THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VOCABULARY IN LANGUAGE TEACHING: GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH ON THE APPLICATION OF THE LEXICAL APPROACH IN PUNTA ARENAS

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Punta Arenas, December 2012
“People with an impoverished vocabulary live an impoverished emotional life; people with rich vocabularies have a multihued palette of colors with which to paint their experience, not only for others, but for themselves as well.”

Anthony Robbins
Acknowledgements

To our families for their undying devotion and boundless love throughout the construction of our career path. You are the ones who fully deserve the recognition gained from this hard effort.

We are genuinely grateful to Ms Patricia Díaz, the teacher who cultivated our appetite for learning beyond the classroom. We deeply appreciate your encouragement to never surrender, be wise in times when you lose your way, and especially we treasure your attempts to imbue us with the significance of diligence. Thank you for your eruditeness, your patience, your careful guidance and for mentoring the effectiveness of this work. You carved out our future and we will always cherish every moment spent together as you proved not only to be a woman of great moral stature, but of sincere words as well.

A warm thanks to Efira Aravena for her wholehearted support and assistance when facing unexpected setbacks. We also extend our gratitude to our classmates whose aid contributed to the successful realization of this research.
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Abstract

The Lexical Approach is a set of innovative teaching ideas which gives prominence to vocabulary as a means to learn the language more effectively. The aim of this research seeks to answer the disparity of lexis acquisition in private, subsidized and public schools in Punta Arenas, as well as at the University of Magallanes. To find reasons to answer this paradox, a close scrutiny was done of the textbooks and general syllabi that teachers utilize to yield positive results in language acquisition. The findings obtained in different categories proved the blatant disregard towards the Lexical Approach from the Ministry of Education and some teachers in the city, as this latter mostly demonstrated the employment of traditional methods not only in their interaction with their course books, but in the teaching praxis as well. It is advisable to give way to new investigations on the matter to find optimal solutions to the limited vocabulary management among Chilean EFL learners.

Keywords: lexical approach, lexis, syllabi, language acquisition, methods, interaction, praxis, vocabulary management, EFL, learner
I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout English teaching history teachers have been encouraged to boost their performances with the aim of motivating students to increase their learning. The fact to fulfill this salient aspect lies in the students’ inexorable demands to explore the world and learn about their discoveries. In the circumstances, current education intends to swerve the teacher’s centered role into a student’s proactivity, in which they become the constructors of their own learning as they raise awareness of the whole process involved. In this way, constructivism arises as sharp focus on effective teaching which advocates students’ roles as thinkers, investigators, mediators and negotiators. In order to familiarize with these schemata teachers have steeped themselves in a whole gamut of teaching principles which have led them to steadily reflect on their praxis. Updating these principles is of utmost importance to stand out and become earnest mentors in students’ meaningful and collaborative learning.

To optimize these profound changes in a system which tends to be rigorous, teachers have to cope with multiple pedagogical aspects, being grammar one of them. Grammar has constituted the most conflictive factor for students’ success and failure for years. As a matter fact, most of learners’ frustrations and deep antipathy voiced stem from poor results after barren efforts to carefully approach grammar. Unfortunately, this notion has permeated English language teaching far and wide, which has been reduced to the inescapable conclusion that English is based on the significance of grammar. But English is not grammar and consequently teaching English does not mean teaching grammar; after all, this set of rules prolongs students’ suffering in the study of English as a second language.

Notwithstanding the previous notion appears to be ineradicable, there are still viable solutions that teachers have attempted to reach. This fact does not imply to dispose of grammar from the teaching of English language, but to incorporate heuristic methods to teach their essentials. These indirect methods will encourage teachers to veer around to alternative points of view which swift the learning focus on to other aspects of language which bear more relevance. A striking example is the one which sets teachers pioneering in the teaching of pronunciation through rap singing or practicing yoga in case of vocabulary development. These scenarios
epitomize the teacher’s performance which does not confine itself in grammatical contents but the one which expands bold initiatives to modify the hostile reaction towards English. Doubtlessly, when teachers spur innovation in the system students become fully appreciated.

Nonetheless, these major advances occur when teachers proceed in constructive engagement as to the enhancement of their performances. This assertion does not embrace the assumption that grammar is fundamental to effectual learning, as this approach is considered rudderless, but it draws attention to the interactive application of various methods which guarantee a comprehensive teaching. A teaching which ranges from a wide diversity of levels, promotes experience and interaction, and above all encompasses not only grammar, but pronunciation and vocabulary as the backbone of language proficiency as well. Needless to say, this stepwise process of development entails delving into a host of methods alongside their reasoning to let teachers thrive on the students’ expectations to have an innovative class.

In this way, an approach stands for the principles involved in choosing the appropriate tool to accomplish a competent teaching performance. An important point regarding any set of methodological ideas, is that it is composed by both the syllabus and the method, or mostly referred as the what and the how of language teaching. Methods are then the sets of tools which depict how the teaching praxis is carried out. They become influential in the field of education as they put forward that the students’ roles turn more complex out of the emphasis on the process of learning instead of the process of teaching. Consequently, the teacher’s role has switched from being the center of the class to being a guide to the students, or rather the facilitator of learning. Inasmuch as the focus of the class has narrowed to the students, new approaches have been proposed to stress their new necessities, such as the Task-based Approach, the Project-based Approach and the Lexical Approach, among others. Each one of these novel insights is based upon heuristic methods, in which learning takes place through the accomplishment of tasks provided by the teacher so as to reach a specific goal. Similarly, these approaches share the premise that grammar is not given as much importance as vocabulary, because the idea is to communicate in a meaningful way and not to penalize errors. Mistakes are permitted since they form part of the gradual process of learning. Finally, the ordinary class division into stages, in which both the presentation and practice of the content leads to a subsequent production, has
been rejected and replaced by a new cycle. This cycle consists in having students experiencing learning after systematic observations and plausible hypotheses. A stalwart supporter of this class structure is an approach which has gained momentum little by little as it describes words like an effective weapon to leave language barriers behind. This postulate is known as the Lexical Approach.

The Lexical Approach emerges as a radical alternative to replace the tedious grammar-based methods which have predominated for long years in Chilean education. Within its principles vocabulary overrides grammar, focusing on groups of words called “chunks” instead of sole words largely isolated from meaningful context. Familiarization with these commonplace phrases, primarily used by native speakers, will lead to successful and accurate language. Thus the teaching and learning equation is simplified to the constant exposure to words which frequently accompany each other. Insofar as learners are acquiring more expressions, they are developing abilities to deduce crucial grammatical structures and create unconscious patterns which eventually aid them to construct their own functional database of the language. Therefore, grammatical mistakes are not glossed over but employed to efficiently cement future learning. In addition to this detailed consideration, this approach is firmly based on collocations, which are other types of words whose partnership urges to learn the language in a more natural manner. This notion elucidates how certain combinations of words are readily comprehended and naturally assimilated when learners change the manner in which they internalize words.

On the other hand, teachers have taken cognizance of the prominence placed on vocabulary as they have come to the undeniable fact that vocabulary contributes to effectual communication. With a prodigious word power, students may endeavor to convey their feelings with precision, coherence and consistency, albeit this management does not verge on mastery. They can go on to a deep dialogue or monologue which can lead them to divert their thoughts from their native language to the target one. Be that as it may, teachers cavil at the teaching of vocabulary, on the grounds that it is regarded a prosaic process which seems essentially alien to students’ general knowledge. Bearing this crude idea in mind, teachers are not only devoid of the proper procedure to equip the students with word sets, but also with the overriding notion which suggests clustering words to convey meaning. Unfortunately, the advent of teaching
through the basis of the Lexical Approach has posed new challenges for teachers who, regardless of their willingness to update themselves, falter in their praxis as they do not intensely scrutinize what is novel in their area. The locus of this reality is in the whole of the conundrum showing how collocations, multiwords and fixed phrases have been neglected in the textbooks, which guide teachers’ steps to a feeble grasp of their students’ objectives and progress.

Chapter one deals with the whole process infants go through during their first years of life when acquiring their mother tongue. For many decades, an intense debate has divided a great deal of theorists on this matter. On one hand, some argue that first language acquisition is influenced by the environment in which toddlers are immersed (behaviorists), while others claim that it is an innate procedure which relies on inborn traits (nativists). Several theories consequently have arisen from these approaches to provide a plausible explanation for this phenomenon. Some of the most recognized premises discussed in this chapter include Universal Grammar, the Cognitive Theory, the Social Interactionist Theory, and the Relational Frame Theory (RFT), along with some of the most well-known exponents such as Chomsky, Piaget, Skinner, and Vygotsky among others. All these researchers contribute to sequence the language acquisition process that encompasses the moment from which newborns utter their first words until the period in which more structured sentences are conveyed. Apart from the evolution noticed in the amount of words and structures as children grow up, phonological, morphological, syntactical, and semantical features are also taken into account to better comprehend the on-going development of language and communication.

Chapter two covers the complexity of learning a new language and some of the pivotal factors that may influence on reaching its proficiency. While some children are raised in bilingual environments, other individuals seek to learn another language at later stages for different motifs. Therefore, the terms second, foreign, library, and auxiliary language are clarified in order to establish the purpose for which learners decide to immerse in a target language like English. The whole process involved is likely to be fostered or hindered by internal and/or external factors. In the former, aspects such as learning aptitudes, motivations, and age may play a significant role to end up developing an overwhelming or outrageous performance. In the latter, the quantity and quality of input received as well as the amount of interaction will be reflected in the suitable
usage of language. Manifold standpoints also appear in this chapter to theorize issues which affect positively the effective internalization of a target language. Having their basis on either nativists or behaviorist approaches, or on a mélange of both, Stephen Krashen, Merrill Swain, Richard Schmidt, Michael Long, Manfred Pienemann, Elizabeth Bates & Brian MacWhinney, and Antonella Sorace & Francesca Filiaci show up to expose their findings on second language acquisition. Finally, the impact that the first language may have on the second or vice versa is also scrutinized to help figure out some of the most common interferences occurring between each other.

Chapter three encompasses all the characteristics associated to the effectual instruction of English. Along with a brief history of language teaching, the main key terms such as syllabus, skills, multiple intelligences, explicit and implicit teaching, approach, method, and techniques among others are introduced to aid the comprehension of the challenging task of training students. Beginning with methods dating back at the 19th century (Grammar-translation), this chapter is devoted to reviewing the dissimilar manners in which teachers can engage pupils in the learning process. All the revolutionary models developed ever since permit to witness the evolution of methods as new findings on ELT appear. The Dogme Approach thus concludes as the most recent innovation on language teaching, standing out because of its simplicity and focus on emergent teacher-student interaction.

Chapter four discusses in detail the Lexical Approach, a method created by Michael Lewis in the 1990’s and devoted to the teaching of English through chunks. Lewis begins by clarifying the vocabulary-lexis dichotomy and identifying the fundamental components necessary to comprehend the functioning of this approach. This exponent stresses the role of the diverse lexical items such as words, poly words, compound words, collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms, and fixed phrases in order to become proficient in the target language. Lewis also establishes some premises that work as foundations to support this teaching system, enunciating that language consists of grammaticalized lexis rather than lexicalized grammar. Therefore, lexical constructions are given more emphasis and grammar is only used for the creation of new novel phrases. He also believes that receptive skills should be enhanced over productive ones, relying on the way in which first languages acquirers increase their vocabulary size and improve their
repertoire during their first years of life. So as to find out the inclusion of the varied lexical items proposed by Lewis in the Chilean education, course books from 5th grade in elementary school to 4th grade in high school are thoroughly scrutinized to collect evidence on the application of the Lexical Approach in the classrooms.

