

The Effect of Vocabulary Focused Techniques on Vocabulary Acquisition on the Proficiency of
Eleventh-grade Learners

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Submitted to the School of Human Sciences
in Partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of B.A. In the Department of
Linguistics and Languages
Universidad de Nariño

May 2016

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Las Ideas Y Conclusiones Aportadas En El Trabajo De Grado Son Responsabilidad Exclusiva De La Autora. Artículo 1º Del Acuerdo Número 324 De Octubre 11 De 1966, Emanado Del Honorable Consejo Directivo De La Universidad De Nariño.

NOTA DE ACEPTACION

Firma del Jurado

Firma del Jurado

Asesor

Resumen

El propósito de este estudio fue describir como las técnicas enfocadas en vocabulario afectan el desempeño de los estudiantes de grado once en un colegio de grado once en nuestra ciudad, y como ellas afectan directamente la adquisición de vocabulario en ellos.

Las observaciones fueron hechas dentro de las clases. Estas observaciones mostraron que los profesores utilizan técnicas basadas en vocabulario en sus clases en un contexto como el nuestro. Teniendo en cuenta las estrategias disponibles y materiales que los profesores tienen para enseñar el contenido propuesto por el colegio y de acuerdo a los requerimientos del gobierno.

Los resultados de la investigación dieron una descripción de las técnicas basadas en vocabulario incluyendo efectividad, utilidad, ventajas y desventajas de ellas. También, un examen de rendimiento basado en el contenido propuesto por la colegio fue aplicado después de haber observado las actividades previamente mencionadas, es decir, una revisión de ellas incluyendo sus beneficios y limitaciones.

El uso de técnicas enfocadas en el vocabulario pueden facilitar el proceso de enseñanza, con el uso de ellas se solucionan muchos problemas, como son: tiempo y complejidad. Cabe recalcar, que solamente estas actividades pueden ser utilizadas en clases si se tiene en cuenta el contexto, las estrategias y materiales disponibles.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe how the vocabulary focused techniques affect the proficiency on eleventh grade in a public high school in our city and how they affect directly vocabulary acquisition on them.

Observations were done inside the classes. These observations showed that teachers use techniques base on vocabulary in their classes, in a context like ours. Taking into account the available strategies and materials that teachers have to introduce the content proposed by the high school and according to the government requirements.

This research findings provide a description of the effectiveness and usefulness of techniques based on vocabulary including the advantages and disadvantages of them. Also, an achievement text based on the content proposed by the school was applied after having witnessed the activities previously mentioned, that is to say that a revision of them was

The use of vocabulary focused techniques could make vocabulary teaching an easier process by using them, problems such as time or complexity could be sort out. It is meaningful to say, that these activities could only be used in class regarding the context, strategies and available materials.

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Introduction

English as a foreign language is an essential area of the development of L2 proficiency in eleventh- grade learners in a high school. Sánchez & Manchón, (2007) argue that vocabulary is a component of the language which recently has turned from an overlooked topic to one of the most important aspects in language learning. It is necessary, then, to give vocabulary its relevance in proficiency development and vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to describe the effect and importance of vocabulary-focused techniques used by teachers in class and recognize if there have been benefits of their use to improve L2 proficiency in students in a public high school in our context.

The study is supported by different documents to get an idea of effect of vocabulary focused techniques on vocabulary acquisition, but also observation and surveys which could draw a portrayal of this topic according to the needs of our context.

This chapter provides a description of the research problem, the scope and variables, giving some explanations and concepts.

Justification

According to Ying He (2010), taking into account the fact that in second language acquisition vocabulary is a relevant component, because when students are learning a language, they recognize that without it, students couldn't understand or express themselves. It is important to do a paper about the importance of Vocabulary Instruction in the public high school context in our city, because of the lack of information about this topic in our sources. The results of this study would generate a descriptive document whose information could draw a portrait of the current situation to future or novice teachers.

It is imperative to mention Pruebas Saber 11 which are a requirement that students should

comply with, in order to graduate from high school. Thus, its results are important for many reasons. First, because this test assesses students' English proficiency level, and it is used as an achievement test to measure how much of the language students have successfully learned, that is, to verify the effectiveness of the language learning process as proposed in the high school syllabus. Secondly, this exam is relevant because it is the only requirement in Colombia to get into public and some private universities. Since the focus of this project is to discuss vocabulary instruction, it is significant to turn to how vocabulary is seen in the most important foreign language exam in Colombia. It is essential to remark that the Pruebas Saber 11 do not assess productive skills such as speaking and writing, which make it incomplete. Many people would argue that it is focused mostly on reading, grammar and vocabulary. In terms of this component, the exam shows a mixed use of it. Vocabulary can be explained in two different ways, implicit and explicit ones. Implicit vocabulary is the acquisition of new words involving thinking and consciousness of students. Explicit vocabulary involves pictures and another materials to increase students' short and long term memorization skills.

If teachers want to enhance student's opportunities to perform well in this test and other standardized tests, they need to start paying attention to vocabulary and come up with more specific strategies to focus attention on the development of lexis. If the learners' needs are met regarding tests, it might be inferred that these strategies might also help learners develop their overall language proficiency.

Problem description

In English language acquisition, vocabulary plays an important part especially for eleventh- grade learners. In words of Taylor (1990), high school is a vital period on proficiency development, not only because the students should learn to know just the meaning of a particular

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word, but also all its aspects such as: register, frequency, collocation and finally the equivalent in the mother tongue. Further, Aitchison (2003) suggests that human minds organize words in an intricate system. Likewise, the use of vocabulary-focused techniques by the teachers could help second language learners to know this system to acquire vocabulary more successfully. Learning vocabulary is important, but it might seem that teachers have the idea that vocabulary does not need a special emphasis and can be taught incidentally. This may not be enough in a setting like ours where students may be exposed to the foreign language only 2 hours a week. Actually, teachers need to take some time to teach vocabulary in the English class. Moreover, it is important to witness the class process, the effect and how they use vocabulary-focused techniques inside the class, taking into account that the student's English levels which could be different each other. This research project brings a descriptive idea regarding the relevance and benefits that vocabulary has in language proficiency in our context.

