positive feedback* refers to information that indicates a hypothesis is incorrect; and *negative feedback* considered as negative evidence or something which causes student’s fear and triviality in what they do (Ellis, 1995). According to Long (1996) positive feedback is the provision of models of what is grammatical and acceptable in the language learned and negative feedback is the provision of direct or indirect information about what is unacceptable.

### Types of Feedback

Rinvolucris (1994) suggests that there are many types of feedback, such as *feedback to self as a speaker; feedback provided by a teacher, feedback provided by a classmate* and some others.

Feedback to self as a speaker refers to the self-correction that one can provide

by means of observing and analyzing others when they speak. This type of feedback can be carried out by any learner but it is important to stand out that when the learners have an advanced level they can provide themselves the best correction. In other words, while producing oral utterances speakers realize the form and content of their utterances, providing correction if necessary and reconfirming their hypothesis on the target language.

Feedback provided by a classmate occurs when two classmates discuss what they have understood and what they have been doing; this type of feedback is free and spontaneous. This type of feedback generally occurs in classroom settings without avoiding other places where classmates can discuss about their experiences, doubts and expectations. However, it is not necessary to have a teacher while carrying it out.

Feedback provided by the teacher has the form of error correction, providing additional information, acknowledgement and theory. This form of correction is one of the most important roles of the teacher in a teaching - learning environment. By means of that correction, students can be informed about their hypothesis and they can give a response to that correction.

#### Responses to Feedback

There are two types of responses on the part of students: immediate - positive response and immediate negative response (Tsui, 1995). Immediate - positive response refers to the reaction of students to the provision of feedback that serves to improve and to eliminate specific errors that were corrected. Immediate - negative response is related to an immediate response to the provision of feedback, but in this case, the correction is ignored and does not permit students to correct their errors.

The most important fact when providing feedback is what students perceive from their own learning process. That is to say, if all or almost all of the comments or

corrections carried out are taken into consideration to improve students' language production, then students are able to increase at every chance their language ability.

### Feedback in the Learning Process

Those afore mentioned are the most common types of feedback. This paper however, is focused on the feedback provided by teachers when correction is considered necessary. That is, how, why, and when teachers are able to carry out an appropriate type of feedback taking into consideration their groups, and what errors can be corrected. All that, without forgetting that each and every type of feedback plays a very important role in helping students in their language learning process (Tsui, 1995).

The use of an appropriate type of feedback by teachers is a very important part in the language learning process of students: "The type of feedback that teachers provide affects students' learning (Tsui, A. 1995) and if feedback is positive or negative, it should affect the environment of students and at the same time the elements involved in learning such as motivation and interest.

According to behaviorist theories, the elements involved in learning such as motivation, reinforcement, interest and information provide useful data which learners can use actively in modifying their behaviors (Ramel, 1981., Annett's, 1969); in this case motivation means the desires students have to continue although their errors are significant; reinforcement is one of the teachers' role in learning and through the comments teachers can provide students a way to explain the errors made, and structures or the topic being taught can be made clear.

According to German (1997) students prefer a type of feedback where they have plenty opportunity to revise and to improve their work by means of their errors, with or without giving them grades or presents to be encouraged to continue. In other

words, students feel interested and motivated to improve if teachers do not stop their desires to persist; all that, by using corrective feedback and a correct moment to carry it out.

### Errors and Types of Errors

Feedback, as it was mentioned before, is related to error correction; this is the first and main function of feedback use; errors are made by students; but it is necessary to have a clear idea of what an error is. Different authors conclude that it is something which is not appropriate at all; an error is a systematic deviation from the accepted code; (Norrish, 1993). Another conception of error is a misunderstanding of a structure and, according to Ellis (1995), there are two types of errors: comprehension and productive.

Comprehension errors are considered as a misunderstanding of a sentence, this happens commonly in oral compositions; for example, if a teacher tells students to “pass me the paper”, and what students understand is “pass me the pepper”. Ellis (1995) affirms that teachers do not focus on them because of the difficulty to determine the cause of failure when understanding a particular syntactic feature of a utterance. On the other hand, productive errors are those that happen when producing foreign language compositions such as phonology, grammar, lexicon, content, discourse, syntax and they can occur in an oral and/or written way.

Errors on phonology are related to the production of sounds of the language learned. Students usually experiment pronunciation difficulties because of the non-existence of some sounds of the foreign language in their mother tongue. Example:

T: The teacher says an example: “I’ve finished”

S: What students understand is: “I finished”

T: I’d better....



Errors on lexicon are associated to a wrong choice of vocabulary, (i.e., nouns, prepositions, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, articles and all the elements present in the speech acts). Taking the previous example:

S: She *told* she was on holiday → she *said* she was on holiday

In this case, it is a lexical error because of the confusion of the verbs, and its repair is carried out with the provision of a synonym that fits into the pattern.

Example 2:

S1: "I ride in a horse"

S2: "I ride on a horse" here, there are two problems with the use of preposition

A teacher needs to explain the use of the prepositions in different contexts and then it is necessary to provide learners with the right form.

T: "I ride a horse". Although this error is commonly classified into a lexical category, it can be considered as a grammatical error as well because of the confusion of the uses of prepositions. And to repair this error it is necessary to carry out a grammatical explanation about the uses of prepositions.

As it can be seen, Chaudron (1998) provides a full analysis of the most common students' errors and what patterns need to be taken into account when performing error correction. All the authors mentioned above conclude that an error is something which needs to be corrected with the help of a teacher who, at the same time, encourages students to learn.

Each type of error requires appropriate feedback, but it is also worth considering the affective support when using feedback to correct errors. It is imperative to take into account the importance of whether or not a positive affective environment is present in teachers and students' interactions, including relationships between students-teacher; teacher-students; students-students (Chaudron, 1993).

For teachers it is important to know what feedback means, what an error is, how every error can be corrected, if all students' errors can be corrected and which is the least intrusive way to do it.

Most language teachers think that errors should be corrected; otherwise students will think that what they produced is correct and could internalize incorrect structures (i.e., fossilization) (Tsui, 1995). Fossilization is a common aspect of students' learning and the main cause for it to happen is that teachers ignore errors. Fossilization is potentially dangerous because students may internalize those errors as correct structures after which they become difficult to repair (Brown, 1994) since they might pay more attention to meaning than to the forms.

Another point of view according to whether errors can be corrected or not is expressed by Hendrickson (as cited in Chaudron, 1993), he thinks that every error can be corrected in practice. That is, by using correct structures to avoid a bad use of them, correcting in the right moment when the errors are produced without providing students theory but examples to illustrate why they are wrong.

### Feedback and Skills

To understand the teachers' choice of a type of feedback, it is necessary to take into account what the focus of the subject matter is. In the following considerations, there are some explanations of feedback in a course for developing oral skills and some types of feedback for the written skills.

Feedback varies according to several aspects; one of them is whether the class is focused on oral or written skills. Let us start with types of feedback used for teaching writing, which can be adopted by teachers taking into account their groups, the more common errors and why not the ease to carry them out (Spada, 1991).

### *Feedback on Written Skills*



Written feedback is an essential aspect of any English course. Its goal is “to teach skills that help students improve their writing proficiency to the point where they are cognizant of what is expected of them as writers and are able to produce it with minimal errors and maximum clarity”. (Williams, 2002). There are two main types of feedback on written skills: *feedback on form and feedback on content*.

Teachers can perform the feedback on form by marking the place and the type of error without correction and by underlining to indicate only the presence of errors. In this form, students are expected to correct their error on their own.

Feedback on content consists on comments written by teachers, these comments are accompanied by suggestions for improvements on future rewrites. In this type of feedback, students are usually expected to include information from the comments into their other versions of their paper (Williams, 2002).

Frodesen (2001) regards that indirect feedback, which indicates the place but not the error, is more useful than the direct correction in which the correct form is conveyed.

According to Williams (2002) written feedback can become more convenient if its comments and corrections are accompanied by a conferencing. In this conferencing, students and teachers meet to clarify the students’ errors, their questions and doubts, and teachers can explain and clarify why students are wrong in their written exercises.

It is important to underline, that feedback on written skills such as reading and writing is focused basically on grammar, lexicon and syntax errors. It can be added that every error corrected in written compositions needs repetitions of their right form and in written exercises to be repaired.

After this part related to writing, let us move on the types of feedback used in

a course developing oral skills.

### *Feedback on Oral Skills*

According to Lyster & Ranta (1997) there are six different types of feedback to use in a language course focused on Speaking and Listening abilities: Five corresponding to Implicit correction and one form which corresponds to Explicit correction. *Explicit Correction*

There is a form of explicit correction, which is “explicit feedback”. This refers to the explicit provision of the correct form. Example:

S: The dog runs *fastly*

T: Teacher explains that the word the student used does not exist. “Fastly” doesn’t exist. “Fast” does not take -ly.

Teacher explains an example where -ly is added to form an adverb “the dog runs quickly”

Although this type of feedback is easy to apply and teachers usually resort to it, research has demonstrated that explicit correction does not permit students to discover and make their own inferences about language: This type of feedback gives the right form and then an explanation, but students are not aware of their errors and they can forget the correct form in a future production.

### *Implicit Correction*

There are five types of feedback in implicit correction: *recasts, clarification requests, meta-linguistic feedback, elicitation* and *repetition*. Here, learners are expected to learn to correct their own errors by means of their own knowledge. Every type of feedback is different but each one has the same focus: They do not provide the correct form to elicit the wrong structure.

*Recasts.* They refer to teacher’s reformulation of all or part of a student’s

participation avoiding the error; this type is not introduced by any corrective word.

Although Recasts are the most frequent type of feedback, it is the “least likely to lead to uptake” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Example:

S: When *you're* phone classmates, did *you talk long time*?

Teacher reformulates the student's participation avoiding the wrong structure and says the right form.

T: When *you were* phone classmates, did *you talk for a long time*?

*Clarification request.* it indicates to students that what they had expressed was wrong or misunderstood; it can be introduced by some words of clarification or repetition. Example:

T: How are you this morning?

S: Yes

T: Excuse me (Clarification request)

S: Yes

T: What do you mean by Yes? (Clarification request)

S: I'm well

T: I'm fine this morning (the right answer)

*Meta-linguistic feedback.* It is a type of feedback where students realize their errors without giving them the right form but some clues to find the correct structure.

This is the main focus of this research, and it is the feedback, which was applied in a foreign language classroom with elementary school learners, although it can be applied to any type of audience. Example:

S: We talk to Jim yesterday

T: What's the ending we put on verbs when we talk about the past?

S: We talked to Jim yesterday

*Elicitation.* It refers to at least three techniques that teachers use to illustrate the correct form to the students. First, teachers elicit completion of their own structure. Second, teachers use questions to elicit correct forms. Third, teachers occasionally ask students to rebuild their comments. Example:

S: My father cleans the plate

T: Excuse me? He cleans the???

T: what does he clean?

S: plates?

*Repetition.* It refers to the teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the student's error. In most cases, teachers raise their intonation to show the error. This type of feedback can be accompanied by meta-linguistic comments in order that students identify their errors. Example 1:

S: He is in the bathroom

T: Bathroom? Bedroom. He is in the bedroom

Example 2:

S: We is in the school

T: We is? But there are two people, right? You see the error? When it is plural it is: we are.

S: We are in the school

From the examples above can be concluded that implicit correction stimulates hypothesis testing, it gives the learner the opportunity to tackle form-meaning relationships and this type of feedback does not provide the correct form, most importantly, it forces learners to use their own resources in constructing a reformulation.

Another element to consider in developing oral skills is timing whether it is done immediately, after the error is committed or when the students finish their participation depends largely on teachers. However, it is important to underline that researchers have demonstrated that interrupting the students in the middle of the sentence could be frustrating and inhibiting for them (Tsui, 1995). Jensen, M. (1997) considers that to avoid interrupting the flow of learners' language in order to point out their errors, corrective feedback might take place after students finish their participation.

Once different types of feedback on oral production had been discussed, it is central to underline why the application of Meta-linguistic feedback is important in an English course. As explained before, teachers do not provide the right form, but encourage students to discover their error or errors, so that, they identify, understand and correct the wrong structure that they have produced. This type of feedback is commonly used in Language immersions, in advanced English classes and might soon enter elementary and high schools.

In a 1997 study, Lyster & Ranta found that although recasts were very common, they led to 0% of repair. That is, teachers stand out the errors but students do not correct them because teachers provide the correct form and students are not conscious about the correction of their errors. In their findings, Lyster & Ranta (1997) conclude that elicitation, clarification, repetition and meta-linguistic feedback lead to repair because these types of feedback do not provide correct forms. Meta-linguistic feedback showed a 26 % of repair. That is, students corrected the 26 % of their errors at the end of the study. According to the researchers, these corrections are kept in students' minds in a long term, because they knew why they were wrong, and what the right form was. This right form is their own conclusion, according to what they

knew (theory) and putting into practice the negotiation of form and the interaction patterns that any type of corrective feedback provides.

