

Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Acquisition in the EFL Classroom

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CHAPTER 11

Differences in the Types of Vocabulary Used among students of Three Grades of a Bilingual School

Elizabeth Angélica Roa Pacheco
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Resumen

Se espera que los estudiantes de una segunda lengua incrementen la variedad de palabras usadas tanto cuando hablan como cuando escriben. Sin embargo, muchos de ellos llegan al punto en donde no muestran un progreso y aún se ve que hay un retroceso en cuanto a la cantidad de vocabulario usado. Este estudio trata acerca de la variedad de vocabulario que tienen los estudiantes de diferentes grados de la sección bilingüe de un colegio y se enfoca en identificarlo, describirlo y compararlo en diferentes tareas escritas. La investigación distingue algunas categorías que agrupan los patrones de vocabulario mostrados como cognados, colocaciones y el uso de palabras específicas para nominar objetos, evidenciadas en textos de diferente naturaleza. La metodología usada en este estudio es la etnografía ya que el objeto principal es descriptivo y contrastivo.

Palabras clave

Desarrollo de vocabulario, escritura, cognatos, colocación, palabras específicas.

Abstract

Students of a second language are expected to increase the variety of words they use both when they speak and write. However, many of them get to a point where they do not progress and even regress in the amount of vocabulary used. This study deals with the variety of vocabulary students use in different grades of the bilingual section of a school and points out to identify, describe and compare the vocabulary used in different writing tasks. The research distinguishes some categories that group together vocabulary patterns such as cognates, collocation words, and usage of specific words to nominate objects, evidenced in texts of different nature. The methodology used in this study is ethnography since its goal is mainly descriptive and contrastive.

Key Words

Vocabulary Development – Writing – Cognates – Collocation – Specific Words

1. Introduction

As students of English evolve in their language use, they are expected to use more vocabulary in both speaking and writing. However, it is just in writing that students are more dependent on a varied lexicon because they need to convey clear messages, implying organization and elaboration, with no other tools than words. Texts which are poor detail sometimes are neither clear nor motivating to read. In addition, the wrong selection of words can also confuse the reader.

This study deals with the type of vocabulary students use in three different grades in the bilingual section of a school. Its main aim is to identify the general characteristics existing in every grade studied and to establish categories to find out patterns of distinction to verify whether there is a clear progress or not. We cover here then collocation words, cognates and words that are used unequivocally.

The school where the research was carried out is located in the south of Cordoba. There are about 1400 students and 110 teachers. The school is a private institution owned by a multinational company that provides their employees' children basic education. Therefore most of the students are mine workers' children and very few are children from the community whose parents do not work in the mine.

The school is semi-bilingual since groups of students are divided into two sections known as regular and bilingual. The regular section has an English five-hours per week intensity and the other subjects are taught in Spanish. It has three groups of about 25 students in each grade. On the other hand, the bilingual section covers up to 8th grade. It has an English eight-hours per week intensity in the first three years. And from grade, 4 to 8. They have English five-hours per week intensity. Other subjects such as Math, Geometry and Science are taught in English in all the grades of the section. Social Studies is taught in English from 1st to 3rd grade. The other subjects are taught in Spanish. Each grade has about 25 students and there is only one group per grade. One teacher is in charge of all the subjects taught in English from 1 to 4. And from 5th onwards different teachers guide the students in each of the subjects.

The students at the school take standardized exams that evaluate their performance. One is the Secondary Level English Proficiency Test (SLEP) taken by 9th and 10th grade students and another is the Michigan English Language Institute College English Test (Melicet) taken by 11th grade students. The average results achieved by the students have placed them in a high-intermediate level. In the ICFES exam, the school has been ranked as “Muy Superior” for over four years, showing a consistent performance.

The total number of students in the bilingual section is 185 and their characteristics are: most of them come from a middle -social level and have followed all their studies in the same school. Students start 1st grade when they are about 7 years old and graduate when they are 18. There are more girls than boys. Students that are part of the bilingual section have an average academic performance better than the ones in the non-bilingual section.

The teachers are non-native English speakers but have a high-intermediate level as evidenced by a standardized test they have to take every two years. All English teachers in the bilingual section come from Bogota since it is perceived that the level of graduates in Universities located in Bogota is more competent and most of them have lived in a country where English is spoken as the first language. Teachers use the same methodology and program as well as the same book series to teach (Scott Foresman – Reading) in the first 6 grades. In the last two grades of the section, i.e. 7th and 8th grades, students follow the New Cutting Edge Intermediate book.