Problem Statement

What is the Effect of Vocabulary Activities or Techniques in an eleventh grade EFL class in a public high school in the city of Pasto?

General objective

To describe the effect of vocabulary-focused techniques on vocabulary acquisition on the proficiency of eleventh grade learners.

Specific objectives

- To compare student's language proficiency to eleventh grade standards.
- To know the relevance , benefits and limitations of vocabulary-focused techniques on language skills

Definition of terms

Vocabulary

Bonnie (2001) states that vocabulary is all about words, the words in a language or a special set of words you are trying to learn. Vocabulary has become an important aspect and base of language acquisition.

Language Proficiency

According to Richards, Platt, H & Platt, J. (1992), the use of language is the degree of skill with which a person can use a language in the four abilities, it means how well can read, write, speak, or understand a second language. Besides it can be measured with a proficiency test.

Limitations

The problems that could have found in this study are based on two important aspects, first of all, it is the participants' attitude, which can affect the study in a negative way, especially with the obtained results of the observations and an achievement test, which are going to have misled information. Another important limitation could be the extracurricular activities, which could delay the data collection process. To overcome these situations, as solution, it was suitable to create an organized schedule, this, to avoid some unexpected events in the high school, and also to develop observations and an achievement test with the participants in an isolated way, to generate confidence and to avoid lack of cooperation and wrong information.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In this chapter readers are provided with the most relevant information about what is the relevance and benefits of vocabulary instruction, what is the influence of vocabulary in classroom practice, and finally the relation between vocabulary teachers-students including information of the importance of vocabulary for novice teachers.

The Role of Vocabulary in Proficiency

Proficiency is the level which a person has to use a language in all its abilities. These include reading, writing, listening and speaking. A solid vocabulary is essential to gain proficiency in the students' target language. Vocabulary itself is multi-faceted and should be considered as part of a larger language structure and use, involving spelling, pronunciation, and grammatical behavior.

The eleventh grade syllabus based on Colombian English standards has given to proficiency an important role on students' second language acquisition. As an objective of eleventh grade course, this proficiency is assessed mainly in two skills: reading and writing, which have been directly affected by a poor development of vocabulary in students. These low levels of vocabulary can have an impact on the literacy skills previous mentioned.

To avoid this effect on reading and writing one useful technique is giving a lot of information about something but omitting key words, for instance, when we are talking about a banana, you are unable to say the word "fruit", you can use "yellow skin" instead. There have been different studies that have analyzed the factors that affect literacy; and these were applied due to the lack of success of students on reaching the expected national standards. Between 2007 and 2011 studies showed that just 12 of each 100 students reach the expected standards, while in

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the others vocabulary gets poorer. According to The Reading Panel (2001), vocabulary is one of the core components of reading and fluency and has become the most important component to teaching children to read. When students do not develop literacy skills, teachers have to carry out more vocabulary instruction, because the correlation between academic success and vocabulary size is high. The challenge for most schools is make students read, if the process is done in a correct way, these students will know twice as many words as low performing ones. The Texas Reading Initiative (2002) argues that it is supposed that students should read at least 21 minutes per day to reach almost two million words per year.

Teaching vocabulary in class could be done in two different ways: direct and indirect. The first one is the direct teaching of specific words such as a pre-teaching prior reading and writing, teachers could be able to teach 400 words per year in a school, students receive the original words and besides synonyms of them. When this is done correctly students develop “word consciousness” for reading and thus good oral skills.

Indirect instruction includes exposing pupils to new words, having them to read a lot, helping them to appreciate new words, basically students are surrounded by vocabulary. There are basic recommendation for teaching vocabulary in reading and writing. The use of direct and indirect methods, exposure and repetition based on a context and finally the capability to vary the vocabulary techniques done by the teacher.

The role of vocabulary in language proficiency is essential and it should be done by the development of both research and teaching, where teacher use the appropriate technique to go beyond the barriers and limitations of phonics.

Word recognition is the basis of Reading, students normally connect words from speech with the printed ones. A match is generated, the real vocabulary learning process is done when

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users link new words with the previous ones and vocabulary comprehension is produced. For understanding of text, students need to be familiar with 95 percent of words in a passage otherwise if students decode instruction by themselves will not guarantee that they will gather enough meaning from what they are reading.

The importance of vocabulary in reading is hard to dispute, the number, accuracy, and effectiveness of this in reading much bigger than in spoken language.

To teach vocabulary in an effective way is necessary to follow some steps, these are some implicit and explicit practices that may be adapted to be used in our setting.

Read Alouds. It's a way to expose students' new vocabulary beyond their level of decode.

Composed by selected words which the teacher needs to introduce before reading the text out loud, specially used to define vocabulary that comes up in the passage.

New with the known. It's the association between new words and already known ones, giving emphasis in the relationship and also the difference between them.

New Words in Sentences. It focuses on the use of new words but each one in different contexts, which students understand and recognize every time they find them.

Multiple Senses. When the proposed vocabulary is introduced or reinforced could have an easily and effective storage in the brain, it should be suitable the use of pictures, listening, readings, texts, and writings activities.

Vocabulary has an important effect in all the components of proficiency reading.

Vocabulary learning should be done in a progressive way; when it increases, learning increases.

In the next part the Colombian standards will be analyzed in order to see which regulations affect vocabulary instruction, and (second or foreign language) L2 instruction in our country. This instruction could be done by adapting vocabulary activities and techniques to

improve and make easier vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, the L2 proficiency would be increased, due to vocabulary enrichment.

