THE EFFECTS OF USING REALIA ON CONCRETE VOCABULARY LEARNING IN

FOURTH GRADE AT INEM HIGH SCHOOL

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PAULA ANDREA URBANO GÓMEZ

MAROLYN ESTEFANI GUERRERO

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF B.A.
IN THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH PROGRAM
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NOTAS DE RESPONSABILIDAD

Las ideas y conclusiones aportadas en este trabajo de grado, son responsabilidad exclusivas de los autores.

Art. 1 del acuerdo No. 324 de octubre de1966, emanado del honorable consejo directivo de la Universidad de Nariño.

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San Juan de Pasto, Noviembre, 2012

RESUMEN

¿Podría ser realia una herramienta útil para mejorar el aprendizaje de vocabulario? Esta investigación presenta un tema que se basa en los objetos reales para enseñar vocabulario concreto en el Instituto Municipal INEM en Pasto. Este estudio consiste en una investigación quasi-experimental con un grupo de participantes que son niños. En esta investigación hay cuatro planes de clase en las que se utiliza la enseñanza de vocabulario concreto utilizando materiales reales durante un mes, dos horas por semana. Este estudio tiene como objetivo saber si el uso de materiales reales ayuda al estudiante a aprender nuevo vocabulario.

ABSTRACT

Could realia be a useful tool to enhance vocabulary learning? This research presents a topic which is based on real objects to teach concrete vocabulary at INEM High School. This study consists in a quasy-experimental research with a group of participants who are children. Into this research there are four lesson plans which contain the concrete vocabulary for teaching using realia during one month for two hours per week. This study has the objective to test if the use of real material helps students to learn concrete vocabulary.

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Chapter I: Introduction to the Study

Title

Effects of using realia on concrete vocabulary learning in fourth grade at INEM High School

Problem

How can the use of realia influence the learning of concrete vocabulary in fourth grade at INEM High School?

Problem Statement

Some English teachers like to use new techniques to enhance students´ learning. However, they look for those techniques out of the real world, instead of profiting from some classroom aids that are all around us. Nevertheless, it is the teachers' work to think about the best ways to use them. One of those techniques is to use realia in a creative way. Realia can help English teachers in the classroom to enhance vocabulary learning.

According to Celce-Murcia (2001), the English teachers in the post-method Era are responsible for selecting the most useful techniques or principles to improve students' learning conditions in the classroom, This study attempts to answer this question: How can the use of realia influence English vocabulary learning in the students of fourth grade at INEM High School?

Delimitation

This study will be developed during the month of September, 2012. This project will attempt to discover whether using realia in teaching English vocabulary will provide evidences for concrete vocabulary learning.

Problem Description

Knowing that English language teaching is a broad field that requires the implementation of new methodologies and techniques which may contribute to the cognitive development of the students, it is important to consider the implementation of materials that can develop language understanding and the different possibilities for teaching a foreign language as well as different materials that can make it possible to attract the students' attention and interest in English classes to learn concrete vocabulary. At INEM High School the fourth grade students were accustom to using their own language and not tangible materials for learning A very useful example of such material is realia.

Hypothesis

The use of realia with students of fourth grade at INEM High School will provide evidence of concrete vocabulary learning.

Objectives

General Objective.

To determine the extent to which the use of realia in fourth grade at INEM High School can provide an evidence of concrete vocabulary learning.

Specific Objectives.

To create the realia´s lesson plans according to the INEM High School syllabus for fourth grade taking into account the students' needs.

To analyze the effect of the realia`s lesson plans in concrete vocabulary learning.

To determine if realia has a positive or negative influence in concrete vocabulary learning.

Limitations

To develop this research some limitations were found: the first limitation was that there were too many students in the classroom; it was difficult to control and to carry out the activities successfully. The second limitation was the previous background the students had; they were used to learn English using the first language and it was difficult for them to understand the foreign language.

Justification

Through this research, the effects are expected to be noticed using realia to enhance the learning of English vocabulary in students. One reason is because realia represents a practical resource for English teachers. It also offers a helpful way to understand the meaning of the target vocabulary. Moreover, it can help to increase the comprehension in English as a foreign language. Therefore, taking into account the standards of the National Ministry of Education in foreign language, (2006) the students of fourth and fifth grade in Elementary School have to achieve one standard which is ¨ my vocabulary is limited to known topics ¨ (p. 21). It means

that English teachers in those grades should teach the basic vocabulary. So, according to this standard and the High School Syllabus, this research is in agreement with government requirements in fourth grade. The basic vocabulary will be taught using realia.

Another reason is that realia is a tool for teachers; realia is a useful material to provide learners with a better environment so that they can understand the target vocabulary in a direct way. It means that when students see the object, it can be easier for them to remember the word. Besides, it is the teachers' responsibility to choose appropriate vocabulary to facilitate the students´ learning. So, realia can be chosen according to the topic and considering the grade´s syllabus (Richards and Rodgers 2003).

In the English teaching and learning processes there is not much attention to teaching vocabulary. According to Dubin and Olshtain, (1986) vocabulary has been neglected by grammatical syllabuses and by the recent communicative approaches. Many modern linguistic theories are more focused on communicative strategies such as functions, notions and structures; however, mastering a good set of vocabulary permits the students to communicate effectively using their knowledge. Therefore, vocabulary is important at the moment of teaching a new language because the more vocabulary the students learn, the better they can communicate their ideas. When students have learned enough vocabulary - they can communicate their thoughts and they can understand better.

Another important point about the relevance of this project is that in the Linguistics and Languages Department at the Universidad de Nariño there is only one monograph written about the topic of realia applied to vocabulary learning: "Using Realia for Teaching Vocabulary to Children", by Maria Luz Portilla and Marisol Chamorro (1998). The paper talks about the

importance of realia in vocabulary learning. If more studies are developed on this topic, it can be possible to illustrate the importance of realia and contextualize the use of this material for teaching particular contexts as those in Pasto. Moreover, this research contributes to fill a gap in the existing literature at the Resource Center with a topic that is contextualized with students of a local school in Pasto.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Most foreign language teachers face many problems related to the lack of tools and materials which would make their work in the classroom an efficient activity, and at the same time, an enjoyable experience for learners.

Thus, considering the topic of this research, it is relevant to begin by defining what realia is.

Realia

To explain this word some people can say that realia's meaning is implicit in the same word, and they are right indeed. In English as Foreign Language settings, the word realia refers to the use of real objects as a means to teach English. However, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2007) realia are "objects or activities used to relate classroom teaching to the real life especially of peoples studied" and the dictionary also provides the origin of the word REALIA which comes from Late Latin, "neuter" plural of "*realis*" which means "real" and can be used in general pedagogy.

In order to demonstrate and to teach a language in the classroom, there are some real objects or materials that teachers can use. This is what teachers call realia. It is a supporting tool to make language acquisition and production possible. What realia does is to provide learners with concrete vocabulary that permits them to have a direct contact through the senses of seeing,

hearing, smelling and touching the objects. As Richards and Rodgers (2003) say, real-world materials are brought to class by the students in the form of newspapers, signs, handbills, storybooks, and in the case of adults printed materials from their workplace are also another resource. Students also produce their own materials. Besides, realia does not have to be limited to food or drink. Calendars, coupons, magazines, and fashion may all be recycled to help open life into lessons, and help deal interest. (p.111) As we can see there are many objects around us which can be used as material for teaching. Those materials can be brought to the class by the teacher and also by the students but the teacher can use the objects that are already in the classroom. Moreover, during the class the students can make their own supplies.