Chapter five is devoted to explaining the research per se. It starts by elucidating what a research is and the advantages of being a meticulous researcher. Then it moves on towards presenting the epistemological approach or the two main perspectives used in investigations, the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The first is employed most commonly to study social phenomena through a series of numerical methods; the latter is more inductive and while the first approach focuses on numbers, this one puts especial emphasis to the subjects’ testimonies and opinions. The subjects analyzed during the investigations were students and teachers, both from schools and university. The instruments selected to gather the required information were carefully created to retrieve only the information to answer the research question; these instruments were achievement test (for the students) and questionnaires (for the teachers). The overall was to collect information to have a clear picture of what the situation in Punta Arenas is like related to the Lexical Approach. In the following chapter the findings are exposed and explained.

Finally chapter 6 is fully devoted to presenting the most relevant aspects of the collected data in terms of charts and tables. These graphic elements used to expose the results are also analyzed by the research team which carried out the investigations in a number of local schools where almost five hundred students participated voluntarily in the investigation. At the same time, students of the career of English Pedagogy at the University of Magallanes, also contributed to the research. To have an even wider range of information, fourteen school teachers and four university teachers answered a questionnaire in which they first were asked to complete a sort of self-evaluation chart and then asked about the diverse techniques they prefer to assess or teach grammar and vocabulary. As the Lexical Approach places especial emphasis on vocabulary the teachers were inquired on what were the lexical items they included the most in their classes and the volume of vocabulary they expect their students to learn each month. Having taking all this into consideration the researchers were able to have a clear notion regarding the application of the
Lexical Approach in Punta Arenas and present accurate results which could help develop more efficient methodologies when teaching English.

This research sets out to undertake a detailed examination of the reality of vocabulary teaching in Punta Arenas, in its contrast to what the Lexical Approach posits. Firstly, it is deemed of core importance to encourage teachers to highlight the benefits underlying vocabulary management, especially when words defy students’ general understanding. Likewise, this study attempts to assess the conditions whereby the Lexical Approach has been incorporated in the material provided by the Chilean Ministry of Education, the textbooks and their reliability are a potential source for both teachers and students in English classes. On the whole, these coursebooks encompass activities which largely aim to develop grammar as a competence and not as a skill to be tacitly grasped. Additionally, minor sections in which collocations are used to develop specific tasks have been located as they are not inserted within a meaningful context but in isolation. As a result, this investigation intends to redress the imbalance concerning teachers’ approaches to build up an adequate word store, as well as identifying glaring weaknesses bedeviling numerous teachers and learners in Punta Arenas.
1.1 Objectives

General objectives

To determine the degree to which the Lexical Approach is present in the teaching-learning process in educational centers of Punta Arenas.

Specific objectives

- To examine the Chilean syllabus and textbooks provided by the Ministry of Education.
- To diagnose through reliable research instruments the students and teachers’ acquaintance with the components of the Lexical Approach.
- To analyze the results to determine the students’ aptitude in the usage of word chunks and collocations.
- To present findings concerning learners’ knowledge on lexical contents.

1.2 Research questions

- Are teachers aware of the existence of the Lexical Approach and the benefits it may have in their teaching?
- Is it feasible to implement a lexical syllabus in Chilean public schools?
- Which would the implications of using the Lexical Approach be in the acquisition of a second language?
- Is the Lexical Approach worthwhile to be included in the current teaching tenets?
- What methods, model and target language lie in the study of collocations and multi words?
- Which are our expectations by conducting research on the study of the Lexical Approach and its principles?
II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER ONE: FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is, at times, not highly valued by the human being in their everyday life. The proclivity to debase the language by misuse or inappropriate motion has engendered an upsurge of contempt by people who, in a moment of aberration, prefer to use the language to reach a dialog than following an animal instinct which results in laceration. As a matter of fact, it has been the artistry to set words into action the ability which has led people to become a successful species and survive throughout the vagaries of fate. Granted, language has allowed human beings to blaze trails in their agitated existence. Language is not only the heaven-sent gift which makes people different from animals at being one of the chief traits of rationalization, but also the key to their hegemony over the world today. Insofar as language has come to evolve with nature, it has foiled the characteristic violence which gave rise to wars, bloodshed and flagrant injustices from the outset. Rendering the world more idyllic through consensus raised by the patterns of
speaking, language precluded decay and progressive self-mutilation. Thus, it bodes well when language is employed. Being a salient intellectual prowess, language serves to forge relationships, as the human beings socialize by the use of language to make friends, rear their children, patch up differences, hold society globalized by communication or more ideally to expand horizons in hunting jobs or travelling. Even more naturally language is used to convey feelings and thoughts, gossip, tell jokes, run errands, count, tell the time, agree or disagree, or any function which is intrinsic to human nature.

Nevertheless, even if there are people who have better commandment of the language when delivering eloquent oral presentations, speeches, scripts, writing dissertations or reading heavy-going books, language is not a talent, yet an exceptional ability in human life tantamount to breathing, eating or thinking. But babies are not born speaking; they do not even have an iota of what adults say around them when they are brought to life. With an inchoate system of codes, babies at their early stages begin to communicate by bawling, gurgling and drooling as their grown peers obey to their cues. A host of research and in-depth examinations have been conducted to detect whether children acquire language in continuous exposure to nature or it is an innate faculty which any human being is plunged into. This tipping point has aroused a farrago of growing debates on whether it is an unwieldy process for children to pick up language or the converse, an effortless attainment added to their vast cognitive scope. In this way, a systematic and explicit teaching of their language would be an otiose undertaking for children if self-correction is considered as the major tool to become self-taught in language development.

In this chapter, the question pertaining to language acquisition will be addressed within the framework of a series of theories formulated with acceptance ever since this issue was firstly tackled. Under this premise the formalist and functionalist school will be approached by sharp contrast among their general theories. Additionally, the circumstances in which the process of language acquisition takes place will be attributed to the notion of grammar and its implications in the construction of first sentences as prime lexicon is imbedded little by little. Ultimately, different atmosphere stimuli rub off on children’s language acquisition, fact which is deemed paramount as the concept of input is to be defined in accordance with the contrastive parameters of nature versus nurture.
2. KEY TERMS

In order to develop this chapter properly, it is pivotal to establish some further clarifications before going through the diverse theories. Once the definitions are clear enough, the reader will be able to move on and become fully immersed in this linguistic matter.

Acquisition and learning

Since this chapter is devoted to language acquisition, it is essential to clarify what acquisition stands for. Most of the time, this term and learning are mistakenly referred as synonymous concepts, though, Stephen Krashen hypothesizes that there is a slight difference between these notions. He states this dichotomy to differentiate between conscious and unconscious internalization of knowledge. Besides, Madalena Cruz-Ferreira (2011) proposes that:

“the phrase “first language acquisition” commonly refers to the natural development of language which takes place in childhood, from birth; “language teaching”, in turn, pertains to structured language instruction, such as takes place in school settings, whether in childhood or later on in life.”1 (p. 1)

Firstly, the non-conscious development of acquisition involves a process of natural assimilation and rule internalization owing to the exposure to comprehensible input. This input, language sample, focuses more on meaning than form. The language sample received is the result of the social interaction between the acquirer and their environment when the role the learner plays is increasingly active. As any child who is getting familiarized with their mother tongue, the phonetic characteristics, new vocabulary and effective oral communication is what prevails during this process.

Secondly, the conscious and usually planned process includes the study of the rules of the language and prioritizes the writing system over communicational skills. The main aim is that

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users of the language comprehend the structure and form, requiring intellectual performance to get meanings. When being instructed, learning is usually based on a complex syllabus where the correct is valued over the incorrect use of language.

Finally, despite the fact that these two terms have some dissimilarities, it must be agreed that they are completely interrelated and in a certain way they complement each other.

Input

When human infants begin acquiring their first language, they are assisted by the way adults and older children behave especially in their household. These people provide children with input. Input could simply be defined as all the language an acquirer is being exposed to, everything that they hear around them when growing up. All the input received helps children start learning their mother tongue going through a series of stages until the time they become proficient in their first language.

Most of the time adults tend not to treat the infant in front of them as if they were addressing someone of their own age; on the contrary, moms, dads and grandparents seem to manipulate language and transform it into plain bits that infants would be more able to comprehend. Thus, words such as good or dad are usually added the suffix –y, turning into goody and daddy.

Onomatopoeia, “words that are considered by convention to be imitative of nature, acoustically similar to the thing to which it refers” (Richards; Schmidt, 2002, p. 373) is also a resource commonly used by grown-ups when trying to communicate with the little ones. For example, if they are talking about a toy, they may utter choo-choo instead of saying train. This way, combining both of the ideas previously exposed, an excellent example would be the following:

Oh, goody! Now Daddy will push choo-choo.

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Caregiver speech

When adults talk to each other, their conversation can include hesitations, repetitions, idioms, sayings, the shortening of words, and the like; a way of speaking which differs from the fashion that a person usually speaks to an infant who is acquiring language. Just by taking a look at the people, it is possible to notice the manner in which a grown-up talks, making many modifications in their speech when saying something to a son, daughter, niece, nephew, etc. The sentence above is a clear example of what is called caregiver speech.

Also known as motherese, mother talk, baby talk, caretaker speech (Richards; Schmidt, 2002) or an even more updated label child-directed speech (CDS), this style is characterized by the simplicity of speech. People tend to use shorter and grammatically simple utterances and topics. In general, the conversation is a monolog carried out by the caretaker where he or she intends not to get feedback, but at least a smile or babbling. Furthermore, the topics usually cover concrete concepts, actions or objects that can be perfectly seen, the here-and-now. These non-abstract words that are usually repeated with thorough pronunciation, exaggerated intonation and a higher pitch (Williamson, 2011) are thought to prompt language acquisition. All these features combined can be found in the following example in which a mother is communicating with her 13-month-old child (Shulman; Capone, 2010):

- **Mother:** Look!
- **Child:** (touches picture)
- **Mother:** What are those?
- **Child:** (vocalizes a babble string and smiles)
- **Mother:** Yes, these are rabbits.
- **Child:** (vocalizes, smiles, looks up at mother)
- **Mother:** (laughs) Yes, rabbit.
- **Child:** (vocalizes, smiles)
- **Mother:** Yes. (laughs)
Whether child-directed speech assists infants or not has been of great concern. Studies show that in fact the role of the parents is crucial when matching their speech to their son’s cognitive level, and consequently aiding the acquisition of their first language and making it easier for those less fortunate children who are not treated with this subtle way of communication (Matychuk, 2005). One startling aspect is that “the behavior of turn-taking emerges toward the end of the second month, when infants react to the vocal promptings of the mother by cooing when she stops talking”3 (Matychuk, 2005, p. 323). Even if children are not able to utter a word yet, they are already taking part of a conversation and developing the first skills in this complex process.

Intake

Despite the fact that newborns are bombarded with a great amount of input during their first months and years of life, not everything they hear or are exposed to can be processed and stored in their brains. The ability to retain information is a facility that not only children have but people of all ages. Imagine someone studying for a test, reading a bunch of pages about any topic for hours; in the end, this person will not be able to recall every detail from the reading as some of the contents will be virtually forgotten, yet others will prevail and will be ready to be applied. The ability to use at least a small amount from all the information provided is called intake, the language a little kid is able to integrate successfully. The reasons for a part of the input to be transformed into intake is a question in which different factors such as the motivation, attention, and tiredness among others, may influence (Lewis, 2005). In spite of these factors, it is fundamental to highlight that input along with caregiver speech are crucial for the development of speech in children. Parents and people surrounding newborns are in charge of providing as much input and child-directed speech as possible to switch it into intake and thus be able to develop their communicative skills.

Based on the premise that behaviorists hold regarding language acquisition, it is of central importance to indicate that these interactions between a child and an adult not only contribute to

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the children’s construction of a diverse repertoire of both vocabulary and notions of structures from an early age, but also to the use of simplified models which facilitate infants’ understanding. Additionally, it has been observed that as children began using more language, the speech of those interacting with them become more elaborate.

