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**UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO**

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**División de Estudios Internacionales y  
Humanidades**

**SUPPLEMENTING ENGLISH COURSEBOOKS: A  
KEY TO EXPLOITING VOCABULARY IN THE EFL  
CLASSROOM**

**TESIS RECEPCIONAL**  
Que para Obtener el Grado de  
*Licenciado en Lengua Inglesa*

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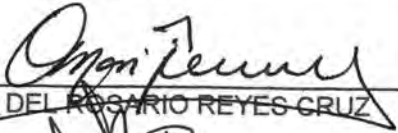
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*Quiero agradecer a Dios por darme la vida, salud y por permitirme tener una hermosa familia.*

*A mis padres que me dieron todo su apoyo y comprensión a lo largo de mi carrera.*

*Al Lic. Alfredo Marín Marín quien a pesar de su gran carga de trabajo siempre estuvo cerca de Carminia y de mí cuando lo necesitamos. Así como también a la M.C Rosario Reyes Cruz quien nos ayudó en todo momento.*

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# "SUPPLEMENTING ENGLISH COURSEBOOKS: A KEY TO EXPLOITING VOCABULARY IN THE EFL CLASSROOM"

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## Abstract

Everyday, a bigger number of students decide to embrace the English Language Major at the University of Quintana Roo. This major's main objective is the formation of professionals in English Language Teaching, with an excellent fluency of English Language and its 4 basic skills. However, as students and teachers, we have noticed that vocabulary has been given little attention, despite its importance in reaching language's main goal of communication. Therefore, we decided to do this research to find effective ways to improve vocabulary teaching among EFL students.

A deep revision and exploration of bibliography suggested that the use of supplementary vocabulary activities could be a good way to enhance vocabulary teaching.

This thesis consisted of a quasi-experimental research carried out among students of a two-month summer course in the PUI program of English at UQROO. Through this experiment we examined the possible correlation between the use of supplementary vocabulary activities and the degree of language learning among students. To do so, we designed vocabulary activities and adapted existing ones to apply them in an EFL classroom which we denominated our experimental group. The activities were applied in the experimental group during a whole summer course. At the end of the course students' final grades in vocabulary were contrasted with those of a control group we had previously selected for internal validation purposes. Our hypothesis was that the correct application of supplementary vocabulary activities increased EFL students lexical level. The results of our research proved that our hypothesis was correct and established a clear guideline for teachers to start incorporating supplementary activities to their curricula in order to enhance EFL students' language learning process.

## Introduction

With the greater number of young people entering the English Language Major at the University of Quintana Roo, there is a need for research into the process underlying performance in English as a Foreign Language. Such research can provide guidance for teacher education, instructional materials, and curriculum development.

Key to English performance is vocabulary teaching, which has been historically neglected. In the past “specialists in methodology feared students would make mistakes in sentence construction if too many words were learnt before the basic grammar had been mastered. Therefore, teachers were led to believe it was best not to teach much vocabulary”<sup>1</sup>

“However, by the end of the 70’s, vocabulary teaching was coming of age. Its place within language teaching had been reasserted, insights from lexical semantics had been brought to bear in the incorporation of notions such as sense-relations and collocation into the teaching materials”<sup>2</sup>. The learner had been brought center staged, and the lexicon was beginning to be seen as a resource for the needs of learner and for strategic use in the gaining of communicative objectives.

In this context, most textbooks used in the EFL classroom contain vocabulary sections that are supposed to contribute to students’ vocabulary building. However, the emphasis is placed on the memorization of definitions and very little time is given to anything else. The problem is old. In the past, vocabulary had been neglected in programs for teachers. These programs gave little attention to techniques for helping students to learn vocabulary. The main focus was always on pronunciation and grammar. Some books still have this approach

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<sup>1</sup> French V. (1983) *Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary*. Oxford: OUP p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cowie, A.P. (1978) *Vocabulary exercises within an individualized study programme*. London: The British Council, p. 33-44



although vocabulary has proved to be an effective tool to achieve language's most important goal: communication.

According to Marlon Davis, " Students will not improve their vocabulary skills if they are simply memorizing definitions. Powerful and meaningful vocabulary instruction should integrate new vocabulary words with other knowledge. It should enable students to learn new words and relate them to different contexts and experiences".<sup>3</sup>

When vocabulary activities in the textbook fail to promote the improvement of vocabulary level effectively, supplementing activities can be used to counterbalance these deficiencies. However, it is very difficult to find supplementary books specially designed to follow the syllabus of specific books. That is why most of the times these supplementing activities have to be designed from zero or adapted from existing ones.

The main objective of this research is to examine the possible relations between the correct application of supplementary vocabulary activities and the students' vocabulary learning. This will be done through a quasi-experimental research on an experimental group. Internal validity of this study will be given by the utilization of a control group. For practical reasons, we have narrowed our field of work to students of a two-month summer course in the PUI program of English at UQROO. The textbook used in the course is *Interchange Intro*, designed for a beginner level. Since there is not a supplementary book containing techniques to teach vocabulary, specific for the book, we compiled a set of vocabulary teaching techniques, adapted from existing techniques or originally designed. All of these activities were created following the current language learning principles.

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<sup>3</sup> Davis, M. (n.d. / 2000). *Vocabulary Instruction: A New Approach to Learning*. [WWW document]. URL <http://learnweb.harvard.edu/2821/v6.cfm>

This work is intended to give EFL teachers a guideline to introduce supplementing activities to its curricula. We do not intend students only learn words but also acquire their meaning when teachers use supplementary activities in the classroom. Likewise, we do not expect the class to become one of vocabulary but an integration of the techniques into the class. Although restricted to the UQROO context for technical reasons, we assume that the findings may be reliable and valid for other educational contexts.

The fact we narrowed this study to the UQROO context, specifically to beginner level summer course whose coursebook is *Interchange Intro*, allowed us to provide supplementary vocabulary teaching activities specially designed to support those in the book and eventually increase the students' lexicon.

Thus we expect to support our hypothesis, which has been stated as follows: The correct application of supplementary activities increases the lexical level of beginner students at UQROO and whose coursebook is *Interchange Intro*. That is, there is a relationship between the incorporation of vocabulary activities and the lexical level attained.

It is important to note that in this research, technique will be referred to as "all the activities carried out in the classroom. Examples of techniques used in particular methods are drills, dialogues, role-plays, sentence completion, etc."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, by activities we mean those events carried out in the classroom and which are designed with a specific purpose.

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<sup>4</sup> Richards, J. et al. (1993). *Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics*. England: Longman. p. 200

## Description of the Chapters

Chapter one will begin by introducing the reader into the main topic of this thesis, that is, vocabulary. First, we will give a brief description of vocabulary from different perspectives. We will define what we commonly know as a word. We will take a look at the different stages of knowing a word, according to several researchers. We will revise the different types of meanings a word can have. Finally we will review the different approaches for teaching and learning vocabulary and the pedagogical basis of these approaches.

Chapter two will focus on the experiment. We will describe all the elements that intervened in the experiment, including the coursebook, the study subjects, the supplementary activities used in the experimental group and the measure instruments. We will describe in detail what the experiment consisted of.

Chapter three will display and analyze in detail data collected through the experiment.

At the end the main objective of this work will be assessed and conclusions will be drawn, based on the previous chapters.

# CHAPTER 1. Exploring Vocabulary

As stated before, vocabulary has gained importance in current language teaching. Therefore, in this chapter vocabulary will be fully described from different perspectives. Firstly, starting with the meaning of what is commonly known as "word" or, more technically, a "lexical item". Secondly, we will see the different stages of "knowing a word". Afterwards, we will take a look at the two types of meanings a word has, in other words, the affective meaning and the conceptual meaning of a word. In addition, a review of ways of teaching and learning vocabulary will be made. Finally, the role of vocabulary in the different teaching approaches will be assessed.