The relevance of vocabulary is clear and every method or class strategy need to engage it as a component. The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for example, encourages teachers to develop a myriad technique for teaching vocabulary so that students remain engaged and multiple learner types are reached. Current research suggests that visual techniques are extremely effective for vocabulary acquisition, with modern multimedia technologies providing teachers with a range of options for presentation including many authentic materials that would otherwise be unavailable. The use of multimedia is helpful for both the students' comprehension and retention processes, as visual memory is extremely powerful. However, teachers must pay careful attention to craft a pedagogical strategy that readily incorporates the development of auditory skills as well. Furthermore, the quality of tasks selected directly reflects the depth of cognition for the learners. This connection is significant, for the higher the cognition level, the more meaningful the outcome. In order to maximize vocabulary development, teachers should apply activities that require students to employ context and students' background knowledge so that they engage more deeply with the material. As students' knowledge of the target languages progresses, it is imperative to initiate comprehension checks to ensure that students are retaining information and can properly apply it. Overall, second language instructors should consider vocabulary as an integral part of language acquisition and work to build a creative and continually evolving repertoire of classroom techniques.

Proficiency in Colombian Standards

To work properly in a public high school teachers have to follow some regulations. These ones give a guide or a scheme of aims to pursue to reach the appropriate level in proficiency. In

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Colombia this proficiency of eleventh grade has been proposed by MEN (Ministerio de Educación Nacional) it states that one of the objectives of language education should be the acquisition of speaking, reading and comprehension skills in at least one foreign language. The main objective of this process is to instruct Colombian citizens to be able to communicate in English seen as a second language. El artículo 21 de La Ley General de Educación (Ley 115 de 1994) establish that all educative institutes should offer their students the learning a foreign language since the basic level. As a result in 2004, the MEN decided to adapt a framework for learning, teaching and language assessment. Thus, the common European Framework was elected by reason of its firmness and operation in the educative field. From that point, Colombian goals were established according to international English competences in both basic and secondary education. These Colombian standards were published in 2006.

ICFES Examination. Currently Saber 11, is a standardized test similar to the SAT in the United States. The test is administered prior to graduation in Colombian high schools final year, 11th or 12th. It can be taken as many times as a student sees fit. The test is thoroughly developed and published by the ICFES.

Although the ICFES provides several tests for different academic purposes, the ICFES test is nationally recognized as the most important test since it qualifies students according to their actual academic skills and therefore it can affect the possibilities that a student might have to be accepted in Public and Private Colleges.

English. The foreign language section is obligatory for all students. It has seven sections (also known as PARTS) which assess the different language skills (except listening and speaking). Each section of 45 questions, in all it has a quantitative scale from 0 to 100 and a qualitative grade given according to the Common European Framework:

Beginner (A1). Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.

Elementary (A2). Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

Intermediate (B1). Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

Upper intermediate (B2). Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Table 1
Proficiency Colombian Standards

Level group	Common name of levels in Colombia	Educative Level where each level should be reached	Targets for Academic proficiency 2019
A1	Beginner	Grades 1 to 3	
A2	Elementary	Grades 4 to 7	
B1	Intermediate	Grades 8 to 11	Minimum level for the 100% of high school graduates
B2	Upper Intermediate	Higher education	Minimum level for English teachers Minimum level for graduates from other careers
C1	Advanced		minimum level for new graduates
C2	Proficiency		

Note. Adapted from: Ministerio de Educación Nacional. (2006). Serie Guías N° 22, *Formar en Lenguas extranjeras: Inglés ¡El reto!* (p. 14). Bogota: Espantapajaros Taller.

Vocabulary Acquisition

In words of Bonnie, (2001) vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively. In general, vocabulary can be described as oral or reading ones. Oral vocabulary refers to the words that we use in speaking or recognize in listening. Reading vocabulary refers to words we recognize or use in print.

In addition to that, Bonnie (2001) argues that vocabulary plays an important part in learning to read. As beginning readers, children use the words they have heard to make sense of the words they see in print. For example, what happens when a beginning reader comes to the word dig in a book? As the student to figure out the sounds represented by the letters d, i, g, the reader recognizes that the sounds make up a very familiar word that she has heard and said many times. Beginning readers have a much more difficult time for reading words that are not already part of their oral vocabulary. Take into consideration the magnitude which vocabulary has, it is relevant in reading comprehension. Readers cannot understand what they are reading without

knowing what the most of the words mean. As students learn to read more advanced texts, they must learn the meaning of new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary.

Teaching Vocabulary

Boyd (2008) proposes that teaching vocabulary is a key factor when learning a foreign language and it includes giving instructions about the form of words, the pronunciation and the meaning they convey. At the same time, this process involves three fundamental steps such as Presenting, Practicing and Producing in order to have an effective vocabulary learning process. Teaching vocabulary has become a central part in EFL classrooms and most teachers are concerned about implementing effective ways to teach it. This article is aimed at giving a short explanation about the most important aspects that any teacher must take into account in order to have a successful vocabulary teaching process such as the amount of words that a person should know in order to communicate, what the knowledge of a word means, how the vocabulary is retrieved and which words to select in order to be taught.

Furthermore, according to Thornbury, (2000, p. 1), language appears first as words and in terms of the way each of us learned our first and any subsequent language. Thus, the more words the learners know, the more fluent they become when using a foreign language. In words of Folse (2008), basic level of vocabulary will allow learners to communicate some ideas to certain degree, better communication can be accomplished when learners have acquired more vocabulary. Clearly then, it could be approached toward relevant aspects inside learning vocabulary, it takes into consideration the challenges teachers have in EFL contexts.

Teacher's Role in Vocabulary. A look at the teaching practices in the past suggests that vocabulary teaching has always been influenced by current trends in linguistic and psycholinguistic research. The naturalistic approach has a big implicit incidence on vocabulary

learning, which is the emphasis is basic on guessing the meaning from the context by using monolingual dictionaries, whereas defining and translating lexical items were avoided.

On the other hand, explicit vocabulary teaching would ensure that lexical development in the target language follows a systematic and logical path, thus avoiding uncontrolled accumulation of sporadic lexical items.