The effectiveness of applying meta-linguistic feedback, to develop oral skills in students allowing them to use their own resources to find the right answer of form is one of the reasons by which this type of feedback was applied. In addition this type of feedback was chosen because of the importance that any type of feedback has to students in their learning. It is important to consider that the type of feedback used in classes may affect the future learning attitude and behavior of the student (Edith Cowman University & Marianne Cronin Heather Sparrow, 2000)

Regardless of the type of feedback teachers decide to apply, teachers must consider the most important characteristics of it. Morgan (1993) and Price (1997) suggest that feedback always entails: specific and clear comments, comprehensible constructive suggestions, encouragement, and prompt return of assignments, justification for grades and respectful presentation and tone. To illustrate with an example the six main characteristics that any type of feedback must have, let us take as an example the following situation: students made the following error:

S: “my dog has four feet”

The error will be avoided using any type of feedback as follows:

*Explicit Feedback:*

S: My dog has four feet

T: you are wrong Feet is used with human beings and Legs is the right form with animals. Repeat please *My dog has four legs*

*Recasts:*

T: your dog has four feet?

S: my dog has four legs

*Clarification:*

T: your dog has???? Excuse me, I didn't hear you.

S: ahh!! My dog has four legs

*Meta-linguistic feedback:*

T: how do we refer to the extremities of the dog?

S: my dog has four legs

*Elicitation:*

T: your dog has??? Repeat it please.

S: sorry, my dog has four legs

*Repetition:*

T: my dog has FOUR FEET!!! Are you sure? .....My dog has four legs

S: yes, my dog has four legs

The example explained with the six types of feedback shows the error and the right answer. What a teacher must do, as it can be seen, rather than providing an *easy* right answer, teachers need to encourage students' curiosity and interest and a explanation in context or a good question should avoid the fossilization of this lexical error and help students improve their performance.

## CHAPTER 3: METHOD

### Design of the Study

The design applied in order to carry out the research on feedback on oral production is Intact group design. This design requires two groups. One was the experimental group, and the other was the control group. A pre-test was carried out in both groups. After the pre-test, the treatment (i.e., meta-linguistic feedback) was applied to the experimental group for a period of three months. Finally a post-test was carried out in both groups in order to compare the results obtained in the pre-test and in the post-test in both control and experimental groups.

This is the graphic of the intact group design

G1 T1 X T2

G2 T1 T2

G1 Group 1

G2 Group 2

T1 Pre-test

T2 Post-test

X Treatment: Meta-linguistic feedback

### Procedure

Two groups of 38 students were chosen from which 11 students took the pre-test and the post-test in both groups. The first group was considered as the experimental where meta-linguistic feedback was applied; the second group functions as control group, where a traditional type of feedback: recasts were given when students produced an error.



To carry out the teaching sessions, 10 activities were planned; each activity had three main steps: Grammatical explanations, provision of material (dialogues, paragraphs, readings, pictures, videos, drawings) and oral exercises. All the activities had an oral focus in which the students were expected to talk using the L2 as much as possible.

In both groups, error correction was provided. In the experimental group, the error correction was given through meta-linguistic clues such as “How do you say that in English?”, Do you remember where we place the verb in that sentence?, How do you pronounce that word?, What do you mean?; those clues made the students analyze their production to repair their errors when they understood where and why they were wrong. The grammatical and lexical errors were followed by grammatical explanations when it was necessary. Pronunciation errors and the use of L1 were corrected with some hints such as How do you pronounce that? How do you say that in English? When these errors were impossible to correct, the repair was carried out by the teacher.

In the control group, the error correction was given in the form of recasts and repetition where the errors were highlighted by the teacher, and the students were expected to repeat and correct their utterances. The four types of errors were corrected in the same way basically through repetition.

### Subjects

This research was carried out in an elementary school in Pasto, with 22 students of fifth grade, who belong to a medium socio-economic status.

### Materials

The main materials to work on during our research were readings, dialogues, oral questionnaires (not too long but spontaneous), videos, tapes. All these elements

were provided so that students had enough tools and topics to talk and to interact in our English classes.

### Instruments

An oral pre-test was applied to identify and categorize the errors committed by the students and to analyze students' overall oral proficiency as well. This pre-test was applied in both groups, the experimental and control group. The pre-test was recorded to have more access to the errors.

An oral post-test was applied to identify the features of oral production after applying Meta-linguistic Feedback. This post-test established the pros and cons of the treatment, and it helped find differences between the groups in this pre-experimental research.

Both, pre-test and post-test had the same procedure and content when they were carried out. They consisted on 24 questions, where there was not a specific answer and the students had the plenty freedom to answer in the way they thought was correct. There was not a fixed scale to measure the students' oral utterances; however, the students' errors on each one of the responses were analyzed to establish the four categories: grammar, lexicon, pronunciation, and use of L1 analyzed in this paper.

### Variables

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLE:** The effect of meta-linguistic feedback

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE:** oral production

### Analysis

This pre-experimental study used a quantitative and qualitative analysis of results. It used a descriptive statistics to determine the level and the differences found in both groups before and after the treatment in relation to the quantity and quality of

the errors. To do the quantitative analysis the results obtained in the pre-test as well as the results of the post-test were poured in a data matrix where the errors of the students in all the questions of the survey were analyzed to establish the four categories of errors and study them deeply in both groups, in order to test differences and similarities in both the experimental and the control group before and after the application of the treatment.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this research, two groups of learners were chosen to initially diagnose the quality of errors made by them. One group was considered as a control group, in which the traditional error correction (i.e., recast) was applied. The other is the experimental group in which the treatment, Meta-linguistic Feedback was applied. Both groups took the pre-test which consisted on providing oral responses to twenty-four questions.

The results of the pre-test were compared to the results in the post-test in order to observe if the hypothesis established earlier in this paper could be proved or refused. The results obtained in the experimental group are explained next, to continue with the control group:

### *Recall data.*

In the experimental group (5-2 grade) a total of 642 errors were found. These were divided in four different categories. Grammar, lexicon, pronunciation and use of L1 (see Table 1). Twenty-four questions were asked to eleven students who answered each question with an extended performance. This performance served to evaluate their oral production and their level of involvement with the activity.

The results obtained with this test in this group indicate that the issue students find the most difficult is grammar, followed by pronunciation problems, use of L1 and finally lexicon which are the less frequent mistakes. (See Table 3)

Grammar errors are the biggest category with 295 occurrences (See Table 1 and Polygon 1). The most frequent and significant errors are found in the omission of complements, which make for an incomplete answer. Example:

T: Where is this ruler?

S: on

T: on what?

S: on....

C.A: It is on the table

In these questions students were required to provide complete, long answers in order to have enough information about their performance. These answers are considered as errors because students did not produce extended responses, although their answers were correct. Example 1:

T: Where is this ruler?

S: on

T: on what?

C.A: That ruler is on the book?

Another grammatical error is in the ordinal use. Students confuse the use of ordinals and cardinals in some structures, specifically to express or to talk about dates. Students do not add the particle “-th” or do not change *one* for *first*, *two* for *second* or *three* for *third*; in addition they use numbers indistinctly. Example:

T: When is your birthday?

S: My birthday is may *thirty*

T: My birthday is on May the *thirtieth*

Example 2:

T: When is your birthday?

S: My birthday is *one* may

T: My birthday is on May the *first*

In these types of constructions, not only, the use of ordinal and cardinal numbers caused some trouble, learners also misuse the structures.

Example 1:

T: When is your mother's birthday?

S: Is *twenty July*

C.A: her birthday is on *July twentieth*

Other significant errors were shown in the use of possessive adjectives, when students were not able to distinguish which adjective is appropriate in each context.

Example:

T: What is your mother's name?

S: *My* name is Blanca Nora

C.A: *Her* name is Blanca Nora

The omission of the definite article is another grammatical error. In these types of errors students do not use the article correctly. Example 1:

T: Where is this book?

S: on desk

C.A: It is on *the* desk

The omission of words, verbs, nouns, subject pronouns and the use of plurals in inappropriate contexts were less common than the errors described above.

Pronunciation errors are the second biggest category. The total number of errors on pronunciation is 156 (See Table 2 and Polygon 2). Students experiment some problems pronouncing sounds that do not exist in Spanish and feel uncomfortable when pronouncing some words containing those sounds. Thus, they attempt to introduce Spanish sounds in their utterances. Another characteristic of pronunciation errors is that students pronounce the word as it is written. Examples:

*Examples:*

*Name*        /name/

*Birthday*    /birðai/

*March*        /mars/

*Picture*       /piktʌre/

*Thirty*        /tirtʌ/

*Chair*         /chair/

*Eight*         /eich/

*Under*         /under/

*Telephone*    /telepone/

*April*         /aprol/

*Brother*       /broter/

Errors on pronunciation are more frequent than expected by the researchers, and these results claim that learners, despite being in communicative courses, have not worked sufficiently on developing an adequate pronunciation.

The third most common type of error is the use of L1 with 121 occurrences (See Table 2 and Polygon 3). In this category, every idea expressed in Spanish is considered as error because of the inability learners have to express their ideas in English. The students use the L1 basically to ask for confirmation, reformulation or clarification, or simply they use Spanish to replace a word in English that they do not know. Example:

S: I'm *once* years old

Example 2:

T: What objects can we find in your house?

S: *hay* bed, *hay* table, *qué más qué más* lamp y window

Example 3:

T: What objects can we find in your bedroom?

S: Bedroom *qué es? Habitación? No sé*

The fourth and the last category of errors in this group is lexicon with 70 occurrences (See Table 2 and Polygon 4). Lexicon problems include misuse and/or confusion of the meaning of nouns, verbs and some parts of speech.

Students confuse some nouns giving them a wrong meaning. Example 1:

T: When is your father's birthday?

S: her *name* is December twenty

Other less common errors are the misuse of *there is* and *there are* and the preposition use as *in* and *on*. However, those errors do not interfere in the comprehension of students' oral utterances.

These are the errors found on the pre-test applied to students of 5-2 grade at Marco Fidel Suarez Institute.

On the other hand, the results of the control group vary in some way. In this group (5-1 grade) a total of 658 errors were found divided into four different categories: grammar, pronunciation, lexicon and use of L1 from which 347 belong to grammar, 140 to pronunciation, 87 to lexicon and 84 to use of L1. (See Table 4).

The total of errors produced per student in each one of the categories varies, showing the strengths and weaknesses of each student in these four categories. These results also show how heterogeneous the group was; taking into consideration that while some students showed a large number of errors, others displayed fewer errors. (See Table 5)



Table 6 illustrates the total of frequencies occurred; where grammar errors was the category of the highest frequency, followed by pronunciation errors as the second category to continue with lexicon errors and to conclude with the errors found in the use of L1. In spite of the fact that use of L1 is the category with the lowest frequency, it is surprising the high use of Spanish, since at the beginning of the pre-test the students were told to use it as less as possible.

Again, grammar was the category with the highest frequencies, adding 347 errors on total. It can be said that one of the most common errors is the omission of the definite article. (See Polygon 1)

Example 1.

T: where is the dictionary?

S: dictionary is under notebook

C. A: *the* dictionary is under *the* notebook.

Again, the misuse of ordinal and cardinal numbers was a common error among learners from the control group. This error was evident especially when students talk about dates, for instance:

T: Tell me the Halloween's date

S: October the thirty-*one*

C. A: October thirty-*first*

Verb omission and word addition were also found, examples of this are:

T: what is your telephone number?

S: my telephone number 7335098

C. A: my telephone number *is* 7335098

Addition of words refers to the addition of words where is not necessary, for example:

Example:

T: who do you live with?

S: I live *is* my grand parents and my brothers

C. A: I live with my grand parents and my brothers

Other cases as omission of complement, use of possessives, subject omission and word order are also errors found in the grammatical category. Examples of this are:

*Omission of complement*

T: where is the pencil?

S: it is in...

C.A: it is in the desk

*Use of possessives*

T: whose bag is this?

S: this bag is *your*

C.A: this bag is *yours*

Example 2:

T: what is your father's name?

S: *my* name is Alfredo

C.A: *his* name is Alfredo

*Subject omission*

Example 1:

T: is this a desk?

S: no, is eraser

C.A: no, *it* is an eraser

### *Word order*

T: tell me where the eraser is?

S: is eraser under

C.A: the eraser *is under the desk*

Finally, very low frequencies in certain other categories such as preposition omission and adjective use were noted.

The second category of errors found was pronunciation with a total of 140 errors (See Table 5 and Polygon 2) . Here, students omit final sounds, or pronounce words as they are written, for example:

Omission of final sounds:

/fai/ fine

/fai/ five

Lexicon errors were the third category with a total of 87 errors (See Table 5 and Polygon 4) In this category, the highest sub-category is the use of ordinals, as shown in the following examples:

T: when is your birthday?

S: my birthday is January *six*

C.A: my birthday is January the *sixth*

Spelling, use of possessives and use of nouns are other sub-categories found in the lexicon error category. Examples of this are:

### *Spelling*

T: spell the word DAUGHTER

S: D A O U J G H T E R

### *Possessives use*

T: when is your mother's birthday?

S: *my* birthday is April the tenth

C.A: *her* birthday is April the tenth

Use of Pronouns, use of cardinals and use of verbs are the lowest sub-categories on the lexical errors. Examples of these are:

*Use of cardinals*

T: tell me the date of Saint Valentine's day

S: September *fifty*

C.A: September the *fifteenth*

*Use of verbs*

T: who do you live with?

S: I live *is* my parents

C.A: I live *with* my parents

The lowest and the most surprising category found is the use of L1 with a total of 84 occurrences (See Table 5 and Polygon 3). Despite it is the lowest frequency, it is surprising to have such a quantity of Spanish utterances when the pre-test was done in English. Spanish utterances were mainly used to ask for confirmation, as in the next example:

T: how are you?