The uses of realia in language teaching

Some reasons for using real objects in the classroom to illustrate and teach vocabulary are: The real aids such as realia are helpful tools to attract student´s attention because they offer imagination and variety to the class and to the students too.

It is useful to open curiosity and maintain the interest in the real objects the teacher shows (Yilmaz, 2011).

The usage of realia is only narrowed by your imagination and possibly practicality too. Using realia motivates the mind, and makes vocabulary more unforgettable than an image would. Students can touch, smell, and with a food article, taste it. Realia saves time, as appreciation of an object is often instantaneous, elicitation of vocabulary becomes easier since it is simply holding up the object and showing it to the students.

As it was explained above, realia is a good aid to make students remember the new vocabulary because they experience vocabulary through the senses. All objects can be used in a foreigner English class. So, it is feasible to employ realia to teach concrete vocabulary.

Moreover, as it involves the senses, it promotes creativity and the acknowledgment of the object as direct (Richards and Rodgers 2003).

Realia can be used as an icebreaker, and it serves as a valuable tool to encourage conversation. It also makes the students' minds concentrate on the object. When teaching English vocabulary to children, realia is a good option. For example, children love toys, so they can be used in a lesson. Realia can be used also to construct a dialogue, to tell a story, and to explain concepts such as traditions; realia is practical in teaching prepositions of place such as: *on, in, under, next to,* and *in front of over.* The teacher can take an object and put it on a box, in a box, under a box and so on. Finally, some of the ways we can help students to understand the meanings of new languages are illustrated by means of the use of realia (Yilmaz, 2011).

According to Harmer, the following example shows how realia helps to learn vocabulary with beginners.

Example 1: 'It's a pen!

"This is perhaps the easiest level at which to explain meaning. The teachers want students to understand the form 'pen' so she holds up a pen and says 'pen'. The meaning will be clear. She can do the same with words like 'pencil´, 'table´, 'chair' etc. (….) some of the ways of helping students to understand, then – especially when dealing with fairly simple concepts – are: objects, pictures, drawings, gesture and expression" (Harmer, 1998, p 51). Therefore, realia is useful with children because it is a helpful instrument in making the abstract world, concrete.

Realia opens life into new vocabulary, and the opportunities of the students to remember the new words the teacher has taught them. For example, take the word, "sweet". The possibility of

calling to mind the word develops much higher after feeling the taste, touch and smell of an object.

Taking into account the previous information, realia is a material used in second language acquisition. Richards and Rodgers, (2003) say that realia can be used in different approaches and methods. They explain that some methods require the instructional use of existing materials, found materials, and realia (p.29). So, it explains that most of the methods to teach English as a second language need materials. All those materials help teachers to enhance English learning in the classes.

The materials including realia should accomplish the following features:

Materials will focus on the communicative abilities of interpretation, expression, and negotiation.

Materials will focus on understandable, relevant, and interesting exchange of information, rather than on the presentation of a grammatical form.

Materials will involve different kinds of texts and different media, which the learners can use to develop their competence through a variety of different activities and tasks (Richards and Rodgers, 2003 p.29).

Realia is also considered great material to teach English. It is because realia uses the senses to understand the meaning; this example is explicit in Multiple Intelligences. It explains that since the intelligence can be broken in other intelligences, some of them can help humans in the purpose of language. It means communication. This is attributed to the fact that language has its ties to life through the senses. The senses provide the accompaniment and context for the linguistic messages that give it meaning and purpose. It is necessary to have a multisensory view

of language, it means, to build an adequate frame of language as well as effective development of skills for language learning (Richards and Rogers, 2003, p. 117,118).

One approach that considers the use of realia as a good helper to make students understand the meaning of an item is Multiple Intelligences. In this approach it is mentioned that "Through multisensory experiences- touching, smelling, tasting, seeing and so on – learners can be sensitized to the many-faceted properties of objects and events in the world that surrounds them". Moreover, "students strengthen and improve the intelligences by volunteering objects and events of their own choosing and defining with others the properties and context of experience of these objects and events" (Richards and Rogers, 2003, p. 117-118).

Christison cited by Richards and Rogers (2003) describes a low-level language lesson dealing with description of physical objects: "The teacher brings many different objects to the class. Students experience feeling things that are soft, rough, cold, smooth, and so on". Experiences like this help activate and make learners aware of the sensory bases of experiences. (p. 117). This is one way to awake the intelligence.

Another way is to amplify the intelligence. Students are asked to bring objects to class or to use something in their possession. Teams of students describe each object attending to the five physical senses. They complete a worksheet including the information they have observed and discussed (p. 118). It means that when the students bring a personal object to the class, they have a real context to describe. So, it makes the students pay attention to the given and gotten information.

Another method that considers realia as a material to bring in classes is Communicative Language Teaching. It says that there are many proponents who have supported the use of "authentic," "from-life" materials in the classroom. These materials might include language-

based realia, such as signs, magazines, advertisements, and newspapers, or graphic and visual sources around which communicative activities can be built, such as maps, pictures, symbols, graphs, and charts. It means that different kinds of materials can be used as realia to support communicative exercises and to provide a good environment for the learning process (Richards and Rodgers, 2003, p.170).

Additionally, to the coherence in the fundamentals of the research, some considerations about vocabulary need to be made, given that the focal point of this research is the application of Realia for learning vocabulary.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is an active key piece in language development in any class. Richards and Rogers cited Palmer (2003) who says that vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of foreign language learning (p. 117). Another author who agrees with Palmer is Penny Ur (2009). She claims that vocabulary is the most important aspect of language to teach. She points out that the students can understand a reading text and make themselves understood with almost no grammar, but they can't get anywhere without vocabulary. So, vocabulary is seen as more important in the process of learning a language. One reason is that the more vocabulary students know, the greater are the chances that they can be understood by others.

To define vocabulary in an informal way, it is possible to say that vocabulary refers to the words we teach in a foreign language. Nevertheless, vocabulary is more than a single word. Therefore, vocabulary is still complicated. English vocabulary is more than one word, it is about the meaning one or more than two words have. McCarten (2007) mentions that in English all the words can be considered vocabulary, the vocabulary used alone with an explicit meaning and

some vocabulary items which are made from the union of one or more words with different possibilities of meaning. So, McCarten (2007) says that it is almost impossible to say exactly how many words are in English (p. 1). McCarten questions what students mean by a word because in English one word has different meanings and different forms to be written according to the grammatical category. For example, run, running, runs, runner, runners, ran, run out of gas, fell run down or a run of bad luck. All of them come from the same word but they have different meanings in an isolated way or in a sentence. Finally, as a solution to these complications there is a convention from "word" to "item" in order to cover all these cases (Ur, 1996, p, 60).

In the process of learning a foreign language one basic portion of the process of education in EFL is the improvement of vocabulary. If there is a lack of acceptable vocabulary the students will have a severe impediment to communicate their ideas. So, they can be in an educational risk because knowledge is evolving and the students will have a poor vocabulary set to master.

Vocabulary is a fundamental building block of language and it is one of the strongest contributors to comprehension. A good control of vocabulary makes the student understand better not only readings and audios but also writings.