In addition to that, teachers can apply a host of strategies and activities. Hatch and Brown (2000; 401) propose that teaching strategies refer to everything teachers do or should do in order to help their learners to learn. For this, a teacher should employ them depending on the available time, the content (i.e. the component of knowledge that learners intent to acquire). Teaching strategies are also dependent on specific principles such as: planned and unplanned vocabulary.

Unplanned vocabulary teaching. It relates to teacher's spontaneous reactions with the aim to help learners when the needs arises, in which case teachers improvise. Seal (1991) suggests that teachers need to convey and check the meaning and finally consolidate it in students' memory.

Planned vocabulary teaching. Teachers can introduce and present the meaning of new lexical items, encourage learners to review and practice.

There are four important aspects teachers need to consider. The first is that teachers need to plan and provide a well-balance course. This step helps teachers to stablish the students' English level providing a complexed vocabulary which is essential to the development of language skills, which have been neglected. The second step is to train the learners in some useful vocabulary techniques: guessing from context, learning from word cards, using word parts, and dictionary use. The third step helps teachers to do an observation about their vocabulary grown and acquisition which is determined by testing the learners. And the final step

is called teaching vocabulary, where teachers put into practice assessing vocabulary teaching

Vocabulary Strategies

Definitions. In the target language may be very handy if they are expressed in terms that are better known or more easily guessed than the word that is defined. In this direction teachers and students can refer to authentic and reliable dictionaries.

Self-Defining Context. The context makes the situation clear, and this in turn illuminates the meaning of the new word. This practice saves time and develops an intensive reading habit and better understanding.

Pictures and Drawings. Pictures of many types and colours can be used successfully to show the meaning of words and sentence. Handmade pictures can also be used as there is no need to be very artistic.

Realia. Real objects or models of real objects are very effective and meaningful showing meanings but handling real objects, a teacher must be practical and should not be superfluous.

Parts of Words. The parts of complex and compound words may be more common than the words themselves. Separating such words into their component parts generally elaborates the meaning.

Reading the Word. Reading words aloud is also very beneficial. It makes a learner familiar with the word and also improves pronunciations of the learners.

Writing the Word. It will enable the class to write the new word while the auditory memory is fresh, even if the objective is only to read. Writing or copying the word from the blackboard will give the student a chance to understand the grammatical aspect of the word such as noun, verb, adverb, adjective etc.

Specific techniques or special combinations of the above techniques may be applicable

for particular groups of words. Words that are easy to learn, words of normal difficulty and difficult words.

Criteria

New word vocabulary activities which are mostly explicit instruction ones should follow certain parameters or guidelines, which give them a basis to be created or selected in any context. The content, result, efficiency, simplicity and design are basic components of their criteria.

Rich content and context. The context and content reign these activities. The cognitive, social and linguistics are cues that students use for learning vocabulary, they derive meanings according to context, and it makes them more efficient users. The context also encourages them to continue learning not just inside but besides outside the classroom, these activities are most certain to result in useful learning.

Engaging. Learning is done through involvement. The correct process could be done with the appropriate structure of the activity, this structure might encourage active participation by the new word users, the more likely they will be to attend and learn. Providing balance in a well-designed program, teachers can enhance retention by creating activities that have the potential for some emotional connection, some of them based on topics that they would find interesting. Activities in which the learner experiences a deep emotion, like joy, curiosity, surprise, or wonder, make it easier for the new word to be stored and retrieved.

Clarity and simplicity. The current search of activities that help making the key concept clearer in the mind of the learner. At the earlier stages of word learning, distinctions between what a word means and what it does not mean have to be crystal clear. Through verbal explanation and contrast, we could accomplish some of that, but we have to follow that up with experiences that allow the communicator's active participation in a simple and efficient way.

Interactive. Solitary activities, like worksheets, are fine for practicing things that you have already learned, but that is not a therapy. Our focus is on vocabulary teaching experiences that involved dialogue and exchange. These activities should contain both teacher and students, within this process, they do not require a lot of work from the teacher because these techniques can be used over and over again. In words of Zangari (2012), he describes relevant activities applied in the vocabulary. The first and most important one is the useful result in learning. Secondly, they do not require teacher's work providing a balance well-designed program, in which these activities are simple and efficient and whose use can be done many times. In the same token, it may be relevant to describe some techniques in relation with criteria:

Learning from Word Cards. Each learner provides their pack of cards to their partner who tests them on their recall of the meaning by saying the word and getting them to give the translation. This can also be done by giving the translation and getting them to give the word form.

Learning from Word Parts. The teacher writes words on the board and the learners cut them into parts and give meaning of the parts.

Give the meaning by using an L1 translation, using a known L2 synonym or a simple definition in the L2. After this, it's essential to break the words into parts and giving the meaning of the parts and the whole word. Showing the prefix, stem and suffix that make up the word.

Learning by Using Dictionary. Nation (2001, pp. 284-288) states that a useful word occurs in a reading text, the teacher trains learners in the strategy of using a dictionary. It's significant to remember, though, that the dictionary can never know the exact context in which the word is being used, it will need to apply some relevant steps:

1. Use your knowledge of the language to get information about the grammar of the word

you want look up

2. Guess the general meaning of the word in the context
3. Decide if it is necessary to look up the word, Can you understand the sentence without it?
4. Find the word in the dictionary
5. Choose the correct entry in the dictionary
6. Check the meaning given by the dictionary to see if it fits in the context

At the end, the last process is to identify grammatical patterns which defined whether word is a noun, verb, adjective, etc. and which patterns it occurs in.

Learning Vocabulary in EFL Contexts

First of all, it is significant to say that vocabulary learning is one the major challenges for foreign language learners deal with in the process of learning, and the main question teachers need to keep in mind in order to solve the problem statement is how to suggest a framework for training EFL learners in vocabulary learning strategies.