S: fine thank you, *si no?*

Students were asking for reformulation, for example:

T: who do you live with?

S: *como es que es?*

And students answered some questions in Spanish, as in the next example:

T: tell me the Christmas day

S: *Diciembre veinticuatro*

In general, the results obtained in both groups, the experimental as well as the control group show similar weaknesses and a similar positioning of categories with grammar as the most prevailing followed by pronunciation. It is important to notice that both groups exhibit similar characteristics and it provides this research with more objectivity. The weaknesses identified and described above for the two groups were addressed with the application of Meta-linguistic feedback to the experimental group. (See Table 2 and 5)

### *Results of the Post-test*

After three months of the application of meta-linguistic feedback in the experimental group, a big difference between the pre-test and post-test was found. In the post-test, students showed that their level had increased and their errors had decreased. Of 642 errors found at the beginning, students experimented 253 at the end (See Table 7). That is, students had a 60.60% of repair after the treatment. That indicates that meta-linguistic feedback indeed worked, although students continue having difficulties (See Table 10). The errors decreased in a big percentage; however difficulties in the four categories were found. In grammar a reduction of 50.16% was found, of 295 errors found in the pre-test, 147 was committed in the post-test (See Polygon 5). In spite of this big reduction, the students continue having difficulties and the biggest difficulty for them is in the omission of words, students avoid giving long answers and they just provided the information but not in a grammatical structure. For instance:

Do you have a pet?

Yes

No

The answer is right if somebody was asking for the specific information “yes or not”

but in this case the long answer paying attention to the structure was required.

Example 2:

Is this a notebook?

Yes

No

The same happened in these examples where students were trying to provide information and not to show their competency level.

The omission of article especially in dates continued demonstrating the gap on students, because they usually avoid it; the omission of subject and often of verbs caused some difficulties as well. Students said:

Live with my family

They omit the subject because there is a transfer of Spanish to English; and of verbs because students said.

I three sisters instead of I have three sisters

And other big difficulty is in the word order in some structures because students said

I two brothers have

I many chairs see

They do not follow the structure as Subject + Verb + Complement but Subject + complement + Verb as if they were speaking in their mother tongue.

In spite of these errors, it was noticeable that the overall amount of errors produced decreased, as well as the misuse of possessive adjectives where students had the biggest difficulties at the beginning of the research. However, the reduction the difficulties are the same (See Table 8).

On pronunciation a 60.89% of reduction was found, of 156 errors at the

beginning just 61 was found after the treatment, which indicates that students internalized the sounds and the general pronunciation of English words at the end of the application of the treatment (See Table 10 and Polygon 6). The biggest difference consists in students' understanding, since they do not pronounce the word as it is written because they think twice before producing the sounds. However students had difficulties when pronouncing [ð] at the beginning and at the end of words. This could happen because this sound does not exist in Spanish.

On lexicon a reduction of 54.28% was proved. In the pre-test 70 errors were found while in the post-test 32 (See Table 10 and Polygon 8). Students are more able than before in recognizing which word goes in which context; however they confuse some verbs in some specific situations. Example:

How many sisters do you have?

I am three sisters

Where do you live?

I am panamericano

In these errors, the internalization of verb To Be is present in all the sentences.

The confusion of prepositions *in/on* or *with* and the ordinal and cardinal numbers too, since students do not change them in dates.

And the Use of L1 reduced in a 89.25%, students do not use Spanish as before, they look for the best way to express their utterances in English and when it is really impossible they use their mother tongue to ask for clarification or for an unknown word (See Table 10 and Polygon 7). The total amount of errors found at the beginning of this research was 121 and after the application the improvement is very clear, where students had 13 errors of the total.

Contrasting pre and post-test results it is visible that the learners' proficiency

changed. These results could be perceived through the post-test as well the positive effects of the meta-linguistic feedback on students. The repair is visible in a 60.60% in all the categories (See Table 10).

On the other hand, the data collected through the post-test in the control group shows a total of 385 errors, which indicates a reduction of the 41.48% in relation to 658 errors found in the pre-test (See Table 14).

Grammar is one of the categories in which the competence level improved with a higher percentage, from 347 errors found in the pre-test, only 187 were found in the post-test showing a 46.10 % of improvement (See Polygon 9). The biggest problems in this category continue being the use of ordinals and the omission of article. Nevertheless, addition of words is other subcategory that had increased. The omission of some parts of speech was also a category in which students continued producing errors (See Table 12).

In the pronunciation category only a 2.85 % of improvement was found; while in the pre-test 140 errors on pronunciation were made, 136 errors were made in the post test (See Table 14). This fact is surprising because some students instead of enhance their pronunciation, they decreased their level. For instance, student three decreased his/her level in a 20 %; while student four did it in 44.44%, student seven in 100 % student nine in 75 % and more surprisingly, student eight lowered his/her level in 233 %, he/she pronounced in a wrong form almost three times more in the post-test what he/she had pronounced in the pre-test (See Table 13).

In this category, the biggest fault was caused by the inability of pronouncing the word “desk” which was pronounced as /dEks/. Other important errors were made when students pronounced words such as “*chair*” that continue being pronounced as /tsair/, “*birthday*” that was pronounced as /bEr dai/ and “*neighborhood*” that was



pronounced as /neboku/. Of course, some learners (e.g., student five and student six) improved their level in a 53.33 % and 36.84 % respectively. But in spite of this fact, the level of proficiency of the whole group could not be improved in the way that was expected (See Polygon 10).

In the lexical category 44 errors were found, while in the pre-test 87 errors were made showing an improvement of 49.42 % (See Table 14 and Polygon 12). In this category, most of students improved their level in a high percentage. For instance, student one improved in an 84.61%, but other students did not do any progress or as in the pronunciation category, they lowered their level by increasing their errors such as student nine that obtained 33.33 % more lexical errors than in the pre-test (See Table 13).

The major improvement of students was evident in the use of L1 category where 18 errors were found, in contrast to the 84 errors found in the pre-test; this shows an improvement of 78.57 % (See Table 14). Once more, the Spanish utterances were used for confirmation and/or clarification. For example: ¿cuántas hay? ¿mejor amigo? ¿Cómo es?

Most of students showed some sustained improvement, with exception of student 11 who decreased the 100%. That is, in the pretest this learner only uttered once in Spanish, but in the post-test the student did it twice (See Table 13).

All this information shows once again that the group is too heterogeneous, besides each one of the students progressed at their own pace and according to their own interests and motivations.

In general, the results obtained from the post-test in both groups show an improvement in the competence level. They also show the differences found after the

application of the treatment. This improvement is more visible in the experimental group where meta-linguistic feedback was applied, since the total amount of errors is lower than in the control group. In the experimental group a total of 253 errors were committed while 385 in the control group, the divergence is of 132 errors (See Table 7 and 11)

Although the experimental group had fewer errors, there is not a big difference between groups. The biggest improvement appeared in the pronunciation category where the experimental group had 75 errors less than the control group, that indicates that students appropriate the pronunciation specially in words they had difficulties, on the contrary, students decreased their level in the control group, where students increased the error level, this fact implies that this group needs to work harder on pronunciation specially on the proper English sounds (See Polygon 14).

In the grammar category there is a variation of 40 errors by part of the experimental group. This variation is not significant as was expected, taking into account that both groups carried out different error correction. What it is important to highlight is the meaningful reduction that both groups had in contrast to the previous results (See Polygon 13).

On the other two categories, use of L1 and lexicon, the divergence between the groups is minimal, with five and twelve errors respectively. In spite of this insignificant difference in these two categories the improvement happened inside the groups, where students learned, produced and improved their level without a big comparison between the treatment and the traditional error correction (See Polygons 15 and 16).

In general, the application of meta-linguistic feedback on oral production demonstrated that pronunciation category improved with a bigger difference,

however, the results and the entire test show that students keep in mind in a long term their knowledge and their explanations what does not happen in the same way by using recasts.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

The application of a new type of feedback as meta-linguistic feedback allowed the comparison between this one and the traditional type when teaching English as a foreign language. From this experience the following conclusions can be drawn.

Meta-linguistic feedback is a type of correction which leads to repair without providing the correct word, form or sound. This makes the repair come from the learners, and the type of repair provided by learners depends on the level of proficiency of the students. In any case, learners of different levels benefit from this type of feedback since they have to make their best effort to make hypotheses about language and discover the right answers.

The more mindful and advanced students are, the most they benefit from the corrective feedback administered by teachers. This was something that could be observed throughout the study. It is important then to remember that teachers should not use only one type of feedback with beginners and advanced learners. The most advanced students are able to manipulate language in different ways and they are also able to start formulating their own rules, which enables them to have an active participation in their own learning.

Meta-linguistic feedback allows the internalization of structures and learners keep those structures for a long time, since it relies on the students' background knowledge of the L2 and their desire to repair their own oral or written production.

One important conclusion from this study is that meta-linguistic feedback is more suitable to be applied when working with the discovering of grammatical structures and pronunciation. To be able to solve problems relating lexicon and excessive use of the L1 in the foreign language classroom, teachers can make use of

other types of corrective feedback.

The communicative activities and tasks planned for the application of meta-linguistic feedback are some of the main reasons why learners improved, since these activities forced students to produce language and to apply their knowledge.

After providing corrective feedback three or four times, focusing on a specific error, students are able to produce the structure correctly in subsequent production. It can be said that learners need constant reinforcement of every piece of language taught and learned.

The use of meta-linguistic feedback in the shape of comments helps students remember the knowledge acquired in previous lessons and courses and takes them to make active use of their memory skills constantly in the foreign language class.

The use of meta-linguistic clues allows learners to improve their level at every opportunity because they knew that questions were prompt to be asked. It also enhances class participation and provides opportunities for communicative exchanges.

Recasts help students correct their errors at the time the correction is provided, but in a long term students forget the correction and students continue producing errors as could be observed during the sessions shared with the students. It was noticed that after the recasts, some learners did not repeat the correct form, this fact did not permit students' repair.

Although the differences in both groups are minimal, the experimental group, where meta-linguistic feedback was applied, showed the most noticeable improvement in all four categories. It is worth mentioning that before the treatment, both groups had received traditional instruction focusing only on grammar and translation, and the constant use of the L1. Both groups were used to work with lists of vocabulary and at the end of the year they were supposed to memorize 20 words.

Even though the treatment was carried out with one group, both groups had a change in the type of instruction. Both groups started having communicative classes and that might be the reason why both groups showed such improvement. After the treatment, almost all students were able to understand the English spoken in videos, tapes and even produced dialogues where students demonstrated their communicative abilities.

Recasts and meta-linguistic feedback are more suitable for repair in the Use of L1 category. This conclusion was drawn from the sessions after the treatment, where students avoided the Spanish utterances.

The cooperation of students is a fundamental part when carrying out a research, otherwise the study as well as the application of any treatment can be affected. This was evident in this study; although it was intended to be carried out with students from Liceo Integrado de Bachillerato de la Universidad de Nariño, the reduced cooperation on the part of some teachers made us modify the conditions of the project.

In contrast to the meta-linguistic feedback, recasts do not force students to think about structures, it rather leads learners to produce more errors either in the production of the same word which was supposedly corrected or in different words with the same characteristics of the word corrected.

In spite of the very similar tasks used and the similar treatment of errors provided inside the groups, it was impossible to even out the level of students in both groups, since there are factors which escaped our control. For instance, they work with their previous knowledge and with their personal interests and they use them to make hypotheses about language.

The administrators and teachers of the school where the treatment was applied noted the change on students, since they were able to produce language and not to just

repeat a list of words as before, and this was one of the most important comments that the institution made. They also thanked the researcher, because of the important change of attitude on the part of the students as well of the language teachers inside the school.

The application of these two new forms of correction is the step to open a better view of what teachers want to produce in our students, but the most important fact to consider is that this is the first time that these two types of error correction are applied with children of low proficiency levels, especially in a school, at the end of the treatment, the groups had moved to a higher level of proficiency and that should be remarked.

## Recommendations

Among the recommendations the researchers can provide for further research, the following are considered:

Researchers could choose a group with a higher level of proficiency. This way the application of the treatment is easier and students understand better the recommendations and the error correction which is provided.

It is advisable to apply other types of feedback to test their pros and cons and the differences of the type or types of feedback in relation to the others that had been applied.

It is recommended to increase the number of subjects so that the results obtained with them can be more easily generalized to other contexts.

It could be interesting to carry out a research on feedback in different groups from different institutions but with the same level of proficiency, so that the researchers can study if the context variables affect error correction.

It is advisable to apply meta-linguistic feedback, because it allows students to learn by means of their own resources, it allows them to increase their motivation and a sense of competition among peers, which helps them improve.

When applying recasts, teachers must make sure that students produce the right answer in order to repair the error; on the contrary, students do not internalize the correct form or structure.

It is important to not interrupt students' utterances to apply error correction, it is better to wait students finish their participation and then correct the errors, otherwise students could forget what they were saying or the participation might be affected.



The positive results obtained changing the method used shows that teachers should think about the importance of incorporating communicative activities into the classroom, that help students acquire proficiency rather than accomplishing academic “logros” or covering all the topics of the syllabus. Teachers need to read constantly, study, practice English in their classes, and even if they have a steady job, they should never stop innovating and reinventing themselves.