## 1.1 What is a word?

If we are to work on vocabulary, then we need to know and understand its basic element: *the word*. Many students do not really know what a word is, even though they always use many of them. According to the Webster's Dictionary, "a word is a sound or a combination of sounds, or its representation in writing or printing that symbolizes and communicates a meaning and may consist of a single morpheme or of a combination of morphemes."<sup>5</sup>

According to Carter and McCarthy, "words are freestanding units which are composed of meaningful "bits" of language. Much of how we recognize words is on intuitive basis and

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<sup>5</sup> Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary. (1994). US. The Riverside Publishing Company. p. 1326-27

we shall assume that this sort of intuition is a reliable basis for knowing what we mean when we talk of words".<sup>6</sup>

The term **word** is also used as a *lexical item*, or a unit of meaning. Thus, an idiom is considered one word. The term 'word' must also be understood as a unit that consist of more than one word called **lexical phrase**. According to Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992)<sup>7</sup>, a **lexical phrase** is a "chunk" of language of varying length with an idiomatically determined meaning. Some studies have proved that vocabulary is not only stored as individual morphemes but also as whole chunks of speech.

The set of words that a person acquires and uses is what we call **vocabulary or Lexical System**. It is important to state that not all the people use the same number of words; this depends on their social and educational level. An EFL student of a university level must use a quite large number of words in order to express meanings and ideas. To reach this level teachers should be aware that teaching vocabulary would be an important part of the students' English instruction.

The final objective of EFL vocabulary instruction is that the student can apply it correctly, at the right moment whether he is talking or writing. This also implies that the student understands it in a conversation and finally is able to get the message and place himself into the same context than the speaker.

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<sup>6</sup> Carter, R. And McCarthy, M. (1988) *Vocabulary and Language Teaching*. New York: Longman, p. 18

<sup>7</sup> Nattinger, J. & DeCarrico, J. (1992) *Lexical Phrases and Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 1

## 1.2 Knowing a word

Before continuing, it seems necessary to explain the meaning of "knowing" or "learning" words in EFL. The usual distinction has been made between active knowledge (knowing how to use the word) and passive knowledge (understanding the meaning of the word). Nation refers to this kind of knowing a word as "receptive and productive knowledge".<sup>8</sup> However, the passive/active dichotomy has currently been rejected as even 'passive vocabulary' involves some kinds of active processes.

**Receptive knowledge** of a word also involves having an expectation of what grammatical pattern the word will occur in. On the other hand, **Productive knowledge** includes not only the Receptive knowledge but also an extension of it. It involves knowing how to pronounce the word, how to write and spell it, how to use it in correct grammatical patterns along with the words it usually collocates with, the use of a word in suitable situations, and being able to think of suitable substitutes for the word if there are any.

More sophisticated distinctions among different types of knowledge of words are made by several authors. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the work of Paribakht and Wesche (1997)<sup>9</sup> who list five different stages or types of knowledge of words:

1. The word is not familiar at all.
2. The word is familiar but its meaning is not known.
3. The meaning is known - the student can supply a correct synonym.
4. The word is used with semantic appropriateness in a sentence.
5. The word is used with semantic appropriateness plus grammatical accuracy in a sentence.

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<sup>8</sup> Nation, I.S.P. (1990) *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle, p. 30

<sup>9</sup> Paribakht, T.S. & Wesche, M. (1997). *Vocabulary enhancement activities and reading for meaning in second language vocabulary acquisition*. In Coady J. & Huckin, T. (Eds.), 174-200.

As can be seen, stage '3' is parallel to "passive knowledge", and as such, is not sufficient for EFL's objective of communication.

Furthermore, Leung and Pikulski (1990)<sup>10</sup> offer another categorization of word knowledge on a 0-3 scale, which they use for testing recognition of words:

- 0= no recognition of the word meaning.
- 1= a general, but vague, sense of the word meaning.
- 2= a good sense of the meaning of the word but not the best meaning.
- 3= the most appropriate meaning of the word.

This categorization is still vague for a teacher because there are more stages that students have to face in order to discover the meaning of a word and its correct use.

Grabe and Stoller (1997)<sup>11</sup> suggest another type of stratification of word knowledge in six stages:

1. Words that are totally unfamiliar.
2. Words where a degree of familiarity can be sensed.
3. Words that must have been in the environment.
4. Words that were familiar and understandable.
5. Words that were familiar and understandable but which presented a need for better, more accurate meanings.
6. Words that had multiple meanings and the most appropriate meaning could be accessed at the time of reading.

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<sup>10</sup> Leung, C.B. & Pikulski, J.J. (1990). *Incidental learning of word meanings by kindergarten and first-grade children through repeated read aloud events*. New York: Prentice Hall.

<sup>11</sup> Grabe, W. & Stoller, F.L. (1997). *Reading and vocabulary development in a second language: a case study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 98-122.

This stratification is more precise because stages specify the steps that students have to pass through in order to get the meaning. The teacher can identify in which stage the students are and this way help them to skip from passive to active knowledge.

Moreover, there are two different ways to get to know a word: by incidental learning and intentional learning. In connection with word learning, a distinction is commonly drawn between incidental and intentional learning. Unless one narrowly defines incidental learning as excluding any conscious attention to the words being learned, the two learning modes are not always easy to differentiate and show a considerable overlap, not unlike the acquisition/learning dichotomy suggested by Krashen. In this paper, intentional learning will be used to refer to any learning activity the learner undertakes with the intention of gaining new knowledge. As such it differs from incidental learning where there is no such intention. From a teaching perspective, however, the distinction is still useful in a discussion on the optimal way of presenting new L2 words in instructional contexts.

Thus, it can be seen that 'knowing words' is a subjective concept that depends on the learner's purposes, standards, situation (extensive reading, testing, active usage etc.), teacher or tester's requirements and so on. Still, many researchers claim that incidental vocabulary learning is less efficient in acquiring word knowledge, whatever that is, than intentional learning. Watanabe (1997)<sup>12</sup> claims that "although incidental learning of vocabulary through context is possible, it is not always efficient".

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<sup>12</sup> Watanabe, Y. (1997). *Input, intake and retention: Effects of increased learning of foreign language vocabulary*. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 19, 287-301.



Hulstijn, Hollander and Greidanus (1996)<sup>13</sup> list several reasons for this inefficient learning. These reasons stem from:

1. The readers' false belief that they know the words.
2. The readers' decision to ignore the words.
3. The readers' ignorance of the connection between the form of a new word and the meaning contained in the context.
4. The readers' inability to infer a word from context.
5. The non-recurrence of new words (i.e., a single encounter of words).

Intentional and Incidental Learning are represented by different kinds of classroom activities. **Input** activities refer to those activities in which students receive and store words (receptive knowledge). The lexical system of EFL students receives a very small percentage of words from this type of activities. **Output** activities refer to those activities in which students are intentionally exposed to use this knowledge in a real situation (productive knowledge).

Some authors as Jeremy Harmer consider that a word that has been 'active' through constant use may slip back into the 'passive' store if it is not used or vice-versa<sup>14</sup>. It is important to say that the EFL students do not happen to know a word only within the classroom context. Several words are known because students "wanted" to use them or "needed" to use them. They find these words on TV commercials, programs, magazines and songs. The words represent a way of communication and they take some of their time to look up them at the dictionary and this process helps to know words. Typically, the words that students learn by necessity become part of their active vocabulary.

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<sup>13</sup> Hulstijn, J.H., Hollander, M. & Greidanu, S.T. (1996). *Incidental vocabulary learning by advanced foreign language students: The influence of marginal glosses, dictionary use, and recurrence of unknown words*. *The Modern Language Journal* 80,3, 327-339.

<sup>14</sup> Harmer, J. (1991) *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. London: Longman, p. 159

Therefore, EFL instruction's main objective, that is communication, requires an active knowledge of a word. As Stevick states, "Students must develop abilities when using a word, for instance ability to speak in a way that ease "coherent", complex and dense, ability to say the right thing at the right time, ability to control aesthetic and other nuances of the language and overall ability to use the language well"<sup>15</sup>.

To sum up, vocabulary plays an important role as one of the elements that make up the communication process. These elements are a speaker, a hearer and a message in which words or lexical phrases are included.

### 1.3 Affective meaning versus conceptual meaning

The most important aspect of vocabulary is meaning. When students know what a word means, they are able to express what they intend to without being afraid of making a mistake or misusing a word. In fact, a wrong word would express an undesired message and this is most students' major fear: not being able to reach communication. One of the main obstacles a student faces when trying to correctly use a word is the fact that words have two kinds of meaning: a Conceptual meaning (Denotation) and an Affective Meaning (Connotation).