The phenomenon already mentioned in the first paragraph is a general concern mainly because regardless of the great quantity of vocabulary students are exposed to, they do not use it in writing. They have their own list of words which is rather limited and which becomes an obstacle when communicating their thoughts. Sometimes the texts do not demonstrate good language proficiency. This issue was addressed by Smith (2003b) who, through his research, indicated that to perform well in writing students need to possess a rich vocabulary.

Learning outcomes are affected because the strategies to cope with lack of vocabulary are different in speaking and in writing. Hence the observable disparity in the vocabulary usage that students have

both when they write and when they speak. There is no one to one relationship. What they communicate orally seems to be richer and more complete than what they communicate in writing. It is therefore difficult to evaluate what students really know when they write texts.

This paper presents the description of the problem, the questions that are intended to be answered in order to identify evidence of the issue we dealt with, the objectives we set once we identified the problem, a theoretical framework, the explanation on the methodology used, the results, a discussion and a brief conclusion. At the end the format of the activities used to collect the information along with some examples of the original texts written by the students, and charts with the words employed divided into categories are attached.

2. Description of the Problem

Students achieve a certain level of proficiency and seem to stop or even regress, especially as they get to higher grades. Students feel limited to use English in writing and find it difficult to express their thoughts. This phenomenon is perceived every time they hand in writing tasks such as story reviews, description of events, personal experience narrations, summaries, and so forth. There is hardly any evidence of word usage different from the basic acquired in the lower grades. This can take the reader to misunderstand the message.

Both teacher and students are involved in the problem. Teachers do not promote or use strategies to help students acquire the vocabulary through constant repetition or through systematic exercises that make students implement new vocabulary. On the other hand, students do not challenge themselves to learn new words and to increase the number of words they usually use.

This fact has been noticeable in the written texts students do with very few exceptions. Only a minority of students, who are engaged in their learning, challenge themselves to use new words that they listen to in songs, learn from TV programs or read in the captions of the movies. The tendency is to overuse the same words regardless of the type of text to be written.

2.1 Research Questions

- › What differences are there in the type of vocabulary used between different grades of the bilingual section of a private school in writing tasks?
- › What differences are there in the type of vocabulary used between 3rd and 5th grade students of the bilingual section of a private school in writing tasks?
- › What differences are there in the type of vocabulary used between 5th and 8th grade students of the bilingual section of a private school in writing tasks?

2.2 Research Objectives

- › To identify the differences in the type of vocabulary used between different grades of the bilingual section of a private school in writing tasks.
- › To describe the vocabulary used in 3rd, 5th and 8th grades of the bilingual section of a private school in writing tasks.
- › To compare the vocabulary used in 3rd, 5th and 8th grades of the bilingual section of a private school in writing tasks.

3. Theoretical Framework

Baker *et al.* (1995) acknowledged the importance of vocabulary achievement. They stated “Not only do students need a rich body of word knowledge to succeed in basic skill areas, they also need a specialized vocabulary to learn content area material” (p. 35).

Research has proven that the beginning of vocabulary learning must be early if children are going to perform successfully in school. (Miller cited in Liberman & Liberman, 1990) suggested that students learn an amazing number of words during their early school years, as many as approximately 3,000 per year on an average, or 8 words per day. However, the number of words students learn varies greatly. As some students are learning eight or more words per day, other students are learning only one or two.

Coomber, Peet, and Smith (1988) proposed a classification of levels of vocabulary proficiency that a student must work through. They describe these levels as:

- › Listening vocabulary: composed of words whose meanings we recognize when we hear them.
- › Reading vocabulary: composed of words whose meanings we recognize when we encounter them in our reading.
- › Writing vocabulary: composed of words we know well enough that we could use them in our writing.
- › Speaking vocabulary: composed of words we use in our speaking.

Students who have mastered a vocabulary word at one level may not have mastered the word at a different level. In fact, “reading vocabularies are usually largest, followed by listening vocabularies, given that speech is less formal than writing, we normally encounter more complex words in what we read than in what we hear.”

We can conclude that acquiring “Writing vocabulary” becomes one of the most difficult issues in language learning because of the degree of formality implied in writing and the need of elaboration. As a result, students must master the ability to understand new words first through listening, and second through reading before they can learn to use vocabulary in writing.

