

Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Acquisition in the EFL Classroom

*Compiled by María Guadalupe García
Assistant Editor: Ajitha. R. Manjeshwar*



371.1

G89

Guadalupe García, María, Compiladora
Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Acquisition in the EFL Classroom/
Compilado por María Guadalupe García, Asistente editor, Ajitha R.
Manjeshwar -- 1 edición -- Medellín: UPB, Seccional Montería, 2020
355 páginas, 16,5 x 23,5 cm.
ISBN: 978-958-764-887-4 (versión digital)

1. Comprensión de lectura - Inglés -- 2. Inglés - Métodos de enseñanza --
3. Vocabulario - Enseñanza del Inglés -- I. Manjeshwar, Ajitha R., editor
Asistente -- II. Título

CO-MdUPB / spa / RDA
SCDD 21 / Cutter-Sanborn

© María Guadalupe García, © María Paula Vélez Rodríguez, © Johana Lily Penagos Arriet,
© Lia Montalvo Bedoya, © Martha Paz Wechk, © Dianeth Zabaleta González, © Pedro
Martínez Peinado, © Claudia Patricia Brunal Morales, © Orlando Ramón Mass Montes,
© Kelly Angulo Petro, © Cindy Angulo Jiménez, © Hernando Alfredo Guerrero Soto, ©
Paola Patricia Sánchez Vergara, © Cinthia Romero Delgado, © Jesús Guillermo González
Arbeláez, © Zaily del Toro García, © Boris Piñeres Yanes, © Sirley Martínez Montes, ©
Angélica Roa Pacheco, © William Hernán Medina Ortiz.
© Editorial Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana
Vigilada Mineducación

Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Acquisition in the EFL Classroom

ISBN: 978-958-764-887-4 (versión digital)

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.18566/978-958-764-887-4>

Primera edición, 2020

Escuela de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas

Centro de Lenguas

Grupo: CAVIDA

Seccional Montería

Arzobispo de Medellín y Gran Canciller UPB: Mons. Ricardo Tobón Restrepo

Rector General: Pbro. Julio Jairo Ceballos Sepúlveda

Rector Seccional Montería: Pbro. Jorge Alonso Bedoya Vásquez

Vicerrector Académico: Álvaro Gómez Fernández

Decana de la Escuela de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas: Ilse Villamil Benítez

Directora del Centro de Lenguas: Ariadna Guzmán Bejarano

Editor: Juan Carlos Rodas Montoya

Gestora Editorial Seccional Montería: Flora Fernández Ortega

Coordinación de Producción: Ana Milena Gómez Correa

Diagramación: Marta Lucía Gómez Zuluaga

Dirección Editorial:

Editorial Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, 2020

Correo electrónico: editorial@upb.edu.co

www.upb.edu.co

Telefax: (57)(4) 354 4565

A.A. 56006 - Medellín - Colombia

Radicado: 1978-16-04-20

Prohibida la reproducción total o parcial, en cualquier medio o para cualquier propósito
sin la autorización escrita de la Editorial Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, Photostat, micro-
film, retrieval system, or any other means, without prior written permission of the publisher.

CHAPTER 8

Vocabulary Building to improve Reading Comprehension through the Use of Lexical Approach, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Cinthia Romero Delgado
Jesús Guillermo González Arbeláez

1. Introduction

While the relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension appears to be established, instructional methods to effectively increase students' word knowledge and comprehension are not. Researchers suggest that “early elementary students' word knowledge is a determinant of reading comprehension both in early elementary school and throughout their schooling” (Juel and Deffes cited in Hensen, 2009).

Scientific research on vocabulary instruction reveals that most vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words. Students can acquire vocabulary incidentally by engaging in rich oral-language experiences at home and at school, listening to books, reading aloud to them, and reading widely on their own are some of the options suggested. (Cunningham et al cited in Diamond & Gutlohn, 2006) stated that extensive reading gives students repeated or multiple

exposures to words and is also one of the means by which students see vocabulary in rich contexts.

According to the diagnostic stage many children from fourth grade often present difficulties in reading comprehension. They are usually able to interpret words accurately but are unable to get understanding from what they read. Many of the children who are part of the school population and are part of the present study struggle with reading comprehension, it could be said that their vocabulary bank is limited and this has a direct impact on their ability to understand what they read. In that sense vocabulary building becomes a target for successful reading comprehension. It seems for children to get meaning from what they read they need both, a great many words in their vocabulary and the ability to use various strategies to establish the meanings of new words.

Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process, and contributes greatly to a reader's comprehension. A reader cannot understand a text without knowing what most of the words mean. Students learn the meanings of words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language and through carefully designed instruction. Taking into account this instruction the teacher must find different strategies for students to be successful at vocabulary learning, therefore the use of the lexical approach as a useful tool to accomplish this task. The lexical approach makes a distinction between vocabulary traditionally understood as a stock of individual words with fixed meaning and lexis, which includes not only single words but also the word combinations that we store in our mental lexicons. Lexical approach advocates that language consists of meaningful chunks that, when combined produce continuous coherent text and only a minority of spoken sentences are entirely novel creations.

For Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) lexical phrases as they call them, do represent a major change with profound theoretical and practical implications. This idea shows a total reversal of the traditional structural trend. Structuralism maintained that the learner should have control over the grammatical system of a language and in this case he would be able to use correct sentences. Now, it seems reasonable that an essential part of language acquisition is the ability to produce lexical phrases as unanalysed wholes or 'chunks' and these chunks, will, ultimately,

become the basis for the learner to perceive patterns, word-structure and those other features of language formally thought of as ‘grammar’ (rules of language) and therefore improve on reading comprehension skills as well.

Within the years teachers have explored new strategies to provide learners with the appropriate tools to make the learning process successful and thus satisfy their needs. However, since the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), teaching and studying has become more varied, especially when dealing with vocabulary. According to Young (2003), and Melor Md Yunus (2007), the use of technology as a tool to develop different language skills has received great attention, so that teachers are frequently exposed to new materials. Furthermore, these can be seen as valuable tool to improve teaching and learning vocabulary, not only for students but also for teachers.

Taking all this into account, the purpose of this research is to lay out how vocabulary building can improve reading comprehension using the lexical approach and the ICT on fourth graders. The investigation involved explicit teaching to a small group and attempted to give further evidence that the teaching of vocabulary through the lexical approach and ICT can prepare students to read and have success in understanding what they read.

1.1 Research Question

Based on the purpose of this study, we stated the following research question and objectives:

1.2 Main Question

How can vocabulary building improve reading comprehension through the use of the Lexical Approach and ICT’s?

1.3 Sub question

In what way student’s perspective towards language learning process can be affected?

1.4 General Objectives:

- › To identify and study the depth of children vocabulary knowledge and how well do they understand the words in the lexicon.
- › To measure the effectiveness of the lexical approach to improve vocabulary building as a way to progress reading comprehension on fourth graders.

1.5 Specific Objectives:

- › To develop strategies for students to discern meanings of new unfamiliar words encountered in reading.
- › To measure vocabulary development to determine students' overall level of mastery on specific words.
- › To raise students awareness on the importance of positive attitude in learning and the appropriate use of the resources.

2. Literature Review

As many researchers have noted, vocabulary knowledge of word meanings is a powerful predictor of reading comprehension. Reading is a highly elaborate procedure and thus it is of great importance to help students to learn the vocabulary so they can be active readers and improve their comprehension.

One of the theories underlining vocabulary building is through *Morphemes: (prefixes, suffixes, and root words)*. This will greatly enhance and build the vocabulary and reading comprehension of all students, especially struggling readers. Studies have shown that a set of 20 prefixes and 14 roots, and knowing how to use them, will unlock the meaning of over 100,000 words (Wilde, 2006).

Many students do not realize that they can use their knowledge to divide words into parts to get meaning; it is important to ensure that students develop their ability to analyze the structure of multisyllabic words. Teaching morphemes to students increases vocabulary and reading comprehension. "In one study, third graders who were

given training on the nine most common prefixes and a strategy for decomposing words into roots and suffixes outperformed a control group on several measures of word meanings” (White *et al* cited in Wilde, 2006).

On the other hand, there are some theories that outline that vocabulary building can be achieved through *Lexical Sets*. Some researchers call them ‘lexical phrases’ or ‘lexical items’, others prefer the term ‘multi-word chunks’ or just ‘chunks’ of language. Whatever the term, they are an important feature both in language use and language acquisition and offer advantages for language teaching and learning. Most learners associate ‘vocabulary’ with ‘words’, and “there is a tendency among learners to translate any professional text word-for-word, i.e. they usually try to simplify most lexical phrases to separate words” (Kavaliauskienė and Janulevičienė, 2006). Therefore, the role of teachers is to raise students’ awareness of the existence of lexical items.

According to Channel (1981) teaching vocabulary through lexical sets “makes the meaning of words clearer by seeing how they relate to and are different from other words in the set”. Others such as Michael Lewis (1997) challenged the standard view of dividing language teaching into grammar and vocabulary by arguing that language consists of lexical items. These lexical items are divided into four categories: *poliwords*, *collocations*, *fixed expressions* and *semi-fixed expressions*. The first one considered to be essential vocabulary for learners to memorize; the second, how words usually occurs with each other; and the third and fourth considered to be the most important type of lexical phrases. From this perspective, Lewis’s ideas seem appropriate and effective for the purposes of the study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The goal of this section is to look at the effects of vocabulary enrichment and building to improve reading ability of English language learners. First, some aspects about the lexical approach to vocabulary building will be discussed and then how critical is vocabulary knowledge to successful reading comprehension and finally the use of ICT in language teaching and learning.