**Nature versus nurture**

The nature and nurture controversy is one of the oldest debates concerning human behavior, being possible to find evidence from the 13th century. In this never-ending discussion, there are two main approaches which oppose each other with the purpose of hypothesizing and explaining why certain individuals behave in a particular fashion or are likely to develop a specific personality. On one hand, the nature angle focuses on the characteristics people are born with and the influence that genetics have on them, but on the other, nurture inclines towards the impact of the environment and how personal experiences mold aptitudes.

Imagine a newborn with the same color of eyes from his mother or the same curly hair that characterizes his father. These physical traits the baby is born with are of course hereditary, but what about the personality he may have when growing up? Is it due to biological reasons or the manner in which he has been raised? It is uncertain how much influence nature and nurture may have but it is of primary consideration to agree on the fact that both of them play a significant role. While nature gives humans inborn abilities and characteristics, what nurture does is to take these elements and mold them as people grow up (Powell, 2012).

On behalf of the nature theory, scientists have been trying to find for years the genes that may be associated with traits such as intelligence, personality and sexual orientation and of course language. To validate their hypothesis, several experiments have been carried out with identical twins demonstrating that even if they are reared apart, both present remarkable similarities. In relation to language, it is believed that “a child is born with an innate knowledge
of or predisposition towards language, and that this innate property is universal in all human beings" (Brown, 2000, p. 34).

Supporting the nurture belief, their varied exponents have demonstrated through experiments with animals and babies that behavior can be conditioned. One of the most famous American psychologists John Watson ran a controversial experiment with a child named Albert. Through classical conditioning, he made little Albert develop a phobia to furry animals and objects. His findings led Watson to convey:

“give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select – doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and, yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors” (Kimble, 1998, p. 83).

Later, Skinner, a well-known psychologist, tested on animals and proved that human behavior can actually be conditioned in a similar mode as animals.

3. LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES

According to Barbara and Philip Newman (2009) a theory,

“is a set of interconnected statements, including assumptions, definitions, axioms, postulates, hypothetical constructs, intervening variables, laws and hypothesis to...describe unobservable structures, mechanisms and processes and to relate them to one another and to observable events.” (p. 18)

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For example, attributing the phenomena taking place in the environs of a child as substantial likelihood to nourish his or her language is a theory based upon assumptions and observations. Similarly, if an individual states the converse, that the above-mentioned tokens do not have a profound effect on children’s language acquisition, then he or she is theorizing about the same controversy based on hypothetical constructs.

Most importantly, a theory differs from an approach and a model, which is the method used to tackle a problem and the “schematic description of a system, theory, or phenomenon that accounts for its known or inferred properties and may be used for further study of its characteristics” correspondingly (Müller, 2009, p. 2). Within this umbrella, numerous theories have been formulated to provide the human being with the thoroughgoing account of the acquisition of one of their major tools, language.

From classic times, erudite luminaries like Greek philosopher Plato pondered on the linguistic skills that children possess whether or not they were a heaven-sent gift or a stepwise development from nature. In fact, both Aristotle and Plato acknowledged the prominence of language use and its linchpin between human beings and other species (Frede; Inwood, 2005). Plato, on the other hand, excelled in his famous dialog Meno for being the first time when the status of language was addressed in order to prove the veracity of language acquisition existence, lying either in convention or nature. In this dialog Plato questioned the whys and wherefores for children acquiring linguistic knowledge despite being in situations which are overtly devoid of stimuli (de Villiers; Roeper, 2011).

The copious reverberations of Plato’s problems were far-flung throughout history. As a matter of fact, a host of psychologists, linguists and philosophers has aimed their studies at reasoning out what Plato ever wondered. For example, the French philosopher René Descartes claimed that human beings were a holistic fuse of both mind and body. His argument posits that the human mind accesses knowledge irrespective of the input provided by the environment, strengthening thus the God-given inborn nature of language (Popkin, 1999). These views ignited

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even more the fierce debate pertaining to language acquisition between formalists and functionalists.

On one hand, functionalism contends that language and its process of acquisition are framed and seconded by the communicative function of language granted by nature; but on the other, old formalism asserts that nature has no bases on the fact that language is used to communicate (Hoff, 2009). In first language acquisition both formalists and functionalists are often recognized as nativists, or mentalists, and empiricists respectively. Mentalism, or rationalism, is associated with nativism because it holds that knowledge is originated from innate processes occurring in the mind, whereas nativism affirms that language development is innate as the child matures in his or her own biology (Vinson, 2011). On different score, empiricism ventures to suggest that language is not innate but developed from the perception of significant experiences provided by the environment the child is steeped (Russell, 2004).

There again, behaviorism precepts posit that language is acquired when verbalizations are reinforced in a positive form; however, in this research behaviorism will partake empiricism as it includes the natural angle of the argument concerning what the process of language development is (Wallach, 2008).

3.1 Nativism

Noam Chomsky and Universal Grammar

Psychologically speaking, the nativist trend believes that certain abilities are hard wired into the human brain, that is, humans are born with these skills as they are innate. When it comes to language, and most particularly the acquisition of it, a predominant figure related to this theory comes immediately up, and that is the figure of the American linguist Noam Chomsky.

Noam Chomsky, sometimes called the father of modern linguistics, believes that children are born with some congenital skills to learn the human language, whichever it may be. He insists upon the fact that in a child’s mind there are already some linguistic structures engraved.
Chomsky is mistakenly believed to have discovered *universal grammar*, a linguistic theory that states that the ability to learn grammar is purely innate. This theory proposes that there are some characteristics, which are shared by all human languages and the linguistic ability does not necessarily entail being taught. In fact, what Chomsky fulfilled was just to observe and compare a human baby and a kitten, when being exposed to the same linguistic data the human child would be able to understand to produce language; nonetheless, the kitten would not be able to do the same at any time. After observing this phenomenon Chomsky formulated that humans have a special device in their brains that encrypts a language’s grammatical structures and its major principles, being this device known as the *language acquisition device* or just LAD.

Chomsky believes that as the LAD already possessed the syntactic structures used to create sentences children only needed to learn new vocabulary and combine it with the feature previously mentioned. On the other hand, Chomsky states that children cannot learn a language purely by imitating what they hear because most of the times the adults surrounding them do not use language properly, that is to say, their speech is ungrammatical. Although all languages are complex children become fluent in their mother tongue by the time they are around five or six years old. When referring to Chomskyan universal grammar, the principles and parameters model excel as an element of overriding importance. Chomsky says that principles do not have to be acquired by anyone; they are invariant and part of universal grammar. On the other hand, there is a large number of options that children can pick up from experience which are called parameters. It could be said then that from this nativist point of view, children acquire language by combining innate factors and environment.

Some evidence to support Chomky’s theory might be:

- Getting the verbs, subjects and objects in the wrong order are grammatical errors that children learning a new language never make.
- A child cannot be deceived, if a grown-up says a sentence grammatically incorrect on purpose, he would notice it.
• Mistakes regarding past tense, changing an irregular form to a regular one (fought instead of fought) shows that children are not learning by imitation because that is a mistake an adult would not make.

Those who are against Chomsky’s theory of language acquisition accept that children do not learn just by imitating but do not approve the theory of the LAD either; they say that language learning could be developed through interactions with other people.

Anatomically speaking, the human brain possesses a region which is called the Broca’s area where the speech production occurs. A study held by a group of German scientist tried to prove the connection between the Broca’s area and language learning yielding that the LAD might be found in this region and that as long as a language follows the principles of universal grammar it was going to be easier to relate another language to the mother tongue of the sample researched.

As a matter of conclusion, it can be said that there is not a clear idea whether Chomsky’s theory is right or not; the idea of universal grammar has evolved since he first proposed it in the late 1960’s but the theory remains to be one of the most influential ones regarding language acquisition because it combines nature and nurture, the innate and the environment.

3.2 Empericism

3.2.1 Behaviorist theories

When nurture is noted, the first assumption to arise with is the fact that everything learned and/or acquired, not only when being a child but throughout lifetime, is thanks to a process involving interaction with others. In this assumption, behaviorism emerges as the largest theory to support this belief. Thus, behaviorists track the acquisition of language in the early stages of a human being and present evidence of the influence that environment has over acquirers.
In the whole process that acquiring a language covers, especially during the first five years of life, there are three main factors that directly affect the language skills that children develop: the knowledge children accrue, the input children receive (often called the Primary Linguistic Data) and the nonlinguistic capacities of children to form and test generalizations based on the input (Crain; Thornton, 2012). The idea of tabula rasa, the way in which humans have their brain at birth, empty and with no ideas or thoughts stored, (Sydney, 2005) is also backed up within these assumptions. Therefore, all these factors support behaviorism, its relationship to language and how important context is to reach effective communicational skills.

Opposite to nativist ideas, behaviorism suggests that the ability children have in the early stage to produce language is because of the expertise the brain has to extract the data it receives through the input and under no circumstances due to any innate device people are born with. Humans have enough time and brain capacities to store the large amount of words required to speak and make the corresponding associations to combine and link these words correctly. When a child is able to communicate after having received plenty of input, it does not mean that he or she has an inborn device in their brains, it is just an instance where someone is apt to project their acquired abilities beyond experience.

Behaviorists argue that, as any other cognitive process, language is acquired in a piecemeal fashion based on all the information provided by the input. At least at the earlier stages, children tend to reproduce some basic linguistic expressions, confirming again the behaviorist principle. Not only the quantity of input is important, but also the quality or nature of input available to infants which seems to play a crucial role when moving forward in the language acquisition process.

**Skinner**

As explained in other areas of cognitive development, Skinner proposes that language is acquired thanks to a process of rewards and punishments. This means that when an acquirer performs successfully he or she is praised, but when mistaken, the behavior is not rewarded (Castagnaro, 2006). Consequently, they start repeating actions which lead to pleasure and avoid
carrying out the others, creating a habit and in the long run becoming successful exponents of language.

When creating a habit, there is a conditioning procedure which reinforces a child’s future production of language. For instance, when a newborn babbles, none of these tries to talk are rewarded but when they utter well-known words such as *daddy* or *mommy*, adults’ attention is immediately caught and babies are rewarded (Johnson, 2012). On the contrary, they gradually forget the nonsense words that receive no feedback. Some critics claim that this theory thoroughly aligns with the development of grammar as language acquisition seems to be a grueling task.

3.2.2 The Cognitive theory

Thinking is a remarkable feature, which alongside the set of skills immanent to the human brain prove an important asset to the construction of language. As a matter of fact, thinking involves grasping meanings and cues from nature and peers, such as objects, concepts, representations, actions, events and ideas. Thinking nurtures human sub-skills like decision making, problem solving and creativity, which are quintessential in people’s everyday life to perceive, interpret and predict their behavior. It is not a coincidence that thinking is the kernel of a nuanced notion which has been deeply entrenched in multifold fields of the intensive study of the human being, which is cognition. Vyvyan Evans (2007) defines cognition as follows:

“…all aspects of conscious and unconscious mental function. In particular, cognition constitutes the mental events (mechanisms and processes) and knowledge involved in a whole host of tasks ranging from ‘low-level’ object perception to ‘high level’ decision-making tasks.”

Given this perspective, the inextricable link between cognitive capacities and language is salient. Language is the result of a general conceptual organization, processing mechanisms, the impact of vast array of experiences and environmental stimuli. This doctrine squarely resides on the precepts of cognitive linguistics. Cognitive linguistics peruses the language as a motley

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assortment of new experiences gleaned from constant contact with the environment, which to some extent determines the human knowledge. Through this continuum of first-hand experiences the human being structures their knowledge as it is classified into different categories which store the information and permit the contrast from old to new experiences (Geeraerts; Cuyckens, 2007). Thus, this experientialist view discloses that Cognitive Linguistics combines its principles with the assumption that it is not all about the knowledge of the language but, as Geenraerts and Cuckenks state, “the knowledge of the world as meditated by the language”\(^9\) (p. 6).