Baker *et al.* (1995) found considerable differences between students in the number of words known. This vocabulary discrepancy tends to increase significantly all over school. Numerous reasons may contribute to the different rates of vocabulary growth. Biological factors that may partially account for differential rates of vocabulary growth include general language deficits and memory problems. Also, a strong connection has been found between environmental indicators such as socioeconomic status and vocabulary knowledge, indicating that home factors may contribute substantially to students’ vocabulary knowledge. In a straight line teaching word meanings does not effectively reduce the breach between students with poor versus rich vocabulary because of the magnitude of the disparity.

An explanation on the reasons why students display differences in the vocabulary they use when they speak and when they write appears in feature 19 in 'Towards a language-based theory of learning' by (Halliday, 1993):

In the first years of schooling these two factors come together: children have to struggle with the written medium, and they have to monitor their own learning process. The result is that when they have to present their knowledge in written form, they typically regress in semiotic age by anything up to 3 years. A teacher may get a class of 7-year-olds, in preparation for a writing task, talking on some topic with a high level of fluency and common-sense understanding; yet, when they come to write about the topic, their text is in the language of a child of 3 years. For example: *I am a dinosaur. I was hatched out of an egg. Today I was hungry. I ate some leaves.*¹

A writing vocabulary requires a student to have a long-term memory for new words. This requires that the student becomes "actively involved in the words they are learning". Coomber *et al.* (1988) have pinpointed three different methods of elaborative practice: distinctiveness, decision-making, and generation of material. Distinctiveness involves remembering a word because it is dramatic in some fashion. Decision-making is related to the moment we make the choice of either learning or using a word. A student will remember the definition of a word better if he or she makes the decision to remember it himself or herself. Generation of material is related to producing something with what is learned.

On another research conducted by Smith (2003a) on vocabulary development, it was concluded that the vocabulary used by the learner in their writing texts entails the highest level of cognitive development. This is an evidence of the great advantage students would take if they learn and use new vocabulary with an elaboration for writing. In this work, there is a description of the distinction between different levels of vocabulary and it is explained that students exhibit a better vocabulary understanding and usage when they speak or when they read than when they have to write. It also explains the conditions under which vocabulary is learnt

1 Halliday, 1993, p. 110

and used in writing. A main requirement is the active participation of the learner to incorporate the words within his/her lexicon.

Some characteristics of writing that involve the use of vocabulary consider the rate at which this process develops being it a slower process than speaking. Thinking about a word and whether to choose it or not, increases the effort. On the other hand, “Writing is learnt as a second-order symbolic system, with symbols standing for other symbols; hence the learner has to recognize two sets of abstract entities, and also the abstract relation between them”².

The types of tasks students usually perform at school in low and medium grades can be classified under the following categories: narrative, informational, critical and argumentative. Good vocabulary usage is required to achieve written communication in any of the tasks mentioned. This along with a clear understanding of a situation mapped in the mind and the ability to express ideas organized on paper, make the difference between a text with coherence and cohesion difficult to understand.

Elaboration in writing depends on the ability to provide specific details and information to develop a text. The more specific, concrete and relevant the information provided by the writer is, the more complete mental image the reader is going to have. The lack of detail will give more trouble for the reader to picture what the writer states.

3. Vocabulary Categories

In order to study vocabulary differences in groups that share characteristics in common, we have decided to take into account the following categories:

Cognates

Taking into account that the population studied is Spanish native speaker and that according to Green (2004) those bilingual students, whose

2 Ibid. p. 109.

first language is a Romance-rooted language like Spanish, use words that are similar in both, the native and the target language. When it comes to vocabulary acquisition in English, we can deduce that these students can often call on their knowledge of cognates in their native language to determine the meanings of the words in their second language. The number of cognates a student is exposed to tends to increase with the grades as they encounter increasing numbers of words with Latinate roots, especially in subjects such as Science and Math.

Collocation

Words are neither produced nor understood in isolation. They are usually grouped in a way that is not elucidated by means of rules. Thornbury (2004) highlights the good use of collocation words as the most characteristic feature of a high level student. Students who possess a wide range of common collocates have a greater amount of available language that makes their production be more natural and effective. Non-native English speakers have difficulty internalizing expressions that when thought in their native language do not seem to be different.

Specific Words

A more clear understanding of an idea expressed in either oral or written form is achieved when words activate a very specific reference in the reader or the listener's mind. Specificity in the use of words helps to convey more clear and accurate messages as there is a narrower gap for misunderstandings. It avoids overgeneralization because what is written or said refers to just one item. The importance of naming the things by their precise labels, call them actions, characteristics, objects, etc., gives the feeling of language appropriacy as it is also perceived when someone masters the grammar or the sounds of a language.