Moreover, there are some key circumstances for vocabulary development as language-rich environments and connections to real-life experiences, those circumstances are related to realia due to the vocabulary that can be learned with real material which can make a connection to real-life experiences.

Christine Coombe (2011) claims that vocabulary instruction needs to include: explicit and direct instruction of words, opportunities for incidental learning, use of rich language in the

classroom, discussion, and wide reading. Therefore, realia can be used as a means to teach vocabulary directly and explicitly. The most effective approaches to vocabulary development include: Active learning, connections to previous knowledge of concepts, and related words. To keep in mind, there is no single agreed-upon "list" of what words should be known at a certain age.

Moreover it is necessary to take into account what Harmer (1991, p.154) calls "Selecting vocabulary". It shows two aspects which can be used during the activities to teach vocabulary. He talks about 'frequency' and 'coverage'. While the former is associated with the idea of how often a term is used by language speakers, the latter has more meanings than the basic one; it means a number of other things, providing a recognized context. It means that in English there are some vocabulary items that are used more than others. Besides, one item can be used with different meanings according to the context.

Ellis (1994) mentions that there are some aspects which influence the vocabulary learning process. Those aspects are important because they stimulate explicit learning. It means that concrete vocabulary teaching and realia can be associated at the moment of teaching because the students can make conscious efforts to notice new lexical items and selective attending. Nevertheless, there are other features that influence the vocabulary learning process. For example, enthusiasm, attitudes towards vocabulary learning, fear of failure and the same attitude to learn a foreign language. So, the learning of new items in English is pulled by the aspects mentioned before.

Moreover, it is necessary to remark what Penny Ur (1996) states at the moment of teaching vocabulary. She points out some features as form and aspects of meaning which are relevant

when teaching concrete vocabulary using realia. Therefore, they are going to be explained in the following paragraphs.

Ur (1996 p.60), says "form" is the first relevant feature, at the moment of teaching vocabulary. Form is related to pronunciation and spelling; the students have to know the correct pronunciation of the items in mind. Moreover, if there is any similarity in the pronunciation and the spelling, it is necessary to teach it. For example: red/read, four/ for, meat/meet and so on. Those words are similar in sound but they are different in meaning. The same happens in spelling, if learners make a change or omit one letter the meaning will change. This part is related to concrete vocabulary teaching with the use of realia because it is important to know the right pronunciation and spelling considering that if the students make a mistake in form they can change the meaning of the word.

So, pronunciation and form are going to be present when learning English, so those characteristics of a new item are going to be perceived by the learner when meeting the item for the first time. In teaching, "teachers need to make sure that both these aspects are accurately presented and learned" (Ur, 1996 p.60).

The second important point considered by Ur (1996) when teaching concrete vocabulary is called "*aspects of meaning*". It is divided in three parts: first, denotation, second connotation, and appropriateness. First of all, "denotation refers to the meaning of a word in the real world", it means that the definition is related to everyday life and sociocultural aspects. Denotation is often the sort of definitions which are given in a dictionary. For example, dog denotes a kind of animal; more specifically, a common, domestic carnivorous mammal; and both *damp* and *moist* mean slightly wet.

To continue, connotation is the second aspect of meaning. It refers to the meaning given inside a group of people with some influence of culture. Connotations are associated to the positive or negative feelings the word evokes, most of the time this meaning is not indicated in a dictionary definition. For example, the word "*dog*" is understood by most British people with positive connotations of friendship and loyalty; nevertheless, most people in Arab countries understand this word with negative associations of dirt and inferiority (Ur, 1996 p. 61).

Another aspect of meaning mentioned by Ur (1996) is appropriateness. When students are learning vocabulary, it is necessary to teach if a particular item is the appropriate one to use in a certain context or not. Thus, it is useful for a learner to know that a certain word is very common, or relatively rare, or 'taboo' in polite conversation, or tends to be used in writing but not in speech, or is more suitable for formal than informal discourse, or belongs to a certain dialect. For example, "you may know that weep is virtually synonymous in denotations with cry, but it is more formal, tends to be used in writing more than in speech, and is in general much less common" (Ur, 1996, p.61)

Additionally, there are other ways of associating meaning that are useful in teaching. The teacher can, for instance, relate parts to a whole. For example, there is a relationship between *apple, banana, grapes, cherries;* all those fruits belong to a group which is *fruits* (Ur, 1996 p. 62).

In addition, Penny Ur (1996, p. 63-64) identified some ways to present new vocabulary. Those ways to present vocabulary can be associated with teaching concrete vocabulary considering realia. Therefore, Ur called them "ideas for presenting items". The first idea is to

choose an item from the vocabulary taught. Then, think how the item teachers select could be offered considering it is the first time the students see the item.

The second idea is "*studying further techniques*". There are different techniques of giving the significance of new vocabulary. One is a concise definition as it appears in the dictionary. For example, a dog is an animal which…, the second is meticulous description, it refers to appearance and qualities: examples (hyponyms), designs (image, object) demonstration (performing, role play mime), context (story or sentences in which the item happens), synonyms, (similar), antonyms (opposites), translation, connected thoughts, collocations; or a combination of the two. This idea for presenting vocabulary can be used for teaching concrete vocabulary because the meaning of a new item can be demonstrated from the abstract meaning to concrete meaning. It happens when students describe the objects´ qualities, design, and perform in a real context with real materials (Ur, 1996, p. 63).

The third idea is called "*application and comparison*". As the teacher selects some ideas to present the new vocabulary, it is essential to find which one or more of the procedures were used in the original idea for presentation. In other words, could the teacher use other techniques instead of the original idea? Therefore, the teacher can have more ideas to present vocabulary to the students (Ur 1996, p.63).

The fourth point is "*discussion*". Considering the previous facts in the third idea, it is essential to debate verbally or in writing about the helpfulness of the dissimilar techniques. Ur (1996) recommends some questions to reflect on this point because some techniques are more general than others. Those questions are: 1.What are they, and can the teacher account to their popularity? 2. Are there techniques that are particularly suitable for the demonstration of certain

kinds of words? 3. Are there techniques which are likely to be more or less suitable for particular learner population (young/adult, beginner/advanced, different contextual cultures)? (Ur, 1996, p.64).

In addition to the information about how to present new vocabulary, Ur (1996) points out that there are different ways to test vocabulary learning such as multiple-choice, matching, odd one out, writing sentences, dictation-translation, gap-filling with a pool of answers, translation and sentence completion.

Vocabulary Assessment

To continue with the development of this research it is necessary to start defining what assessment is.

According to Brown (2004) assessment is a continuing process that takes an overall field. When a student answers a question, makes a remark, the teacher unconsciously makes an assessment of students' performance. It means that during the teaching the teacher is always assessing the students in each activity they do.

Moreover, assessment is divided in two parts: Informal and Formal Assessment. Informal Assessment can take place in a variety of forms beginning with incidental, unplanned comments and responses. The teacher does not grade them instead he makes some comments about a student's competence. Formal Assessments are exercises or procedures specifically designed to get an advantage of the knowledge. The teacher assesses the students learning giving them a grade. In other words, the teacher records the results (Brown, 2004, p. 5-6).