On the other hand, Cognitive Linguistics, as embracing language as a whole cardinal element in its principles, addresses to the question concerning the origin of it in human beings, or rather its acquisition. First language acquisition is tackled in a series of cognitive theories which have broken ground in linguistic research from the outset. Under this conception, language acquisition constitutes one essential track of a long road of cognitive development which encompasses a host of systematic stages (Hickmann; Kail, 2010). This Piagetian outlook posits that this cognitive development is triggered by the multiple changes which the child’s cognition experiences along the disparate stages. For Piaget, notwithstanding the cognitive development is autonomous from language, he relates cognition to social interaction, which years later would bring about a strong bond with the domain of language acquisition (Columbus, 2003).

This former postulation adheres to other popular cognitive models and current approaches which theorize that first language acquisition rests in the existence of cognitive constraints highly associated to early processes underlying language use in real time. This modern position ascribes acquisition to usage events, that is to say, progressive incipient utterances in determined contexts would give rise to more complex abstract representations of language (Lieven; Tomasello, 2008). These bits of language are peremptory to occur in an environment whose chief appendance is social interaction, engendering other theories of cognitive development nature therewith.

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Piaget

Jean Piaget was a key Swiss biologist and psychologist who developed a theory of cognitive growth which purported to expound the early development of a child at large. Piaget felt that this general theory comprised the occurrence of language acquisition, since the development of language was just another characteristic pertaining to cognitive growth (Cattell, 2007). Nevertheless, Piaget did not fail to notify the form that young children learn about the world by means of their continuous performances on the environment as they use their undeveloped body to keep contact with the knowledge that the world offers them. In this way, Piaget put forward that children build their notion of language from the beginning as they find out more about their surroundings, being the brain the sole innate element which is constantly apprehending the world. Moreover, Piaget claimed that thinking boosts language acquisition given that the thoughts which children develop when they touch, observe, smell or taste objects lead them to depict and identify long afterwards the properties and purposes of the elements with which they had interaction. That said, the cognitive theory of language development posits that landmarks in cognitive development make language unfold progressively as maturation and environment merge to orient not only the cognitive development, but also the language (Sigelman; Rider, 2011).

3.2.3 The Social Interactionist Theory

Children obtain language from the spurs purveyed by their immediate environment. At this point language acquisition impends as adults and caretakers are the essence, on the grounds that they are the contributive agents who shape the forthcoming language that the child will pick up in sound patterns, grammatical inflections, paragons for coining new vocabulary and certainly new constructions. They contrive to add to their language handbook the most recurrent nouns, adjectives and verbs at first, and then they expand their scope as their early speech milestones galvanizes them into meaningful action (Clark, 2004). In developing these stages, children’s rudimentary language hinges on social interaction in order to entrench a focus of attention to them as constant addressees. This social interactionist theory is strongly espoused with pivotal Vygotskian views, which regard social interaction as primary for language development. Thus,
unlike Piaget who deems individual cognitive processes as a crucial factor in development, both Vygotsky and Bruner see children’s participation in social interaction of prime importance in cognitive development, and thereby language (Singleton; Ryan, 2004).

Vygotsky held that through this interaction, mainly with adults, children internalize the dialogs and its deriving codes in a stepwise process. Upon this prospect he proceeds to put forth the following observations (Schütz, 2002):

- The child is the protagonist hunter and constructor of their own knowledge.
- The child and environment relate together to admit of a cognitive development which tailors to the culture involved.
- The mind is distinguished as a social construction.
- The child comes to life with nascent abilities in regard to attention, perception and memory.
- Development takes place as a corollary of close contact with the environment.
- Children foster their thinking through inner communication which entails higher levels of cognition based on imagination (Connery; John-Steiner; Marjnavoc-Shane, 2010).
- Language and thought mature individually; however, in the end they intermingle and act together on a single development.

Vygotsky

Lev Vygotsky was a Soviet learner psychologist who has been highly cited in contemporary twenty-first century writings as he was largely concerned with children’s onerous task to learn from their environment abstract constructions (Meskill, 2002). He fabricated his theory positing that thought underlies multiple contexts which have been witnessed throughout time and it is set into motion through the internalization of certain symbols which arise from inherent cultural contact, such as language (Reed, 2009). In this way, Vygotsky saw language as a tool for cognitive skills which evolves with an inner communication or the child talking to himself. With this silent language the child nurtures knowledge at developing notion of time,
causes and relationships which eventually result in the thinking of the outside environment (Daniels, 2005). Language, in other words, would be partly separated from cognition at least in the earliest periods of development, but it is in their later unification to develop consciousness, or thought, when language, in fact, emerges (Daniels; Cole; Wertsch, 2007).

Paving this Vygotskyan framework requires significant time and piecemeal processes; all the same, Vygotsky adheres his views to a sociocultural or interactionist theory when he maintains that cooperative relationship between adult and child is fundamental to the development of language (Charlesworth, 2011). Under this notion, language is a cultural tool shaped by the immersion and interaction of the child with society. This society, which mostly comprises the child’s caretakers, aligns with the fact that the more the child interacts the more language they are overwhelmed with. This communicative exchanges supply the children with more language to be stored and serve to be a raw model for ongoing constructions (Cashwell, 2008). Regardless, Vygotsky agrees with Piaget in the sense that language cannot be simply acquired from the adults around the child for this latter proves to plainly possess crude characteristics which do not belong to adult speech and thought. Unlike Piaget though, Vygotsky goes on to suggest that this occurrence lies in the impromptu formation of undeveloped concepts, or rather meanings, which function as carriers of information swapped (Miller, 2011).

Bruner

Jerome Bruner is an American psychologist who was one of the first interpreters of Lev Vygotsky’s work. Similarly, he concurs with Jean Piaget in the perspective that the mind constructs a representation of reality through symbols, culture and language and the child is the active constructor of their thinking as they encounter and negotiate with the world. According to Bruner’s theories, language acquisition has both nature and nurture arguments. Bruner puts forward that children have a clear-cut predisposition to acquire and learn the language, but this process is contingent with the social context, in a vein that language acquisition equates to its use in a meaningful sociocultural context (Arnold; Yeomans, 2005). Bruner’s language development attribution to the social environment attempts to clarify that children are poised to initiate fruitful
communication when there is daily interaction with mature language users so that language proves functional accordingly (New; Cochran, 2007).

Even though the child is unable to speak, Bruner contends that adult and child in fact hold conversations based upon games and non-verbal communication. These signals aid to cement the inchoate structure of language prior to the effective verbal communication of the infant (Henschel, 2010). Thus, children acquire language “through instinctive structures in the brain...based on predictability, playfulness, focus on meaning, role reversal, modeling and nomenclature”\(^{10}\) (Adler-Tapia, 2012, p. 30). As grammar emerges, Bruner depicts his language acquisition support system (LASS) in contrast to Chomskyan language acquisition device (LAD). This LASS proposes that the initiative to communicate rests in adults’ mantle and is transferred to children by means of structured formats given during play or any other face-to-face interaction. Children would be capable indeed of internalizing the intention and outcome of a specific dialog, including the structural aspects of such an act. For instance, children procure elementary order rules by observing repeated narration enactment of the relationship among agent, action and object, and every engagement that both child and adult go through provides contextual sustenance within the structure called for (Hoff; Shatz, 2009). Nonetheless, irrespective of the in-depth examinations LASS was not unfurled to dislodge LAD as primary account of the development of conceptual grammar.

In sum, social interactionists demonstrate the effect of both biology and parental fostering. They share with behaviorists the firm belief that environment is crucial in children’s development. In the same vein, nativists share the presumption that children possess an inborn inclination to acquire a language, and with the cognitive school they accept the belief that language is intrinsic to the cognitive development. Nonetheless, social interactionists underscore the child’s need to contribute to language learning and the construction of learning. It places a strong emphasis on the dynamic negotiations between infants and caretakers. This occurs as mothers or caretakers overall, “treat children attempts at speech as meaningful and intentional”\(^{11}\)

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As parents set out to digest their child’s speech they also commence to make sense of the child’s intent. Parents also endorse an essential task of language when they bolster their children up to meld language with meaning by paying rapt attention to the child’s responses to objects in the environment and tagging each object and its action (Guzetti, 2002).

### 3.2.4 The Relational Frame Theory (RFT)

One recent post-Skinnerian approach has emerged late to be developed under new disparate paradigms, claiming that language acquisition occurs by nurture based on Skinner’s behavioral arguments. As Owen (2002) states:

“Relational frame theory also suggests an entirely new theoretical approach to the nature of language. Specifically, it suggests that language behavior is relational framing behavior (S. C. Hayes, 1994; S. C. Hayes et al., 2001). That is, to talk about something is to frame that thing relationally in a particular way, and thereby to make a particular kind of ‘sense’ out of it. The value of this ‘sense’ can then be checked out against one’s experiences.”

This theory submits a comprehensive learning account as to the development of language nature and competency. The relational frame theory asserts that human beings react not only to incentives grounded on former interactions with them, but also on their reciprocal relations to other events in which novel goads arise to expand meaning and function based on “the relational network that these cues establish” (Sookman; Leahy, 2009, p. 259). Likewise, RFT maintains that a person’s development is virtually subjected to regulations executed by a functional contextualism (Dale, 2002). This functional contextualism serves as an essential determiner in language since it underlies the influence of foreseen events such as emotions, behaviors, and thoughts by enabling the “individual to respond to one stimulus in terms of another and it can

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produce emotional functions for oncoming events that exceed those that have been directly conditioned\textsuperscript{14} (Hargie, 2006, p. 15).

Granted, children would pick up language through interacting with the immediate environment. Still, this language acquisition theory distinguishes and sets forth a kind of operant sense dubbed derived relational responding, largely based upon social learning (Novak; Pelaez, 2004). On this fundamental assumption, RFT suggests that children learn language through systematic codes of inherent reinforcements in response to a mélange of events whose extemporaneous interaction impends. Thus, this notion defies the nativist doctrine which ascribes language acquisition to inborn specific cognitive capacities. However, this theory is fallacious to those who concur with Skinner (Palmer, 2004), and doubts arise when it comes to seeing relational frame theory as a primary new perspective. As Palmer points out, the significance of reinforcement in language as a post-Skinnerian cornerstone is not valid as a mainstream approach in postmodern times of the twenty-first century.

4. THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION PROGRAMME

Indifferently of the theory of language acquisition one may feel more comfortable with the truth is that all normal children start developing language at the same time. Chomsky believes that this time is when infants are between two and six years old. On the other hand, Piaget believes that language development takes place during the stage he called pre-operational which occurs when children are between two and seven years old, so despite the fact that these two theorists have contrasting ideas when it comes down to language acquisition and development a common feature can be found. As children begin developing their language skills they also start developing their motor ones too, that is to say, standing, sitting down, crawling, etc. Having this into consideration, it could be said that an infant’s biological schedule is related to the maturation of his brain; the child’s brain needs to be able to cope with a variety of linguistic input at the different development stages. Children have been processing the input they hear from the environment surrounding them long before they even start talking. A way to identify when children are paying attention to what is being said is to see how they react in response to certain

speech sounds; they turn their heads in the direction where the sound is coming from, and there is also a change in the child’s pupil when he identifies a specific sound. It is believed that infants are able to distinguish between sounds such as [pa] and [ba] by the time they are only one month old. Over the next couple of months the child will start developing an array of crying styles, employing a specific pattern for a specific need and reacting with a big smile to a speaking face.

**Cooing and babbling**

Sydney (2005) defines coo as “to say something in a soft quiet voice, especially to somebody you love”15 (p. 96). Cooing can be described as the process where infants use speech-like sounds for the very first time. This process takes place when the child is between three and five months old and is characterized by his becoming able to produce a series of vowel-like sounds, mostly high vowels like [u] and [i]. By the time the child is four months old he is capable of creating sounds similar to the velar consonants [g] and [k], this because the ability to take the rear part of the tongue into contact with the back of the palate has been developed. By the time the infant is five months old they can already distinguish a difference amid the vowels [a] and [i], and also differentiate between syllables such as [ga] and [ba]. Therefore, it could be said that during this stage infants begin acquiring and discriminating certain vowels sounds.