4. Methodology

Since the main purpose of this study is descriptive and comparative and there is no intention or plan to intervene or be part of the study, the most suitable methodology to use is ethnography. It will allow the

description of the most common patterns of vocabulary usage in three different groups of participants, and then compare these patterns to identify the distinctions.

The data we deal with to do the research implies that the participants have to do different types of writing tasks which they are used to doing in their English classes as homework or classwork. This array of activities along with the time allotted follows what Purcell-Gates, V (1995) suggested as a way to give validity and reliability to the study since it provides a wider view on the characteristics of the students' texts. That is why rather than considering as data the products written about only one theme in just one day, the students are asked to write a variety of texts in different days.

A characteristic of this methodology that is important to examine is the fact that the subjective perceptions and the belief systems of the researchers need to be taken into account. This is because "objectivity" is impossible, given that there are no external "truths" or objective reality to be discovered. Thus this research focuses on the meanings and interpretations of the answers provided by the data given by the population.

Ethnography involves, based on Nunan (1992):

"The study of the culture/characteristics of a group in real-world rather than laboratory settings. The researcher makes no attempt to isolate or manipulate the phenomena under investigation, and insights and generalisations emerge from close contact with the data rather than from a theory of language learning and use."³

Some of the characteristics of this study that went in line with the characteristics of the methodology are:

- › The population was to be studied in an everyday context rather than under experimental conditions.
- › Data was to be gathered only from observation of the most common vocabulary patterns revealed in prepared written exercises.

3 Nunan, D, 1992, p. 55

- › The focus was a group with one characteristic in common: they all belong to the bilingual section of a school.
- › The analysis of the data will involve interpretation of the vocabulary used and will take the form of verbal description and explanation.

The major procedure of ethnographic work is the detailed analysis of gathered data. For this study, based on the information collected in five different writing exercises, the stages followed were the ones proposed by Erickson and Schultz (1981) for analysis of recorded data, but certain changes were implemented to make them more suitable for this work:

- › Stage 1. Global viewing: considering the most notorious characteristics of the vocabulary used in each one of the grades studied.
- › Stage 2. Choice of specific features: grouping or classifying the types of vocabulary used.
- › Stage 3. Specification of differences: By using the classification in last stage, the differences are established between the vocabulary used in 3rd and 5th grades and the ones used in 5th and 8th grades.
- › Stage 4. Detailed description of such differences.
- › Stage 5. Establishing how generalizable the differences analysed are.⁴

To have evidence of what vocabulary students use when they write, we considered that the best way was to ask them to do some tasks where they would be indicated to use English to describe a picture, to narrate a personal experience, to describe a routine, to narrate what happens in a cartoon and to illustrate a process. (See Appendix A).

The exercises were applied to five students in the three grades: 3rd, 5th, and 8th, all of them being part of the bilingual section of the school. The exercises were to be done by the same population chosen randomly. Each activity was to be developed on a different day to prevent boredom. A way to validate the data collection in a triangulation methodology was by having the chosen population perform the five tasks (to make sure that all the tasks would be done in the grade) within the same group. The same task would be done in the other two grades.

4 (Summarised and adapted from: Erickson and Shultz 1981, p.153-7, in van Lier, 1988, p. 65)

Once the texts were written by the students, the texts were analysed to identify the most evident common patterns. At first, some categories such as words used in Spanish or words that were too general to label one item were thought to be highly frequent. However, after reading the whole group of texts, those words were not representative as they had been used by only very few students from different groups in diverse tasks. On the other hand, in spite of having words that were not similar within the same grades, it was possible to group the vocabulary in three different categories: cognates, collocation words and specific words. (See Appendix B).

7. Results

The words classified under the heading cognates demonstrate that students appeal to this type of vocabulary very often. In all tasks there was a predominance to use words that are similar in English and in Spanish with no significant variation in meaning. The choice of words was properly done and is more diverse when we compare 5th and 8th graders.

Regarding the type of task, we found that when students narrate that is when students were asked to talk about a personal experience when they felt really scared; there was a constant increase in the variety of cognates used in all the grades. On the contrary, the difference was not significant when the task to do involved the description of a picture or of a routine which implied a more constricted creation and flexibility for word usage.

The most frequent words used are those very related to the task. This is why words such as *hospital*, *computer*, *ambulance*, *doctor*, and *medicine* appear in all texts where students had to describe a picture. And when students gave an account of the actions they do on a regular weekday, words such as *finish*, *bus*, *class*, and *arrive* prevail though not in all texts. It is worth mentioning that in spite of having a very close type of task such as it is the story created based on a cartoon, very few words are commonly used in the different grades. (See Appendix C).