2.1.1 The Lexical Approach to Vocabulary Building

Research emphasizes that vocabulary knowledge is a vital part of all content learning, but it is too often ignored. (Gough et al cited in Smith, 2002) “Emphasize the importance of vocabulary in comprehension but at the same time considered it largely ignored”. That is why; one of the most important responsibilities of every teacher is to help students develop a strong working vocabulary. To develop student’s vocabulary it is necessary that teachers encourage curiosity for any unfamiliar word that followed by a set of strategies that will help students to get some understanding of what they read including vocabulary instruction as an integral component of reading instruction. According to Nagy and Herman (1987) “Researchers conclude that teachers can have the biggest impact on vocabulary by increasing the amount of incidental word learning”.

2.1.2 Vocabulary Building

Vocabulary building is especially important in the process of reading comprehension. According to Anderson and Nagy, (1992) “a strong relationship exists between knowledge of word meaning and ability to comprehend passages containing those words”. It is usual that many students struggle with reading comprehension. The main reason for that is that they are not familiarized with the vocabulary terms used in specific texts; “the vocabulary bank is limited and this has a direct impact on their ability to understand what is read” (Biemiller, 2003).

(Sheehan cited in Hensen, 2009) states that vocabulary is “the ability to understand and use words to acquire and convey meaning” and according to (Bromley cited in Hensen, 2009), vocabulary development “is both an outcome of comprehension and a precursor to it, with word meanings making up as much as 70-80% of comprehension” In that sense, vocabulary building consists of many different kinds of knowing. Children need to have an interest in words, their meanings and their power. To achieve this interest, students need to learn lexical sets for words they already know, and to clarify and refine the meanings of these familiar words. When learning new words they must build a set of meanings for the word to become a part of their vocabulary bank rather than a single word learnt for a particular text.

2.1.3 The Lexical Approach

The lexical approach to second language teaching has received interest in recent years as an alternative one to grammar-based approaches. The lexical approach puts emphasis on developing the learner's competency in lexis, or word and word-combinations. It focuses on the idea that an important part of language mastery is the ability to comprehend and produce lexical phrases as unanalysed wholes, or “chunks” and that these clunks become the raw data by which learners perceive patterns of language traditionally thought of as grammar (Lewis, 1993).

According to this, Instruction focuses on relatively fixed expressions that occur frequently in spoken language, rather than on traditionally created sentences. Particularly, lexical phrases were seen as a productive resource for learners, helping in the production, comprehension and necessary analytical reflection on the forms and meanings of the target language (Lewis, 1997).

The key principle of the lexical approach is that “language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar.” In other words, lexis is central in creating meaning; grammar plays a secondary role in managing meaning. When this principle is accepted, the logical implication for teachers is that we should spend more time helping learners develop their stock of phrases, and less time on grammatical structures. Michael Lewis presents this taxonomy of Lexical items:

- › words (e.g., book, pen)
- › polywords (e.g., by the way, upside down)
- › collocations, or word partnerships (e.g., community service, absolutely convinced)
- › Institutionalized utterances (e.g., I'll get it; We'll see; If I were you . . .; Would you like a cup of coffee?)
- › sentence frames and heads (e.g., That is not as . . . as you think; The fact/suggestion/problem/danger was . . .) and even text frames (e.g., In this paper we explore . . .; Firstly . . .; Secondly . . .; Finally . . .)

According to this, Lewis states that “instead of words, we consciously try to think of collocations, and present this in expressions, rather than

trying to break things into ever smaller pieces; there is a conscious effort to see things in larger, more holistic ways” (1997).

The basic aims of teaching lexis are not only to cover a certain number of words on a word list, but we have to use more different teaching techniques that can help more in realizing this global concept of what it means to know a lexical item, in giving the learner some teaching opportunities to use the items learnt and finally in helping learner to use effective written storage systems. Michael Lewis suggested that teachers need to help students become aware of the lexical structures that commonly occur in the language. The idea is that if students become aware of some of the many lexical structures, they will have a lot more information about how to combine individual words to build coherent structures like phrases, expressions and whole sentences, which should ultimately emulate those used by native speakers.

2.1.4 Vocabulary Knowledge for Reading Comprehension

Many educators believe “that there is a close relationship between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension and therefore, one of the most important reasons for providing students with explicit instruction to “build” vocabulary”. Stanovich (1986). In that sense vocabulary building becomes a target for successful reading comprehension. Students need to really know the words they are learning so that they can use the context to understand words` meanings and thus they are far more likely to maximize the understanding of a text, furthermore they can improve other aspects of learning. (Manzo et al cited in Hensen, 2009) stated that “word learning can improve the *capacity* to “learn” and a rich vocabulary increases comprehension and, therefore, most all learning”.