Table 1

*Categories of errors and their frequencies (Experimental Group)(Pre-test)*

Category	Code	Frequency
Grammar	1	295
Pronunciation	2	156
Use of L1	3	121
Lexicon	4	70
Total		642

Table 2

*Data Matrix (Experimental Group)(Pre-test)*

Student	Grammar	Pronunciation	Use of L1	Lexicon	Total
1	44	20	18	16	98
2	24	11	9	3	47
3	17	10	4	1	32
4	40	18	9	8	75
5	16	8	25	4	53
6	37	27	6	8	78
7	22	21	14	9	66
8	18	11	14	3	46
9	13	8	0	0	21
10	24	4	6	3	37
11	40	18	16	15	89
	<b>295</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>642</b>

Table 3

*Relative frequencies (Experimental Group) (Pre-test)*

Ctg	G	%	P	%	U	%	L	%	Total
Ss									
1	44	32.83	20	9.75	18	39.13	16	7.80	98
2	24	17.91	11	5.36	9	19.56	3	1.46	47
3	17	12.68	10	4.87	4	8.69	1	0.48	32
4	40	29.85	18	8.75	9	19.56	8	3.90	75
5	16	11.94	8	3.90	25	54.34	4	1.95	53
6	37	27.61	27	13.17	6	13.04	8	3.90	78
7	22	16.41	21	10.24	14	30.43	9	4.39	66
8	18	13.43	11	5.36	14	30.43	3	1.46	46
9	13	9.70	8	3.90	0	0	0	0	21
10	24	17.91	4	1.95	6	13.04	3	1.46	37
11	40	29.85	18	8.75	16	34.78	15	7.31	89
	<b>295</b>		<b>156</b>		<b>121</b>		<b>70</b>		<b>642</b>

Table 4

*Categories of errors and their frequencies (Control Group) (Pre-test)*

Category	Code	Frequency
Grammar	1	347
Pronunciation	2	140
Use of L1	3	84
Lexicon	4	87
Total		658

Table 5

*Data Matrix (Control Group) (Pre-test)*

Student	Grammar	Pronunciation	Use of L1	Lexicon	Total
1	65	20	23	13	121
2	36	24	3	12	75
3	44	20	16	11	91
4	11	9	7	1	28
5	27	15	7	6	55
6	35	19	3	10	67
7	24	4	11	4	43
8	13	3	6	5	27
9	40	8	5	9	62
10	28	11	2	8	49
11	24	7	1	8	40
	<b>347</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>658</b>

Table 6

*Relative frequencies (Control Group) (Pre-test)*

Ctg	G	%	P	%	U	%	L	%	Total
Ss									
1	65	48.50	20	9.75	23	50	13	6.34	121
2	36	26.86	24	11.70	3	6.52	12	5.85	75
3	44	32.83	20	9.75	16	34.78	11	5.36	91
4	11	8.20	9	4.39	7	15.21	1	0.48	28
5	27	20.14	15	7.31	7	15.21	6	2.92	55
6	35	26.11	19	9.26	3	6.52	10	4.87	67
7	24	17.91	4	1.95	11	23.91	4	1.95	43
8	13	9.70	3	1.46	6	13.04	5	2.43	27
9	40	29.85	8	3.90	5	10.86	9	4.39	62
10	28	20.89	11	5.36	2	4.34	8	3.90	49
11	24	17.91	7	3.41	1	2.17	8	3.90	40
	<b>347</b>		<b>140</b>		<b>84</b>		<b>87</b>		<b>658</b>

Table 7

*Categories of errors and their frequencies (Experimental Group)(Post-test)*

Category	Code	Frequency
Grammar	1	174
Pronunciation	2	94
Use of L1	3	15
Lexicon	4	42
Total		642



Table 8

*Data Matrix (Experimental Group) (Post-test)*

Student	Grammar	Pronunciation	Use of L1	Lexicon	Total
1	18	7	1	5	31
2	12	2	0	2	16
3	23	6	0	2	31
4	20	6	1	4	31
5	23	9	7	1	40
6	17	2	2	8	29
7	14	22	1	8	45
8	14	22	0	2	38
9	10	6	1	4	21
10	18	9	1	2	30
11	5	3	1	4	13
	<b>174</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>325</b>

Table 9

*Relative frequencies (Experimental Group) (Post-test)*

Ctg	G	%	P	%	U	%	L	%	Total
Ss									
1	18	13.43	7	3.41	1	2.17	5	2.43	31
2	12	8.95	2	0.97	0	0	2	0.97	47
3	23	17.16	6	2.92	0	0	2	0.97	32
4	20	14.92	6	2.92	1	2.17	4	1.95	75
5	23	17.16	9	4.39	7	15.21	1	0.48	53
6	17	12.68	2	0.97	2	4.34	8	3.90	78
7	14	10.44	22	10.71	1	2.17	8	3.90	66
8	14	10.44	22	10.71	0	0	2	0.97	46
9	10	7.46	6	2.92	1	2.17	4	1.95	21
10	18	13.43	9	4.39	1	2.17	2	0.97	37
11	5	3.73	3	1.46	1	2.17	4	1.95	89
	<b>174</b>		<b>94</b>		<b>15</b>		<b>42</b>		<b>325</b>

Table 10

*Percentage of reduction (Experimental Group) (Post-test)*

Ctg	Grammar%	Pronunciation %	Use of L1%	Lexicon%	Total
Ss					
1	59.09	65.0	94.44	68.75	68.36
2	50.0	81.81	100	33.33	65.95
3	-27.7	40.0	100	-100	3.12
4	50.0	66.66	88.88	50.0	58.66
5	-43.75	12.5	72.0	75.0	24.52
6	54.05	92.59	66.66	0	62.82
7	36.36	1.0	92.85	11.11	31.81
8	22.22	-4.5	100	33.33	17.39
9	23.07	-100	0	-400	0.0
10	25.0	25.0	83.33	11.11	18.91
11	87.50	-12.5	93.75	73.33	85.39
	<b>58.98</b>	<b>39.74</b>	<b>87.60</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>50.62</b>

Table 11

*Categories of errors and their frequency (Control Group) (Post-test)*

Category	Code	Frequency
Grammar	1	187
Pronunciation	2	136
Lexicon	3	44
Use of L1	4	18
Total		385

Table 12

*Data Matrix (Control Group) (Post-test)*

Student	Grammar	Pronunciation	Use of L1	Lexicon	Total
1	17	12	2	0	31
2	15	23	7	0	45
3	29	24	3	4	60
4	8	5	1	5	19
5	18	7	3	0	28
6	18	12	10	3	43
7	23	8	2	0	33
8	8	10	0	2	20
9	10	14	6	1	31
10	22	12	7	1	42
11	19	9	3	2	33
	187	136	44	18	385

Table 13

*Relative frequencies (Control Group) (Post-test)*

Ctg	G	%	P	%	U	%	L	%	Total
Ss									
1	17	12.68	12	5.85	2	0.97	0	0	
2	15	11.19	23	11.21	7	3.41	0	0	
3	29	21.64	24	11.70	3	1.46	4	8.69	
4	8	5.97	5	2.43	1	0.48	5	10.86	
5	18	13.43	7	3.41	3	1.46	0	0	
6	18	13.43	12	5.85	10	4.87	3	6.52	
7	23	17.16	8	3.90	2	0.97	0	0	
8	8	5.97	10	4.87	0	0	2	4.34	
9	10	7.46	14	6.82	6	2.92	1	2.17	
10	22	16.41	12	5.85	7	3.41	1	2.17	
11	19	14.17	9	4.39	3	1.46	2	4.34	

Table 14

*Percentage of reduction (Control Group) (Post-test)*

Ctg	Grammar%	Pronunciation %	Use of L1%	Lexicon%	Total
Ss					
1	73.84	40	84.61	100	74.38
2	58.33	4.16	41.66	100	40
3	34.09	-20	72.72	75	34.06
4	27.27	-44.44	0	28.57	32.14
5	33.33	53.33	50	100	49.09
6	48.57	36.84	0	0	35.82
7	4.16	-100	50	0	23.25
8	38.46	-233	100	66.66	25.92
9	75	-75	-33.33	80	50
10	21.42	9.09	-12.5	50	14.28
11	20.83	-28.57	62.5	-100	17.5
	<b>46.10</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>49.42</b>	<b>78.57</b>	<b>41.48</b>





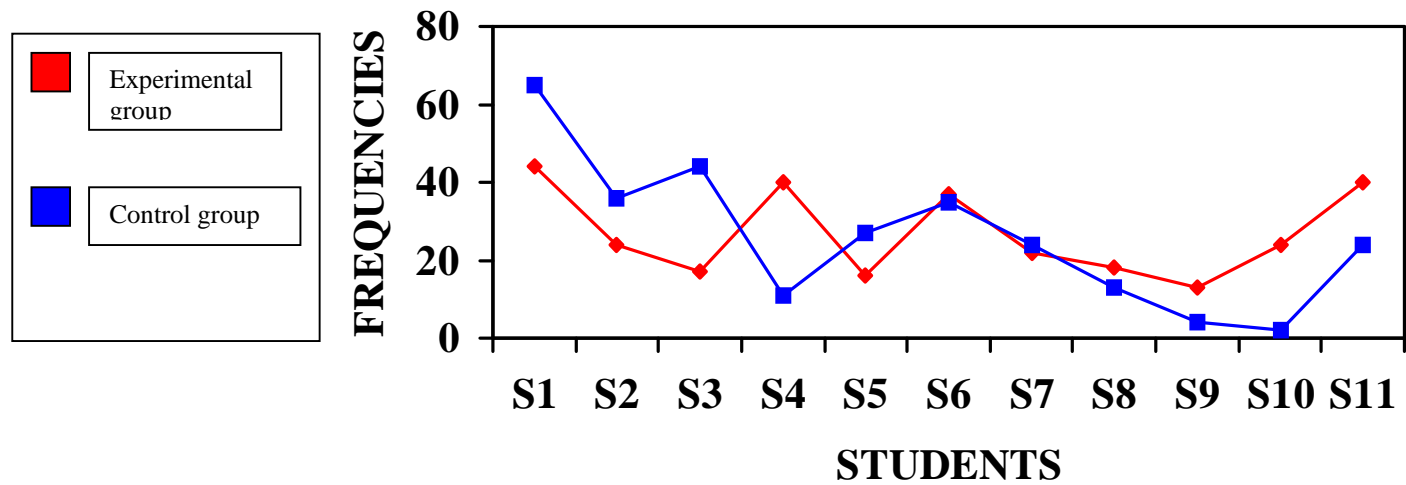
*Polygon 1*

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*Students' errors on grammar (Experimental and control group)(Pre-test)*

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## STUDENTS' ERRORS ON GRAMMAR

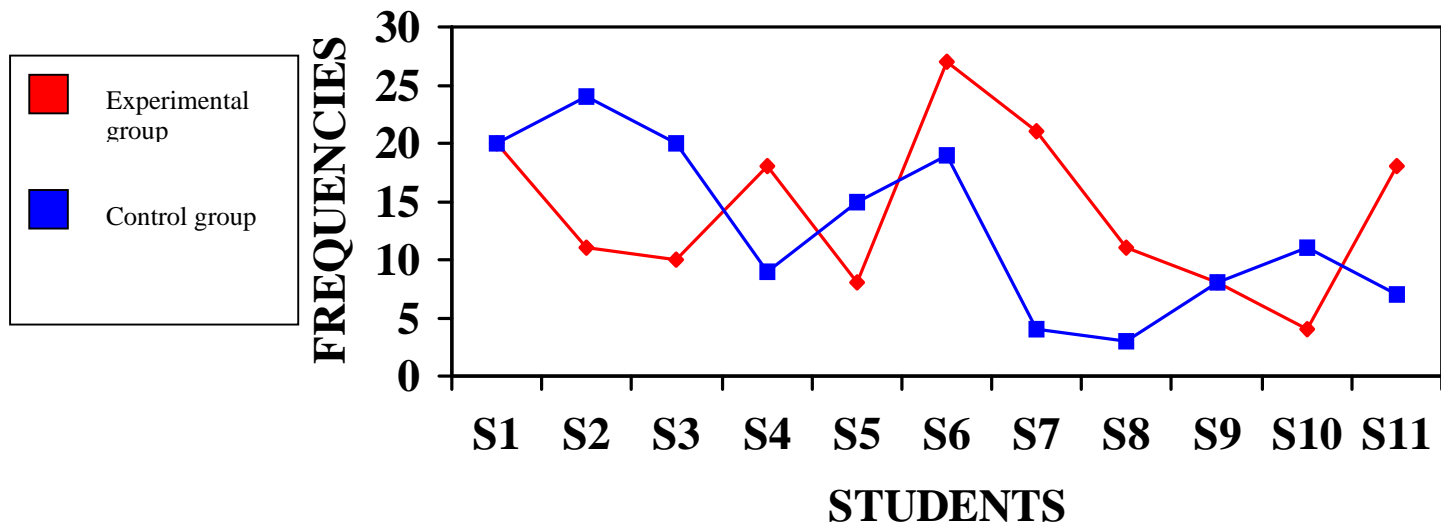


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Students' errors on pronunciation (Experimental and control group)(Pre-test)