A basic usage of collocation words can be seen in the lowest grade when the students used conventional chunks of words in the different

tasks. It is clear that for students at the lowest level of English, the use of these words is very limited and repetitive. There are more examples of collocation words in the higher level and their use is more accurate in tasks where students are narrating their daily routine and describing an experience they lived. In less controlled tasks, the use of collocation words is very broad and hardly any of these clusters is repeated. More demanding expressions found in the texts include groups of words such as: *make fun of*, *on purpose*, *back and forth*, and *don't mind*. (See Appendix C).

The collocation category is the one that presents also the most number of misuses in the task where students described their routine. There isn't a general established pattern in the proper management of even very frequent expressions and mistakes such as *wash my teeth*, and *see TV* are evident. (See Appendix C).

There is a growth in the students' appropriacy of collocation words as they reach a higher level of language proficiency. Contrasting the passages written in 3rd grade against those of 5th grade, the breach is not as notorious as it is when contrasting 5th grade and 8th grade texts.

In the way students use specific words to represent a particular item, progress in the students' vocabulary usage is observed as a variety of words appearing in the five tasks is identified. The richer lexicon appears in 8th grade. However, there is not a great range of words used within the same tasks. The activity where a fewer multiplicity of words is used is the description of the routine.

A number of misused words appear in this category and deviate from what the real meaning of the word is. That is the case of *wand* used as walking stick or walking cane, *kick* used for *hit* and *earth* used as land or soil. (See Appendix C).

8. Discussion

In general terms, there is more word usage and more elaboration in 8th grade than in 5th grade and there is no great difference between 5th and 3rd grade. Besides, the tasks that suggest a controlled text given that

they include a picture, or ask for a specific process are accomplished with a narrower range of words.

We recognize the development of vocabulary that is used to name specifically a great variety of items, especially in the activity that requires a more open use of the second language. When we analysed the grammatical function of the words used in the category specific words, we find more multiplicity in the words needed to describe, i.e. adjectives, used by the students in 8th grade, while in the lower grades the tendency is to use words that name objects, i.e. nouns. It is possible that the vocabulary acquired in the higher grades respond to the need to be descriptive.

At the same time, we observed an appropriacy of vocabulary referred to actions and objects to which students are more exposed to with more frequency. This limits the possibility of a more varied use but at the same time more accurate of words that students listen and read in their classes and that allow the inclusion of specific details.

In regard to cognates, the information collected proved what Green (2004) suggested and that was already mentioned in the theoretical framework (p. 12). As the students advance in their academic years, they receive more input of words with Latinate roots, and there is a more frequent use of cognates in their written production. This can imply that students benefit in this aspect from being instructed in the second language in subjects such as science, math and geometry until they reach 8th grade.

We consider that the vocabulary acquisition in English will improve as the grounds of first language vocabulary grow richer. The knowledge of the first language brings students a wide variety of words similar in the two languages. This allows the association and recognition of cognates. In the tasks done by the students, we identify a significant number of words that are not part of what students receive in their academic subjects so it can be understood that cognates are also learnt as a consequence of an improvement in the native language vocabulary.

There is no clear pattern in the variety of mistakes made when students used cognates. This might point out that only in few cases students

challenge themselves to use words they do not feel sure about even when the word is completely known in the native language. This is the case of the words *transornate* and *support*. The first used to indicate the result of a strong emotion and the second to mean tolerance. (See Appendix C). This can be evidence of what Coomber *et al* (1988) mentioned as decision making, referred on page 11. However the decision to choose the word and use it was not correct.

As non-native speakers of English, not only should we accumulate more English words in isolation but also learn the usage of chunks of words. According to the data gathered, the less exposed the students have been to the second language, i.e. in 3rd grade, the more they omit the use of collocation words. At this stage there seems to be a more controlled use of words in isolation and the ways they are usually grouped together doesn't seem to be regarded. This makes texts be less natural and some words appear to be inserted inappropriately in the sentences. In the higher level the usage of collocation words is wider and the texts look more fluent.