Other researcher also stated that “Children with larger vocabularies find reading easier, read more widely, and do better in school” Lubliner and Smetana (2005). That is to say, students with large vocabularies are able to articulate responses to questions and ask better than their classmates with limited vocabularies, “they are able to extract meaning from a text and connect what they read to prior knowledge, even more they are able to use their knowledge to make meaning of unknown words from the context of the text”. (Osborn, Heibert and Elfrieda, 2004).

Moreover, others stress how students can be negatively affected by poor reading comprehension. “Factors that may inhibit comprehension of these texts, such as a lack of vocabulary, can be expected to have increasingly detrimental effects on achievement”. (Jenkins et al cited in Hensen, 2009). Thus, if learners understand words they will comprehend the contents and therefore do better at language learning and why not better at school and all subjects in general.

Although students can benefit from teachers who include vocabulary building in their lessons; any effective “*method*” determined yet and selecting the best one to do it can be a difficult task. This vocabulary instruction varies a lot Hensen (2009); we might think each teacher makes the choice by taking into account the context and conditions she/he is dealing with. Many of them know that they need to improve their teaching especially to students who find reading difficult (Bromley cited in Hensen, 2009). (Lubliner and Smetana cited in Hensen, 2009) describe this difficulty in their work, “The ultimate challenge of a vocabulary intervention is not merely to teach a set of words or skills, but to positively affect reading comprehension”.

2.1.5 Ict in Language Teaching And Learning

The use of information and communications technology (ICT) in education is a relatively new phenomenon. Nowadays, the use of technology as a tool to develop the different language skills has received great attention, according to Dudenney, et al (2000), some technology devices such as television, tape recorders, video recorders and computers have been used in language teaching since 1960’s. However, the effectiveness of them depends on the motive why and how it is applied and integrated. There are many reasons why the use of technology may be favourable for the language learning process. According to Padurean and Margan (2009) “It offers an authentic learning environment. Skills can easily be integrated in the teaching/ learning process; reading, writing, speaking, listening can be combined in task- based learning”.

The integration of ICT in teaching and learning has some significant benefits. It has the capability to control presentation, increase variety and creativity, provide feedback on learning activity, and it can also

adapt easily with any materials. When presenting a new word, students should be given interesting materials to attract attention. Unlike books and dictionaries which have fixed presentation, computers can combine visual with listening materials, texts with graphics and pictures even movies. For the lower level learners, these learning activities are interesting and challenging. Instead of reading and memorizing, students can directly get involved into the activities.

ICT is known to be the best source to any conventional classroom, especially when used properly and could be a plus to the foreign language to increase the vocabulary use in the classroom. Lanni (2005) points out that these resources let teachers to make everything noticeable as well as more comprehensible, helps in analysing and organizing information, therefore allowing students to get in touch with different types of media, texts, styles, and registers, which in turn improves vocabulary and language understanding. It has been increasingly argued that computer technologies can support learning in a number of ways. Many features of the computer are considered to improve vocabulary development and reading comprehension: multimedia is one of them. Multimedia refers to computer-based systems that use various types of content, such as text, audio, video, graphics, animation, and interactivity. The key concepts of multimedia are thus 'computer-based' and 'interactive'.

One example of the effect of multimedia glosses for vocabulary development were carried out by Chun and Plass (1996) who presented the positive results of three studies with students in their second year of German language. They used a multimedia application offering various types of annotations (picture, text, video). The goals of this study included the exploration of incidental vocabulary learning, and the examination of the effectiveness of multimedia annotations on vocabulary acquisition. The results of this case study supported previous research on the effectiveness of different types of annotations, according to which visual imagery was found to help in learning and retention of new foreign words. Moreover, visual multimedia advance organizers were found to help not only recalling new words, but also act as facilitators of reading comprehension, which stresses the close relationship between vocabulary and reading (Chun and Plass, 1996).

3. Methodology

This section describes the research methodology this study will follow. We will define some aspects such as the type of study, the setting and the population, the research phases and the data collection techniques.

3.1 Type of Study

This research has some characteristics that classify it as a qualitative research. This type of study involves “an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories” (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). In this sense, this study attempted to help students improve in their language learning process and identify how they might affect their process by observing, analysing their behaviour in the class .

This study can also be defined as a case study which is a type of qualitative research that allow the researchers to explain a situation, to provide a basis to apply solutions to situations, to explore, or to describe an object or phenomenon. This type of study provided our research with the necessary information and events which could offer and facilitate the researchers a clearer understanding of the children experiences in the language learning process.