By the time the infant turns six months old he moves to a different stage, the babbling stage. Sydney (2005) defines babble as “the sounds a baby makes before beginning to say actual words”16 (p. 337). Babbling could be described as the process where infants use and combine different syllables. During this stage a child will use, for example, the syllables mentioned above in different ways, sometimes in isolation and others combining them. As the child approaches the end of the babbling stage (nine-ten months old) he starts producing sounds with marked intonation patterns; vowels are often combined with consonants creating a CV (consonant-vowel) pattern. Babbling is produced more often when children interact with their caregivers but they also babble when they are left alone. Nasal sounds such as [ma] and [da] become more common

at this stage and as they are repeated by the infants their parents repeat them back to the child, pointing to each other, that is to say, they utter *mama* and point at the mother or *dada*, associating the syllables to a person in particular.

As it was previously mentioned, while children develop their language skills they also develop their motor ones too. By the time infants are ten and eleven months old they should be capable of standing and staying in an upright position for a little while. At the same time, they are now able to use their limited vocalizations to express certain emotions. During this stage infants use an even more complex combination of syllables and attempt to imitate, both gestures and words produced by grown-ups. The ability to babble is a human thing only, and part of the practical stage has been proved to do the same. While infants are standing, babbling and making gestures adults tend to react and even though it is incoherent, it is the child’s way of contributing to social interaction.

**One word stage**

Also known as the holophrastic stage, it occurs when children are between ten and eighteen months old. By this time children are already capable of uttering a diversity of words. A characteristic feature of this period is that the single words uttered are usually linked to everyday objects such as *cookie, dog, car, papa, spoon* (usually pronounced [pun]), etc. It is also common that by this period children are now able to relate words to pictures or actions, for example, if a child is sitting on a sofa, looking out through a window and suddenly sees a car passing by, it is likely that he will be very excited and point out through the window yelling *car!* Another example would be when a child listens to a doorbell ringing; he is obviously not going to say something like *daddy, there is someone at the front door*, but more likely to say *papa* and stare at the object making the sound where the sound is coming from, in this case the door. As children are already able to relate objects to words they are also able to relate a specific object to its owner, for example, a child might see his father’s hat and say *Juan hat.*
Children use words combined with a specific intonation pattern and gestures, in a way, to inform an adult of a desire, feeling or something they notice around them. These words are used in a particular context so they have a particular meaning, for example:

a) **A child’s desire for a specific action:**
   - Down! (with this word the child is telling his parents that he no longer wants to be carried)
   - Cookie (this is the way a child in this stage would say *May I have a cookie?* )

b) **Express an emotion:**
   - No! (the child does not want to do what he is being requested to)
   - Auw (the child’s way of letting everyone know that the has hurt himself)

c) **Naming objects:**
   - Doggie (which would mean that the child has seen a dog somewhere)
   - Daniel (the child might be recognizing himself on a mirror)

Another characteristic to be found in children’s language at this stage is the particular use of some words; when they are used in a too narrow way they are called underextensions, that is, employing one word to describe different objects; for example, a child might use the word *bottle* when he is referring only to the plastic bottles, but may not be able to name a glass bottle because they are not made of the same material or maybe the shapes are different. On the other hand, when words are used in a too broad way they are called overextensions, that is, employing a word as a generalization; for example, a child might use the word *dog* not only to name that precise animal but also to name cows, cats, etc., in other words, any furry animal with a tail. As children grow up these underextensions and overextensions disappear because they now understand that different families of materials, animals, etc., exist.
Two word stage

By the time children are between a year and a half and two years old they are expected to have incorporated over fifty words to their developing vocabulary. Keeping in mind that during the previous stage children already possessed and used a certain amount of words they always did it in isolation; in contrast to that and during this stage, infants begin playing with words and combining them in a variety of ways. Commonly, the combinations of words involve a subject with an object or adjective; examples of this would be:

- Subject + object = baby bottle
- Subject + adjective = doggie bad
- Subject + action = daddy eat

Though infants are still too young to understand what an intonation pattern is, and how it works to convey different meanings, the way they apply these patterns and the adults’ interpretation of their utterances condition the real meaning of what they are trying to say. Taking the first example from above, baby bottle, there are at least two possible meanings for the combination of those words:

- Expression of possession (this is my bottle)
- Expression of a request (I want some milk)

As a result, as always, the context in which the baby is immersed is of paramount importance to understand what he is attempting to convey.

With these sorts of expressions the child is obviously attempting to communicate so it is important for adults to behave as if communication is actually occurring. To stimulate children to continue trying to connect with the people surrounding them, adults should give them feedback as a way to confirm that they are not only producing speech, but that their utterances have contributed to the interactions with their human peers.
Furthermore, by the time a child is two years old, he will be treated as a conversational partner by the caregiver because despite the fact that he will already be producing between two hundred and three hundred words, he will also be able to understand five times as many.

**Telegraphic stage**

When children are between two and two and a half years old they start constructing a large amount of expressions that could be categorized as multi-word speech. In contrast to the two previous stages, the number of words uttered by children is not as important as the variation of forms in which words begin to appear.

During this stage children become capable of using sequences of words in a semi-coherent way. It is common to hear a child uttering something like *dog drink milk*, where it is clear that he has a notion of what is happening around him and tries to communicate it, maybe not in a fully correct manner but at least gets the correct word order and starts developing a sentence-construction ability. While these series of lexical morphemes are combined to create a telegram-like speech, simple prepositions begin to appear and a variety of grammatical inflections, too.

By the time children are between two and a half and three years old, they have not only been developing their language skills, but their physical ones as well. While activities like jumping and running increase to a large extent so does their vocabulary, now containing hundreds of words. As children are now able to communicate in a more elaborate way with the adults they start acquiring certain features of pronunciation, so it could be said that an adult might indirectly influence how a child develops his own speech.

**Acquisition process**

While the child’s linguistic collection of words, grammar structures, etc., grows, it is a common belief that he is being taught the language, but this concept does not really go along with what the child does. A less abstract perception of this idea would be to see the child building
different ways of using the language from what is being talked to them, as in the majority of the cases nobody provides children with any tutoring on how to speak the language. Moreover, children should not be seen merely as creatures with an empty head that is progressively being packed with words and phrases. Children’s linguistic production seems to come down to a matter of testing and error; they try different linguistic constructions and check if there is any response to them or not; in this case, it is just not likely to believe that children are acquiring language by imitating the adult’s speech they are encountered with.

Unquestionably, children repeat different versions of the speech they hear from adults, they go through a process in which they adopt a great deal of new vocabulary and make it their own. Thus, adults just produce some of the expressions that appear in the children’s future speech. The following is an extract taken from Clark (2005) that illustrates how a child hastens to add a completely new verb, to Woodstock.

- Noah: (picking up a toy dog) This is Woodstock
  (He bobs the toy in Adam’s face)
- Adam: Hey Woodstock, don’t do that.
  (Noah persists)
- Adam: I’m going home so you won’t Woodstock me.

Adult corrections have not proved to be a conclusive determiner of how children speak. Once the child has adopted the form he constructed, and added it to his linguistic repertoire, all efforts made by adults to correct the child’s speech are useless.

In the next dialog (Fromkin; Rodman; Hyams, 2011) a four-year-old child, is neither duplicating a teacher’s speech nor accepting his mother’s correction.

- **Child:** My teacher holded the baby rabbits and we patted them.
- **Mother:** Did you say your teacher held the baby rabbits?
- **Child:** Yes.
- **Mother:** What did you say she did?
• **Child**: She holded the baby rabbits and we patted them.
• **Mother**: Did you say she held them tightly?
• **Child**: No, she holded them loosely.

Despite the subtlety of these corrections, once a child has the new form engraved into their brains, there is little that can be done to make him realize that it is wrong. The context and the environment the children are immersed will be in charge to do the work.

5. LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN LINGUISTIC UNITS

5.1. Phonology

Phonology may be simply defined as the description of language’s sounds. It is more connected to “the abstract or mental aspect of the sounds”17 (Kisno, 2012, p. 75) rather than the physical articulation. The physical articulation of speech sounds is studied by phoneticians within the articulatory phonetics branch. It covers the different parts of our vocal tract such as mouth, lips, tongue, among others and their functions to produce sounds. In contrast, phonology is concerned with the cognitive processes and associations the brain does with all the sounds a human being is capable of developing according to their own culture and native language.

As newborns begin uttering their first sounds, usually by babbling or cooing, it takes a while until they are able to produce understandable words. As children grow older, they pass through complex stages which require plenty of time and practice to reach an adult-like pronunciation. Input of course plays a crucial role in modeling children’ sound production since what they heard around is stored and used to make comparisons with their actual speech. Observations show that a child may last weeks or even months to reach a correct pronunciation, practicing during the day and even having bedtime monolog. They tend to repeat and repeat until they are able to pronounce correctly, showing their achievements to people around them afterwards.

When infants start babbling, they usually convey single syllables which are repeated. As they develop more sounds, they combine these single syllables with new ones adding some intonation patterns as well. Some researchers argue that there is no continuity between babbling and the first words. Nowadays even though, most of the findings prioritize continuity over discontinuity because babbling and the first words involve a process of vocalization (Clark, 2009). What is really important to pass from one stage to the other is the reinforcement parents give on right sounds rather than any other nonsense production, and so that children begin emphasizing certain sounds and avoiding others.

The final correct pronunciation goes through a series of processes where language is simplified and consequently misunderstood. As the range of sound production is limited, acquirers tend to substitute the complex for simple ones. For instance, it may turn out easier to pronounce a [b] instead of a [p] in an initial position, and the other way around in final position. Another simplification involves assimilation, “the process whereby a feature of one sound becomes part of another during speech production”18 (Yule, 2010, p. 283). The reduplication of syllables is usually found in assimilation, pronouncing for example [baba] instead of bottle.

Finally, children tend to omit sounds, specially the final ones as in [ba] for ball. Besides, consonant clusters are difficult to pronounce, so instead of saying stop, they utter [top] (Clark, 2009). In the end, every single person who walks through this path moves from single word to longer sequences. The production of more than one-word utterances usually begins between age 1;3 and 1;8 in a gradual expansion. In this way, children develop their speech and are able to communicate with people who surround them with a pronunciation that resembles almost totally their target language.

5.2 Morphology

Morphology is defined as “word structure, or the branch of linguistics which studies this”19 (Trask & Stockwell, 2007, p. 128). Once children have gone through the telegraphic stage,

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when they are about two and a half years old, their speech forms start incorporating different inflectional morphemes. These inflections specify the grammatical roles of verbs and nouns. The –*ing* form is most commonly the first to appear in expressions like *doggie sleeping* and *daddy eating apple*.

The use of plurals is one of the most important features of language and is also usually the second morphological aspect to be developed by children. By now they are able to count and realize that when there is, for example, more than one dog the correct word to describe that scene is *dogs*, so for the first time the –*s* form used for regular plurals appears. A common phenomenon associated with the appearance of this marker is a process of overgeneralization. The child does not distinguish yet between regular and irregular plural forms, so frequent mistakes like adding the –*s* morpheme to words such as *tooth* or *man* would come up. Furthermore, when the /ɔz/ ending appears it is also overgeneralized by children and a typical application of this form occurs; it is common to hear a child saying *boyses*. On the other hand, the correct use of irregular forms starts taking place at the same time, but children then mix it with what they think is a general rule for plural forms; an example of this would be a word like *mens* which is a mistake often made by children. The incorporation and use of the inflection –‘*s*, to indicate possession, comes not long after and is used in expressions such as *daddy’s key* or *baby’s bottle*.