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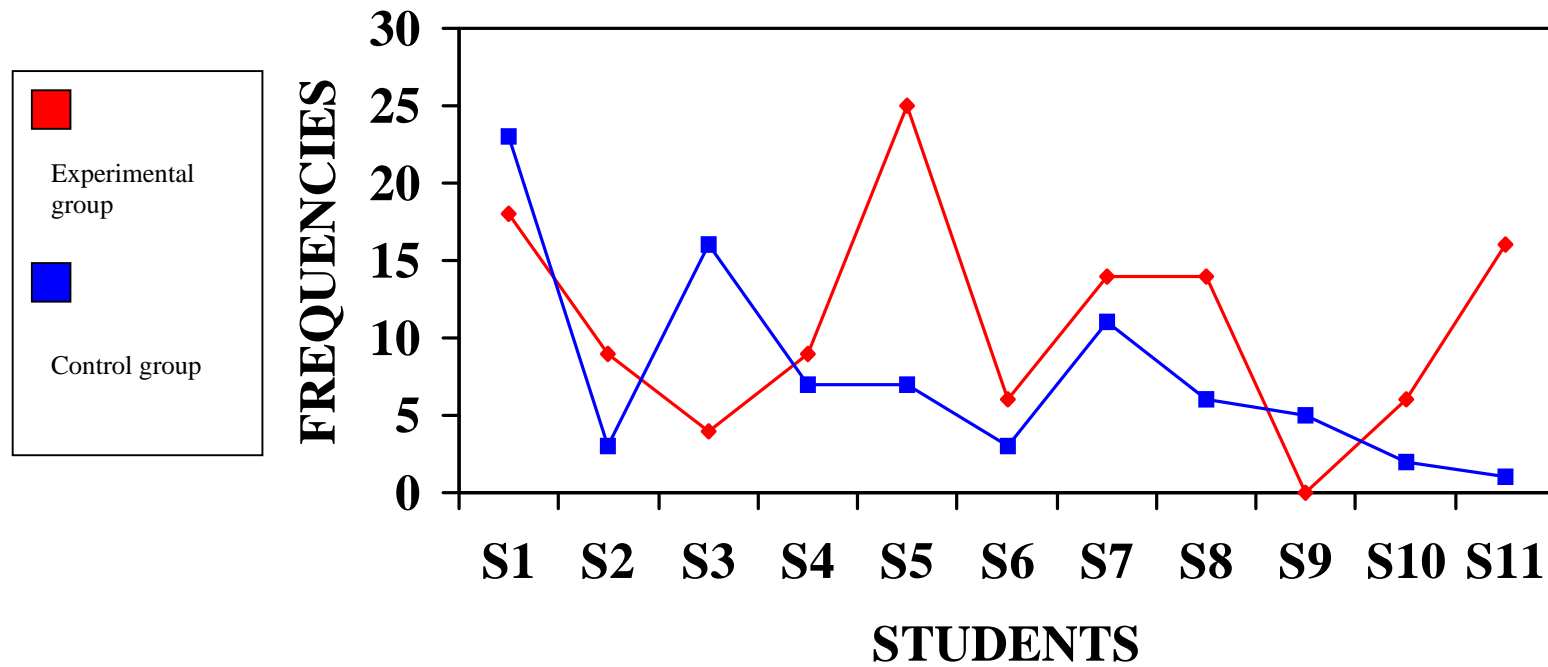
## STUDENTS' ERRORS ON PRONUNCIATION



*Students' errors on the use of L1 (Experimental and control group)(Pre-test)*

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## STUDENTS' ERRORS ON USE OF L1



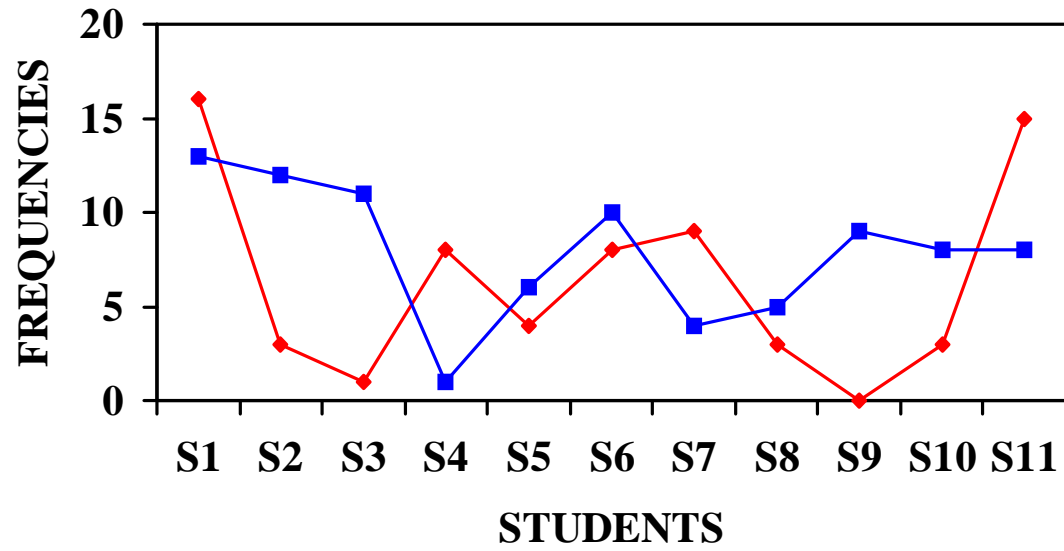
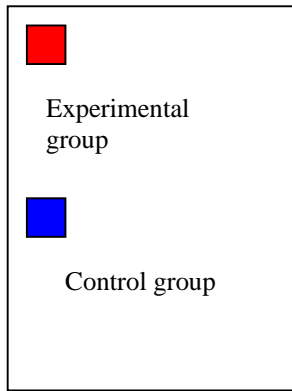
Polygon 4

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Students' errors on lexicon (Experimental and control group)(Pre-test)

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### STUDENTS' ERRORS ON LEXICON

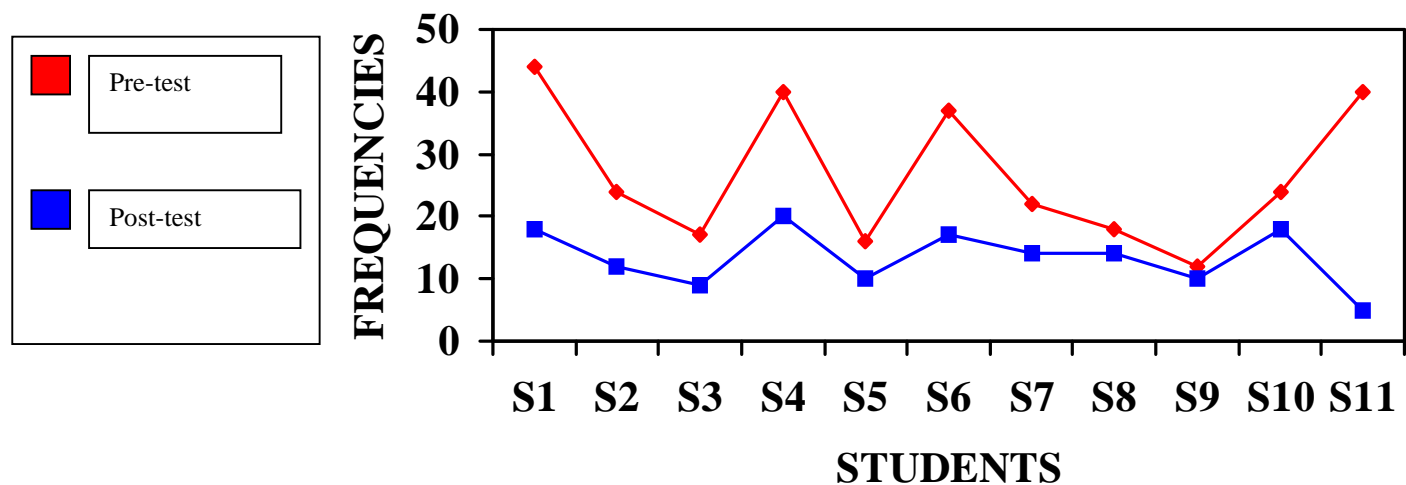


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Comparison among students' errors on grammar (Experimental group)(Pre-test and Post-test)

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## STUDENTS' ERRORS ON GRAMMAR

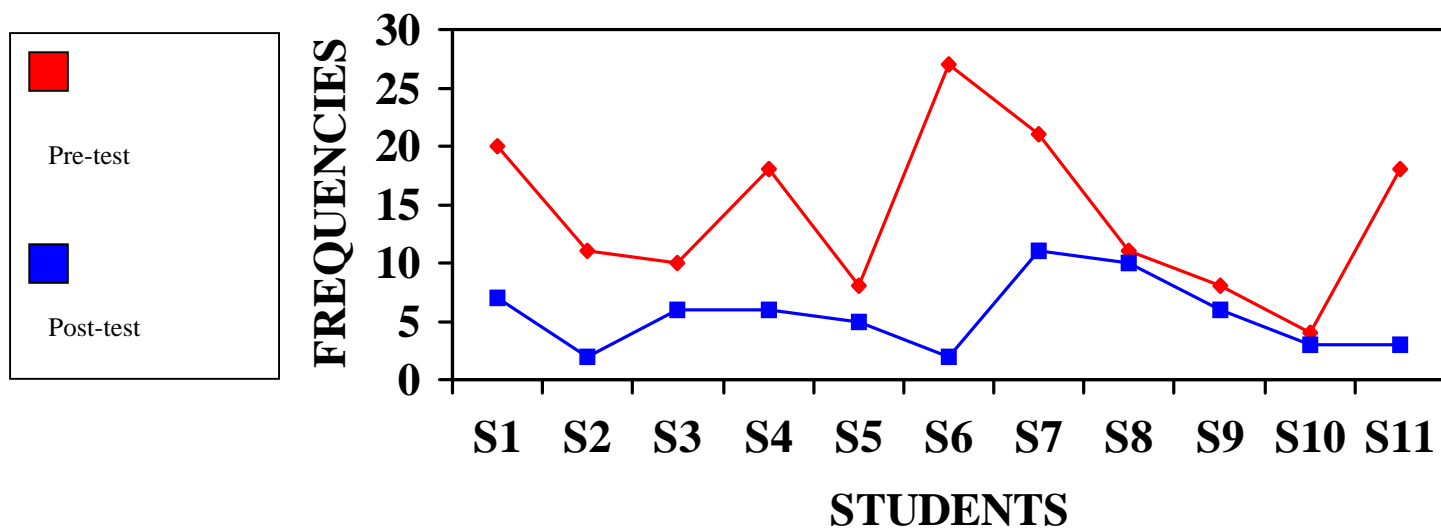


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*Comparison among students' errors on pronunciation (Experimental group)(Pre-test and Post-test)*

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## STUDENTS' ERRORS ON PRONUNCIATION

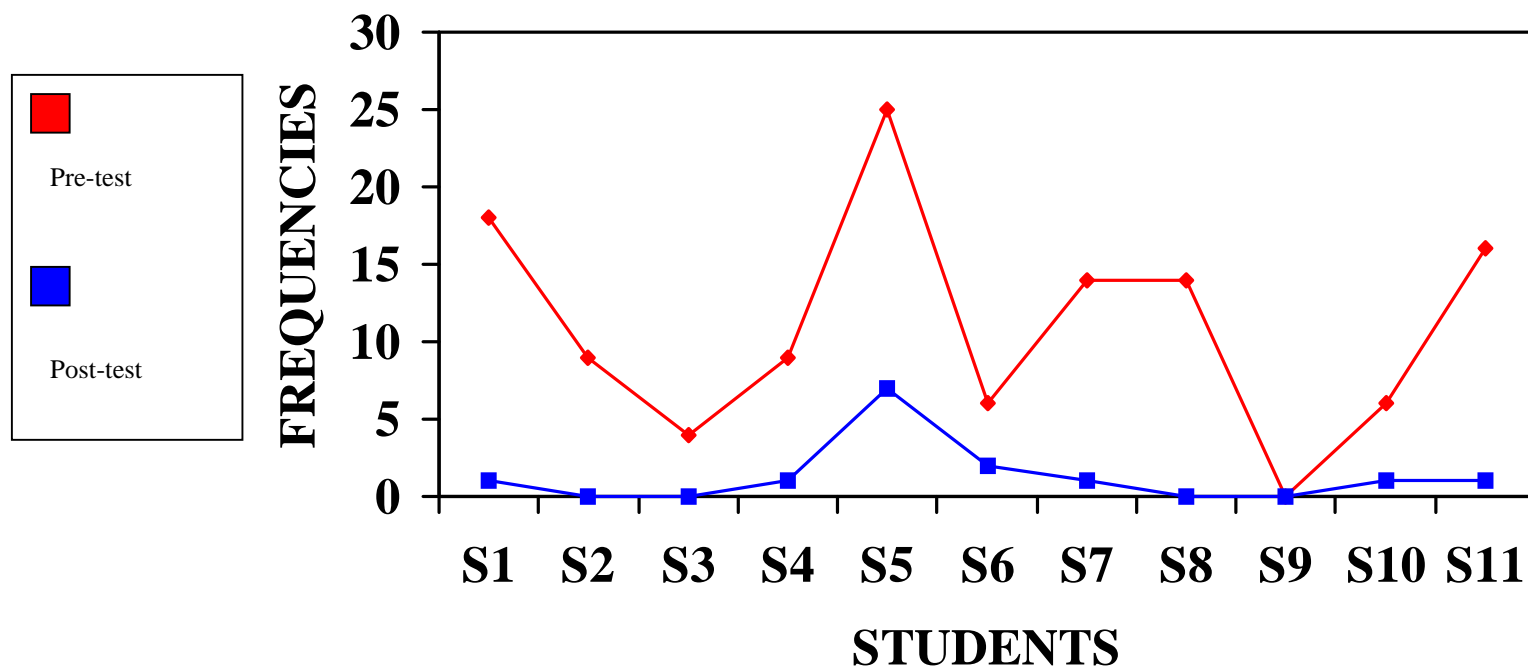


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*Comparison among students' errors on use of L1 (Experimental group)(Pre-test and Post-test)*