3.2 Setting and Population

This research was conducted a public school located in the Caribbean region of Colombia which was designed to offer better education for under-served students. This study will improve the level of English through the teaching of vocabulary in order to enhance reading comprehension. The sample group of the research comprised of an intervention group of 25 students and a target group of 3 aged 8 to 10 years old.

3.4 Research Phases

The study was carried out through three main phases divided into six sessions (two hours each). The Diagnostic phase, the Intervention phase and the Data Analysis phase.

3.4.1 Diagnostic phase

This phase was the first session and was meant to observe students and diagnose their learning environment, language learning level and attitude towards the English class and the methodology being used. In this phase students answered an introductory questionnaire to check their prior knowledge on ICT.

3.4.2 Intervention phase

This phase consisted of five sessions and planned for the intervention group to participate in a series of 5 teaching sessions which targeted the teaching of vocabulary chunks using the lexical approach and ICT resources to improve reading.

3.4.3 Data Analysis phase

In this phase all the information gathered was triangulated and analysed. As part of it students answered the final questionnaire meant to check how the investigation and the use of the lexical approach and ICT have impacted and improved their language learning process.

3.5 The Data Collection Procedures

3.5.1 Observation

This data collection procedure is one of the most important in the study because it offers precise information about the individuals within the research and gives the possibility to check whether the data gathered is reliable or not. According to Alder (1994), “Observation is a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative inquiry, It is used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings”.

The observation was supported by other methods such as note taking for further analysis. It comprised all the six sessions of the research.

3.5.2 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a means of eliciting the feelings, beliefs, experiences, perceptions, or attitudes of some sample of individuals. The questionnaire is most frequently a very concise, pre-planned set of questions designed to yield specific information to meet a particular need for research information about a pertinent topic.

In this case, a questionnaire allows the researchers to get some information about students' opinions, attitudes and feelings towards the process held during the research. It also serves as a mean to go into the depths of reality of the situation and discover subjects' meanings and understandings.

Along the research all the students will answered two questionnaires; the first one at the beginning of the research, in the diagnostic phase and the second one at the end; in the data analysis phase.

3.5.3 Diary

Diaries can help provide access to people's interpretations of their world, create a complete record of actions and words, develop realistic pictures and provide sensitive descriptions of an individual's daily life Nicholl (2006). As it can be inferred this data collection procedure may allow us to know students' thoughts and feelings about different aspects which are involved in the teaching-learning process along the study.

For this study students reflected on their diaries along the five intervention sessions, starting from the second one, taking into account their experience in the diagnostic phase.

4. Data Analysis

The research group collected data for about one month and a half and findings from the triangulation of the information found in the different data sources and data collection techniques were analysed. The following were the categories found.

- › Vocabulary improvement
- › Positive attitude towards the subject
- › Reading comprehension progress

4.1 Vocabulary Improvement

Through the use of different types of data collection procedures and instruments such as class observations, questionnaires, diary, and other sources such as the lesson plans; we realized that students learnt to use the vocabulary chunks they were thought and this influenced the way they performed in the vocabulary exercises and further reading exercises.

Students showed to have managed the chunks to put into practice the target vocabulary. The use of the chunks allowed language management to be possible in terms of the avoidance of translation and positive perception about written exercises which contributed to the first reading comprehension steps.

These will be described as follows:

4.1.1 Student's tendency to translation was significantly reduced

Data suggest that students understood that it is possible to learn vocabulary chunks and get deeper understanding by no means of translation. As a way to identify students' tendency to translation, we decided to work the sessions totally in English. All kinds of complains came from them expressing little understanding on the topic. Therefore, as a strategy the teacher switched the languages, for this time the results were superior. As it is shown in their reflection of the sessions:

Subject 1: “La clase estuvo bien, porque me enseñaron varias cosas y me divertí mucho aprendiendo directamente en inglés”.

Subject 2: “Pues la actividad me pareció chévere, porque aprendí el vocabulario e hice las actividades en inglés”.

Subject 3: “Me gustó mucho, me pareció muy, muy divertida y chéverísima, lo mejor aprendí inglés bien y aprendí cosas nuevas”.

Taking into account their perceptions it may be said that students seemed to understand that use of L1 must not be totally rejected but the appropriately used as a strategy to facilitate the memorization of new vocabulary pieces and lead to L2 understanding of new words meanings. It also served for themselves and the teacher to check and validate L2 learning and understanding. According to Schmitt (as cited in Liu, 2008) “Intralingual strategies are “pedagogically correct” because they are consistent with principles of communicative language teaching or comprehensible input”.

In addition, it seems that it provides a sense of challenge for their learning process as they are induced to face a different approach to learning and different resources which lead them to develop other kind of strategies to learn. Students seem to recognize that working this way may help them learn better and improve on their continuous and future language learning experience.