The errors in collocation are the most frequent in the majority of the tasks. We believe this phenomenon is a consequence of the interference of the first language in the second language use. In spite of the usage of some words along with others in groups is evidenced in all grades, it is less frequent in 3rd grade. This fact can be proof that in the lower grades the students tend to use the meaning of each word to construct a text while in the higher grades, due to a constant practice, and to the amount of time students are exposed to models of the second language, the words are used in groups in a more natural way. This verifies what Thornbury (2004) highlights as the most predominant feature of a high level student.⁵

As students reach higher levels, they elaborate their written texts more suitably. There is a better usage of terms either as understood in isolation and also when produced in groups. There is also the strategy to appeal to the first language in order to supply words in the second language and this is done to a great extent. The vocabulary differences

5 Mentioned on page 12.

between 3rd and 5th grade are very slight and there are even cases when the texts reveal regression. The progress is not clear and there is not a relevant multiplicity of vocabulary displayed especially when students have to use specific words. The use of cognates does not imply the advance expected in two years and the use of collocation words does not imply a significant variation. The differences between 5th grade and 8th grade in vocabulary usage are more evident, particularly in cognates, and in the specific words used to name an array of items. The texts are more elaborated and there is more meaningful ideas expressed in writing. There is also a more accurate usage of collocation words which gives the readers the feeling of having a more authentic text.

9. Conclusions

What was proposed in this study was achieved in terms of identifying differences in the vocabulary usage of students of three grades of the bilingual section of the school. Some general categories as well as the most frequent were also observed. By having students do a range of tasks it was possible also to find correspondences between the task and the words used so the tasks involving a free narration require a more flexible frame and are accomplished with a wider range of words. On the other hand, tasks that set some boundaries like the description of a picture, the description of a routine or a process, by nature call for a narrower selection of vocabulary.

It is expected that students keep a line of progress as they evolve in their second language learning. Nonetheless, the difference was not clearly seen between 3rd and 5th grade, besides there was evidence of regression. It was not the same when 5th and 8th grade were contrasted. There, we perceived a more standard development in all the categories and in the proposed tasks.

To a certain point, we can also say that the aim of this study has to be complemented by having more data from other types of tasks at a more demanding level that involve argumentation and also more open options to write about. We also recommend having a further study that contrasts the vocabulary, students use against the vocabulary they have been exposed to.

We think that teachers should pay more attention to the kind of vocabulary their students are using because in spite of the result of this study, we think that students who have been exposed to the second language for long time must be able to use the language in a more elaborated way, and not overusing words that are acquired at an early stage.

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Appendix

Research: Vocabulary differences in writing between the grades of a bilingual section of a school.

INSTRUMENT: TESTS

Researchers: Elizabeth Roa & William Medina

Participant: _____ GRADE: _____

Description of a picture

Look carefully at the picture and describe as much as you see is happening.



RESEARCH: Vocabulary differences in writing between the grades of a bilingual section of a school.

INSTRUMENT: TESTS

Researchers: Elizabeth Roa & William Medina

Participant: _____ GRADE: _____

Composition

Write about your daily routine on a regular weekday.

RESEARCH: Vocabulary differences in writing between the grades of a bilingual section of a school.

INSTRUMENT: TESTS

Researchers: Elizabeth Roa & William Medina

Participant: _____ GRADE: _____

Narrative

Write about a personal experience when you felt really scared.

RESEARCH: Vocabulary differences in writing between the grades of a bilingual section of a school.

INSTRUMENT: TESTS

Researchers: Elizabeth Roa & William Medina

Participant: _____ GRADE: _____

Cartoon

Write a story based on what happens in the following cartoon.



from: <http://www.comics.com/comics/ferdnand/index.html>

RESEARCH: Vocabulary differences in writing between the grades of a bilingual section of a school.

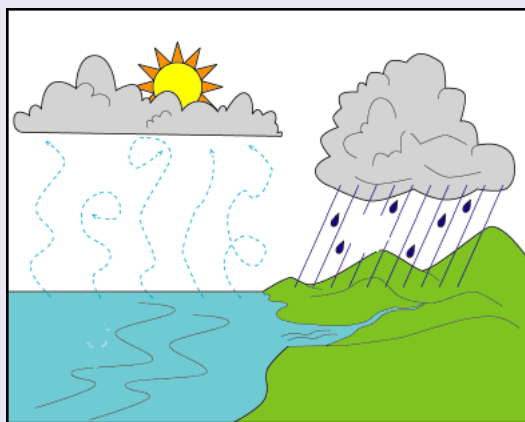
INSTRUMENT: TESTS

Researchers: Elizabeth Roa & William Medina

Participant: _____ GRADE: _____

Description of a process

Describe the water cycle.