**Denotation or Conceptual Meaning** is the literal meaning of a word/the stated definition in the dictionary. **Connotation or Affective Meaning** is referred to as the additional implied meanings that a word may take on. For example: crowd, mob, gang, audience, congregation, or class. Each of these words has the same basic meaning: "An

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<sup>15</sup> Stevick, W. (1996) *Memory, Meaning and Method*. Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle, p. 152

assembled group of people," but each one has a different shade of meaning. Crowd suggests a disorganized, large group. Audience, on the other hand, suggests a quiet controlled group.

Teachers should be aware that a lot of time has to be spent before students manage the correct meaning of a given word. This time, however, will be well spent if students accurately communicate the message they are intended to.

## 1.4 How vocabulary is learned.

If we are going to talk about learning strategies we should mention its basic term, *strategy*, this term imply some characteristics as: planning, competition, conscious manipulation, and movement toward a goal. A common definition is mentioned by Rebecca Oxford who states that "learning strategies are operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information"<sup>16</sup> These strategies are important because they become important tools for active and self-involvement, which are essential to develop communicative competence.

Most words in first language acquisition are learned incidentally in an increasing way because the native speaker comes across them frequently in a wide range of contexts. In a short space of time, a large number of words are thus learned and this lexical repertoire then forms the basis for learning other new words. In the case of foreign language acquisition in instructional contexts, this process is virtually impossible to simulate. The exposure to new words is considerably less intensive and varied. Undoubtedly, a limited number of high frequency words can be learned incidentally, but that will certainly not be possible for the

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<sup>16</sup> Oxford, R. (1990) *Language Learning Strategies*. Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle, p. 8

much larger number of less frequent words that must subsequently be learned if one wishes to speak of functional proficiency.

If in instructional L2 situations incidental acquisition of a large vocabulary of lower frequency words through exposure to authentic L2 texts is hardly possible. It follows that efficient acquisition of new vocabulary requires a conscious effort from the learner. There seems to be no viable alternative to intentional learning of a large number of words with the help of authentic L2 material that has been selected (or edited) specifically for this purpose. The limited time available for this huge learning effort makes it imperative that the acquisition process be, as it were, accelerated. This requires a careful analysis of what should be learned and how it should be learned or, in other words, which words should be selected for learning (following the syllabus of the course) and how they should be presented (language learning theories).

We consider that techniques are the key to creating and recreating daily life situations in which students can be placed and forced unconsciously, to interact among them and to acquire, with the teacher's help, the correct words in order to reach comprehensibility.

In general, students learn vocabulary in different ways. Each student has his own rudimentary strategies, which they developed through personal preferences and experiences. However, there is a set of strategies which have been extensively documented and tested. Below, there is a brief description of each one.

"Strategies can be classified into **direct strategies** and **indirect strategies**".<sup>17</sup> Direct strategies directly involve the target language, which they mentally process. There are three

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 37.

types of **direct strategies**: Memory, Cognitive and Compensation strategies. Each one has a different purpose, which will be described below.

**Memory strategies**, also called *mnemonics*, help students store and retrieve new information by associating it with imagery. For instance, a set of words can be easily remembered if they are associated with the object they represent. The arrangements and associations must be personally meaningful to the learner and the material to be reviewed must have significance. This type of strategies has great importance in the learning process because remembering a large amount of vocabulary is necessary to achieve fluency, is always a serious problem for students. Central to Memory Strategies is the concept of *Meaning*.

**Cognitive Strategies**, on the other hand, enable students to produce and learn new language through practical reasoning exercises such as summarizing, analysis and in general everything that involves student participation. Role plays, repetitions and games are just some of the cognitive strategies that can be found in the classroom. These are the most popular strategies among learners. However, many times just a few of the students really participate while the rest remains idle. The teacher must promote participation among all students.

**Compensation Strategies** are those strategies students use to make up (compensate) their gaps in grammar and vocabulary. Among common compensation strategies are guessing the meaning, changing to the mother tongue, using mime, asking for help, etc. The main purpose is to get the message across no matter the lack of knowledge. Compensation strategies are used not only in production, but for reception (i. e. reading and listening) too. When a student misses the meaning of a phrase in a text or a piece of speech when listening to a speaker, compensation strategies allow him/her to get the message.

Similarly, **Indirect Strategies** are divided into *metacognitive*, *affective* and *social* strategies.

**Metacognitive strategies** are those strategies used by students to take control over their own

learning, that is they center, plan, organize and evaluate their learning. The personality of each student is directly involved because metacognitive strategies are determined by the student's sense of responsibility. Students that develop these kinds of strategies have more probabilities to be successful learners.

Gaining control over attitudes, emotions, motivations and values so that they do not interfere with the learning process is the main characteristic of **Affective Strategies**. A good language learner usually knows how to control his emotions and attitudes, has a good disposition towards learning, which becomes therefore an effective and enjoyable experience.

Furthermore, **Social Strategies** are characterized when the student interacts with other people by using the target language, departing from the premise that language itself is a social behavior. Examples of specific social strategies are: making questions, working in groups, etc.

As can be seen, there is a difference between the source of direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies, although taken to practice by students, can be designed and promoted by the teacher. Indirect strategies are the result of a personal effort, which is determined by the degree of commitment the student has towards his own learning.

Finally, the teacher should be aware of these strategies. Also she should implement direct ones and complement them with the student's personal strategies to improve the whole learning process.

## **1.5 How vocabulary is taught**

There are different theories about the nature of language and how languages should be taught. They imply different ways of teaching language, which are the methods, and these different methods make use of different kinds of classroom activities, which are in turn the

techniques. These techniques or activities may vary. A teacher can use these as a way to introduce new vocabulary items or to consolidate them. What students need to know is that vocabulary items can have more than one meaning. Hence, they must understand the importance of meaning in context and sense relations because words have different meanings in relation to other ones. Students must also know that a word can be changed, stretched or limited by how it is used. That is, the use of what we call metaphors and idioms. Even in certain situations words can change their shape and their grammatical values; i.e. a noun becomes a verb or an adjective. Students need to know about word formation and this means knowing how words are written and spoken and knowing how they can change their form. There is also another concept that is related to words: word grammar or grammar of vocabulary. Words have also a grammatical meaning and this can generate the use of certain grammatical patterns. Here we can find nouns: countable and uncountable, etc; verb complementation: phrasal verbs, etc; adjectives and adverbs: position, etc. (parts of speech).

As stated above, teachers make use of different activities in the classroom to present or reinforce new vocabulary items. Most of these activities have been used and proved in their efficiency by teachers in EFL classrooms. The activities must be adapted according to the students' language level, needs and characteristics.

Now, we present some of the most common techniques used to introduce new vocabulary.

### **Presenting Vocabulary.**

**Realia:** One way of presenting words is to bring the things they represent into the classroom. The teacher holds the object (or points it), says the word and gets students to repeat it.

**Pictures:** Sometimes there are many things that are impossible to bring into the classroom as a car, for example; so teachers can draw things on the board or bring pictures of them.

**Mime, action and gesture:** if realia and pictures are not enough to present an item, teachers use their bodies. Actions are better explained by mime and concepts as smoking by gestures.

**Contrast:** We have already mentioned that words have a sense relation among them, so we can contrast these meanings using opposites or synonyms.

**Enumeration:** Another sense relation we can find is that of *general* and *specific* words. We can say 'transportation' and explain its concept by enumerating or listing various items.

**Explanation:** Explaining the meaning of vocabulary items can be difficult at beginner and elementary levels. But it is highly recommended with intermediate students. Explaining a word must include explaining any relevant facts of word use, too.

**Translation:** Using the mother tongue is the quicker and easiest way to present words, but teachers must consider that is not always easy to translate them and even if translation is possible, it may make it a bit too easy for students by discouraging them from interacting with the words.

### **Discovering Vocabulary.**

There are many ways to discover vocabulary, one of the most popular is **matching exercises**. In addition, students can use bilingual or monolingual dictionaries to look up at new words. Thus, they cannot only find meanings but pronunciation, spelling, word formation, metaphorical and idiomatic use. These activities become more complex at advanced levels.