Considering that there are too many students at INEM High School, the oral tests take too much time. So, according to Brown (2002), a test of language proficiency that takes a student five hours to complete is impractical. It spends more time than necessary to achieve the objective. Then, those kinds of tests violate one principle of language which is practicality. The ones used in this study are in a written format. The pre-test and post-test are presented in a clear and standardize format. It has clear pictures in black and white which are easy to see and read. The test is easy to administrate. The scoring procedure of the test is done to each sub-point.

During this research the pre-test and the post-test were applied. So, it is a Formal Assessment; those tests are a method to measure the students' ability, knowledge, or performance involving concrete vocabulary. The objective of the pre-test is to diagnose the students' background and the objective of the post-test is to measure what they learned after having used realia to learn concrete vocabulary (Brown, 2004, p. 3).

There are some points to consider stated by Coombe (2011) as deciding how the teacher´s vocabulary tests are related to how the teacher teaches it. In the assessment of new vocabulary there are two ways of testing: one is to test vocabulary discretely and the second is to test vocabulary embedded in other skill areas.

In this research the students are going to be assessed with Discrete Vocabulary Testing which assesses a word as an independent construct. In Discrete Vocabulary Testing, tests are divided in evaluating two abilities: recognition and production. However, the pre and post-test were based just on assessing recognition of vocabulary. In this way, the teacher tests vocabulary explicitly.

There are some common formats for assessing vocabulary recognition. For example: Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQS), Matching and Picture-Cued Items

The pre and the post-test measured the students' ability to recognize concrete vocabulary with the formats mentioned above.

The first format, Multiple-Choice Questions is one of the most common formats in professionally-developed language testing. Coombe, Folse and Hubley (2007) as cited by Coombe (2011) say that those kinds of tests are widely used to assess learning at the recall and comprehension levels. Moreover, the advantages associated with the MCQ are: 1. If the test is written well, there is only one correct answer. In other words, this test is reliable. 2. The test is easy and quick to mark and thereby very practical for teachers. 3. They can be used to assess at various levels from beginning to advanced level of learning.

However, there is also one disadvantage associated with MCQ test. It is that MCQs do not allow testing the production of language or language as communication.

The MCQ format can be used to assess vocabulary knowledge in a variety of ways. They include synonym recognition, definition, meaning in context, and odd man out. Synonym recognition refers to test items in isolation or in context. Definition refers to test an item in a minimal sentence context. Meaning in context happens when the items are presented in a sentence or in a paragraph. And finally the odd man out occurs when the item is different from the other distractors (Coombe, 2009).

Multiple-Choice is used to assess students in low levels; it includes choosing the letter, matching, and circling the answer (Brown, 2004, p. 191).

The second format for assessing vocabulary recognition is matching. It is usually present in two columns of information and the students' task is to find the matches between the two

columns. One advantage in this format is that the format could present more distractors than MCQs formats. In Picture-Cued Items students are shown a picture with some possible answers (Brown, 2004, p. 191).

Chapter III: Methodological Aspects

After having revised the theoretical framework of this study, it is important to present the procedure that is followed to know how this research is developed in order to achieve the proposed objectives. It is important to know who the participants and the sample are. This study was carried out at "I.E.M INEM in Pasto". This study was based on the quantitative research.

A deductive process will be followed, that is the researcher is independent of what is being researched. Besides, the value of the gathered results was unbiased with a free context and shown with graphs. It used a pre-test and a post-test for the group. The students took a pre-test in order to diagnose their current level of proficiency in vocabulary. As Seow (2002) says the teacher needs to know what the students know and work from there. Therefore, to see the starting point for the creation of lesson plans that would be applied later. Besides, Brown (2002) points out some steps as: to diagnose the needs of students, to treat students with pedagogical techniques and to assess the outcome to those treatments.

The lesson plans were based on the High School´s syllabus and the students´ background. Finally, after the lesson plans were applied with realia in vocabulary, the students took the post-test and information was obtained on the effects of using realia in concrete vocabulary with children.

This study was a quasy-experimental research and the group was not assigned at random, it was called an intact group, and the group was established before researching. This group belongs to the fourth grade at "INEM High School" in the city of Pasto. It is a public school. The people in this group were children. The group was made up of 41 students between the ages of 9 and 10. The groups were composed of boys and girls. There were 19 girls and 22 boys; they belonged to low and medium socioeconomic statuses. Besides, the type of sample was not probabilistic.

G1   O1   X   O2

In this design a pre-test and a post-test was applied to the group with the aim to get the results of the treatment. In this study, the pre-test and the post-test are the same. They have four points; each point belongs to one different topic. The first point contained ten sub-points dealing with fruits and vegetables, the second point contained six sub-points which dealt with the profession pictures, the third point contained seven sub-points; this point assessed the vocabulary on clothes and the fourth point has six sub-points; it was related to the kitchen´s work. (See appendix 1)

Procedure

To accomplish this study, it is necessary to explain the procedure to collect the data. First of all, it is necessary to say that the fourth grade at INEM High School had English classes using grammar translation method. This observation was obtained by one of the researchers of this study during one semester. Thanks to this prior observation, a new technique was applied in this group to teach vocabulary using realia. In second instance, it is necessary to obtain permission

for carrying out this research. After that, the pre-test was applied to be developed in one hour. The third part was applying the treatment which consisted of teaching vocabulary using realia (see appendix p. 44-52). The fourth part corresponded to applying the post-test to obtain the results.

The Instruments

In this study the instruments used to collect data were

The Pre and Post-tests

Observation

Chapter IV: Results

Before starting with the analysis and the interpretation of the pre and post-test; it is necessary to say that this study was carried out in a unique experimental group; it means that there is no control group. Besides, considering teachers´ academic availability, this study was developed in 4 weeks; a weekly two hour class. Moreover, it is necessary to say that each academic hour lasts around 45 minutes.

To start with the pre-test results´ analysis it is important to explain the aim of the pre-test. It is to diagnose the students´ English knowledge and to know the concrete English vocabulary knowledge that the students had before the application of the treatment. So, according to Chapter III, it is mentioned that after the treatment the researcher made, it is necessary to apply the post-

test to know if there is a positive or negative influence in concrete vocabulary learning using realia.

The following graphs show the quantitative results from the study. First of all, it is essential to show the results from the pre and post-test. Afterwards, a comparison of both.

Those results were obtained after having revised the pre and post-test.

Comparison of the pre-test and the post-test

To continue with the process of this research, this project shows the comparison of the pre-test and post-test results in the following tables.