According to Hatch and Brown (1995), vocabulary is central to language and is of great significance to language learners. It means words are the building blocks of a language since the label objects, actions, and ideas where people cannot convey the intend meaning. Additionally as cited in Morin and Goebel (2001) sustain that teaching vocabulary should not only consists on teaching specific words but also aiming to equip learners with necessary strategies to expand their vocabulary knowledge.

Following this further, Seal (2001) states that word knowledge is recognized as a component of communicative competence and it is necessary to take into account the production and comprehension in a foreign language.

In words of Richards (1976), some relevant aspects should be kept in mind in order to

know a word used in a foreign language, aspects such as: general frequency use that a word has, derivation of it, semantic features, and what are the different meanings according to their items. Spelling, pronunciation, collocations, and appropriateness are parameters for applying when a word needs to be defined.

Various intentional vocabulary learning strategies are available for a language teacher to adopt in the second language classroom. Blachowic, et. Al. (2006) noted that there are characteristics of effective instructions that are applicable across teaching contexts. Firstly, learners should be actively involved in the generation of word meanings rather than being passive learners who receive the information. The existence of prior knowledge is important as the foundation for new information to be built on. Secondly, instruction should provide both definitional and contextual information about the words to be learned as well as multiple exposures and opportunities to use them. To build on learners' prior knowledge for effective word learning, Eeds and Cockrum (1985) revealed that word meanings are best taught by expanding learners' schemata and helping them to fit new words into their existing knowledge. Most ESL students are strongly proficient in their L1, this could be effective to trigger students' existing schemata and relate it to the target words to teach vocabulary. The teacher takes on an important role in this process of intentionally learning new lexicons because the teacher needs to be constantly interactive to activate and scaffold learners' background knowledge.

The next step is to approach attempts to classify vocabulary learning strategies employed by foreign and second language learners. Taking this into consideration, Gu and Johnson (1996), list second language vocabulary learning strategies as:

Meta-cognitive Strategies. They consist on selective attention and self-initiation strategies, which employ selective attention strategies know which words are important to learn

and which ones are essential for adequate comprehension of a passage. In this case, the relevant fact is when learners use self-initiation strategies; they can use a variety of means to make the meaning vocabulary items clear. The meta-cognitive strategies are classified in: conscious preview of new vocabulary, learn ways of expanding one's vocabulary learning and retention, target-situating of the vocabulary, allocating time for vocabulary learning, the actual application of newly learnt vocabulary, testing them and finally aiming to remember a certain number of words.

Cognitive Strategies. Learners using guessing strategies draw upon their background knowledge and use linguistic clues like grammatical structures of a sentence to guess the meaning of a word. The cognitive strategies are, for example, vocalization of the words, use of collocations, writing and oral rehearsal, imagery strategies, grouping of semantically connected words, linking words to familiar synonyms and antonyms, prefixes and suffixes use, vocabulary notes and cards strategy.

Besides, these strategies should be taught hand in hand with the mentioned cognitive strategies to achieve the best results of vocabulary retention. Mizumoto and Takeuchi (2009) revealed that some learners gained awareness of the applicability of these strategies that they had not been exposed before the explicit strategy instruction. Association strategies is said to be the most effective as one learner reveals in an interview that he had never known the strategy of relating target words with already known synonyms or antonyms, using prefixes and suffixes and grouping them semantically. The subject felt this is an effective way of learning which should be taught when he started to learn English.

Pursuing this further, Brett, Rothlein, and Hurley (1996) claim that the explicit way of teaching vocabulary intentionally can draw learners' attention to the process of word learning

and it requires the teacher's active role in imparting this knowledge in a regular classroom instruction. Students who receive explicit instruction of words through meaningful context not only are able to define words better but also are able to define words more quickly.

Rote Rehearsal. Ahmad (2011) finds that intentional vocabulary learning based on synonyms, antonyms, word substitution, multiple choice, scrambled words and crossword puzzles, regardless of context, is not so effective, because learners are more prone to rote learning. Learners are said to memorize the meaning of the new words without undergoing cognitive process. He further explains that this method of word learning is less likely to transform the target words learnt into active process. However, rote learning is one of the easiest strategies for L2 learners to pick up words and commit them to memory by repetition until they can be recognized.

According to Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992), the process of repeating words over and over again until they are memorized is called rote memorization. Laufer (2010) states that memorization contributed to most of the retention of the meaning of words, more than inferring word meaning from context, followed by checking meanings from the dictionary. Although this is an out-dated practice, many learners still resort to this practice especially to motivate low proficiency or beginner learners.

The Influence of Vocabulary on Classroom Practice

Taking into account what is the accurate framework for strategy training, some variable are consider like learner's proficiency level, language modality, task, text and other implements which have an impact on the effectiveness of strategies that are taught and used inside classroom context, but considering how much time learners need to spend on training.

The efficient framework applying in classroom has several items, and these let students to

improve their vocabulary exercises:

- A. Reporting their lists in class
- B. The use of collaboratively construction about a new list of vocabulary
- C. Brainstorming sessions

It is relevant to say at this point, teachers can model the strategy for teaching vocabulary according to learners needs. Finally, teachers have two options at their disposal to foster interaction: They can provide learners opportunities to do different vocabulary exercises. This will expose them to different strategies, and learners will discover which one will be the correct for them. Teachers can provide learners with questionnaires to help them gain insight into what strategies are more suitable for them. The questionnaire might include questions such as “Do I learn vocabulary more easily doing speaking activities with my classmates? Am I comfortable with analyzing word parts? Does it work better for me to collect words on index cards or make word lists?” (Sokmen, 1997, p. 256).

Furthermore, Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) propose that teachers should also recognize the adequate vocabulary learning strategies: using notebooks, dictionaries and expansion exercises like semantic mapping, are highly beneficial and could be introduced as early as possible. Learners can write the words they encounter on their vocabulary notebook and add L2-L1 translation or other knowledge they gradually acquire about the words such as: collocations, semantic associations, frequency tallies, roots and derivations. Learners can add and rehearse more information through their personal notebooks. Besides, the vocabulary notebook could serve as a valuable resource as an influence to acquire new vocabulary.