There are also **mind maps** or **semantic maps**, these exercises expand concepts using sense relations and specific words. They include word fields; that is, areas where a number of words group together.

Furthermore, teachers also use **words-in-context** exercises in order to discover meanings. After learners have read texts, these exercises help students guess the meanings of words by filling gaps in a paragraph with words they think fit in them. These exercises are called **fill-in-the-blanks**. Thus, students have contact with words within a context so they can see their real usage.

The use of **suffixes and prefixes** is a technique also used in English classrooms. As stated before, students must know about word formation too. It is important to explain to them the use of these terms and their role in word formation. These exercises are recommended for upper intermediate or advanced students.

### **Checking Understanding.**

At intermediate and advanced levels, it is important to check if students understand the meanings and usage of new words. To do this, teachers use **sorting exercises**, where they give students large groups of words and ask them to sort these into categories according to different characteristics. Other variation is the **Odd-one-out exercises** where students have to identify the word that does not belong to the group.

### **Consolidating Vocabulary.**

**Problem-solving tasks** are used to challenge students to use new words to solve problems, mainly which those dealing with real life situations.

Another exercise is **values clarification**. This is a ranking exercise in which students must put in order of qualities, for example what they consider most to least important.

Also at these levels, **writing a story or a dialog** can be exciting for students. By then, they may know many words this activity becomes easier for them. The teacher can give them a series of words and ask them to write a dialog or a story including those words as much as possible.

Oral practices are also important. Students are given a set of questions and answers and asked to share their opinions, experience or knowledge to the whole group. This motivates **discussion**. Most importantly, **role-plays** can also be used. Certainly, they have the advantage of being funny. In role playing students get other personalities and they feel free to talk and play.

In addition to the techniques used by the teacher, students develop their own strategies to discover meanings. As stated above, learning strategies are operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information.

## 1.6 Vocabulary techniques in the different teaching methods

As a matter of fact, the lexical system cannot be taught. It can be presented, explained or included in all kinds of activities but the individual must acquire it. Vocabulary has been considered in different ways according to the different approaches that exist. Just to remember, “an approach is a theoretical position and beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of language learning and the applicability of both to pedagogical settings”<sup>18</sup>. Some

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<sup>18</sup> Brown, D.H. (1994) *Teaching by Principles*. New Jersey. Simon & Schuster, p. 51.

of the commonly used approaches or methods along with their view on vocabulary are described as follows:

### *The Grammar-Translation Method*

The GTL was first used to teach languages at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The languages taught included Latin and Greek usually with a set examination in mind. Lessons were divided up into a reading section which usually featured a well-known text selected for its intellectual content followed by vocabulary lists with translation equivalents. Finally the lesson was rounded off with a test. Explanations of grammar were given in the students' native language. Proficiency in the language was often judged according to criterion such as the ability to analyze the language into its syntactic structure.

GTL has received a considerable amount of criticism over the years, the main problem being the lack of everyday realistic spoken language content. However as a methodology it requires few specialized skills on the behalf of the teacher and it can under certain circumstances promote an adequate reading knowledge in the language for the purposes of academic study etc. Tests of grammar rules and translation are relatively easy to construct.

This approach is characterized by the classes being taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language. Interestingly, **most vocabulary is taught in the form of lists of isolated words** and the teacher usually gives long elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar. Additionally, Grammar provides the rules for putting words together and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words. A very common practice is the reading of difficult classical texts, which is done in the early stages of instruction. In general, little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis and the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences

from the target language into the mother tongue. Pronunciation is usually not given much attention.

### *The Direct Method*

This approach was developed by Sauveur in the USA and brought to the attention of world by Charles Berlitz. The target language was used as the medium of teaching in very small classes analogous to Swedish studiecirklar. Lessons were made up of carefully graded exercises consisting of question and answer responses.

The basic idea behind the Direct Method was that Language learning should be made to be as similar as possible to first language learning with an emphasis on oral interaction where possible and no translation between the L1 and L2. The method's over-simplification of the similarities between first and second language and the difficulties in its adaptation to large classrooms are frequently cited criticisms. Some characteristics of this approach are:

- Classroom instruction is conducted exclusively in the target language.
- **Only everyday vocabulary and sentences are taught.**
- Oral communication skills are built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.
- Grammar is taught inductively.
- New teaching points are taught through modeling and practice.
- **Concrete vocabulary is taught through demonstration.**

### *Audiolingual Method.*

During World War II, the American government and military became very interested in language teaching on a large scale. During the late 1920s, the publication of the Coleman Report in America criticized existing language teaching for not having sufficient emphasis on reading. The result was that schools went back to a form of modified grammar translation teaching in order to bring their work in to line with the Coleman Report. By the time America entered the war, it was apparent that such an emphasis on reading had been to the serious detriment of oral proficiency skills. In contrast to the Direct Method, The Audio-Lingual Method was based on existing psychological and linguistic theory. The teachings of behaviorism were readily translated into a classroom methodology, which placed great emphasis on mimicry drills, and memorization of set phrases. There was little or no grammatical instruction **and vocabulary was limited and learned in context.** Great emphasis was placed on students producing error-free utterances. Ultimately however, the methodology has been criticized for its failure to develop communicative fluency. General characteristics of this approach are:

- Lessons begin with dialogs.
- **Mimicry and memorization are used, based on the assumption that language is habit formation.**
- Grammatical structures are sequenced and rules are taught inductively.
- Skills are sequenced: listening, speaking-reading, writing postponed.
- Pronunciation is stressed from the beginning.
- **Vocabulary is severely limited in initial stages.**
- A great effort is made to prevent learner errors.
- **Language is often manipulated without regard to meaning or context.**
- The teacher must be proficient only in the structures, vocabulary etc. that he or she is teaching since learning activities and materials are carefully controlled.

### *The Total Physical Response Method (TPR)*

Over a long period of time, many teachers have recognized the value of associating language with physical activity. In total physical response classrooms, for example, students do a considerable amount of listening and acting, making heavy use of imperative commands. This method appeals to the dramatic and theatrical nature of language learning. TPR has been generally thought to be most effective at lower levels of proficiency.

This approach features a structuralist, grammar-based view of language. Its theory says that L2 learning is the same as L1 learning; comprehension before production, is "imprinted" through carrying out commands; reduction of stress. The objectives of the approach are to teach oral proficiency to produce learners who can communicate uninhibitedly and intelligibly with native speakers. **The syllabus is usually sentence-based with grammatical and lexical criteria being primary, but focus on meaning not form.** The common activity for this approach is the imperative drills to elicit physical actions. Regarding the role of the teacher and student, the first acts as an active director of a stage play' with students as listeners and performers with little influence over the content of learning. There are no basic texts; materials and media have an important role later. Initially voice, action, and gestures are sufficient.

### *The Silent Way Method*

This method, associated with Caleb Gattegno is founded on more problem-solving principles rather than the humanism of suggestopedia. In this view, learning is facilitated if the learner expends energy in terms of discovering and creating rather than remembering and repeating. The Silent Way is typical of the discovery learning methods, which grew out of the 1960s. In the classroom, the method often makes use of Cuisinere rods together with wall

charts as props. One criticism of the method is that the teacher is too distant to encourage a communicative atmosphere.

The Silent Way approach says each language is composed of elements that give it a unique rhythm and spirit. Additionally, both **functional vocabulary and core structure are the key to the spirit of the language**. The processes of learning a second language are fundamentally different from L1 learning. L2 learning is an intellectual, cognitive process. Surrender to the music of the language, silent awareness is then an active trial. The objective of this approach is to gain a near-native fluency, correct pronunciation, basic and practical knowledge of the grammar of the L2. Learner learns how to learn a language. Thus, **the syllabus comprises structural lessons planned around grammatical items and related vocabulary**. Items are introduced according to their grammatical complexity. The activities in the syllabus include learner responding to commands, questions, and visual cues. Activities encourage and shape oral responses without grammatical explanation or modeling by teacher. Learning is seen as a process of personal growth; therefore, students are responsible for their own learning and must develop independence, autonomy and responsibility. The SW includes several tasks, among them, teaching and testing. In general the teacher remains impassive and must resist temptation to model, remodel, assist, direct, exhort. The materials used are unique: colored rods, color coded pronunciation **and vocabulary charts**.