Table1. Comparison of the Pre and Post- test, fruits and vegetables
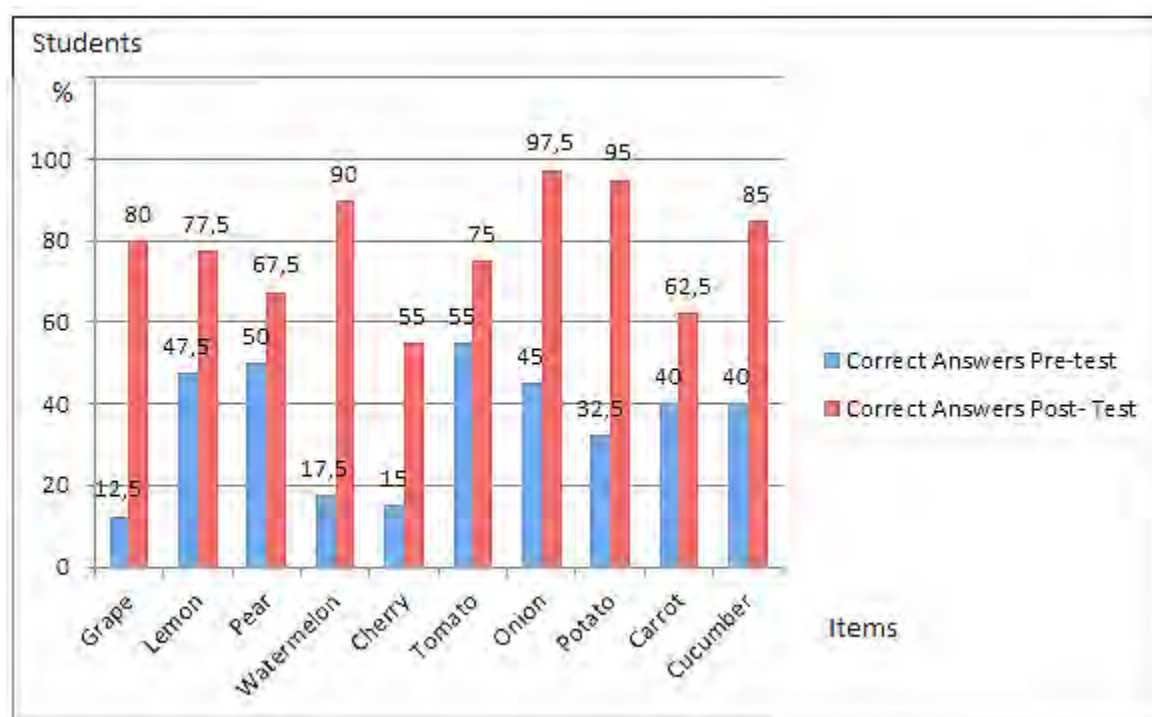
Analyzing the students' pre-test results, we noticed that they had prior knowledge about those items. After the application of the treatment using realia, "the fruit and vegetable items" during the activity the students touched, smelled, ate and felt some of them .It helped students to learn in a better way. Taking into account the graph above, the item they learned the most was the watermelon fruit. They learned it easier because the watermelon is a big fruit and delicious and the vegetable they learn the most was the onion. It could be because the majority of the students did not like it. So, when the vegetables and the fruits were under the blanket, the watermelon was more noticeable among the other fruits. It made the students wonder what it was. So, when they saw it and the teacher called the fruit's name, they learned it quickly. Besides, it is necessary to say that they had an excellent learning experience in this topic which is demonstrated in the graph above.

The graph above shows the pre-test, 12.5% to 55% of the students had knowledge about those items. In the post-test shows, 55% to 99.7% of the students answered correctly. It means that realia worked significantly with those types of items.

Table 2. Comparison Pre and Post-tests: Profession Profile Items
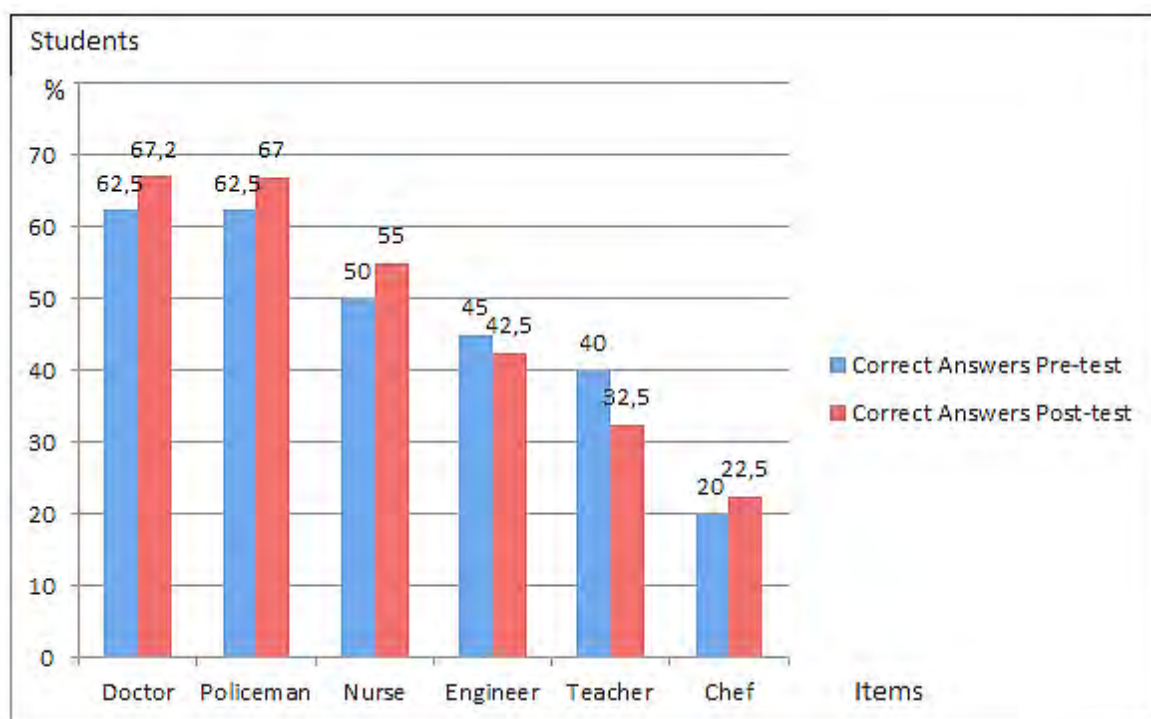
Analyzing the students' pre-test results, we observed that they had knowledge about those items because the graph showed it. After having applied the treatment using the costumes while the students performed each profession, we observed that the students in this activity did not have any direct contact with the object. Therefore, this was the reason why the students did not demonstrate the expected results. Another point to consider is the doctor profession, as you can observe in the graph above it has the highest percentage. We believe that it could happen because the word "Doctor" is the same word in Spanish and most of the students wanted to be doctors when they grow up. In contrast to the profession profiles "Engineer and Teacher", which had the lowest percentage; it could be because the students did not like these professions. We noticed

that during the activity called "what do you want to be when you grow up?", they did no mention these professions.

In the graph above, we can observe that in the pre-test, 20% to 62.5% of the students answered all the items correctly. It means that students had a good knowledge about those items. In the post-test, 22% to 67.2% of the students showed an improvement but not as we expected.