4.1.2 Positive perception of written exercises

In language teaching it is common to use writing exercises for practicing vocabulary. This is done as a way for them to make connections among what it is learnt and explore different situations to integrate them into their learning process. From the information gathered we found that student’s view of written exercises was monotonous and boring. The fact of practicing and learning this vocabulary chunks using ICT’s provided them with a transformation of the opinion they held about this type of exercises by offering them a varied bunch of enjoyable and challenging activities; with the same purpose but with different ways to overcome them. The following were some of their perceptions:

Student 1: “Entendí todos los ejercicios, porque me gustaron todos los actividades de la página, las hice todas aprendí y me gusta el inglés”.

Subject 2: “Me gustó mucho, aunque al principio se me dificultó un poquito, me gustaron todas las actividades, sobre todo las de completar y unir y las entendí mucho”.

Subject 3: “Me pareció chévere, estaba un poco difícil, pero resolví los puntos de completar y aprendí un poquito más de inglés”.

Referring to the methodology used (the approach and ICT's use) when working on written exercises, they wrote:

Student 1: “Me gusto porque creo que como nos enseñaron el vocabulario es más divertido y más fácil para hacer los ejercicios en internet”.

Student 2: “Todo fue muy chévere creo que usar el internet y las páginas para hacer estos ejercicios, nos ayuda a aprender más...”

Student 3: “A mí me pareció que las clases de ustedes fueron increíbles.. muy bonito como nos enseñaron el vocabulario y las páginas de internet son muy chéveres... me gusta hacerlas usando el internet”.

Up to this point, students see the value of using this approach and the materials as an interactive way of practicing and have fun learning English using some tools and a new methodology they seem to enjoy. In addition to this, it seems that it made them reflect on how internet can be used in different ways. Furthermore, by working on this kind of exercises, they were unconsciously making attempts to reading comprehension, as they had to give meaningful use to the vocabulary chunks offering multiple opportunities to use new words in reading, writing and soon discussions. Nagy (as cited in Kinsella, Stump, Feldman, 2010).

4.2 Positive Attitude toward the Subject

Findings about students' motivation toward the Methodology used in the sessions showed that they favour the use of the lexical approach and ICTs as they considered them very appealing to their language learning process.

Since the beginning of the research it was noticed that students have some inhibitions toward language learning process. It seems that previous experiences have risen on them negative aspects that were influencing their attitude towards language learning experience.

Once they were lead through the sessions, a change in their attitudes was noticed. Data suggests that they found the resources and methodology used appealing to carry out their performance in the classes. Internet

provides an easy and fast access to current and authentic materials, which is motivating for the language learners. Jonassen et al (1999). Students' responses to the teacher's invitations to participate were continuous. It seems that the teaching methodology and materials were attractive and suitable to their needs; helping them to practice not only the written use of the language, but also practice speaking, reading and pronunciation, without the fear of making mistakes. This is evidenced below:

Student 1: “Las actividades me parecieron bien, me gustaron las encontré fáciles, resolví todo... usar el computador me pareció divertido. Y ahora me gusta mucho eso del inglés”.

Student 2: “Me gustaron las clases, tomé todos los apuntes y practiqué con todos los ejercicios. Mi materia favorita ahora es inglés, gracias por las clases”.

Student 3: “Muy divertido todo porque uno aprende cosas en inglés... era muy fácil. Quiero seguir asistiendo a las clases”.

As it has been shown, students seem to have a better attitude towards English learning not only vocabulary but also developing other skills, such as speaking and pronunciation and learning in general. Moreover, it gave them a great deal of confidence to become active participants in the language learning process.

4.3 Reading Comprehension Progress

Data suggests that students improved on reading comprehension of short text through the use of specific vocabulary previously learnt. Learners worked on different activities to practice the vocabulary. Later, they worked on comprehension sentences, in which they used the vocabulary within the specific context studied. Finally, they worked on the final reading. The following are some of the reflections students did on the reading exercise:

Student 1: “A mí me gusto la lectura porque aprendí un poquito más de inglés. La resolví porque había cosas que ya yo sabía porque las he practicado en las clases, así que pude hacer los ejercicios”.

Student 2: “Pues la lectura me pareció chévere, no estuvo tan difícil, la respondí enseguida. Las preguntas al principio un poco complicadas, pero tuve que buscar varias palabras que ya me sabía y la pude resolver”.

Student 3: “La lectura me pareció chévere, me gustó mucho, la encontré medio difícil... al final encontré unas palabras que ya me sabía y la entendí”.

It seems that they could develop some techniques to go over a reading. According to the data collected students ability to look for main ideas and specific information strongly improved. Apparently in order to cover the readings they used all the resources they had, they re-read the text as many times as they needed to understand the questions and figure out the answers. They took into account the pieces of vocabulary chunks they learnt by making references to the videos, the different activities and the way they felt during the activities. These are some of their explanations on how they understood the reading and then answer the questions:

Student 1: “A mí me gusto la lectura, resolví la actividad y las preguntas viendo el vocabulario y las palabras en la lectura, pero no todas porque algunas si las recordaba bien”.