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## STUDENTS' ERRORS ON USE OF L1

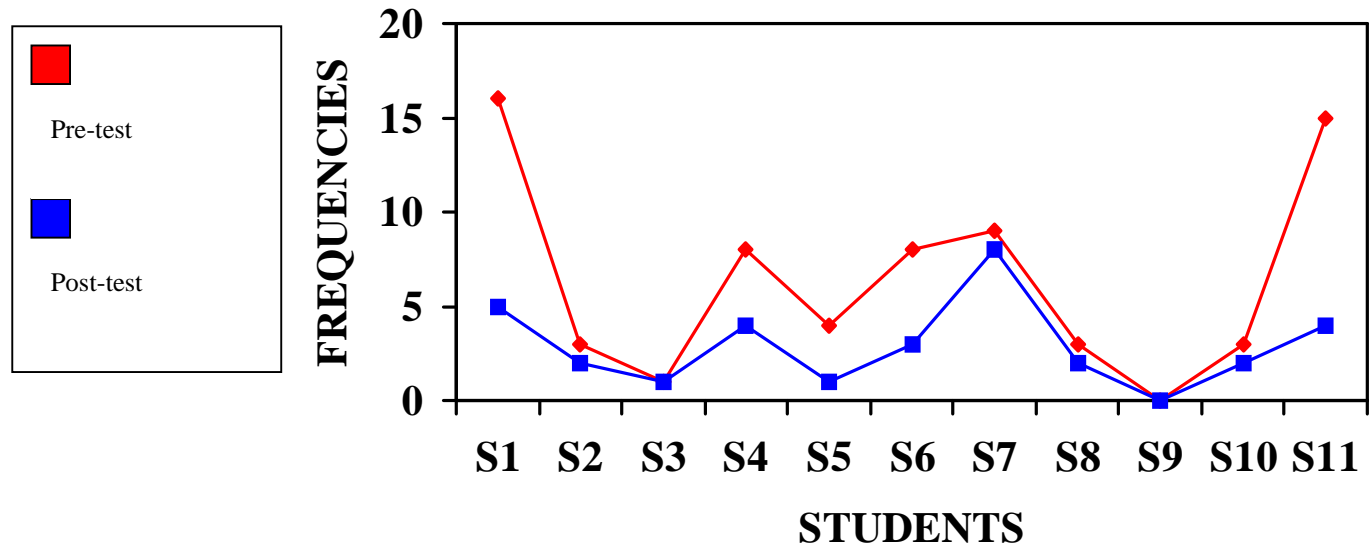


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Comparison among students' errors on lexicon (Experimental group)(Pre-test and Post-test)

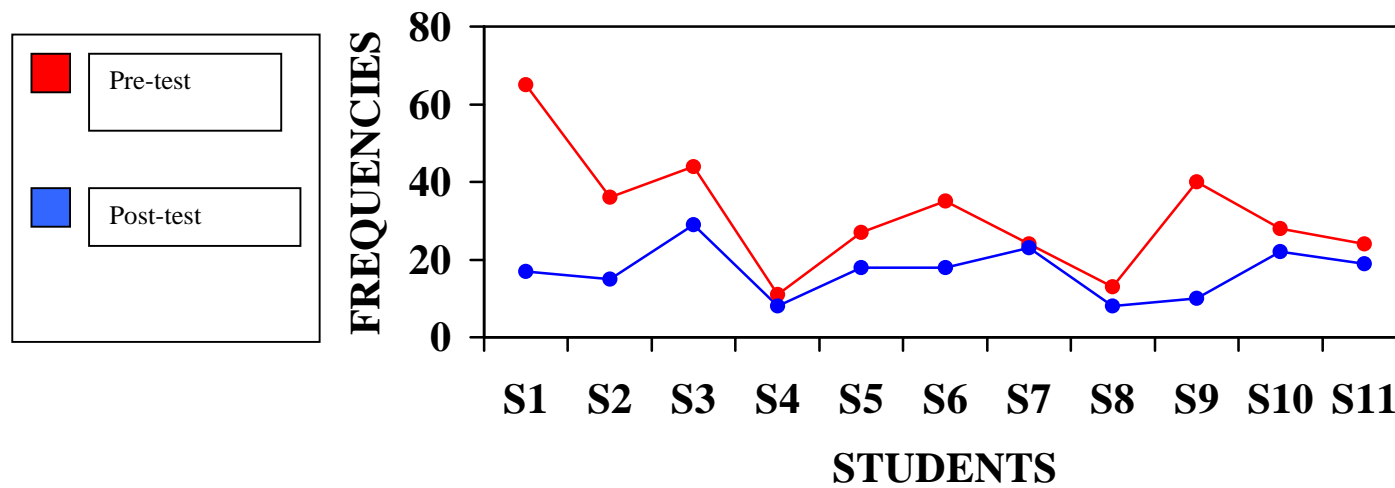
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### STUDENTS' ERRORS ON LEXICON





### STUDENTS' ERRORS ON GRAMMAR

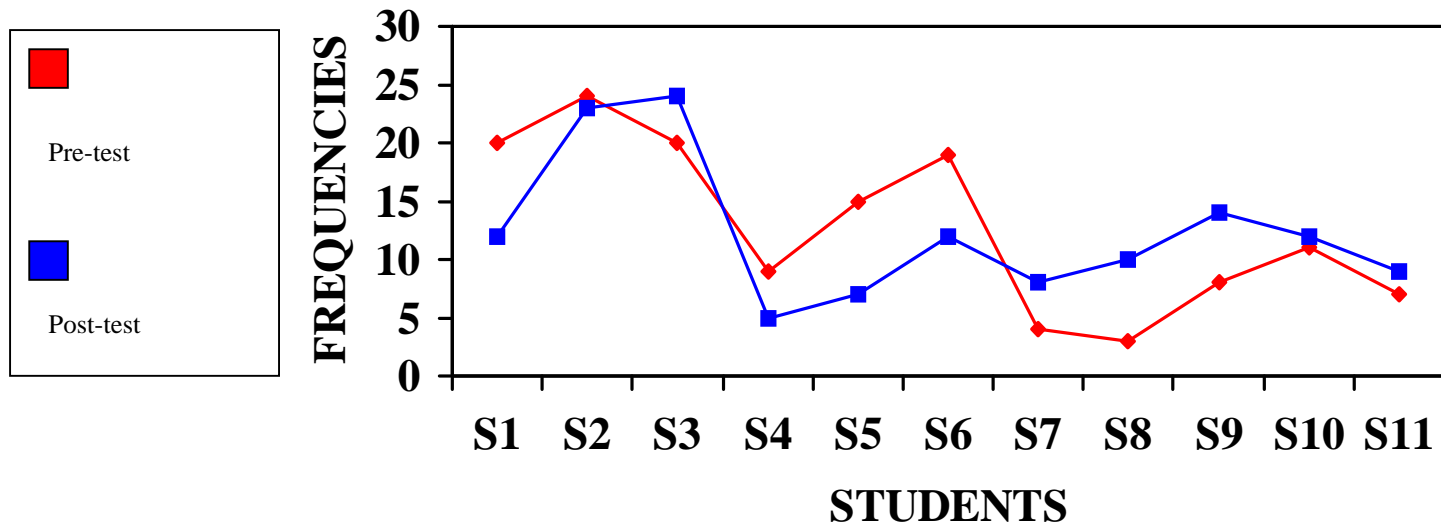


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Comparison among students' errors on pronunciation (Control group)(Pre-test and Post-test)

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## STUDENTS' ERRORS ON PRONUNCIATION

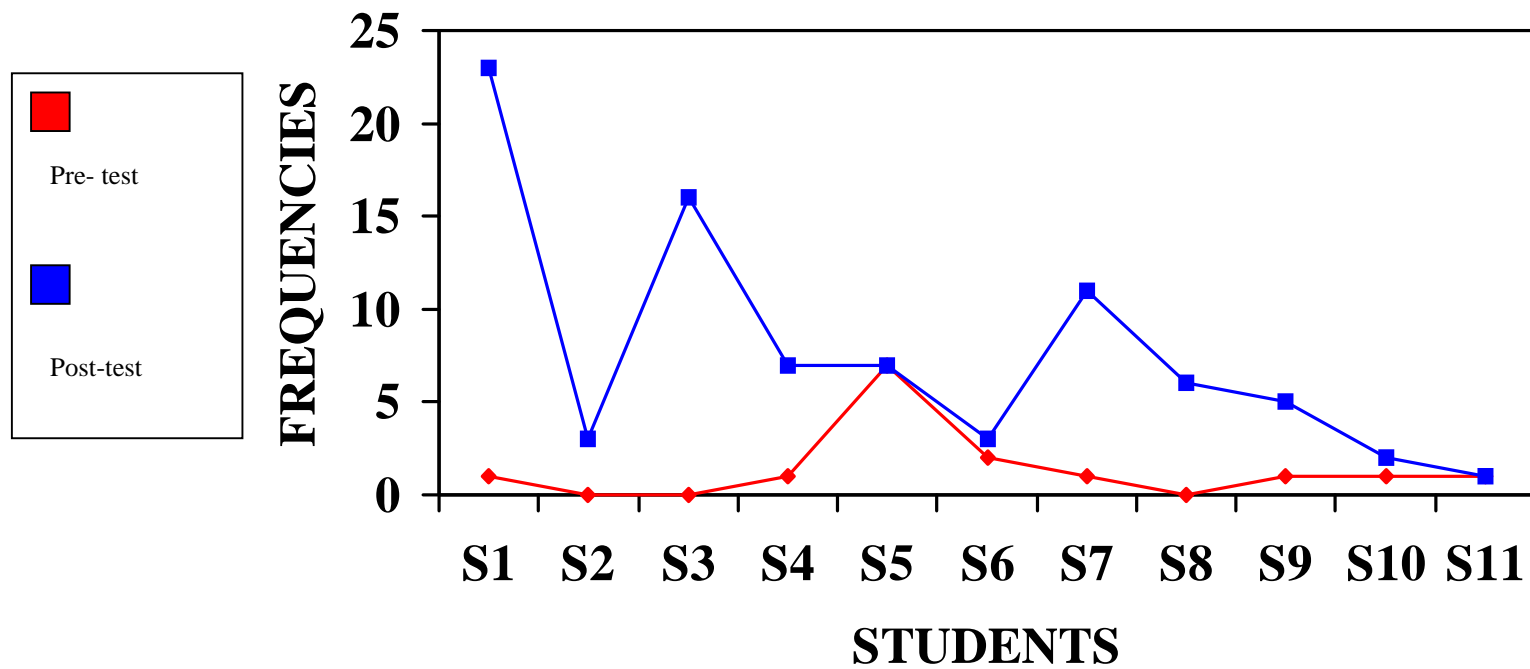


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*Comparison among students' errors on the use of L1 (Control group)(Pre-test and Post-test)*

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## STUDENTS' ERRORS ON USE OF L1

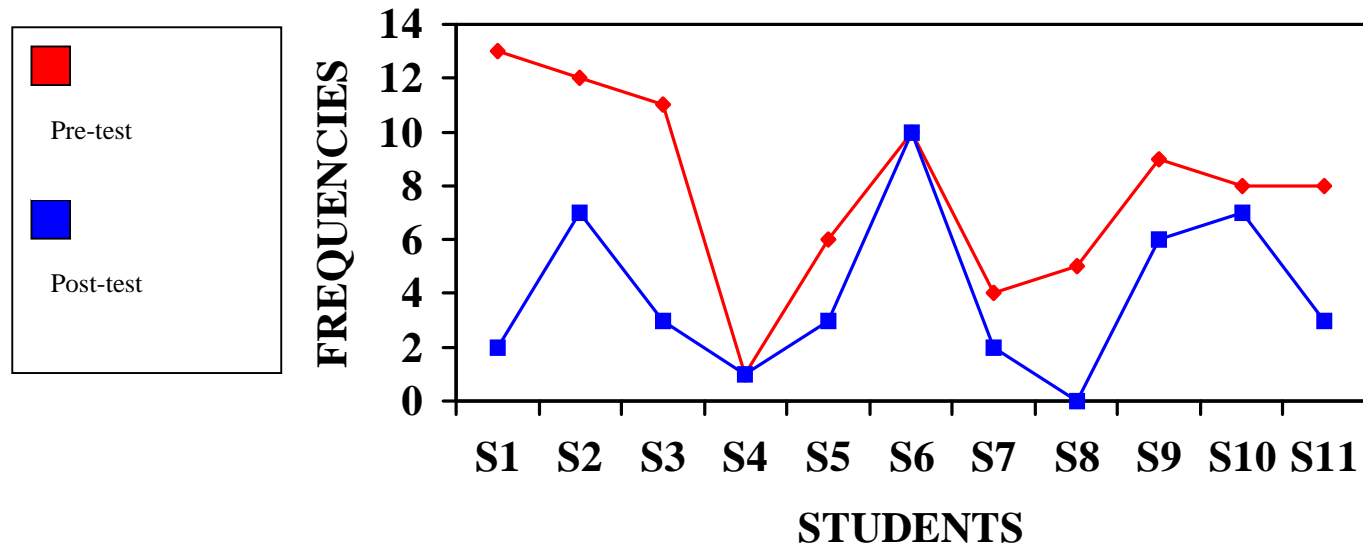


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*Comparison among students' errors on lexicon (Control group)(Pre-test and Post-test)*