### *Community Language Learning*

This method was developed by Charles Curran who had been very influenced by a view of education in which learners in a classroom were regarded as a group in need of therapy and counseling rather than as conventional classroom learners. Emphasis was made on the valuing of each individual's contribution to classroom language production as a way of

lowering the defensive anxiety, which impairs the performance of many classroom learners. This method has been criticized from the point of view that the teacher becomes too non-directive- the student often needs direction in the early stages of learning.

According to the Community Language Learning Approach, language is more than a system for communication. It involves the whole person, culture, and educational, developmental communicative processes. Learning is a social process of growth from child-like dependence to self-direction and independence. The only goal is near-native mastery of language. In order to do so, there is no set syllabus. Course progression is topic-based; learners provide the topics. Syllabus emerges from learners' intention and the teacher's reformulations. The activities used in this approach are a combination of innovative and conventional. **Translation**, group work, recording, transcription, reflection, and observation, listening, free conversation. Learners are members of a community. Learning is not viewed as an individual accomplishment, but something that is achieved collaboratively. In this sense, the teacher has a counseling/parental role. She must provide a safe environment in which students can learn and grow. There are no textbooks, cause they are thought to inhibit growth. Materials are developed as course progresses.

### *The Natural Approach.*

The natural approach was an offshoot Stephen Krashen's theory of second language acquisition. This method stressed the need to delay production of language i.e. production of language should be preceded by a long period of listening. Furthermore the atmosphere inside the classroom should be as relaxed as possible and that the emphasis should be on communication and acquisition as opposed to linguistic analysis. The task of the teacher is to provide comprehensible input i.e. to provide spoken language, which is at the level of the



learner or perhaps slightly in excess of this proficiency level ( $i + 1$ ). One criticism of the natural approach relates specifically to this silent period. If this varies from person to person, how then does the teacher manage the practicalities of a classroom with 30 students?

According to this approach, **the essence of language is meaning. Vocabulary not grammar is the heart of language.** There are two ways of L2 language development: "acquisition" – a natural subconscious process, and "learning" – a conscious process. According to Krashen, learning cannot lead to acquisition. The objective of language instruction is to give beginners and intermediate learners basic communicative skills in the four broad areas: speaking, writing, listening and reading. Thus, **the syllabus is based on selection of communicative activities and topics derived from learner needs.** Activities are designed to allow comprehensible input, about things in the here-and-now. There is a strong focus on meaning not form. Students are discouraged to learn language in the usual sense. Instead, they should try and lose themselves in activities involving meaningful communication. The teacher is the primary source of comprehensible input. He must create a positive low-anxiety climate and must choose and orchestrate a rich mixture of classroom activities. Classroom materials come from realia rather than textbooks. Their primary aim is to promote comprehension and communication.

### *Suggestopedia*

Suggestopedia is based to a large extent on the work of the Bulgarian psychologist Lozanov. His view was that by enhancing the state of relaxation under the right conditions, the human brain could process great quantities of material. This draws on work in the area of yoga and extrasensory perception. Students are encouraged to relax to the sound of classical music while attempting to memorize linguistic material. The practicality of using

Suggestopedia in certain situations where music and comfortable chairs are not available has also been called into question.

This approach has a rather conventional theory of language, although memorization of whole meaningful texts is recommended. According to the principles stated in Suggestopedia, learning occurs through desuggestion, when learners are in a deeply relaxed state. Baroque music is used to induce this state. In order to deliver advanced conversational competence quickly, **learners are required to master prodigious lists of vocabulary pairs, although the goal is understanding not memorization.** Typical exercises are question and answer, role-play and listening exercises under deep relaxation. The learner has a very concise role: s/he must maintain a passive state and allow the materials to work on them (rather than vice versa). In the meanwhile, the teacher must create situations in which the learner is most suggestible and present material in a way most likely to encourage positive reception and retention. The teacher must exude authority and confidence. Materials used in the classroom include texts, tapes, classroom fixtures, and music. Texts should have force, literary quality, and interesting characters.

### *Communicative Language Teaching*

This theory states that **language is a system for the expression of meaning. Its primary function is interaction and communication.** Therefore, activities proper to this approach involve real communication; carrying out meaningful tasks; and using language, which is meaningful to the learner. The main objective is to reflect the needs of the learner; they will include functional skills as well as linguistic objectives. This way, the syllabus includes some/all of the following: structures, functions, notions, themes and tasks. Ordering will be guided by learner needs. The learner is a negotiator and interactor. He is always giving

as well as taking. The teacher is a facilitator of the communication process, participants' tasks, and texts; needs analyst, counselor, and process manager. **Materials used should promote communicative use of language** and they include task-based and authentic materials.

As can be seen, vocabulary has been treated differently in the above methods. For some of them, vocabulary plays an important role, whereas for some others vocabulary has hardly been given attention. Usually, this is dictated by the educational beliefs in vogue. Currently, the importance of vocabulary has been widely documented as a key element of Language Learning.

It is through acquisition activities that the teacher introduces new vocabulary and creates the opportunities for student oral and written production. To do so, the techniques need to be interesting and meaningful.

Taking into account that it is not enough that the technique is interesting, there are other elements, which influence the acquisition of vocabulary, which are three sets of principles of language learning and teaching.

The first set refers to the Cognitive Principles that are related mainly to mental and Intellectual functions, in which are included:

*Automaticity Principle*

*Meaningful Learning Principle*

*Intrinsic Motivation Principle.*

*Strategic investment principle.*

The second set refers to the Affective Principles that are more central to the emotional processing of human beings i.e., feelings about self, about relationships in a community of learners, and about the emotional ties between language and culture. These are:

*Language Ego Principle.*

*Self-Confidence Principle.*

*Risk-taking Principle.*

*The Language-Culture Connection Principle.*

The third set refers to Linguistic Principles that center on language itself and how learners deal with these complex linguistic systems. This set is composed by:

*The Native Language Effect Principle.*

*Interlanguage Principle.*

*Communicative Competence Principle.*<sup>19</sup>

While applying a technique, motivation is one element that plays an important role. "Some learners will be motivated to learn for external reasons, which is a big help, but all learners need to be involved in interesting tasks, when they experience success, and when they see the relevance of class work to their outside lives"<sup>20</sup>

We must take into account that when students are involved in an interesting activity and they enjoy it, they do not realize that someone is guiding and making them acquire new vocabulary. They take the risk of participating because they acquire those words unconsciously, i.e., they do not worry about making a mistake because they consider the activity just a game in which they have fun so in this way, Intrinsic Motivation Principle and the Automaticity Principle take place.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 16-29.

<sup>20</sup> Edge, J. (1996) *Essentials of English Language Teaching*. New York: Longman, p. 11

After all, students acquire new vocabulary with the teacher's help, by making their own mistakes and expressing their needs or by listening to their classmates. This conveys also an unconscious sense of words need in order to continue participating in the game. That way, they will acquire some of the words that they have used in the game and which they will be able to use in the same context that they have already used during the activity.

We must not forget that special conditions should be given in a classroom; these will allow students to participate in the activities and will also make them feel comfortable when an activity is realized. This way, they feel self-confidence and feel motivated to give their best when participating in the activity.

Another important aspect that we must consider is the classroom atmosphere. These include the classroom, furniture, and light among others. The environment can interfere when teaching because these factors can cause a positive or negative motivation.

Overcrowded classrooms, a lack of ventilation, badly lit classrooms, the color of walls; all of them can be de-motivating for students. However, in order to maintain a good atmosphere in which students feel motivated to learn, teachers can improve this with posters, student's work etc, on walls, rearrange furniture or organize outside classes.

To sum up, vocabulary is nowadays other important aspect of teaching and learning other language, in this case English. We have become aware that in order to reach communication it is necessary to know words and the easiest way to do that is by bringing real world situations to the classroom. Research states that there are many teachers who are using plenty of techniques to persuade students to discover meaning of words by using different strategies as mentioned above. In our experience, teaching vocabulary by making students "feel" the words have gotten better results than learning long lists of words without neither context nor experience ("feel").