Student 2: “Me pareció medio difícil porque a la primera no sabía cómo hacer y después si supe. Lo hice por medio de que leí varias veces el cuento y las hice”.

Student 3: “Me sentí bien haciéndola, la encontré un poquito difícil porque no entendía algunas, pero las resolví viendo en la lectura otra vez y luego las respondí”.

Taking into account all the information taken from their diaries it seems that they learnt to use a series of techniques to cover a reading; these can be described as skimming and scanning techniques. The process of Skimming is used to look only for the general and main ideas and Scanning is used to look only for a specific fact or specific information without reading everything (Beale, 2004). Thus, they read according to the purpose and got the information they needed quickly without wasting time.

Data also suggest that students could succeed in the reading by making use of their prior knowledge on the topic. It seems that they were encouraged to relate to what they read in the text to what they already know and learnt during the sessions in which the vocabulary building process was emphasized.

5. Conclusions

As it can be seen through this study, one of the best ways to improve reading comprehension is to improve vocabulary. Vocabulary building in chunks is not just an instrument to reading comprehension but an opportunity to help students to know more about how language works and thus understand the “how” better within the context given. Therefore, taking into account the information gotten from the data collection stage, the research team came to the following conclusions:

Firstly, it is evident that the methodology used to learn and practice the vocabulary influences the way students cover and understand a piece of reading. Students who do not have a large vocabulary or effective word learning strategies often struggle to comprehend what they read. The more exposure students have the more possibilities to encounter words in a range of context they will know and understand. It is of great importance that children realize that words are used in many contexts. Children must then reach beyond the concrete word and activate their schema of the context in which the word is used to understand the meaning.

Secondly, the use of ICT’s resources teaching and learning has produced positive effects in the class. Students seem to be motivated by learning through this medium. The use of these kind of materials gave students visual and mental stimulation and provides immediate responses and practice for the child to learn a skill. Struggling readers interface with the computer and practice a skill without embarrassing situations in the classroom. Interaction with a multi-sensory format provides motivation and a positive attitude toward reading and learning (Case & Truscott, 1999; Forcier, 1999).

Finally, it may be said that the use of the approach with young children can serve as a tool to improve their vocabulary building and reading comprehension process as they learn the expressions and not smaller pieces of language exploring the environment in which words occur.

5. Pedagogical Implications

After doing this study, it was clearly found that students can be helped to develop strategies to improve on their vocabulary, reading and learning process in general. Also, it was found that this way of teaching and learning can contribute to accomplishing their process in a good way. Finally, it was possible to guide learners to reflect on how they are usually taught and explore new ways of make this process as enjoyable and meaningful as possible. For this reason, this study shows the following pedagogical implications:

1. The school should use the lexical approach on children since it can help them to memorize the vocabulary studied, and later use it in meaningful ways in which they can make sense of it. This, with the use of ICT's can improve their learning as they are extremely exposed to visual activities and new ways of learning, which they can directly manipulate. This tends to be of great joy for them to learn easily and successfully.
2. By using this type of methodology, students would reduce the pressure of studying grammar. As it is no main focus on grammar structures, the vocabulary chunks can serve as a way to activate this unconscious learning and allows opportunities to practice. Grammar is to be explored rather than explained. This may also enhance students learning because it would allow them to reflect on how language works.
3. The school should take into account the use of the materials used for learning because it can contribute to cooperative and collaborative learning. By using the ICT resources students can work together to produce common products. To accomplish these goals they need each other and thus work together to carry out the tasks. Furthermore, they can improve on the two aspects, the one of learning English and the one of ICT resources management.

4. By using this methodology students would feel more confident and motivated to learn and participate in the process. The use of vocabulary by collocations, fixed and semi-fixed expressions would allow them to have great management of the language and the ICT materials would allow them to put them into practice in many different real and authentic ways. This multimedia concept stimulates the learner with sight, sound, and action while integrating skills necessary for language development. Forcier (as cited in Boling et. al., 2002).
5. Finally, the use of this methodology would need students to move from dependent direct instruction to more independent learning, receiving more individualized instruction at their appropriate reading level. Thus, giving the teacher the possibility to change the traditional role to that of being a facilitator.