Specific Word Instruction. Or teaching individual words, it can deepen students’ knowledge of word meanings. In-depth knowledge of word meanings, it can help students

understand what they are hearing or reading. It also can help them use words accurately in speaking and writing.

Word Learning Strategies. It is not possible for teachers to provide specific instruction for all the words their students do not know. Therefore, students also need to be able to determine the meaning of words that are new for them, but not being taught directly to them. They need to develop effective word-learning strategies. Word-learning strategies include:

A. How to use dictionaries and other reference aids to learn word meanings and to deepen knowledge of word meanings;

B. How to use information about word parts to figure out the meanings of words in text.

C. How to use context clues to determine word meanings.

In using dictionaries and other reference aids, students must learn how to use dictionaries, glossaries, and thesauruses to help broaden and deepen their knowledge of words, even though these resources can be difficult to use. The most helpful dictionaries include sentences providing clear examples of word meanings in context.

Context clues are hints about the meaning of an unknown word that are provided in the words, phrases, and sentences that surround the word. Context clues include definitions, restatements, examples, or descriptions. Because students learn most word meanings indirectly, or from context, it is important that they learn the use of context clues effectively.

Not all contexts are helpful, however. Some contexts give little information about a word's meaning. An example of an unhelpful context is the sentence, "We heard the back door open, and then recognized the buoyant footsteps of Uncle Larry." A number of possible meanings of buoyant could fit this context, including heavy, lively, noisy, familiar, dragging, plodding, and so on. Instruction using context clues as a word-learning strategy should include

the idea that some contexts are more helpful than others.

At this point, taking into account that learning vocabulary varies according to the context, now some suggestions concerning to vocabulary context is going to be presented.

Some Considerations to be Taken Prior to Strategy Training

First, teachers need to find out what strategies and in particular what combination of strategies should be taught. Second, the learning strategies known and preferred by learners should be identified and take into account. Third, Ellis (1994) claims that some learners may need to be convinced that strategy training is to their own benefit. Fourth, as Nation (2001) states, after deciding what strategies to give attention to, teachers should decide how much time to spend on training the learners in strategy use, and teachers should work out a syllabus for each strategy that covers the required knowledge and provides enough independent practice. Fifth, in words of Schmitt (1997), when considering which vocabulary learning strategies recommend to students, teachers should notice not to take strategies as inherently good. They should bear in mind that effectiveness depends on the context in which strategies are used. The effectiveness with which learning strategies can be both taught and used, depends on such variables as: “proficiency level, task, language modality, background knowledge, context of learning, target language and learner characteristics” (Chamot & Rubin, 1994, p. 771-6). Finally, Nation (2001) argues that teachers should have in mind that learners need to understand the goal of each strategy and the conditions under which it works best. Learners also need enough practice to feel confident and proficient in using strategies. Therefore, teachers should provide sample time for strategy training. After these issues are settled, teachers can adopt an appropriate framework for training students in using vocabulary learning strategies.

Chapter Three

Methodology of Research

This chapter is focused on the essential methodological elements that were considered to develop the study, such as the setting, population, sample, data collection techniques, the participants, and data collection techniques.

The research paradigm

As a component of language vocabulary teaching may be a difficult process, because it differs according to the context and the nature of the learners. Vocabulary learning supports language acquisition and proficiency development. The methodology that was used for the development of this research was qualitative, because of its characteristics. Thus, a qualitative research refers to properties, attributes and values of individual and social cultures or contexts. This option was chosen because even though the results of the proposed strategies are not observable and measurable by means of numbers or percentages, the important thing is to observe how the students react to the vocabulary strategies, and how their proficiency is affected by specific vocabulary instruction.

Type of research

The type of research which was applied in order to develop this project was the descriptive research. It describes information concerning the current status of the phenomena to define "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation or the group of characteristics of variables from a group or interest areas, like the events and studies and correlation between them. The correlation study which investigates the relationship between variables, to develop studies which seek to determine changes over the time. In words of Borg and Gall (1989), observation are frequently used to collect descriptive data without changing the

environment. Its only function is to tell what the situation, characteristics and population being studied are.

Escalante (1987) claims that a descriptive research is a sort of systematic study which describes the participant's issues and interests areas, but is not interested in the explanation of facts. This type was appropriate because the proposed problematic was dealing with people and description of a particular situation.

Setting

This process set in one public high school from the city of Pasto, which is called COLEGIO SAN ANTONIO. Its English instruction syllabus agrees to the average aims proposed for all public high schools.

Population

With the purpose of getting the accurate information and obtain the correct results, it is essential to work with both teachers and learners from high school. The teachers' participation would be crucial because they focus their lessons on vocabulary acquisition with the techniques.

Sample

The selection process is this:

1 English teacher from eleventh grade

The principal participant was the teacher. The observation formats were applied to find out his/her rehearsal the researched topic.

5 Students of the classroom

Five is a significant sample, they would be chosen randomly from the group. They are important in order to know their learning experience in the class. The students are the evidence of the current instruction process, how much of the language they have learned could be

measured by means of an achievement test.

Data Collection Techniques

This monograph describes the effect of vocabulary- focused techniques and its relevance on vocabulary acquisition on eleventh grade learners in a public high school in Pasto. For that reason the participants were essential, each one is going to give a referent of the topic. Teachers and students were the object of study, all the participants' attitudes might be useful to describe the role of vocabulary acquisition on learners' proficiency.

Observation is an accurate technique to find out information about our context. It has been chosen because is the most suitable for this kind of research. It is an excellent way to collect information in the contexts where the events occur, it allows the researchers to live and interact directly with the participants.