It is important to say that teaching through techniques is not an easy work because teachers have to plan, to rehearse and to adapt them constantly. All the groups have different characteristics and not all the students learn at the same time. Sometimes the teacher has to spend more time in other aspects of teaching which are also important so this reduces the time when applying the technique and that can disturb the classroom conditions and the students can lose interest. As teachers, we know that sometimes the disposition of students is not the best to develop a technique even if it has already been planned; that can discourage us. However, we must know that not all the time things go well in the first try but what is true, is that if we keep working on it, we will make the students give their best.

## **CHAPTER 2. Methodology**

In order to evaluate the possible correlations between the correct application of supplementary vocabulary activities and students' vocabulary learning, we decided to carry out an experimental study that obviously included an experimental group. However, various circumstances, such as the impossibility of randomly assigning subjects to our sample population, obliged us to carry out a quasi-experimental research. Internal validation was provided by the utilization of a control group, which had the same characteristics than the experimental one. The research was strengthened by the application of a post-treatment test. The experiment basically consisted of compiling and adapting techniques that were applied in the experimental group.

Hence, in this chapter we will describe all the elements that took part in the experiment, such as the coursebook, the subjects and of course, the supplementary vocabulary activities.

### **2.1 The coursebook**

According to J.C. Richards, *Interchange Intro* is the introductory level for *Interchange*, a beginning to high intermediate series for adult and young adult learners of English. *Intro* is designed for students at the beginner level and for learners needing a thorough review of basic instructors vocabulary, it is divided into sixteen units and after every four, there is a review.

The multi-skills syllabus on which the course books are based on, integrate structural, functional, lexical, phonological, situational and thematic syllabi. The methodology reflects a

communicative approach, with an emphasis on both fluency and accuracy. Furthermore, the book contains a systematic treatment of pronunciation, communication activities that encourage creativity and vocabulary- building exercises.

Structurally, the coursebook, first of a series of four, is divided into sixteen units, which are at the same time divided by a review after every four units.

At the end of the book, there is a set of activities that complement the contents of every unit. Also key vocabulary for each unit is noticeable. A workbook that contains exercises related to the coursebook contents also supports this coursebook. Most importantly, the four abilities are practised and the series of coursebooks is supported by video and audiocassettes.

## 2.2 The subjects

The first step was finding two groups with similar populations. The most important thing was making sure both groups used *Interchange Intro* as the textbook. The selected groups were taken from the Summer 2000 Course at the University Program of Languages. One of the groups was taken as a control group and the second one was taken as the experimental one. We will briefly describe each one of these.

**Control Group.** There were 17 students, most of them women. It was an introductory English summer course with a two-hour class every evening conducted by native speaker teacher. The main function of this group was that of a parameter to do a comparison between its post-test grades and those of the experimental group. We did not apply any technique in this group and we randomly took 11 students to randomly obtain a post-test grades sample for the comparison.



**Experimental Group.** Eleven students integrated the experimental group. This group had a different teacher. All the lexically-orientes activities were presented to this group and were used by the teacher to reinforce the vocabulary content in 4 units. Activities were applied only when considered necessary by the teacher. They were given to him in a special format, which included: name of the activity, objectives, time, class disposition, and procedure. Activities were not only applied but also evaluated and the grades obtained were compared with those in the Control Group. The main objective of doing this was that of supporting our hypothesis.

### 2.3 The supplementary activities

The second step was designing and adapting a set of techniques to the syllabus of the book. Only four techniques were designed because it was a 2-month summer course.

The first technique was designed **to reinforce** the vocabulary related to *Fashion* (See Appendix A). In this technique, students had to match word cards with pictures presented on the blackboard. They also practised the present continuous tense and some words related to the weather. This activity promotes unconscious learning because students are playing cards and at the same time reviewing weather vocabulary.

The second technique reinforced vocabulary about *Jobs* (See Appendix B). Students had to describe a flash card that contained a person doing a job. Thus, students learnt vocabulary through pictures and also with the teacher's help. Additionally, they reinforced the simple present tense and some related words, in this case, tools and work places. Both activities, Clothes and Jobs, are related to the Natural Approach and Communicative Language Teaching because students learn vocabulary unconsciously through games and at

the same time they were placed in a real context and everyday situations. This way the techniques promote communication.

In the activity called *Families* (See Appendix C) students had to find out the family members of a famous person. Students first talk about the famous person and then organize his/her family tree. Finally, students talk about their own family.

The last activity was called *Health Problems* (See Appendix D). This activity consisted of a crossword in which students had to find vocabulary related to health problems. Afterwards, they had to sort the words according to a given criterion. The main objective was to introduce and practise the *Health Problems* vocabulary.

## **2.4 The experiment**

The experiment consisted of a comparison between the grades obtained by students from both groups. As stated before, the teacher applied the activities in the experimental group and under direct supervision of the researchers. Scores were collected through different measurement instruments that will be explained later. Reliability of the techniques was measured via a piloting process. In the end, scores were averaged, compared and conclusions on the effect of the techniques over the students' vocabulary performance were drawn.

## **2.5 Measurement instruments**

As mentioned before, in the experiment we made use of several measurement instruments. Each one had a specific purpose such as assessing the learner performance in

vocabulary, monitoring the teacher's correct application of the techniques, etc. Each of these measurement instruments will be described below.

### **2.5.1 Class observation**

As the course developed, the teacher of the experimental group was in charge of applying the techniques. During the application, the general conditions of the classroom and the teacher's performance were monitored by the researchers through the utilization of the checklist in Appendix E. This checklist consisted of 13 yes/no questions, which evaluated from the classroom environment to the teacher's performance. This information allowed us to measure one of the variables in our hypothesis: the correct application of the techniques. Additionally, this information will let us know if a given result in the experiment is or not affected by the classroom's physical environment at the moment of the application of the techniques.

### **2.5.2 The questionnaire**

A questionnaire was designed in order to get the students' reactions to feelings and experiences about the techniques. This questionnaire was in Spanish so that students felt comfortable while answering it. This questionnaire (See Appendix F) was applied at the end of the course and only in the experimental group. The results of this questionnaire will allow us measure how comfortable they were doing the activity. This information will be complemented with the one obtained from the class observation checklist and they will both be taken into account at the moment of drawing conclusions.

### **2.5.3 The tests**

Scores from both groups were recorded via a post-test (See Appendix G). The test was mainly designed to measure the level of improvement in student's vocabulary about Fashion, Jobs, Family Members and Health Problems. The same exam was applied at the end of the course in both groups. The exam was divided into 4 parts, each one corresponding to each vocabulary topic. At the end we obtained 4 grades per student. To obtain a final grade per vocabulary topic per group all grades in a classroom were averaged, excluding the highest and the lowest grades to increase reliability. Thus, these four final grades per group were compared.

## CHAPTER 3. Data Analysis and Results.

As said before, in gathering the data to be used in this experiment, we made use of different measurement instruments. We will now present the results of every one. As our piece of research will be quantitatively and qualitatively-based our data and final outcomes will be presented by using tables.

### 3.1 Class Observation

Our first measurement instrument was the checklist in Appendix E, which we used to monitor the general conditions in the classroom at the moment of applying the 4 techniques in the experimental classroom. This checklist consisted of 13 yes/no questions. The following table shows the results on the monitoring of the application for each activity.

Question.	Activity 1 Fashion	Activity 2 Jobs	Activity 3 Family Members	Activity 4 Health Problems
1. Classroom well lit?	YES	YES	YES	YES
2. Furniture in good condition?	YES	YES	YES	YES
3. Classroom clean?	YES	YES	YES	YES
4. Classroom well ventilated?	YES	YES	YES	YES
5. Disturbing factors in classroom?	NO	NO	NO	NO
6. Teacher promoted thinking?	YES	YES	YES	YES
7. Teacher encouraged participation?	YES	YES	YES	YES
8. Teacher set up a need for communication?	YES	YES	YES	YES
9. Teacher showed interest in Ss' opinion?	YES	YES	YES	YES

10. Teacher made activities enjoyable?	YES	YES	YES	YES
11. Teacher accomplished technique's objectives?	NO	YES	YES	YES
12. Teacher followed technique's application procedure correctly?	NO	YES	YES	YES
13. Teacher used additional teaching resources (mimicry, gestures)?	NO	NO	NO	NO

**Table 3.1. Monitoring on Application of Techniques in Experimental Group.**

In general, the application of each technique took place in a good environment, with good illumination and ventilation. There were not distractors, which was very important for the development of the activity. In general, the teacher followed the procedure to apply the activities correctly. The only activity which was not correctly applied was activity number 2 related to *Jobs*. The teacher was supposed to use 20 minutes to do the activity but because he was late in his regular class program, he only devoted 10 minutes to do the activity and he did not follow the procedure as indicated by the researchers (Table 3.1).