References

- Adler, P. A., & Adler, P. (1994). Observational techniques. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Retrieved 27 7 2012 from http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/10985_Chapter_4.pdf
- Argüelles, I (2011). *New ICT Literacies and holistic approaches for the effective learning of languages in tertiary education*. Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. Retrieved 10 2 2013 from http://repositorio.ual.es/jspui/bitstream/10835/1754/1/Odisea12_Arguelles.pdf
- Beragi, C. (2006). Proper words in proper places: Some “modest proposals” for introducing the lexical approach into your English class. Vol 5 n° 13.
- Biemiller, A and Boote C. (2006). *An Effective Method for Building Meaning Vocabulary in Primary Grades*. *Journal of Educational Psychology* Vol 98 No. 1, 44–62. Retrieved Sep 9, 2012, from <http://www.wce.wvu.edu/Depts/SPED/Forms/Kens%20Readings/Vocabulary/Vocab%20Effective%20method%20for%20building%20meaning%20vocab%20Biemiller%202006.pdf>
- Bozzo, L. (sf). *Collaborative construction of glossaries in language learning: an integration of the lexical approach and constructionism through blended learning*. *ICT for language learning- International Conference 5TH Edition*. Retrieved 10 2, 2013.

- Collins, C and Manguieri, J. The Effects of Powerful Vocabulary for Reading Success on Students' Reading Vocabulary and Comprehension Achievement. (no date). Retrieved 10 7 2012 from http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/fluencyformula/pdfs/PowerfulVocab_Efficacy.pdf
- Liu, J. (2008). L1 Use in L2 Vocabulary Learning: Facilitator or Barrier. *International Education Studies*. Vol 1 n° 2. Retrieved from <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal.html>
- Thomas, A (no date) . Building Vocabulary through Morphemes: Using Word Parts to Unlock Meaning. Center for development and Learning. Retrieved August 16, 2012, from <http://www.cdl.org/resource-library/pdf/Building%20Vocabulary%20Through%20Morphemes.pdf>
- Hansen, K. (2009) Vocabulary Instruction, Reading Comprehension, and student retention: a review of Literature. Retrieved July 10, 2012, from http://www.nmu.edu/sites/DrupalEducation/files/UserFiles/Files/PreDrupal/SiteSections/Students/GradPapers/Projects/Hansen_Kristina_MP.pdf.
- Islam, C. & Timmis, I. (no date). Lexical Approach Classroom Activities 2. BBC and British Council. Retrieved 11 2 2013 from http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/lexical_try2.pdf.
- Jan Cambrensis, & Gillway, M. (2006). The Study of Selected Vocabulary in Context – Using Technology to Motivate Learners. *UGRU Journal*, Volume 3. Retrieved 10 2 2013 from http://ftp.ugru.info/UGRUJournal/UGRUJournal_files/sr3/vocabcontext.pdf.
- Lewis, M. (1997). Implementing the Lexical Approach: Putting theory into practice. Hove UK: Language Teaching Publications. Volume 3.
- McLaughlin, B. August, D et al (2000). Vocabulary Improvement and Reading in English Language Learners: An Intervention Study. Retrieved July 7, 2012, from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/rcd/BE023768/Vocabulary_Improvement.pdf
- Marzano, R. (2006). Preliminary Report on the 2004 – 05 evaluation study of the ASCD Program for building academic vocabulary. Retrieved on July 7, 2012, from [http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/Building%20Academic%20Vocabulary%20Report%20\[1\].pdf](http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/Building%20Academic%20Vocabulary%20Report%20[1].pdf)
- Marwan S. & Padmarani, L.V. (2013). Enhancing EFL Teaching and Learning through Technology. Vol 2, núm 2. *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*. Retrieved from www.ijsst.com
- Ponnudurai, P. (sf). Impact of ICT on Argumentative Content and Vocabulary Usage. ICT for language learning- International Conference 4TH Edition. Retrieved 10 2 2013 from <http://conference.pixelonline.net/>

- ICT4LL2011/common/download/Paper_pdf/IBL25-168-FP-Ponnudurai-ICT4LL2011.pdf
- Rank, T. Warren, C & Millum, T. (sf) Teaching English Using ICT: A Practical Guide for Secondary School Teachers.
- Salehi, H and Salehi, S. (2012). Integration of ICT in language teaching: Challenges and barriers. 2012 3rd International Conference on e-Education, e-Business, e-Management and e-Learning. Retrieved September 17, 2012.
- Shao, J. (2012). A Study of Multimedia Application-based Vocabulary Acquisition. University of Science and Technology, Retrieved 10 2 2013 from <http://journal.ccsenet.org/index.php/elt/article/view/19967/13170> Teachers visión. Com. Retrieved on June 27, 2012, from <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/skill-builder/teaching-methods/48607.html> www.ijsst.co.
- Vocabulary.com. Can You Ever Fully Know a Word? (2012) Retrieved on June 25, 2012, from <http://www.vocabulary.com/articles/under-the-hood/can-you-ever-fully-know-a-word/>
- Woods, P (2006). Qualitative Research. Retrieved 27.7.2012 from <http://www.edu.plymouth.ac.uk/resined/qualitative%20methods%202/qualrshm.htm>