When we monitored lessons where the teachers focus their classes on the application of some vocabulary strategies, we could note which are the benefits and limitations of that explicit approach to vocabulary instruction, and in a general, the researchers may witness the importance of vocabulary instruction on learners' proficiency development.

The participants' perspective towards this collection technique is very important, for that reason it is necessary to give them an idea of the purpose of the study, and the benefits that it would reflect, such as a guide that they could use to get information and to get the results that they could have.

An achievement test would be also a technique to measure how much students have successfully learned about vocabulary until that moment, the results of this vocabulary test would show what have been the results in terms of vocabulary instruction techniques and compare to the results proposed by eleventh grade standards.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

For this research study we have considered the results offered by the data collection techniques. These ones were based in relation with the main and specific objectives proposed at the beginning of the study in order to describe the effect of vocabulary-focused techniques. The analysis of data was done following the next order:

- To observe the most significant information showed in class including materials, strategies and vocabulary techniques.
- The specific vocabulary techniques based on the eleventh grade standards that were used by the teacher as a help or tool in class.
- To compare the proficiency test results with the standards in order to show how effected were these techniques to introduce or to improve vocabulary acquisition of the students.

These steps have been used to describe not only the effect of vocabulary-focused techniques but also, the relevant benefits and limitations of each one, and how these would allow a better management of class.

Achievement test.

According to Richards, Platt, H & Platt, J. (1992), it is a type of test planned with the purpose of assessing how much of language learners have learned taking into consideration a specific reference of a syllabus needs, and it could be typically given at the end of a course.

- Participants: the proficiency text was applied to eleventh grade students in a public high school, this was done on February 2016. Students spent sixty minutes for doing the text. The proficiency text was developed with the purpose of measure students vocabulary levels according to Colombian English standards, and to see how effective the use of vocabulary activities by the teacher was.

- Components: the use of two texts taking into consideration the glossary use and the guessing from context abilities by students.

The second activity designed for the text was the use of pictures and drawings which showed the ability to connect vocabulary with images. And the final activity was the use of essential prefix and suffix to help students breakdown new words based on their understanding about these particles. Furthermore, the mini-text results exposed the effectiveness of vocabulary focused techniques to improve vocabulary acquisition in students.

Observations. They were done in an eleventh grade English class. They were carried out on February 2016, just before applying the mini-text previously mention.

The three of them took a school hour (forty-five minutes approximately). This technique was used in order to witness and visualize all the components used to introduce and revise vocabulary in class including strategies, materials and most important the activities used. This process has been developed with the purpose of seeing the management of vocabulary fulfilled by the teacher in class. This observation is formed by three observation format sheets, each one checks one of these three components. The first one are the items which are used wittily in the classroom. This step to check which vocabulary activities based on materials were applied. Secondly, the strategies that propose different vocabulary techniques focused on the materials previously mentioned. And finally, the activities used, showing the effectiveness and frequency of their use on vocabulary acquisition on the proficiency of eleventh-grade learners.

Chapter Four

Administrative Aspects

Table 2
Schedule of theory

Date	Event	Description
August 25 th – 30 th	Problem statement and description	Importance of vocabulary techniques as tool in class
September 5 th – October 2 nd	Syllabus design	Justification, definition of terms, objectives and limitations
October 3 rd – October 9 th	Editing and handing of chapter one	
October 10 th – November 20 th	Literature review	Revision of contents based on the syllabus and theory
November 25 th – December 25 th	Literature review editing	Choice of relevant information and first design of literature review
	Editing and handing of chapter two	
Schedule of design		
Date	Event	Description
January 15 th – January 31 st /2016	Methodology	Definition of research paradigm, design and type
February 3 rd – February 28 th	Setting population and sample	Establishment of place for the project. Choice of participants and sample
March 1 st -	Research techniques	Selection of accurate techniques base on theory and literature review
March 5 th	Observation	Formation of tables for classroom observation, regarding: materials, strategies and techniques
March 7 th	Achievement test	A mini test was created base on the topics, syllabus, and techniques observe in class
Pre-application Schedule		
Date	Event	Description
March 15 th -March 25 th	Analysis and Interpretation of Data	Description of techniques and the steps interpretation of its future results
February 3 rd – February 28 th	Editing and handing of chapter three	

THE EFFECT OF VOCABULARY FOCUSED TECHNIQUES

Date	Event	Description
March 1 st -	Administrative aspects	Design of schedule and Budget charts regarding the materials and items used.
March 5 th	Editing and handing of the project chapters and presenting final version	

Budget

Table 3
Research Budget

Details	Values
Photocopies	14.000
Transportation (Visits to high school)	23.000
Typing of the project	90.000
Doubling of the project	80.000
Incidentals	70.000
OVERALL	277000

THE EFFECT OF VOCABULARY FOCUSED TECHNIQUES

Appendix A**Class observation form**

Tick the items that were observed in class

ITEMS	YES	NO	N/A
1. Bilingual dictionary			
2. Monolingual dictionary			
3. Pictures (Flashcards)			
4. Drawings (Board)			
5. Tables charts			

Tick the strategies which the teacher used for teaching the topics in class

STRATEGIES	YES	NO	N/A
1. Word Definitions			
2. Self-Defining Context			
3. Pictures and Drawings			
4. Parts of words			
5. Realia			
6. Reading and Writing the word			

THE EFFECT OF VOCABULARY FOCUSED TECHNIQUES

Tick the frequency these techniques were used in class

TECHNIQUES	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	HARDLY EVER	NEVER
1. Use of dictionary				
2. Family words				
3. Synonyms and Antonyms				
4. Word cards				
5. Roots of words essential prefix and suffix				
6. Physical demonstrations				
7. Draw to visualize a word				
8. Word glossaries				
9. Guessing from the context				
10. Word lists				
11. Vocabulary log				

Appendix B

Achievement test

Colegio San Antonio
Eleventh grade
Vocabulary focused techniques

PARTE 1

RESPONDA LAS PREGUNTAS 1 A 5 DE ACUERDO AL SIGUIENTE TEXTO:

Lea el texto de la parte inferior y seleccione la definición correcta para cada una de las palabras subrayadas.