Table 3. Comparison of the Pre and Post – tests: Verbs
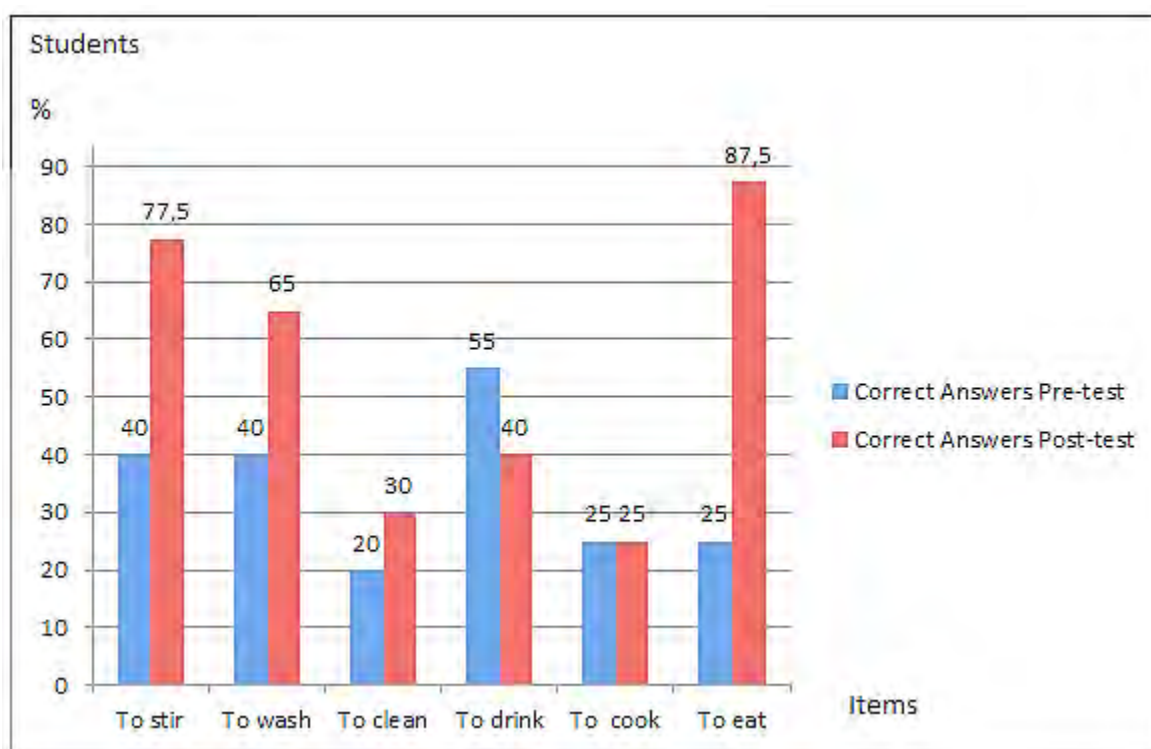
In the graph above, the students made an improvement in some verbs such as: to stir, to wash, to clean, and to eat. First of all, the graph above shows that in the pre-test 25 % of the students aswered the verb "to eat" correctly and in the post-test, this item shows that 87,5 % of the students anwered it correctly- the students recognized the word and the picture. Moreover,

"to eat" was the item that students recognized the most. It could be because the students asociated it with the firtstopic, which was fruits and vegetables. So, in this activity, they saw the teacher pretending to bite a fruit. That is why most of the students learned the verb "to eat" succesfully. The verbs, "to stir, to clean, and to wash" also showed good results. In the post-test, 77,5 % of the students answered the verb "to stir" correctly, 65% of the students answered the verb to wash correctly. We can say that those verbs worked positively because the students performed the actions using some things such as: a spoon , a bowl, and fruits, so that it can be understood easily. However, with the items "to cook" and "to drink" the results were not as expected. Comparing the pre and the post-test results, the verb "to drink" did not have a positive change. It could be the students did not pay attention at the moment when the student was performing this verb. Besides, the verb " to cook" remained in the same percentage could be because it involves different actions. So, when the student was performing the action using the objects, he was making different things, such as: to cut, to wash, to clean, to turn on the stove and so on. Therefore, the students could be confused.

Table 4. Comparison Pre and Post-tests: Clothes
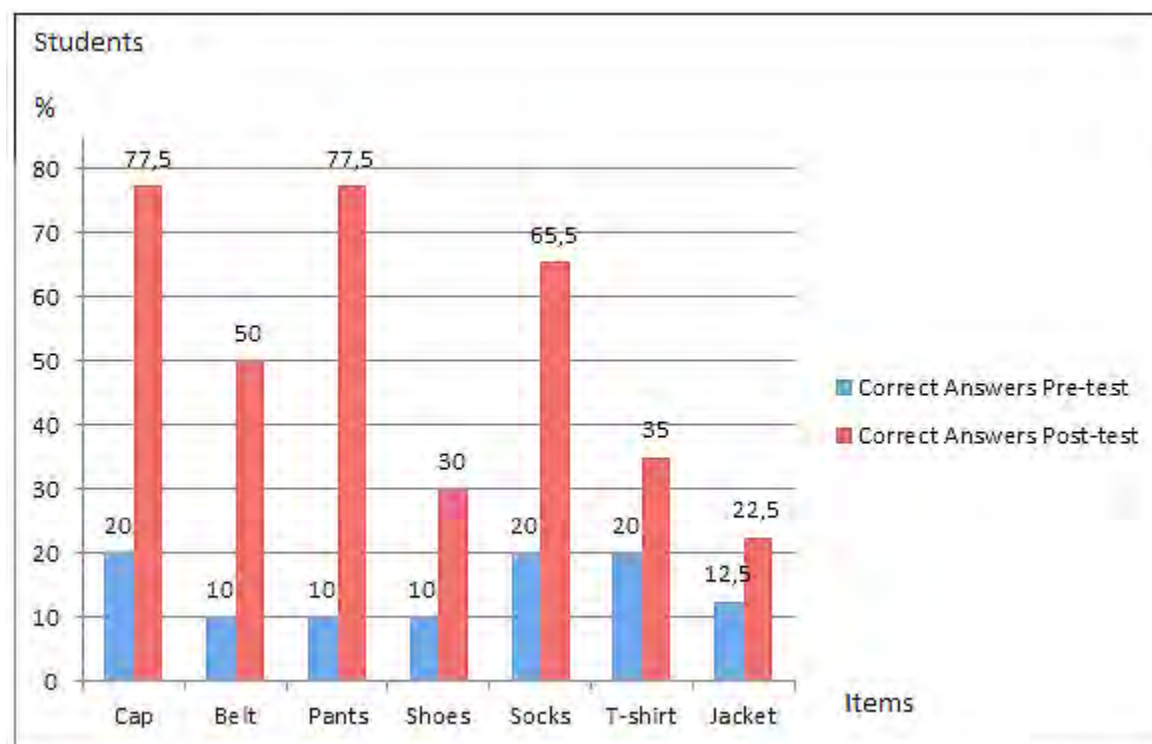
Finally, in the graph above, the treatment using realia worked in the expected way. All of the items presented a significant improvement. 77, 5 % of the students in the post-test results answered "cap" and "pants" correctly, showing the highest percentage. It could be the topic was attractive to the students; they were exciting to see which garments the teacher had brought to the classroom. Thus, all of the items in the pre-test were lower, in contrast to the post-test results which were higher. It could be because the students were engaged in the activities done in the classroom; they were interacting with their own clothes and performing the activity.

Chapter V: Comments and Conclusions

After having diagnosed, applied, and gotten the results of the treatment, the following conclusions were embodied.

Taking into account the results obtained during the application of the treatment, we obtained the expected results taking into consideration the hypothesis and the objectives were achieved because the results showed the evidence of concrete vocabulary learning

The first and second objectives were the creation and the analysis the effects of the lesson plans; we followed them step by step as written. We selected the best activities for the children and they showed improvement, as seen in the graphs. Although, the lesson plan about profession profile item did not work as we expected, but the results showed an improvement in some items such as: verb, cloth, fruit and vegetable items. Thus, we can comment that the profession profile`s lesson plan did not work as expected. In other words, realia function with those types of items, the problem was the lesson plan. So, for future researchers in this topic would be better to change the lesson plan to teach the profession profiles using realia.