### 3.2 The questionnaire

The results of this questionnaire are presented in the following tables. There is a table for each of the questions in the questionnaire.

Question 1. ¿Cómo te sentiste antes de empezar la actividad?

a) Relajado	11
b) Nervioso	1
c) Emocionado	4

**Table 3.2**

Question 2. ¿Cómo te sentiste durante la actividad?

a) Relajado	13
b) Nervioso	2
c) Emocionado	1

Table 3.3

Question 3. ¿Consideras que el maestro fué claro al momento de explicar la actividad?

a) Si	16
b) No	0

Table 3.4

Question 4. Enumera en orden de importancia cuáles de los siguientes factores son los tres más importantes para que aprendas vocabulario. Siendo 1 el más importante.

	Matches for 1	Matches for 2	Matches for 3
a) tus compañeros de clase	2	0	1
b) el maestro	4	6	1
c) la actividad	7	3	0
d) tu esfuerzo	2	2	7
e) el material que utilizó el maestro	0	3	4
f) el ambiente dentro del salón de clases	1	1	1
g) la comunicación que hubo entre el maestro y los alumnos	0	1	2

Table 3.5

Question 5. ¿Sentiste que la presencia del maestro fué indispensable en el momento que realizaste la actividad?

a) Si	13
b) No	3

Table 3.6

Question 6. ¿Te sentiste con ganas de participar en la actividad?

a) Si	15
b) No	1

Table 3.7

As can be seen, students were comfortable doing the activities (Tables 3.2 and 3.3) we consider this was because, as stated before, all the activities were planned to be applied as a vocabulary review. It was very important for us that the procedure was clear enough for the teacher so that students felt he was pretty clear at the moment of explaining. This purpose was accomplished as can be seen in Table 3.4. According to students' perceptions the three most important factors that will determine whether they learn new vocabulary through the activity or not are: the activities, the teacher and the student's effort, in that order of importance (Table 3.5). Most of the students felt that the teacher's presence was important during the activities (Table 3.6) and they were motivated to participate (Table 3.7) because there is a general belief that practice is key to increasing their vocabulary and English in general.

### 3.3 The tests

Our third and final measurement instrument was the test after the course. As said before, this test gave us 4 grades per student per group. Each one corresponding to the 4 vocabulary topics covered by the activities. The following table shows results in the Control group.

<b>Results per Student per Vocabulary topic.</b>				
<b>Control Group</b>				
<b>Student No.</b>	<b><i>Fashion</i></b>	<b><i>Jobs</i></b>	<b><i>Family Members</i></b>	<b><i>Health Problems</i></b>
1	34	93	60 *	86 *
2	41	57	20	29
3	41	72	50	43
4	56	50 *	30	29 *
5	82 *	79	60	72
6	41	93	50	57
7	34	100 *	20	72



8	56	93	40	86
9	30 *	86	0 *	43
10	60	57	40	86
11	67	57	0*	43
<b>Final Average</b>	47.7	76.3	38.7	59.0

Table 3.8

\* Grades not included for the final average.

The table below shows results in the experimental group. Later, we will see a comparison between these two groups' results.

<b>Results per Student per Vocabulary topic. Experimental Group</b>				
<b>Student No.</b>	<i>Fashion</i>	<i>Jobs</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Health Problems</i>
1	67	100 *	50	0 *
2	30 *	57	70	100
3	86	64	50	57
4	34	100	40	100 *
5	90	79	0 *	57
6	75	93	40	72
7	56	72	60	29
8	90 *	0 *	60	43
9	67	57	20	100
10	75	57	90 *	86
11	67	93	10	72
<b>Final Average</b>	68.5	74.6	44.4	68.4

Table 3.9

\* Grades not included for the final average.

<b>Comparison between the final grades per Vocabulary topic per group.</b>				
	<i>Fashion</i>	<i>Jobs</i>	<i>Family Members</i>	<i>Health Problems</i>
<b>Control Group</b>	47.7	76.3	38.7	59.0
<b>Experimental Group</b>	68.5	74.6	44.4	68.4

Table 3.10

In general, the experimental group had a better performance in vocabulary topics Fashion, Family Members and Health Problems. The control group had a better

performance in vocabulary topic Jobs (Tables 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10). However, the monitoring of the teacher's performance indicated that he did not apply correctly the activity to reinforce this vocabulary topic. We believe this was a determining factor for the experimental group's poor performance in this topic.

## Conclusion

After several months of research, we can finally conclude that our thesis objective was fully accomplished. Through this quasi-experimental research we have examined the relationship between the correct application of supplementary vocabulary activities and the students' vocabulary learning. At the beginning we stated our hypothesis that held that supplementing activities, when applied correctly, can be a very effective way to increase EFL students' lexical level. Our main purpose was to support this assumption through an experiment, which included a control and an experimental group. Prior to the experiment, we engaged ourselves in a solid revision of bibliography that allowed us to design a set of activities which were applied in the experimental group and that were key to improving the student's vocabulary level. These activities were supplementary to those in the textbook. The analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from the measurement instruments, among them the final test, have fully proved that the performance in the experimental group was much better than that in the control one, but only when activities were correctly applied. There was one vocabulary topic in which the control group performed better, but we detected that the application of the activity that covered such vocabulary topic was not correctly applied in the experimental group. This also makes it clear to some extent: There is an obvious relation between the correct application of a supplementary activity in a classroom and the students' performance in vocabulary learning. Therefore, our hypothesis cannot be rejected: Indeed, the correct application of supplementing activities can be a very effective way to increase EFL students' lexical level. In other words, there is a positive relationship between the supplementary activities and the enhancement of lexical levels of EFL learners.

This research is not over, though. There are a number of recommendations that have to be made in order to further investigate on this subject. Firstly, we believe that a true experiment should be carried out, for a longer period of time and on a bigger population. For practical reasons we had to narrow our research in terms of time and space, and although all details were carefully observed, this delimitation places a need for a deeper research.

Secondly, results obtained here can be a clear guideline for the University of Quintana Roo to consider including supplementary vocabulary activities in syllabuses of the English Language Undergraduate Program. In the process our research, teachers stated these kinds of activities are not included in their subject's program and they do not have time to prepare them. Hence, it would be important to consider this research as a starting point to discover additional ways to facilitate vocabulary teaching.

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## APPENDIX A. Vocabulary Activity. FASHION.

### FASHION

**Objective:**

Introducing vocabulary related to clothes and personal belongings.  
Using the Present Continuous Tense.  
Using indefinite articles.

**Time:** 10 min. for preparation.  
10 min. for presentation.

**Level:** Beginners – Intermediate

**Class Disposition:** Teams of 3 or 4 students.

**Materials:**

Pictures and Word Cards related to clothes and personal belongings.  
Masking Tape

**Procedure:**

Give each team some pictures and a set of Word Cards (different pictures for each team but the same set of Word Cards for all teams). Only the members of a team can see the pictures they get.

Each team has to look at the pictures and pick up words from the set of Word Cards, according to what they see. Afterwards, make them take a turn and go in front of the class carrying one of the pictures and its matching words. The other teams will try to guess what the words are. They'll do this by asking yes/no questions using the present continuous tense and indefinite articles. Each time a word is guessed, the team will stick it on the whiteboard and when most of the words are guessed, they will stick the picture next to the words on the board together with the missing ones.

## APPENDIX B. Vocabulary Activity. JOBS.

### JOBS

**Objectives:**

Jobs and Simple present tense review  
Tools  
Work Place

**Time:** 10 min. to make up a speech.  
10 min. to present the job in front of the group.

**Level:** Beginners – Intermediate

**Class Disposition:** Individually.

**Materials:**

Flash Cards

**Procedure:**

Ask each student to take a Flash Card and make up a speech describing the picture, also they will give each picture a personality and present it to the whole group. They must use the words written behind the cards and add more information while describing. If they don't know any of these words, help them.