WHY I DIDN'T WANT TO BE A MILLIONAIRE

When Lydia Nash appeared on the TV programme *who wants to be a millionaire?* ¹and was fortunate enough to win \$16,000, she decided to give all the money away. This wouldn't have been surprising if she had been rich or famous, ²but Lydia is a 19-year-old student.

Lydia gave all the money to a charity which helps orphan children in Thailand where she had also worked as a volunteer for the previous three years. 'I first visited the orphanage when I was seventeen, ³besides I felt very depressed by what I saw. When I got back to England I felt angry-looking around all I could see were people who were obsessed with money. That convinced me to return to Thailand the following year'.

After she won the money some of her friends at university thought that maybe she had made the wrong decision. 'Some people said I should have saved it for a deposit to buy a house or to pay back my student Loan' Lydia said. 'That really annoyed me. ⁴Also students seem to live in an unreal world, where they constantly complain about being poor. ⁵Although there's an enormous difference between our situation and people who have absolutely no money'.

With the help of the money Lydia gave the, the charity has just finished building "Rainbow House", a new facility that will house 50 young children. ⁶So, they will live there until they are adopted.

If Lydia had won a million dollars and not only \$16,000, would she still have given away all the money? She said, "Before going to the show I thought a lot about what it would be like to have a lot of money and I realized that I wouldn't like it at all. ⁷Then, of course, as I had been to the orphanage and had seen all the work that needed to be done, I knew how useful that money could be. It was far more important for the charity than it could be for me. I definitely think I got more enjoyment out of giving the money away than if I had kept it for myself."

THE EFFECT OF VOCABULARY FOCUSED TECHNIQUES

Lea las descripciones de la columna izquierda (A – D), y las palabras numeradas en el texto (1 – 7). ¿Cuál palabra concuerda con la descripción de la izquierda? (las definiciones se pueden repetir.)

1. _____	
2. _____	A. Used to connect words, phrases, or clauses
3. _____	B. Used to show a contrast between two or more things
4. _____	C. At that time in the past or future
5. _____	D. With the result that
6. _____	
7. _____	

Marque las palabras que están resaltadas con la definición más coherente de cada una de ellas.

8. An organization set up to collect money for the needy	E. Fortune _____
9. To put in for safe keeping	F. Charity _____
10. A home for a child who has lost both parents	G. Orphanage _____
11. Without any doubt or sure	H. Deposit _____
12. Serving some purpose	I. Adopted _____
13. Whatever happens by chance or (good or bad) luck	J. Useful _____
14. To take a child from other parents	K. Definitely _____

THE EFFECT OF VOCABULARY FOCUSED TECHNIQUES

Responda las preguntas 15 – 19, según corresponda

¿Dónde puede ver estos avisos?. Marque con X la respuesta correcta

15.



- A. In a mall _____
- B. In the park _____
- C. At the airport _____

16.



- A. At the hospital _____
- B. In the street _____
- C. At the bus station _____

17.



- A. In a cycle lane _____
- B. In a swimming pool _____
- C. On an airplane _____

18.

TICKET BOOTH

1 Ticket For \$5.00
 12 Tickets For \$5.00
 25 Tickets For \$10.00
 50 Tickets For \$25.00
 120 Tickets For \$50.00

HAVE FUN!

- A. In a car _____
- B. In a zoo _____
- C. In a greengrocer's _____

19.



- A. In a bank _____
- B. At a restaurant _____
- C. At a play ground _____

Subraye la respuesta correcta

MY NORMAL DAY

I ²⁰_____ at six o'clock and half past six I ²¹_____ a shower. Later, I ²²_____ sandwiches. Then, I ²³_____ housework. Next, I ²⁴_____ breakfast at home. At eight, I ²⁵_____ by bicycle to university. I ²⁶_____ a book in the library. After university, I ²⁷_____ to work, I don't ²⁸_____ much money, and I am a guide at the national gallery in London, I ²⁹_____ two languages: English and French. At half past six, I ³⁰_____ work and I ³¹_____ back home. At seven o'clock, I ³²_____ dinner at home, I usually make soup because it's easy and cheap. At nine o'clock, I often ³³_____ T.V. I ³⁴_____ to bed at eleven o'clock and I ³⁵_____ for seven hours.

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------|--------------|------------|
| 20. | A. Get up | B. Come back | C. Watch |
| 21. | A. Cook | B. Go | C. Have |
| 22. | A. Finish | B. Make | C. Sleep |
| 23. | A. Do | B. Ride | C. Speak |
| 24. | A. Earn | B. Go | C. Have |
| 25. | A. Read | B. Ride | C. wake up |
| 26. | A. take | B. Cook | C. Read |
| 27. | A. Finish | B. Pay | C. Go |
| 28. | A. Earn | B. win | C. Do |
| 29. | A. Talk | B. Speak | C. Listen |
| 30. | A. Start | B. Believe | C. Finish |
| 31. | A. Come | B. Wake | C. Get |
| 32. | A. Do | B. Have | C. Start |
| 33. | A. Read | B. Go | C. Watch |
| 34. | A. Go | B. Get | C. Sleep |
| 35. | A. Wake | B. Sleep | C. Get |

THE EFFECT OF VOCABULARY FOCUSED TECHNIQUES

Complete la siguiente con los prefijos y sufijos y la forma correcta del adjetivo teniendo en cuenta los diferentes sustantivos

OPPOSITES

Noun	+ Adjective	- Adjective	+ Adverb	- Adverb
Luck	Lucky	Unlucky	Luckily	Unluckily
Fortune	Fortunate	Unfortunate	36_____	37_____
Comfort	38_____	39_____	40_____	41_____
Patience	42_____	43_____	44_____	45_____
Care	46_____	47_____	48_____	49_____

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