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### STUDENTS' ERRORS ON LEXICON

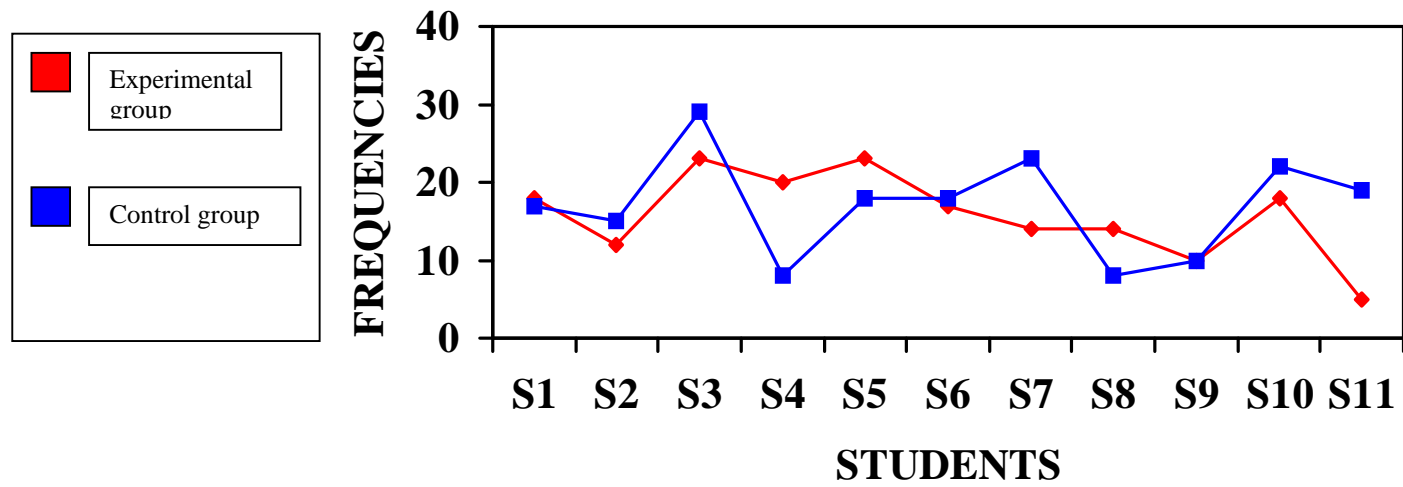


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Comparison among students' errors on grammar (Experimental and control group)(Post-test)

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### STUDENTS' ERRORS ON GRAMMAR

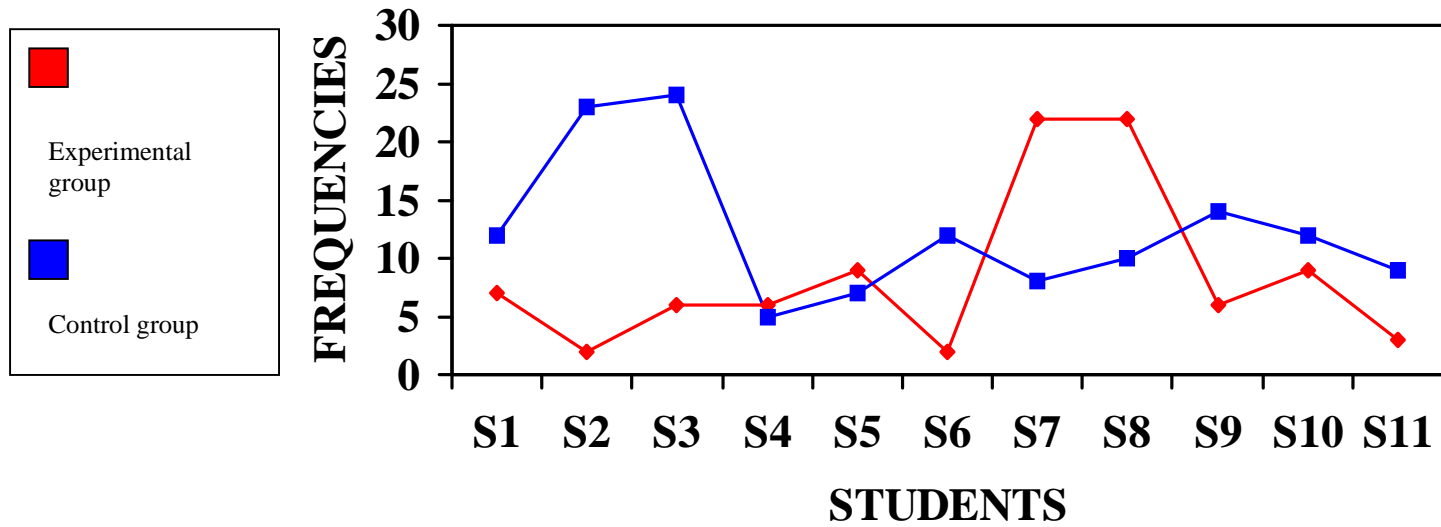


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*Comparison among students' errors on pronunciation (Experimental and control group)(Post-test)*

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## STUDENTS' ERRORS ON PRONUNCIATION

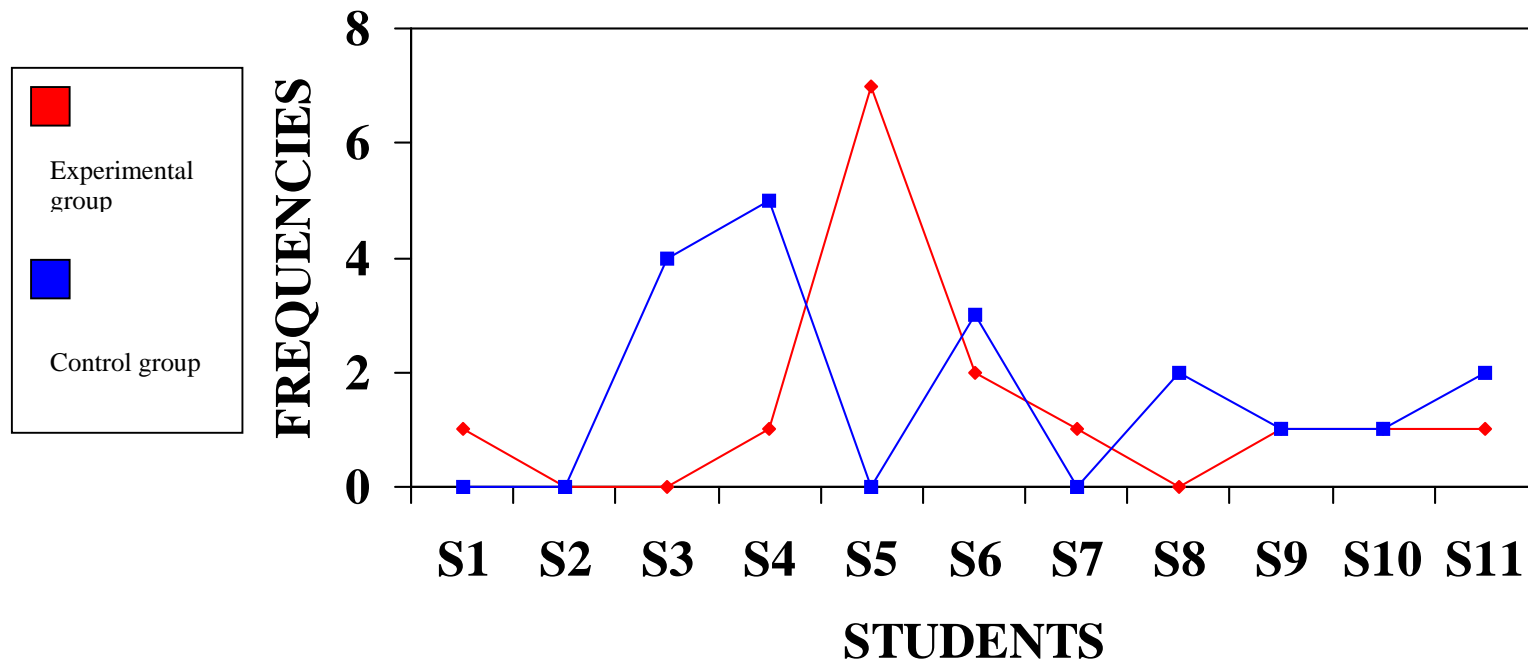


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*Comparison among students' errors on use of L1 (Experimental and control group)(Post-test)*

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## STUDENTS' ERRORS ON USE OF L1

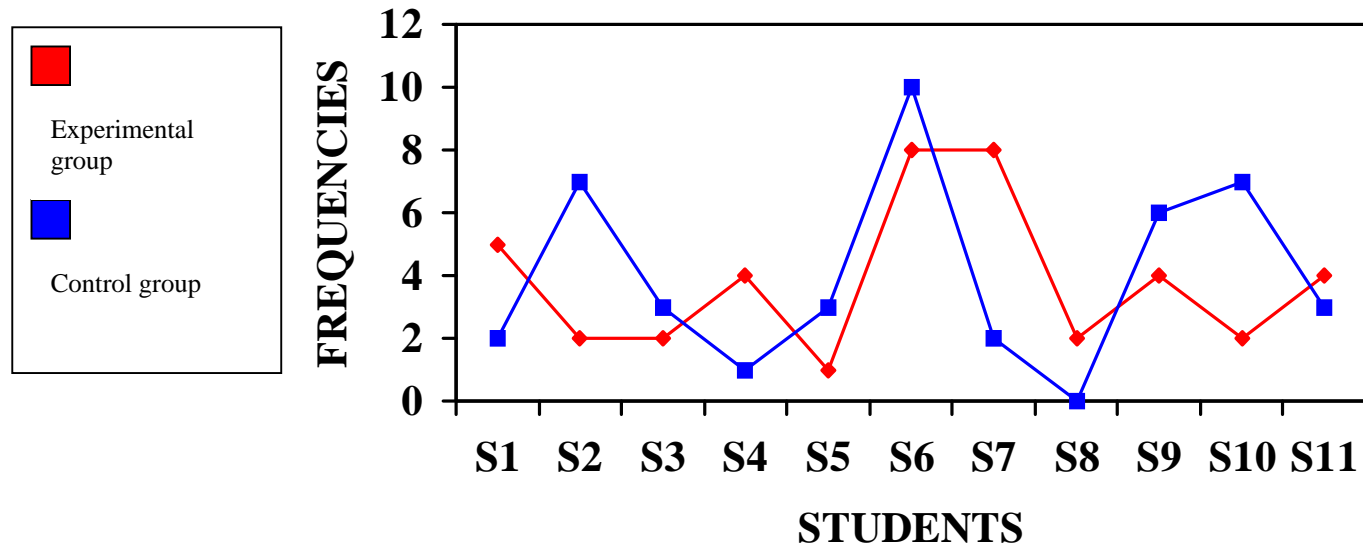


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*Comparison among students' errors on lexicon (Experimental and control group)(Post-test)*

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### STUDENTS' ERRORS ON LEXICON





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## *APPENDIX A: ORAL TEST*

These were the questions students had to answer orally. They were expected to answer exclusively in English, avoiding the use of Spanish utterances, and with complete and long answers.

1. How are you today?
2. What is your name?
3. How do you feel today?
4. How old are you?
5. What is your mother's name?
6. What is your teacher's name?
7. What is your phone number?
8. When is your birthday?
9. What is the name of your best friend?
10. Who do you live with?
11. Where do you live?
12. Spell the words:

*M O T H E R*

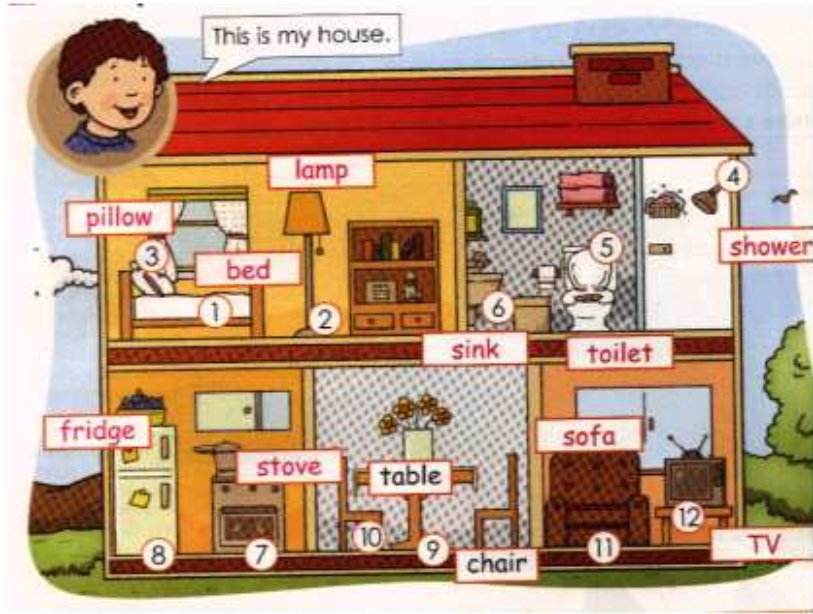
*F A T H E R*

*D A U G H T H E R*

*K N O W L E D G E*

*O T T O*

13. What objects can we find in this house?



14. What objects can we find in this classroom?



15. Tell me where these objects are using IN, ON, and UNDER

Where is this ruler?