Lists of words used presented in categories

Category: Cognates

Activity: Description of a picture

Properly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
Ambulance	adults	Ambulance
bus	ambulance	computer
common	color	doctor
computer	computer	hospital
describe	doctor	medicine
doctor	fracture	organized
hospital	hospital	part
hotel	image	pediatrics
inject	medicine	receptionist
medicine	normal	secretary
	pass	type
	receive	uniform
	secretary	
	serve	

Wrongly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
	mark	
	police	mark

Activity: Composition on routine

Properly used

3RD Grade	5TH Grade	8TH Grade
arrive	activities	activities
bus	arrive	arrive
class	bus	bus
computer	car	class
education	class	difficult
finish	closet	enter
invite	computer	finish
other	finish	important
prefer	mango	moment
secret	mine	orchestra
social	opportunity	organize
study	organize	pajamas
vacation	uniform	possible
visit		practice
vocabulary		routine
		usual
		vitamins

Wrongly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
		Actualize

Activity: Narrative

Properly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
anesthesia	baby	appreciate
cinema	calm	ceramic
continue	car	class
doctor	comedy	experience
enter	curve	family
hospital	direction	future
idea	experience	group
image	horrible	incomplete
presents	imagine	melody
	moment	members
	nervous	moment
	pass	monument
	police	movement
	terrible	music
		phobia
		piano
		precise
		situation
		surprise
		taxi
		terrified
		tunnel
		unfortunately
		visit

Wrongly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
security	brave	act
terrific	function	support
vigilant	transtornate	

Activity: Cartoon
Properly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
air	club	advise
complete	continue	anxious
difference	decide	attention
enemy	furious	celebrate
fantastic	microphone	competition
finish	narrate	congregate
furious	stomach	continue
stomach		desperate
		direction
		distract
		excellent
		excited
		final
		ignore
		impulse
		insist
		interesting
		moment
		participant
		prepare
		prevent
		problem
		rude
		serious

Wrongly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
preparatory	animator	magnific
public		public
support		

Activity: Process
Properly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
affect	atmosphere	accumulate
air	condensate	air
continue	continuous	ascend
cycle	evaporate	condensation
disappear	form	condense
evaporate	occur	contact
gas	transform	create
normal		lagoon
ocean		deposit
original		liquid
pass		form
		humidity
		ocean
		precipitation
		process
		radiation
		reaction
		temperature
		vapor

Wrongly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
	precipitate	consist
		precipitate

Category: Collocation

Activity: Description of a picture

Properly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
look sick	feel better	feel better
take care	look sick	take a picture
wear blue pants	take a picture	wait for
	wait for	walk across the room
	walk across the room	
	wear blue pants	

Wrongly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
		walk though

Activity: Composition on routine

Properly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
arrive home do homework eat breakfast/lunch/ dinner fall asleep stay up late take a shower wake up watch TV	come back do homework eat my breakfast/lunch get ready have fun pick me up put on my clothes take a shower wake up watch TV	arrive home brush my teeth do homework eat breakfast/lunch fall asleep get dressed get ready go home have dinner leave my house pack my bag play the piano take a nap take a rest take me home wake up watch TV

Wrongly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
arrive to my house go out school make homework put my clothes see TV take a bath wash my teeth wash myself wear my clothes (for <i>put on</i>) what I make on Fridays	arrive to my house see TV take a sleep take breakfast wait to (for <i>wait for</i>) wash my teeth	arrive to dress up make homework take breakfast/lunch

Activity: Narrative
Properly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
have a dream see a movie wake up	get shocked go back last year lose control passing by	all around fall over get in a taxi in danger of lose a tooth pass through to be through

Wrongly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE

Activity: Cartoon
Properly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
don't care about something go bowling to be ready for	to get mad	back and forth don't mind have fun knock down make fun of make silence on purpose pay attention to take something seriously to get close to

Wrongly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
lose the air		breath on his neck make an excellent play

Activity: Process
Properly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
take long time to be over	to be full of so on	make contact with start over take place

Wrongly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
to get dry		

Category: Specific words

Activity: Description of a picture
Properly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
burn	bathroom	alone
clock	chair	bored
girl	children	broken foot
hands	clock	clock
head to	cry	dish
left	cup	doll
needle	dark	elbow
newspaper	door	fat
night	hold	foot
nurse	left	girl
picture	newspaper	hips
play	plate	indoors
policeman	police officer	injure
stick	policeman	knee
teddy bear	pony tail	mad
toy	search	newspaper
wait	show	policeman
window	sick	proper
woman	stick	refuse
	t-shirt	spoon
	teddy bear	syrup
	window	teddy bear
	worker	ugly
		van
		waiting room

Wrongly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
	check nursery wand	a playing ambulance a policeman handing a boy check out nursery