The application of the lesson plans for concrete vocabulary learning using realia worked positively with some items such as: fruits, vegetables, verbs, and clothes, because the students touched, smelled, ate, and felt some of them so, the students were engaged with the activities. However, the profession profile items did not work appropriately. The treatment did not work successfully with some items because the students did not have a direct contact with the object or the students did not understand the concept that the items showed. As a conclusion, we can say that the use of realia to teach concrete vocabulary worked with some items and with others topics

not so much because there are some aspects that influence vocabulary learning, Ellis (1994) mentions that those aspects are important because they stimulate explicit learning. It means that concrete vocabulary teaching and realia can be associated at the moment of teaching because the students can make conscious efforts to notice new lexical items and selective attending. However, there other features that could influence the concrete vocabulary learning so we did not obtain significant results. For example: enthusiasm, attitudes towards vocabulary learning, fear of failure and the same attitude to learn a foreign language.

Besides, taking into account the results of the fruits and vegetables, we can say that concrete vocabulary is an adequate topic to be taught using realia. One reason is that during the activities, the students were discovering the objects. So, they were expecting to know what things were under the blanket (see appendix p. 45) and to guess how to pronounce and write them in English. Therefore, it helps the students to be attentive and to learn through discovery using real materials. The results showed an improvement in learning concrete vocabulary about fruits and vegetables.

Taking into account the results obtained in the profession category, it is possible to say that the treatment in this topic did not show us the expected results; maybe it was because the students were not so attentive when their classmates were performing each profession.

In the verb items, the students showed an improvement taking into account the percentage of the tests. Therefore, in learning concrete vocabulary using realia, there is an improvement related to verbs because more than half of the students answered the half of the items; considering this

as a progress. This treatment gave the expected results because all students were performing each verb.

Taking into account the comparison chart about clothes, the improvement in students learning is evident. So, we can say that using realia with this topic provided significant results. The knowledge that the students had before the treatment was not relevant. However, it helped as a basis to work with the students and the result of the post-test showed an improvement in learning concrete vocabulary. The students were engaged in the activities; the students had the opportunity to touch each article of clothing and see their own clothes, too.

Finally, taking into account the previous research titled "Using Realia for Teaching Vocabulary to Children", by Maria Luz Portilla and Marisol Chamorro (1998) it is necessary to say that this research worked with 10 students and our research worked with 41 students, which is a real life situation in Colombian high schools. So, realia works positively, the quantity of participants is irrelevant, the important things to consider are the topics and the lesson plans.

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APPENDIX

INEM

High School 4-2

PRE- TEST AND POST TEST

Name_____   date_____   grade_____

1. Write the name of the following fruits and vegetables
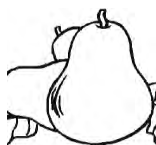
1. _____   2._____   3._____   4_____   5_____

6. _____   7. _____   8. _____   9. _____   10. _____

2. Write the name of the following professions

_____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____

3. Match the pictures with the correct name
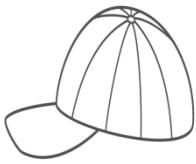
Jacket
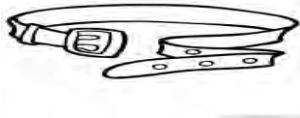
Pants

Cap

Belt

Shoes

T- shirt
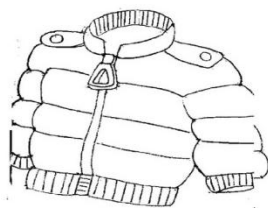
Socks

4. Choose the correct answer

1.   2.   3.
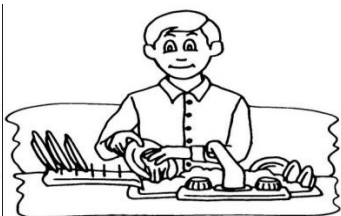
a) To stir   a) To cook   a) To stir
b) To wash   b) To eat   b) To drink
c) To clean   c) To wash   c) To clean

4.   5.   6.

a) To eat   a) To wash   a) To eat
b) To stir   b) To cook   b) To stir
c) To drink   c) to clean   c) To drink

INEM

HIGH SCHOOL

4-2

Date:

Subject area: English

Time: 2 hours per class

Objectives: The students will be learning new vocabulary about vegetables and fruits.

The students will make a recipe using the vocabulary listed below.

Vocabulary: Vegetables: Potato, Pea, tomato, Onion, bean, banana, lentil, carrot cucumber.

Fruits: Mango, tangerine, banana, Lemon, blackberry, orange, pineapple, apple, cherry, watermelon, pear, grape.

Procedure: Warm up activity

Starting with the lesson, the activity is called "what's under the blanket?" The teacher puts several different fruits and vegetables on the desk and covers them with a blanket (shapes of individual objects should be recognizable); teacher avoids the children from seeing them. Afterwards, in groups of four, students will try to identify individual objects. They may touch them, but they must not uncover them. When they recognize an object, they take it from under the blanket and name it for all the class. At the end of the activity, the teacher makes a list of the fruits and the vegetables writing the names on the board and makes students repeat them. **(30 min**)

The students are going to pronounce each item. Then, they are going to make a sentence. Each student is going to call the item aloud but without repeating the sentence. **(30 min)**

Finally, the teacher will write an example of a recipe explaining the steps. Then, the students have to make an easy recipe with the ingredients in the classroom. **(20 min)**
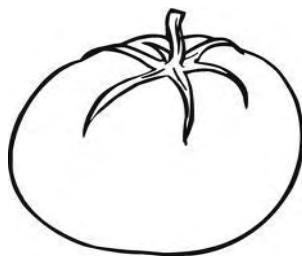
Feedback: **(10 min)**

These illustrations are done to show everything that the teacher is going to instruct in the class, all that is represented in the images are going to be shown in real context. The teacher is going to bring each object.

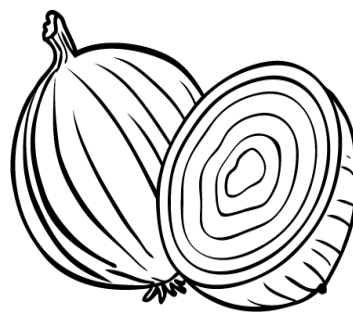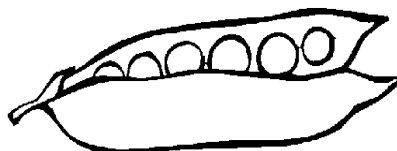POTATO   TOMATO   ONION
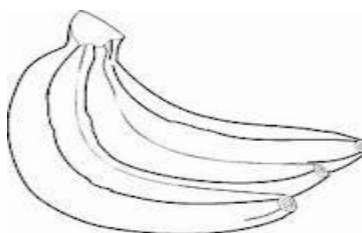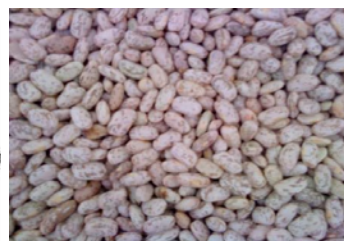
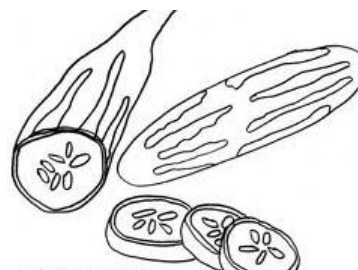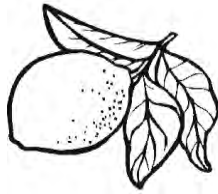PEA   BANANA   BEAN
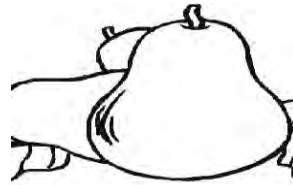
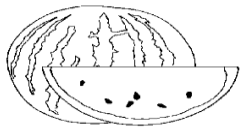LENTIL   CARROT   CUCUMBER
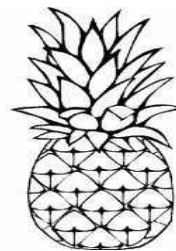
FRUITS