Where is this tape recorder?

Where is this pencil?

Where is this book bag?

Where are these crayons?

16. How many chairs do you see here?

17. How many sisters do you have?

18. Do you have a pet?

19. What is its name?

20. When is your father's birthday?

21. When is your mother's birthday?

22. Answer the following questions with complete answers:

Is this a desk?

Is this a picture?

Are these some papers?

Are those some pencils?

Is this a book?

23. Tell me the dates

Valentine's Day

New year's Eve

Christmas Day

Independence Day

Halloween

24. Suppose this is your family. Tell me who they are.





## APPENDIX B

### DIALOGUE 1

T: Good afternoon class

S: Good afternoon teacher

T: How are you?

S: Fine, thank you

### DIALOGUE 2

A: Hello, Mike

B: Hi, Mark. Is everything Ok?

A: Sure, I'm Ok

B: See you later

### DIALOGUE 3

A: Hi, I'm Tom

B: Hello, Tom. I'm Karol and this is my friend Tina

A: Hi Tina, nice to meet you

B: Nice to meet you, too.

## *APPENDIX C*

### DIALOGUE 1

A: Good morning, what is your name?

B: My name is Sally

A: And what is her name?

B: Her name is Margaret

A: Nice to meet you

B: Nice to meet you, too.

A: How do you feel today?

B: I'm nervous

A: Don't worry...

### DIALOGUE 2

A: Hello, Otto. How are you?

B: I'm Ok

A: And... How is your family?

B: My family is all right

A: Remind me: What is your mother's name?

B: Her name is Sally

A: And what is your father's name?

B: His name is Philip

A: Do you have brothers?

B: Yes, I do.

A: How many brothers do you have?

B: I have three sisters and four brothers

A: What are their names?

B: Their names are: Tina, Alice and Mandy; and my brothers' names are: John, George,  
Bill and Rick.

A: It was nice to know about your family, bye.

B: Bye, see you soon.

### Exercise

Put in the correct order the next sentences to form a dialogue

- ( ) His name is Pit
- ( ) What is your name?
- ( ) Her name is Sofia
- ( ) Their names are: Julia, Kelly and Betty
- ( ) What is his name?
- ( ) My name is Daniel
- ( ) What are their names?
- ( ) What is her name?

## APPENDIX D

Reading: Dracula's biography

My name is Vladimir Dracula. I'm from the province of Transylvania in Rumania. I'm six hundred years old and I'm a vampire. My address is Vlado's castle. I don't have a telephone. My castle is a tourist attraction in my country.

Exercise

Answer right (R) or wrong (W)

1. Dracula's name is Vladimir ( )
2. Dracula's age is six hundred ( )
3. He has a telephone ( )
4. Dracula's castle is popular ( )

Remark

Work orally with the students the next questions

1. What is your name?
2. Where are you from?
3. How old are you?
4. What do you do?
5. What is your address?
6. What is your telephone number?

Exercise

Write a short paragraph answering the last questions. (Oral review)

## *APPENDIX E*

Reading: letter

Dear Carmen:

My name is David Lopez. I'm 17 years old and I live with my family. We live in an apartment in Brooklyn. Brooklyn is part of New York City. I send you photographs of me and my family with this letter.

Let me tell you a little about my family. I have one brother and two sisters. My brother goes to Elementary School, and my sisters go to Junior High School. My parents both work. My father sells cars and my mother is a bookkeeper. She works in a department store. I have a pet, too. It is a cat. Its name is Cookie. I love it.

How many brothers and sisters do you have? Please write and tell me about yourself. Also please, send me photographs of you and your family.

### *Exercise*

Answer the next questions

1. What is his name?
2. How old is he?
3. Where does he live?
4. Who does he live with?
5. What does his father do?
6. What does his mother do?
7. How many sisters does he have?
8. How many brothers does he have?

## *APPENDIX F*

### *Reading: The four Seasons*

In most of North America, there are four seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. Each season is about three months. The months of spring are March, April and May. Officially, spring begins about March the twenty second. The weather is usually cold and windy in March, but there are some warm days. There is a lot of rain in April, but May is usually sunny and beautiful. In May the plants and trees become green, and there are flowers of many colors.

Summer starts about June the twenty second and includes the months of June, July and August. In June, the school ends and vacation begins for many students. It is very hot in summer, so people often go on picnics and go to the beach.

After summer comes fall. It begins about September the twenty second. Vacation ends and school starts again in September. The weather is usually nice in September and October, not too hot and not too cold. The leaves change color and become yellow, red, and brown. The colors are very beautiful, but then the leaves fall from the trees.

Winter is cold in most parts of North America. It starts about December the twenty second. The winter months are December, January, and February. In many places it snows in winter, and people go skiing and ice-skating.

### *Exercise*

Answer the next questions

1. What are the four seasons in North America?
2. How is the weather in March?
3. How is the weather in April and May?
4. What are the summer months?
5. How is the weather in the summer?
6. What do people do on summer?
7. What are the seasons in your country?
8. How is the weather in each season?

*APPENDIX H*

Spelling exercise

Write the following words and its meaning

OPPORTUNITY

GRAND-PARENTS

TRANSYLVANIA

VOCABULARY

SHARPENER

LIVING ROOM

PHOTOGRAPHS

CHRISTMAS

INDEPENDENCE

INTERNATIONAL

TELEPHONE

BOOKKEEPER

WEATHER

NORTH AMERICA

ENGLISH



*APPENDIX I*

Ask and answer questions about the objects of the house according to the picture.

Example:

What is this?

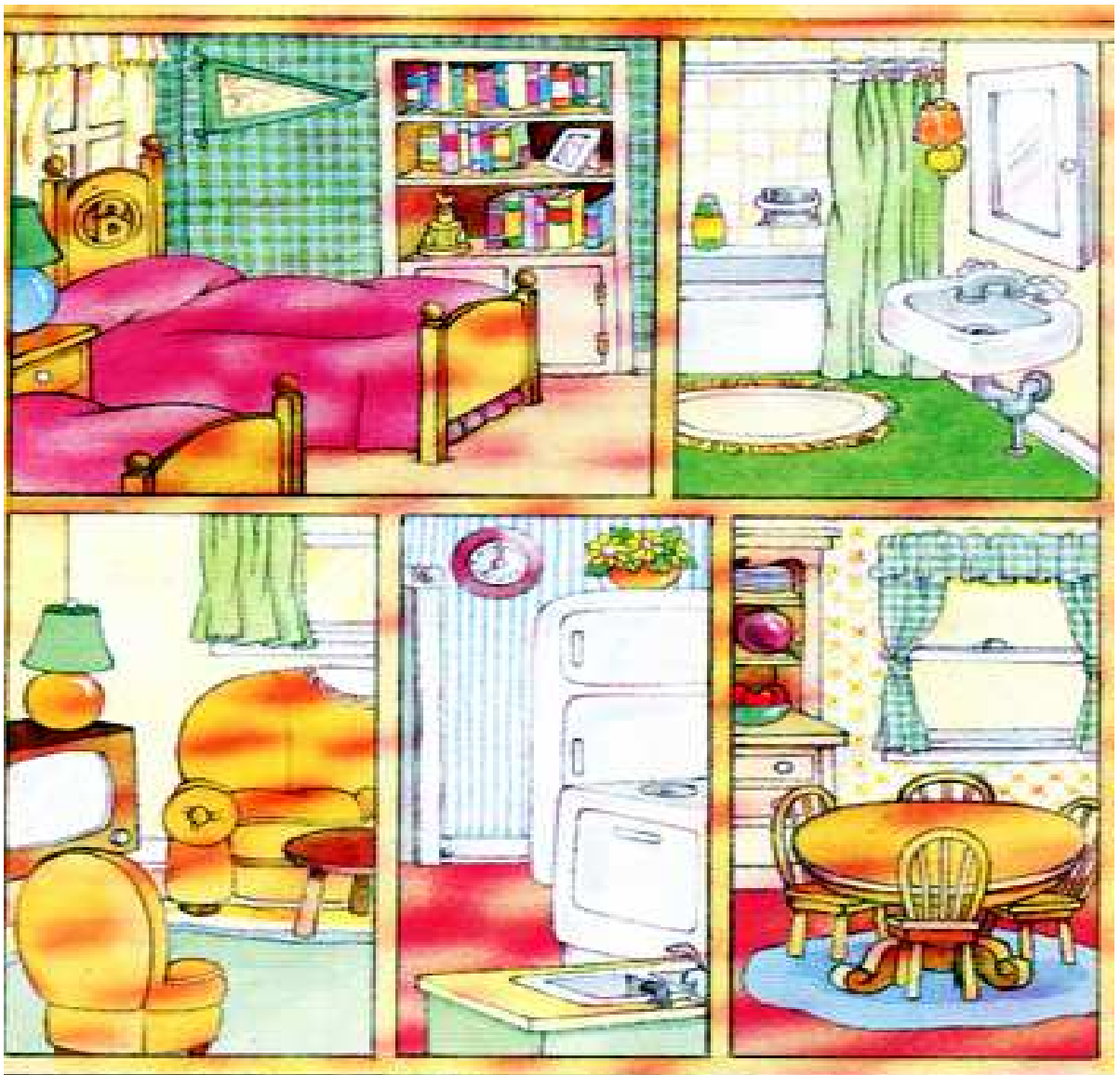
This is a sofa

Where are the chairs?

They are in the dining room

Where is this towel?

It is in the bathroom



APPENDIX J

Ask and answer questions about the location of the objects in the classroom according to the picture. Use in, on, under.

Example:

Where is the book?

The book is on the desk

Where are the crayons?

The crayons are under the desk



APPENDIX K

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_

WORKSHOP

1. Look the video, listen carefully and then complete the missing information.

Jackie: Follow me. Sit down. Sit on the seesaw. Follow me.

Ace: This way. Follow me. Stand up. Sit down. Stand up. Stretch. Breathe.  
Touch your feet. Touch your face. Now, shake one, two, three, four, five,  
six, seven, eight.

Joker: Hi.

Jackie: \_\_\_\_\_

Joker: Hi.

Queen: Hi. \_\_\_\_\_

Jackie: \_\_\_\_\_. This is Polly.

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_ Polly.

Jackie: \_\_\_\_\_

Queen: \_\_\_\_\_ Queen. \_\_\_\_\_ Joker.

Joker: Catch. Throw me the ball.

Jackie: Nice \_\_\_\_\_

Polly: \_\_\_\_\_ you.

Joker: And \_\_\_\_\_ Ace.

Ace: \_\_\_\_\_ We are the pack.

Jackie: The pack?

2. Order the following sentences according to the video.

(     )     Minnie:     What is his name?

(     )     Max:         what is her name?

(     )     Minnie:     Max and I are friends

(     )     Max:         His name is Joker.

(     )     Max:         His name is Ace. They are friends.

(     )     Minnie:     Her name is Queen. What is his name?

3. Unscramble the next words

Y R A U N A J

C R A H M

N E J U

A L I R P

B R E C O O T

S T U G A U

4. Write the members of the family on the photograph



5. Answer the following questions

How are you? \_\_\_\_\_

What's your name? \_\_\_\_\_

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

How many sisters do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

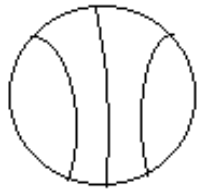
How many brothers do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you live with? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you feel? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Watch the video and the drawings. Answer or ask depending on the case.



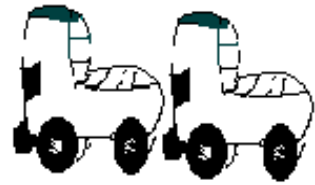
What is this?

\_\_\_\_\_



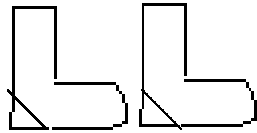
\_\_\_\_\_?

This is a balloon.



\_\_\_\_\_?

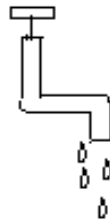
They are skates.



\_\_\_\_\_?

They are my dirty

Socks.



What is this?

\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_?

This is a fish.

7. Write the following dates

DAY      MONTH

03          02      \_\_\_\_\_

12          08      \_\_\_\_\_

01          01      \_\_\_\_\_

25          12      \_\_\_\_\_

02          03      \_\_\_\_\_

17          06      \_\_\_\_\_

20          09      \_\_\_\_\_

8. Complete the chart with the objects around the house.



<i>BEDROOM</i>		<i>KITCHEN</i>		<i>BATHROOM</i>
Bed		Spoon		
				Toilet
	Sofa			
			Table	

9. Read and draw

A kite is on the bed

A ball is in the dresser

A cat is behind the door

A guitar is under the window