As all these new linguistic processes are going on in a child developing language, different forms of the verb *to be* start being used. *Are* and *was* are then accompanied by the appearance of the irregular past tense forms of verbs such as *come* and *go* and they are not expected to be heard before the regular forms. When the –*ed* inflection, used to form regular past tense, starts to appear in the child’s speech, a similar process of overgeneralization occurs. Children then combine both irregular and regular past tense of verbs and come up with whole new versions of words. By this time it would not be unusual to hear a child saying *goed* instead of *went* as the past tense of the verb *to go* or *comed* instead of *came* as the past tense of the verb *to come*. This process of overgeneralizations ceases after the child has turned four; by then they are capable of recognizing which forms are regular and which are not.
The last marker to appear would be the third person singular in present tense verbs, the inflectional morpheme –s. Children first use it with full verbs and then with auxiliaries. As children use language in order to communicate and interact with other people they are not really aware that what they are saying is not correct, and frankly they do not care either because they understand they are getting their ideas across. As children make these sorts of mistakes, the idea that first language acquisition happens mainly through a process of imitation does not seem to be valid.

5.3 Syntax

Syntax is defined as “sentence structure, or the branch of linguistics which studies this”20 (Trask; Stockwell, 2007, p. 203). Studies made on the syntactic structures used by children have proved that imitation is not the heart of their speech production. A child might be asked to repeat what an adult said, but on the process of doing that he might omit a couple of forms, and the sentence may not contain the same words even though the general idea of it will remain intact. The child has a clear understanding of what the adult was saying, but he just expressed it in his own way.

Several studies have been made regarding the way syntax is developed in children’s speech. Throughout life humans incorporate a variety of different syntactic structure to their linguistic repertoire, being the use of negative and the formation of words two of those which are acquired in a more regular basis. At the same time, these two structures are then subdivided into three stages each:

- The first stage, taking place while infants are between eighteen and twenty-six months old.
- The second stage, occurring when they are between twenty-two and thirty months old.
- The third stage, happening when they are between twenty four and forty months old.

**Forming negatives**

During the first stage the formula is relatively simple, children just add *no* or *not* to the beginning of the utterance; examples of this would be:

- No doggy
- Not a choo-choo
- No go

During the second stage new negative forms start to appear in the child’s speech, being them *don’t* and *can’t*. A variation in the way they are used also happens; *no* and *not* have moved from the beginning of the phrase to being placed, usually, in front of the verb. Examples of this would be:

- I don’t want it
- Doggie no bite you
- You can’t eat

The last stage adds new auxiliaries to speech like *didn’t* and *won’t* as the forms from the first stage begin to fade. The negative form *isn’t* is lately acquired as the forms from the second stage remain to be used for a restricted time. Examples of this would be:

- This not apple
- He won’t let go
- I didn’t caught it

It can be concluded that the creation of own syntactic rules occur at this early period of time in a child’s life. A widely known example shows the useless attempt of a mother to correct her child’s speech (O’Grady, 2005):

- **Child:** Nobody don’t like me.
• **Mother:** No, say “nobody likes me.”

• **Child:** Nobody don’t like me.

(Eight repetitions of this dialog)

• **Mother:** No, now listen carefully; say “nobody likes me.”

• **Child:** Oh! Nobody don’t likes me.

**Forming questions**

In this stage there are two procedures for forming questions. The first one, of course, deals with adding a basic *Wh-* (where) form at the beginning of the phrase. The second one involves intonation, a rising pattern at the ending of what is being uttered. Examples of this would be:

- Where doggie?
- Daddy?
- Where mommy go?

In the second stage the rising pattern is maintained as more complex expressions start being built and new *Wh-* forms appear. Examples of this would be:

- Why you eating?
- See my teddy bear?
- What doggie name?

The third and last stage shows children almost adopting the final model of question formation, but still making a few mistakes related to *Wh-* forms and verb morphology (*Did I got it?* instead of *Did I get it?). Regarding the use of auxiliary verbs, the movement to transform a statement into a question becomes evident (*I can go*... → *Can I go*...?), but when being used with *Wh-* questions at the same time they are usually incorrectly applied. When children turn five or six and start attending school these mistakes are still made (*Why I can’t go*...? instead of *Why*
can’t I go...?) but as time passes the child will realize that what he is saying is incorrect and modify it. Examples of what could be heard from a child during this stage could be:

- Can I have some?
- Where did you go?
- Why daddy can’t go?
- Will you ask mommy?
- Did I caught it?

### 5.4 Semantics

Semantics is defined as “the branch of linguistics which studies meaning”\(^{21}\) (Trask; Stockwell, 2007, p. 178). It could be said that a child’s semantic development commences as soon as he opens his eyes and reaches its apogee by the time he is seven years old. During his first year of life a child will go from moving his eyes towards a source of sound, responding to loud noises (when he is about three months old), to giggling while playing with objects and recognizing tools used to feed him (when he is between three and six months old), to attempting to imitate gestures and banging different objects together (when he is between six and nine months old), to responding when being called by his name and starting to utter his first words (when he is between nine and twelve months old), among many other actions.

As soon as he is around a year and a half old he is able to use between three and twenty words and also pointing at recognized and desired objects. Over the next six months he will be able to understand around three hundred words and use as many as fifty. He also responds to yes/no questions by shaking his head and begins to use some verbs and adjectives. When he is between two and two and a half years old he will be capable of understanding around five hundred words and using around two hundred. He will also answer simple Wh- questions and listen to short stories which are up to ten minutes long.

When the child is between two and a half and three years old he would be able to comprehend approximately nine hundred words and use five hundred. He will also start differentiating among different prepositions of place, listen to even longer stories (up to twenty minutes) and ask simple questions such as *What’s that?* At the age of three and three and a half the child comprehends around twelve hundred words and uses as many as eight hundred. He can also identify simple shapes such as circles and squares, react to commands involving two actions (*please be seated and eat*) and answer simple *how* questions.

Over the next year the child will continue to increase his vocabulary, understanding between fifteen hundred and two thousand words and using between one thousand and fifteen hundred lexical items. He will be able to perform up to three actions’ commands, have meaningful conversations, tell events in order of sequence (no more than two), start using auxiliaries such as *do* (in present and past) in questions, and even recognize two or three primary colors.

At five and six years old he comprehends around thirteen thousand words, and despite the fact that a great number of other features of his first language are still to be acquired during the following years of his formation, it is noted that a vast majority of the language acquisition process (the basic one at least) has been completed. Some theorists believe that this is the right time to start learning a new language, second or foreign, just after the foundations of the first language have been laid; the younger the better (Singleton; Ryan, 2004). On the other hand, many theorists believe that there are factors, other than age, that greater influence second language learning (Greenberg; Robertson, 2002).

Lastly, when the child is aged between six and seven years, he understands a range of about twenty and twenty-six thousand words. He is also capable of grasping the concept behind additions and subtractions, understanding seasons of the year and what happens in each of them; a toddler becomes aware of the mistakes others make in their speech, uses slang and minor profanities, and is able to tell addresses (numbers and streets).
CONCLUSION

In sum, first language acquisition is an intricate process which has aroused human interest from times when questioning was vital to bridge the chasm between people’s grim needs to explain social phenomena and their airbrushed reality made up of plausible hypotheses. Under these alternative premises, language acquisition can be analyzed from different theoretical standpoints, whose worthwhile endeavor to clarify the opacity characterized to the origin of language acquisition spans years of not only linguistic studies, but also psychological and biological ones. Being innate or developed by the environment, language acquisition and its development through the years are coeval with the growth of the human brain. In fact, the older the child the more likely he or she is to consolidate his or her cognition as provided with meaning. This moot point constitutes the cohesive element of a plethora of theories which mainly mesh language and cognition, language and behavior, or language and interaction.

Be that as it may, it is factual that there are ultimate stages which maximize children aggravation towards language. With blatant errors and idle attempts to construct sound conversations with adults, children’s active development in their language acquisition has achieved major landmarks today. For example, the advent of technology and its influence have militated against first language acquisition among infants. The vexed question pertaining to this issue has become an intellectual somersault; nonetheless, little research has been conducted to tackle the changes that computer science has ushered in first language acquisition as children interact with cutting-edge technology. It is highly suggested to investigate this contentious issue since it would blaze a current strand to determine first language acquisition foundations and assuage people’s queries on the occurrence of this complex phenomenon.
CHAPTER TWO: SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

INTRODUCTION

Human beings live not in a vast world if it is seen as a five-continent habitat; nonetheless, countries and cities render the world complex to the core. Every country contains myriads of people whose culture and language are sundry and distinct. This rich diversity has piqued human curiosity ever since ancient civilizations made the futile attempt to connect continents by conquering and foisting doctrines upon people whose relentless determination to seize freedom led them to cling on their own principles against all odds. Notwithstanding neither the Roman Empire nor the British were able to construct a whole incipient world; today human beings feel that it is important to keep the world connected. Doubtlessly, the emergence and eminence of the mass media aided the human being to be connected with the world by being acquainted with whatever event occurs in their planet. This bare necessity has given rise to so-called globalization.
Broadly speaking, globalization has come to enhance the way that people live. Countries all over the world have settled to shield human habitat in unison by averting war, famine, illiteracy, economic collapses and any other social plight which might be likely to throw people’s safety and even-keeled relationships off kilter. These agreements have forged ties among different communities, whose close bond does not reside in world peace only, but also in the aim of shaping a multicultural society. This commonplace concept has gradually become embedded in humanity as international business, tourism, technology, sports, entertainment, science, travel and health which have pervaded people’s reality. In light of this interdependence with the world, it has been imperative for people to learn the language which prevails in the fields mentioned, so as to communicate effectively and locate themselves in the mainstream of a globalized world.

Language stands out as an overriding component of the culture of the people who speak it. Hence, when people intend to learn a second language they tacitly become plunged into another culture. Furthermore, learning a second language has proved mandatory for people who long for travelling, studying or working abroad or any another necessity which is incumbent upon people to fulfill. As a matter of fact, immigration has increased the motives for people to learn at least a second language. Some benefits and advantages of learning a second language which some studies have yielded are as follows:

- To develop critical thinking.
- To kindle creativity and develop cognition.
- To improve academic skills and reinforce abilities in writing, reading and math.
- To increase job-hunting possibilities.
- To adapt to a number of cultural background.
- To contribute to professional development.
- To enrich cultural views with regard to tolerance, patience and empathy.

On the other hand, English has prevailed during the last decades. Its importance rests in the hegemony that English-speaking countries like the United Kingdom, in former centuries, and the United States of America today have over the world in terms of technology, business, communication, and education. These factors have turned English language into a \textit{lingua franca},
or rather the language aimed to bridge the gap between people who do not share the same mother tongue. This fact has led English language not only to become the prime language to be learned as a second language, yet one of the most important subjects of every school around the world.

This chapter seeks to shed light on the complexity behind second language acquisition and the elements around its linguistic importance, such as bilingualism. Moreover, it will tackle some cumbersome approaches and models which suggest different points of views when it comes to analyze the phenomenon of English language as the most requested second language. This latter will juxtapose also with key internal and external factors which have decisive influence in either learning or acquisition, as the stages of development of every linguistic unit such as morphology, syntax, semantics, lexis, among others. Most importantly, this second chapter will essentially aspire to foster a tangible link between both first language and second language acquisition, as well as bearing a meaningful English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context.

6. SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION COMPLEXITY

Second language acquisition is a convoluted process whose stages have been indistinctly gauged as linguists firstly faced it. Additionally, Saville-Troike (2006) draws sharp distinctions between second language and other terms which tend to be mistaken:

- A **second language** is naturally an official leading language urgently requested for employment, education, and other vital goals. It is frequently acquired by lesser members of a specific group or immigrants who have another mother tongue.