## APPENDIX C. Vocabulary Activity. FAMILY MEMBERS.

### FAMILIES

**Objective:**

To identify and use family members vocabulary.

**Time:** 15 minutes.

**Level:** Introductory – Beginners

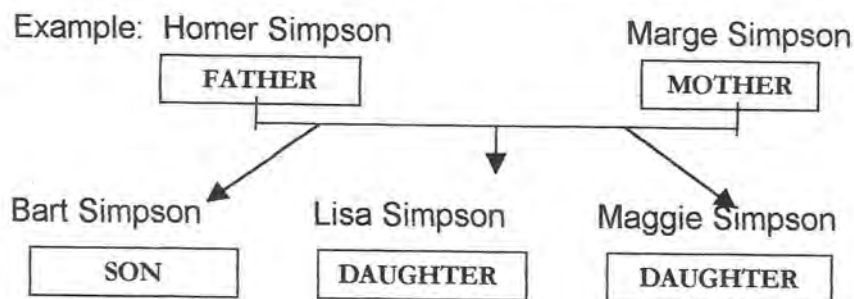
**Class Disposition:** 5 teams of 4 students

**Material:**

Flash Cards.

**Procedure:**

In groups of four make students fill the chart with the missing words, Then, each team take a turn to go in front of the class to stick them on the board as a family tree. Then, give each team a piece of paper to choose a "real family". Now, ask the rest of the class to help the team to fill in the family tree with real names.



**Follow Up:** In pairs, make students to talk freely about their own families.

**TEACHER'S PRINTED MATERIAL**

**THE SIMPSON**

**ADAMS FAMILY**

**THE FLINTSTONES**

**WILLIAM OF WALES**

**ALEJANDRA GUZMAN**

**MY FAMILY**

## **Exercise Key**

### **Adams Family:**

Grandmother: Grandmama

Mother: Morticia

Father: Gómez

Uncle: Fester

Uncle: Itt

Daughter: Wednesday

Son: Pugsley

### **The Flintstones:**

Father: Fred

Mother: Wilma

Son: Pebbles

### **William of Wales**

Greatgrandmother (Grandmother's mother): Queen Mother Elizabeth

Great grandfather (Grandmother's father) : George VI

Grandfather: Philip. Duck of Edimburgh.

Grandmother: Queen Elizabeth II

Father: Charles of Wales.

Mother: Lady Diana Spencer.

Brother: Henry of Wales

### **Alejandra Guzmán:**

Mother: Silvia Pinal

Father: Enrique Guzmán

Sister: Silvia Pasquel

Sister: Viridiana Pasquel.

Niece: Stephanie Salas.

## **APPENDIX D. Vocabulary Activity. HEALTH PROBLEMS.**

### **HEALTH PROBLEMS**

**Objectives:**

To recognize words related to health problems.  
To reinforce body parts vocabulary.  
To introduce vocabulary related to health.

**Time:** 20 minutes.

**Level:** Introductory – Beginners

**Class Disposition:** Pairs

**Procedure:**

Arrange the students in pairs. Give each pair a crossword and make the students find the body parts and the words related to health problems. After ten minutes, give each pair a work sheet which contains the roots of some health problems. Ask them to classify the words into each column ( Example: sorethroat, backache, illnesses, and others).

# Worksheet

**SORE-**

---

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---

**-ACHE**

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---

---

---

**ILLNESSES**

---

---

---

---

**OTHERS**

---

---

---

---

## **Exercise Key**

### **Sore-**

throat  
foot  
hand  
ankle  
leg  
finger  
arm  
wrist  
nose

### **-ache**

head  
tooth  
stomach  
back  
ear

### **Illnesses**

Cold  
Fever  
Flu

### **Others**

painkiller  
syrup  
pill  
shot  
tablet

## APPENDIX E. Researchers' Classroom Monitoring Checklist.

1. Is the classroom well lit?  
Yes                      No
2. Is the furniture in good conditions?  
Yes                      No
3. Is the classroom clean?  
Yes                      No
4. Is the classroom well ventilated?  
Yes                      No
5. Are there any disturbing factors for Students' attention?  
Yes                      No

Name them: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Did the teacher challenge students to think?  
Yes                      No
7. Did the teacher encourage all students to participate?  
Yes                      No
8. Did the teacher set up a need for communication?  
Yes                      No
9. Did the teacher show interest in the students' opinions/ experience?  
Yes                      No
10. Did the teacher make the activities 'enjoyable'?  
Yes                      No
11. Did the teacher accomplish the objectives of the activities?  
Yes                      No
12. Did the teacher follow the steps of the activity?  
Yes                      No
13. Did the teacher use other vocabulary teaching techniques(mimic, body language, etc)?  
Yes                      No

Name them: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F. Students' Questionnaire.

**Instrucciones:** Marca el número que corresponda a tu respuesta.

1. ¿Cómo te sentiste antes de empezar la actividad?

1. Relajado
2. Nervioso
3. Emocionado

2. ¿Cómo te sentiste durante la actividad?

1. Relajado
2. Nervioso
3. Emocionado

3. ¿Consideras que el maestro fue claro al momento de explicar la actividad?

1. Sí
2. No

4. Numera en orden de importancia cuáles de los siguientes factores son los tres más importantes que influyeron para que aprendas vocabulario. Siendo el 1 el más importante.

\_\_\_\_\_ tus compañeros de clase

\_\_\_\_\_ el maestro

\_\_\_\_\_ la actividad

\_\_\_\_\_ tu esfuerzo

\_\_\_\_\_ el material que utilizó el maestro

\_\_\_\_\_ el ambiente dentro del salón de clases

\_\_\_\_\_ la comunicación que hubo entre el maestro y los alumnos



5. ¿Sentiste que la presencia del maestro fue indispensable en el momento que realizaste la actividad?

- 1) Si
- 2) No

6. ¿Te sentiste con ganas de participar en la actividad?

- 1) Si
- 2) No

¿Por qué?: \_\_\_\_\_.

Gracias por tu tiempo.

## APPENDIX G. Final Exam.

Instructions: Look at the pictures and write the correct words .



1.- This is Peter. He is wearing \_\_\_\_\_

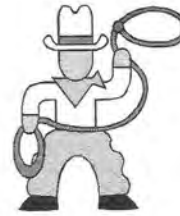


2.- This is Lucy, she is wearing \_\_\_\_\_



3.- These are my parents, they are wearing \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



4.- This is my friend Jack, he is wearing \_\_\_\_\_.



5.- This is John, he is wearing \_\_\_\_\_.



6.- This is Michael ,he is wearing \_\_\_\_\_.



7.- This is Miriam, she is wearing \_\_\_\_\_.

**Instructions:** Put in order the following words and write the jobs.

Tyrisecu dugar \_\_\_\_\_

Gejud \_\_\_\_\_

Rywale \_\_\_\_\_

Tolip \_\_\_\_\_

Shacire \_\_\_\_\_

Cheater \_\_\_\_\_

Segnir \_\_\_\_\_

Terwai \_\_\_\_\_

Lesas krecl \_\_\_\_\_

Renus \_\_\_\_\_

Sitrewsa \_\_\_\_\_

Cotord \_\_\_\_\_

Ocko \_\_\_\_\_

Cinamusi \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Fill in the blanks by writing the correct word.

1.- My father is my \_\_\_\_\_'s son.

2.- My brother is my uncle's \_\_\_\_\_.

3.- My mother's mother is my \_\_\_\_\_.

4.- My mother is my father's \_\_\_\_\_.

5.- Mary is my mother. I'm her \_\_\_\_\_.

6.- My \_\_\_\_\_ is my mother's sister.

7.- My \_\_\_\_\_ is my uncle's son.

8.- My father is my mother's \_\_\_\_\_.

9.- I'm my aunt's \_\_\_\_\_.

10.- My mother and my father are my \_\_\_\_\_.

Instructions: Look at the picture and write the correct word that indicates a health problem.