Activity: Composition on routine

Properly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
enjoy rest sleep study room	aunt chat country cousin earring farm pool strawberry teeth	avoid busy couple early juice rest rice share soap opera soup weekend while

Wrongly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE

Activity: Narrative
Properly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
alone	calm	afraid
cake	cow	amaze
cast	crash	avenue
cookie	creek	awesome
cry	forget	change
fear	nightmare	cheerful
laugh	pants	cover
mall	relax	dark
needle	road	drown
nightmare	sounds	face
noise	tail	hit
path	voice	huge
scary	wet	ill
slip down	worry	journey
thief		lonely
witch		mess
worry		push
		ride
		sad
		seem
		shout
		strong
		suddenly
		surprise
		tooth
		worry

Wrongly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
Steal		

Activity: Cartoon
Properly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
angry	ask	announcer
bother	championship	annoy
disturb	crowd	bald man
faint	floor	believe
find	hair	belly
heavy	hat	bowling alley
hit	hard	chest
jail	hit	damage
pain	laugh	down
pay	loud	game
shout	mad	hand
sing	player	host
start	push	humiliate
throw	quiet	neck
tired	star	pain
try	throw	strong
whistle	wrong	tournament
		twice
		way
		win

Wrongly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
	field	
	kick	

Activity: Process
Properly used

3 RD GRADE	5 TH GRADE	8 TH GRADE
cloud	cloud	discharge
dangerous	drop	drop
develop	fall	heat
flood	lake	lake
land	rain	pond
rain	river	rise
rainbow	sky	river
river	source	season
sea	start	snow
shine	surface	source
storm	water	stage
water		sun beam
		warm

Wrongly used

3RD GRADE	5TH GRADE	8TH GRADE
	earth	earth

Participant: Juan David Tordecilla GRADE: 3ºD

Description of a picture
Look carefully at the picture and describe as much as you see is happening.



I can see that there are 2 girls playing with some toys, I can see that there is a woman in a computer and a police man taking a girl. There is an ambulance out the window and a man with something in his hand a I can see that they are in a hospital and back to the door there is a woman taking care of a boy, and I see a man with a newspaper and a girl playing with an airplane. There is a boy sitting in a chair and is kind of burned, and a big clock.

RESEARCH: Vocabulary differences in writing between the grades of a bilingual section of a school.
INSTRUMENT: TESTS Researchers: Elizabeth Roa & William Medina

Participant: Liuba Bolano Estrada GRADE: 5^oD

Composition

Write about your daily routine on a regular weekday.

My daily routine on a regular weekday is: first my mother wake up my brother and me to go to school, because if I can I will sleep all the day. Then I take a shower and put on my cloth (uniform) and I start to eat my breakfast. When I finish to eat I wash my teeth and before I put my earring and I organize my hair.

Then my father take out the car and we come to the school.

Before of the day of school I go to my house. When I arrive I start to eat the lunch and I eat it until 3:00 pm. At 3:00pm I start to do homework and when I finish I chat with my friends and sometimes I know other people from other countries or other cities of Colombia. At 8:00pm I see the XS factor and when it finish I see "Pura Sangre" until it finish (9:30pm) then I go to sleep.

RESEARCH: Vocabulary differences in writing between the grades of a bilingual section of a school.

INSTRUMENT: TESTS

Researchers: Elizabeth Roa & William Medina

Participant: Laura María Fuentes Semca

GRADE: 80

Cartoon

Write a story based on what happens in the following cartoon.

<http://www.comics.com/comics/ferdand/index.html>



In a bowling tournament, when one of the participants was preparing to start the game and throw the ball, the announcer started making fun of the participant, which the participant didn't like, he felt humiliated, so when he was going to throw the ball, he took the ball back and forth, and when he took the ball to the back he hit the announcer in his stomach on purpose. The announcer fell on the floor because the hit was really strong, but the participant didn't mind.

RESEARCH: Vocabulary differences in writing between the grades of a bilingual section of a school.

INSTRUMENT: TESTS

Researchers: Elizabeth Roa & William Medina

Participant: Paula escobar

GRADE: 8D

Description of a process
Describe the water cycle.

This process start when sun's
beams make contact with
the water and the high
temperature makes it boil.

The water evaporates and that

humidity goes up and condense in the clouds.

when the clouds are full of that evaporated

water precipitation occurs. that water that once was

in rivers, lake or oceans comes again to the

earth in drops of water.

Some times the clouds discharge that condense

water when make contact with mountains.