- A **foreign language** is the one whose usage has not become widespread in the social context which imbues learners. It is expected to be used for travel or other multicultural communication situations, or studied as a subject, workshop or elective in school, but with no instantaneous practical application.
• A **library language** is the one which mostly serves as an indispensable tool for further learning by means of reading, especially when printed materials oriented to a certain domain of study are not published in the learners’ first language.

• An **auxiliary language** is the one which learners necessitate to get acquainted with certain official purposes in their immediate political context, or will need for further communicative functions.

Likewise, second language acquisition, or abbreviated SLA, and its complexity are studied under the compass of one significant branch of linguistics as Applied Linguistics is. Richard and Schmidt (2002) define Applied Linguistics (AL) as follows:

“The study of language and linguistics in relation to practical problems...Applied linguistics uses information from sociology, psychology, anthropology...as well as from linguistics in order to develop its own theoretical models of language and language use...”

Or more accurately, the study of second and foreign language learning and teaching.

At its simplest, Applied linguistics purports to establish and clarify the meaningful link between second language acquisition and teaching, as this former has become an essential subject at schools due to its eminent importance. In this ambitious goal, AL treats a host of hypotheses to properly depict the model of SLA. A hypothesis is “a tentative and stable statement about how changes in one variable are expected to explain changes in another variable.” (Rubin; Babbie, 2009 p. 67) Unlike a theory, a hypothesis does not hazard to merge multiple phenomena, but rather it focuses on one single phenomenon (VanPatten; Williams, 2007). That said, despite painstaking research and numerous hypotheses carried out on the field of SLA the obscurity on how other languages are learned still remains. This fact does not mean spurning the current strands of research as they appear to be reasonable and theoretically sounded; so far arguments portray and illustrate that the whole process has been feeble to the extent that they are not

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officially respected, albeit valid. This unstable scenario of unpredictability and uncertainty has led SLA to be prescribed into what is called *chaos*.

Chaos, or complexity, in multifold sciences stands for the complex system teeming with a vast array of elements which are progressively interacting with each other, thereby organizing themselves into a many-sided system. Alemi, Daftarifard and Patrut (2011) provide a series of features which render the system to be chaotic or complex for its:

- Large number of similar but independent elements.
- Constant movement and responses to other agents.
- Adaptiveness to ensure survival.
- Self-organization in which order in the system forms spontaneously.
- Local rules that apply to each agent.
- Progression to make the system more sophisticated and larger.
- Unpredictability.
- *Subtractivity*.  

Granted, as language is continuously evolving, so is SLA. This dynamic and non-linear assumption makes SLA an involved adaptive system owing to its intrinsic ability to adapt to disparate conditions in different backgrounds (de Oliveira e Paiva, 2002). This chaotic nature of SLA ostensibly lies in the fact that every individual has developed his or her linguistic competences differently. Linguistic competences refer to the correctness of grammar as it is an arduous ongoing process subjected to changes throughout second language development and the foundations of bilingualism (Ottenheimer, 2009).

7. BILINGUALISM

The term bilingualism, as the word itself portrays, makes reference to the use of two languages. Therefore, any individual who is able to use these two languages or any country

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whose official languages are two is called bilingual. Thus, the focus of bilingualism is not merely centered on individuals, but in entire communities as well.

There are different fashions or even reasons for which a person becomes a speaker of two languages. On one hand, the country in which someone is brought up can offer the newborn a variety of choices. Canada, whose official languages are English and French, may be taken as a perfect example. When a large dominant group communicates with a specific language, in this case English, the minor group who grows up immersed in French are required to learn English in order to fit in the society. Consequently, these people end up adapting to what society demands and become bilingual. On the other hand, there might be a simple process in which two parents have dissimilar mother tongues, so the child learns to express ideas in two different ways and uses one language or another unconsciously according to the addressee he or she is talking to.

What if an individual learns a second language being a teenager or an adult? There is a great concern and debate among researchers to distinguish bilingualism from second language acquisition. Some convey that the bilingual is exposed to language being a newborn, from birth to about three years, yet others express that anyone who is not monolingual may take part of bilingualism (Clark, 2009). In this paper, it will be considered as bilinguals any individual who is capable of effectively communicating in more than one language, relying on what Baker argues:

“When children learn two languages from birth, this is often called simultaneous or infant bilingualism... If a child learns a second language after about three years of age, the terms consecutive or sequential bilingualism tend to be used”25 (2006, p. 4).

Despite the fact that there is a clear distinction between two sorts of bilingualism in regard to age, this chapter focuses directly on the acquisition in children. Although the age plays a primary and considerable differentiation, there are other areas at which it is pivotal to take a look. Some of the most important dimensions bilingualism is concerned with according to Baker are:

• **Ability:** Which of the four skills – speaking, listening, reading and writing – the person is capable of performing. Whether the person has some inclinations towards passive or active skills, he/she might be more able to understand a text or a conversation than actually conveying their thoughts in a written and oral fashion.

• **Use:** Related to the context, the use of language points out the setting where it actually takes place. For instance, a Mexican family who just moved to the USA is likely to speak Spanish at home and English when going to the supermarket, school, doctor, etc.

• **Balance of the two languages:** The focus is put on which language is dominant over the other. Even if a child has a vast range of vocabulary in two languages, there will be one language whose performance might result easier and likely to be used more regularly.

• **Culture:** Since two dissimilar languages usually stem from different countries or cultures, the user of two languages is probably going to develop a wider cultural view of the world and consequently be aware of appropriate manners and ways of behaving in different environments.

Bearing in mind these four significant factors involved, it is possible to figure out the degree of bilingual children’s expertise over monolingual ones. It turns out that being able to use more than one language and acquiring them while being a child helps the brain picking up cognitive skills not only related to language matters but to others too. Studies show that a group of bilingual individuals is more successful at the moment of solving mental tasks than a non-bilingual group. The former group is usually more skillful at not getting distracted easily and holding more information in mind than the latter group because of the training that the executive function of the brain receives while acquiring more than one language (Franson, 2011).

Paradoxically, in the past it was believed that learning two languages at the same time hindered and slowed down children’s development. Some researches paid attention to the delay that some children had to begin speaking. Although there is a direct relationship between the delay found in some cases and the acquisition process, it is caused due to the activeness of the
brain. Even if a child is speaking one language, both systems are always on the alert generating certain interference. This conflict is really handy indeed owing to the fact that the brain is forced to figure out how to keep on going, being unconsciously trained and becoming more cognitively successful.

8. FACTORS INVOLVED IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

As in every process of acquiring/learning something new there are always certain elements that condition the natural flow of events. In this particular case, dealing with a new language, is not an exception. Some of the points to be discussed next are:

- Age
- Motivation
- Context in which the process of acquisition takes place
- Cognitive ability

This section of the chapter will be divided into two parts: internal factors and external factors involved in the process of acquiring a new language. At the same time each of those parts will be subdivided into other more specific ones to better understand how the human mind or the social environment, in which the learner is immersed, can affect the process aforementioned.

8.1 Internal factors

These factors are the ones that affect each person differently but have been found to be common among most learners of a new language. The first element that will be considered at this point is language ability, which could be defined as "cognitive abilities that learners bring to the task of acquisition" (VanPatten, 2010, p. 42).

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Learning aptitudes

These abilities can be numerous and range from the ability to perceive and encode a phonetic sound to the recognition of grammatical structures and their future internalization. John Carroll’s work helped identify the “standard ‘four component’ view of language aptitude”\(^{27}\) (Skehan, 1989, p. 26):

- **Phonemic encoding ability**: the name already gives an idea of what this component is about, which is the ability to hear, identify or discriminate sounds from a foreign language so they can be remembered later.

- **Grammatical sensibility**: the ability to recognize the different functions words might have in a particular sentence. Here it is not important to label the function of words, but to determine how the same words are going to behave in a totally different context.

- **Inductive language learning ability**: the ability to identify (through a process of inference) different rules or generalizations with only the use of samples and not explicitly instructed.

- **Rote learning ability**: the ability to form and recall relations between words and phrases in language. The important aspect of this point is the role that memory plays, for it is vital to start building a solid and assorted vocabulary.

Several investigations have been conducted to try to elucidate whether language aptitude is directly connected to L2 learning success. To measure this difference standardized tests are employed and have shown that both previously mentioned aspects are related. Thus “*Learners who score highly on language aptitude tests typically learn rapidly and achieve higher levels of L2 proficiency than learners who obtain low scores*”\(^{28}\) (Ellis, 1997, p. 74)


Motivation

Human beings have always bargained for having polished performances in different fields and in order to do that they have to strive. Even though someone might come across some difficulties on the road to achieving a goal, most people understand that failure is part of the process. Just as failure, motivation also plays an important part when trying to reach the final destination and learning a new language is no exception. Motivation is required to make the decision of learning a new language and then essential throughout the complicated process it involves. It could also be said that motivation changes as time passes. At first the person is motivated to set about a reachable goal. Then motivation is the key ingredient to keep on going despite the adversities to be found on the road. Lastly, there is a period of analysis and evaluation regarding how the whole process was like and its implications on future activities.

After a number of investigations conducted on the field it can be said that there are two main kinds of motivation, and they are:

- **Instrumental motivation:** this is the type of motivation where the learner gain a new experience, in other words, learners are motivated to learn a new language because it may help them get a better job (or increase their salary), get a place in college or just as simple as passing an examination

- **Integrative motivation:** in contrast to the first type of motivation here learners feel inclined to learn an L2 because they might find the culture or people of the target language appealing or interesting and want to become active members of that group.

Age

It has always been believed that children have a better capacity of acquiring a new language than grown-ups. The foundation to this belief can be traced back to the *Critical Period Hypothesis*, which states that children have until certain period of time the capacity to acquire
and develop a language, usually their first one; otherwise they will not be able to accomplish it in a normal manner afterwards. Studies have shown that this fact is undeniable but does not prove that adults are unable to acquire an L2 in a similar manner as children do. The most relevant aspect that may differentiate both kinds of learners could be the development of an almost native-like accent. At the same time, as both kinds of learners are different they also have different advantages over the other. For example, grown-ups possess a greater learning capacity which can be seen in a retentive memory to remember vocabulary, and a greater analytic capacity which can be translated in sophisticated understanding and application of certain grammar rules. On the other hand, young learners possess a more plastic brain which facilitates the proper understanding of the different functions related to linguistics; as they are less analytical than adults, they tend to acquire more native-like structures which lead to more natural communication.

8.2 External Factors

In the first chapter several theories related to language acquisition were exposed. All of them can be divided into two main streams: behaviorist and mentalist theories. For behaviorists language learning is essentially determined by the environment, stating that the stimuli learners receive from the outside is the backbone of their language development. On the other hand, mentalists say that the human brain is already equipped with what is needed to learn languages and that a minimum exposure to outside stimuli is required.

Learning a new language is not an easy task, especially if the learner is not living in his country of origin. Emotions may affect the learner’s desire to perform well and to get understood by others. It is even more difficult when the speakers of the target language make the individual feel even more of a stranger in a new land. Native speakers engage in idle conversation called foreign talk with people who are trying to learn their language. This kind of talk is divided into grammatical and ungrammatical, and can be explained as follows:

- **Ungrammatical foreign talk:** in this kind of talk native speakers tend to omit certain grammatical features such as modal verbs and articles and create new constructions such as “no + verb”. An example of this would be:
“No forget buying ice-cream, eh?” (Ellis, 1997, p. 46)

In a way, this kind of talk makes non-native speakers feel inferior to their native peers and get the sense that they are being mocked at.