GRAPE	LEMON	PEAR

WARTEMELON	CHERRY	APPLE

BANANA	BLACKBERRY	PINEAPPLE	ORANGE
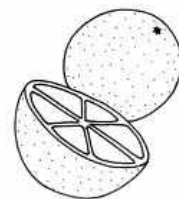
INEM

HIGH SCHOOL

4-2

Date:

Subject area: English

Time: 2 hours per class

Objectives: the students will learn new vocabulary about professions,

Vocabulary: Doctor, policeman, nurse, teacher, student, chef, soldier and garbage collector

Procedure: The warm up activity

The teacher will bring the costumes or some objects related to the professions and the teacher will choose eight children so that they can dress up. They will be outside after some minutes; they will enter one by one. So, when the first student comes in, the rest of the students will try to guess who he is. The student who is dressed up must come up in order to their classmates can guess his profession. At the end of the activity, the teacher will write on the board all professions the students played. **(30min)**

The teacher will ask each student what they want to be when they grow up; when the students finish the activity the teacher will write the new vocabulary on the board. **(15min)**

The teacher will explain the professions so that the students can take notes and they draw each one. (**20 min**)

Teacher will give the students a piece of paper so that the students can draw the profession that they want to be when they grow up. When they finish the drawing, the teacher will select eight students having the eight different professions. After, the students will pass to the front of the class to present their drawings. **(20min)**

Feedback (5min) it could be about some mistakes that students had.

These illustrations are done to show everything that the teacher is going to teach in the class, the outfits in all these images are going to be shown in the real context. The teacher is going to bring each object.

DOCTOR   POLICEMAN   NURSE
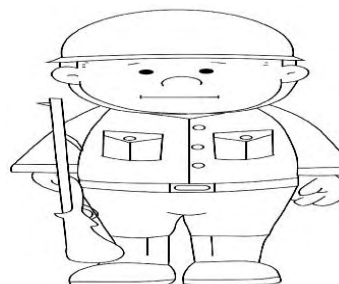
TEACHER   STUDENT   CHEF

GARBAGE COLLECTOR   SOLDIER

INEM

HIGH SCHOOL

4-2

Date:

Subject area: English

Time: 2 hours per class

Objectives: the students will learn about new vocabulary on verbs related to kitchen.

The students will be capable to express actions in the correct way using verbs.

The students will be capable to read and to do a dialogue using the learnt verbs.

Vocabulary: verbs (to cut, to cook, to stir, to wash, to drink, to clean and to eat)

Materials: a spoon, a pot, a cleaning cloth, a plastic knife, a sponge, some dishes, a plastic stove, some glasses and Flour,

Procedure: the warm up activity

The teacher chooses seven children to come to the front of the class; the teacher is going to say to each one the verb and how to play it. The student must learn the action and perform it using the objects according to the verb, for example: the student who has the verb "to wash" has to use a rag and a container with water and to clean the classroom's window. When the teacher finishes saying to everyone; ¡the game starts! The rest of the students are going to be attentive. When the teacher says "to stir" the student who has the verb must play and the rest of the students will do the same, it will go on until finishing the verbs. The teacher will be walking around the classroom, encouraging students. **(20min)**

The teacher will explain the verbs one by one so students can internalized them. In the same way that students made the performance of the verb. **(20 min)**

Activities:

The teacher will organize the students in groups of seven people, each group will have a different verb and each student will play the verb in a different way. The teacher will pass around each group in order to receive the activity **(25 min)**

The teacher will give a piece of paper to each student. After that, the teacher shows the picture to whole class and the students will identify the picture. They will write the verb until to make a list. **(15 min)**

Feedback: 10 min

These illustrations are done to show everything that the teacher is going to teach in the class, all the activities shown in the images are going to be performed. In the real context, the teacher is going to bring each object.

TO CUT

TO STIR

TO WASH

TO DRINK

TO CLEAN

TO EAT

TO COOK

INEM

HIGH SCHOOL

4-2

Date:

Subject area: English

Time: 2 hours per class

Objectives: the students will learn about new vocabulary on clothes.

The students will be capable to describe their classmates what they are wearing.

Vocabulary: pants, cap, sweater, belt, shoes, socks, scarf, shorts, sandals, t-shirt and blouse.

Materials: clothes, magazines, newspapers, glue, paper and scissors.

Procedure: the warm up activity

First Activity, CLOTH ACTIVITY

Teacher presents the topic with the warm up activity, named "fashion"

The students will learn the principal names of the clothes using their own clothes, they will learn to identify the clothes name and they will practice with realia like short, t-shirt, pants, jeans, shoes and so on, with those items they could touch the clothes because the teacher provides them to the classroom. They are going to listen to the teacher the new vocabulary, while the teacher shows it. After that, the students are going to repeat the name of each item. Then, the teacher is going to take one garment and the teacher is going to show it to the students, but for this time the teacher is not going to say the name of the garment. So, the students are going to say the correct name. **(25 min)**

After, the students will make a collage using the common clothes; they will cut the clothes from magazines and newspapers. They will identify the clothes and choose all they think were the common in their classmates. **(25 min)**

Second activity: game

The students will be divided in two groups women and men they will prepare the vocabulary learnt and each group will chose one leader, the first group will point one clothes saying "what is this?" and the leader of the other group must say the clothes name, if the leader

does not know, they lose one point and it continues until they finished the vocabulary learnt. (**30 min**)

Feedback involves the students reading aloud the new vocabulary. After, the teacher uses self and peer correction. And the teacher drills the words that the students had problems during the task. (**10min**)

These illustrations are done to show everything that the teacher is going to teach in the class, all these images are going to be shown in the real context. The teacher is going to bring each object.

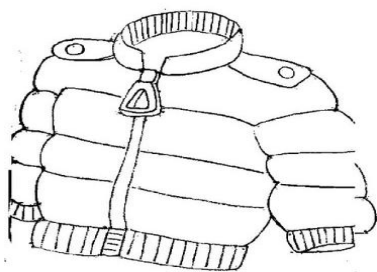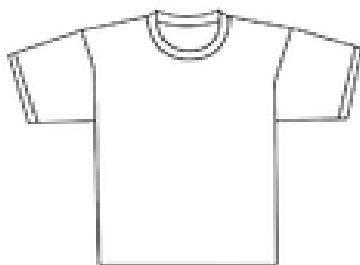CAP   BELT   PANTS

JACKET   T-SHIRT   SHOES

SOCKS