- **Grammatical foreign talk:** this is a more normal kind of talk; it could be called a standard way of speaking between both parties. Some characteristics of this kind of talk are: the usage of a slower tempo and basic forms by the native speaker, simplified input and elaborated language (this means that sentences are slightly lengthened so as to provide explanation in the form of paraphrasing for accurate understanding of the non-native speaker). An example of the last feature would be:

  “The ice-cream—You will not forget to buy it on your way home—Get it when you are coming home. All right?” (Ellis, 1997, p. 46)

**Input and interaction**

In second language acquisition the word input is virtually associated to Stephen Krashen. His input hypothesis is just one of the five he developed to comprehend how learners acquire a new language. A critical term to understand this hypothesis is *comprehensible input*, a kind of input that learners require in order to have a good linguistic performance as they are acquiring the language. For Krashen succeeding in making anyone be understood by others is what defines the achievement of the correct level of input. Once the learner is able to make messages based on the context in which he might be found and using the input he has elicited to produce a meaningful output, it can be said that he has succeeded to communicate his ideas across.

On the other hand, several theorists believe that input is vital when acquiring a new language but it is not the only key component to accomplish this hard task. Michael Long believes that interaction is a fundamental component in acquiring new languages. Long states that

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“what learners need is not necessarily simplification of the linguistic forms but rather an opportunity to interact with other speakers, working together to reach mutual comprehension” (Lightbown; Spada, 2006, p. 43). A crucial concept arises from the previous statement and it is the negotiation of meaning. This concept is used to describe how learners, through corrective feedback, develop their own language. In other words, learners help themselves correct the faults they may perceive on the other’s speech. An example of this would be:

- Hiroko: A man is uh. Drinking c-coffee or tea with uh the saucer of the uh uh coffee set is uh in his uh knee.
- Izumi: in him knee.
- Hiroko: uh on his knee.
- Izumi: yeah
- Hiroko: on his knee
- Izumi: so sorry. On his knee.

The dialog above is a clear example of negotiation of meaning. Both parties of the conversation correct the mistakes made by themselves to finally produce a correct sentence. Overall, Long believes that second language acquisition occurs through conversational interaction and he came to this conclusion after observing the way native speakers interacted with learners.

9. APPROACHES TO SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Stephen Krashen and the Monitor Model

In chapter one it was mentioned that Noam Chomsky was considered by many exponents as the father of modern linguistics. His theory of language acquisition made a tremendous impact in the field and still remains today to be a rather influential one. In speaking of Stephen Krashen, his contributions have become praiseworthy like Noam Chomsky’s in his area. He has been seen

by many as a prominent figure in the linguistics’ field. His Monitor Model has set the foundations for many studies carried out afterwards, which have led linguists to gradually comprehend the different processes involved in acquiring a new language. This section of the chapter is fully devoted to Krashen’s work and will try to explain his main ideas in the topic.

Stephen Krashen is also considered a nativist because he shares Chomsky’s theory of the existence of a language acquisition device. Krashen’s studies and works greatly influenced the way language was taught in The United States of America in the last part of the twentieth century. An important issue to be considered when discussing Krashen’s influence on language teaching was how grammar was approached by teachers. After exposing his model, the idea of teaching grammar explicitly was left aside for a while and up to day has been quite an important aspect for those instructing future educators. The reality is that nowadays the coin has flipped over again and grammar is being taught, by many, explicitly. This is something that can be especially observed in adult education where they find themselves benefited from “an explicit explanation of grammatical structure.”

To better understand Krashen’s contribution to second language acquisition his model will be explained next. The first important aspect to keep in mind is that the Monitor Model is composed of a series of five different hypotheses. Each of these hypotheses describes different features of language; whether it is acquired or learned, how rules are acquired, and the role that input plays, among others. Then, the hypotheses are:

- **Acquisition-learning hypothesis:** Here Krashen states that a language can be both acquired and learned. When he speaks about language acquisition he is saying that it is a subconscious process which acquirers are usually not even aware of. Acquisition “requires meaningful interaction in the target language —natural communication— in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding.”

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language learning is a conscious process that takes place in a classroom, in other words formal instruction. Krashen believes that learning is not as important as acquiring a new language.

- **Monitor Hypothesis:** This hypothesis states that both of the systems above mentioned are combined at the moment of producing speech. The acquired system is the one that makes the first move and produces speech and then the novel system acts as *checker* to analyze whether what was uttered was correct after using the rules consciously assimilated before. In case it turns otherwise, self-correction occurs after the first utterance.

- **Natural Order Hypothesis:** This hypothesis states that learners acquire language at a similar time and different features are incorporated in predictable sequences. Sometimes there are features that are easier to learn but are assimilated in a later stage of language development. An example for this would be the use of the suffix *–s* for third person singular in present tense. This feature is digested early in school but grasped later by L2 speakers.

- **Input Hypothesis:** This hypothesis focuses on acquisition rather than in learning. It is here where Krashen attempts to explain how a second language is acquired. He states that a leaner improves as he receives L2 input which is meaningful; he names it *comprehensible input*. The learner is in a state in which his linguistic competence is $i$ and in order to improve he needs to understand the input he is exposed to; then he can move on to a $i+1$ state, where the $+1$ indicates the new knowledge that should be acquired by the learner.

- **Affective Filter Hypothesis:** This last hypothesis deals with some internal factors that come in the way of learning or acquiring a second language. Different emotions and feelings act as a negative filter between the speaker and the listener. This filter interferes and limits the amount of input that the listener is exposed to and how it is exposed to. The
environment in which the learner is immersed plays a vital role and needs to boost his motivation and self-esteem.

**Merrill Swain and the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis**

Dating back from the middle 80s, Swain developed a theory comparing, but at the same time contrasting and complementing Krashen’s comprehensible input hypothesis. Swain acknowledges that despite the amount of input received, it is worthless unless the learner is capable of producing the target language both in a written and in an oral way. As a consequence, the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis (CO) was born to collaborate with SLA, being the main focus of it the output.

Since output intends to strengthen the language acquisition process, the learners’ production is interrelated but independent to the role of input. Therefore, this hypothesis states that the act of conveying phrases through a conversation or committing ideas to paper are usually going to hamper an acquirer’s production at the beginning. Even though, these difficulties are important for the learner to make an appropriate effort and end up producing correct language output. Being these efforts wholly beneficial, they aid to mechanize the final production, polishing fluency and accuracy in the second language.

The fact of being pushed to elaborate either spoken or written language becomes a trial and error method which makes second language learners reach the correct form. Studies have shown that even if a person receives plenty of input but is not given the chance of expressing it, the grammatical and/or syntactical mistakes are evident when developing the target language. Apart from the mental effort, when creating linguistic forms and meaning in their brain, learners in fact realize what they are able and not able to do, stimulating accurate production.

In sum, output serves as a means to an end; it mediates the internal debate between the learner’s abilities and difficulties. It promotes the construction of patterns and the internalization of processes which reinforce accuracy and fluency. As teachers then, it is crucial to provide
students with space to produce language, engage pupils in pair or group work interaction to practice the language, and resolve what might be deficient in their production or output.

**Richard Schmidt and the Noticing Hypothesis**

Deriving from an empiricist perspective, Richard Schmidt has formulated a cognitive hypothesis which focuses on noticing the language being learned. First of all, it is important to recall two crucial explanations developed in the previous chapter: input and intake. The process of the former term turning successfully into the latter is the marrow of the Noticing Hypothesis.

Schmidt found out in his Portuguese lessons that becoming aware of certain linguistic features helped input become intake, stating this process as the key to begin acquiring another language. As explained in the *key terms* of the first chapter, input is all the language the learner is exposed to, while intake is what actually he or she stores in their brain and is capable of using afterwards. Thus, Schmidt takes this important clarification and establishes that the most determined factor that leads input to become significant intake is the fact of fully noticing certain structures on the new contents. This process then is acknowledged to be purely conscious and is strictly related to what the learner pays attention to. Hence, if he or she does not attend much to novelties, it is not going to be incorporated as new knowledge (Schmidt, 2010).

In order to notice and consequently integrate a second language, three factors influence this hypothesis: intention, attention and awareness (Schmidt, 2010). Consequently, a learner must pay undivided attention to the target language, have the intention and be committed to acquire a second language so as to raise self-awareness throughout the ongoing process. These three factors specifically focus on the different areas of language such as phonology, syntax, pragmatics, morphology and the like. For example, if an acquirer is intended to sound as a native speaker, he or she is to show a strong inclination towards spoken English with the purpose of being aware of the correct production and articulation of sounds.

Finally, feedback and error correction also play a significant role when noticing new structures. Having its roots in the Noticing Hypothesis, Schmidt also distinguishes a new branch
called *Noticing the gap* which deals with errors committed when learning. When producing either spoken or written output, errors are likely to be carried out by acquirers during their performance. Yet, even if learners are constantly being corrected, it has no effect unless they notice it. It means that the effective self-correction will take place at the moment the learner compares their own output with real second language input received, becoming thus aware of the error. Therefore, learners receiving more feedback are more likely to notice mistakes and consequently develop more competences than those who do not.

**Michael Long and the Interaction Hypothesis**

As noted earlier, interaction stands for any mutual involvement between two or more individuals. This reciprocal social immersion takes place against any backdrop of active and holistic experience whereby learning of any type thrives. Behind this rationale, Michael Long proceeds to construct a forceful hypothesis in the field of second language acquisition with regard to interaction. He goes into the changes occurring in conversations when learners interchange meaning leading to the inception of comprehensible input which, in turn, boosts the prospects of acquisition (Cummins; Davison, 2007). These conflicting elements engendered the Interaction Hypothesis whose fundamental notion is a meaning-based learning through a continuum of interactions between two learners, being one of them either a more advanced learner or a native speaker. To all appearance, learners would discern patterns of target language from these characters and their proper interaction (Hinkel, 2011). Similarly, within the exchanges of meanings grammar is expected to be grasped tacitly; that is to say, the focus on the conversations is the primary constituent for L2 learners and grammar forms are mere offshoots from this interaction.

This meaning-based learning proves effectual when the combination of three elements arises: input, interaction and output. When this former is negotiated and comprehensible, it is segmented into smaller bits thanks to the modifications that a less competent interlocutor carries out at facing difficulties in the speech. These input modifications not only are simpler to process, but also lead the learner’s focal attention to illuminate the understanding of certain elements of
language that she or he had partly missed (VanPatten; Benati, 2010). A cogent example would be as follows:

- Peter: So where are you going in such a hurry?
- Adam: I’m going office.
- Peter: To the office?
- Adam: Yes, I’m going to the office.

Or in pronunciation:

- Phoebe: The door crozed.
- Jim: The door has what?
- Phoebe: Closed.
- Jim: Crossed? I’m not sure about what you’re saying.
- Phoebe: The door is closed.
- Jim: Oh, the door is closed OK, sorry.

This interaction becomes purposeful when more adroit speakers attempt to reformulate what has obscured less competent speakers’ speech. At this point, this latter draws attention to the errors committed in order to provide faulty speakers with appropriate feedback to reason out a problem item in the language. This feedback in interlocutors’ inconsistencies in discourse leads her or him to regulate, modify and manipulate their output. In this respect, learners are encouraged not only to produce a more comprehensible output, but to assimilate a more target-like one (Ellis, 2004).

**Manfred Pienemann and the Processability Theory**

Stemming directly from a behaviorist perspective, Pienemmann emerges with the Processability Theory (PT), a theory that states a learner is only going to be able to acquire a second language as their brain actually processes and comprehends new information. It means
that as an individual transforms their acquisition process into a routine or habit, certain skills are to be developed in order to render this task less demanding. Therefore, one of the focuses is put on the fashion; the brain creates determined structures to evolve and go on acquiring new forms. In this way, common patterns should be shared among languages and learners to acquire the target language, while following a series of steps.

The steps that PT establishes are centered on predicting a universal framework of stages to reach effective production. Keßler (2008) lists the four dimensions of the production process as follows:

- Processing components operate largely automatically and are generally not consciously controlled;
- Processing is incremental;
- The output of the processor is linear, while it may not be mapped onto the underlying meaning in a linear way;
- Grammatical processing has access to a temporary memory store that can hold grammatical information.³⁵ (pp. 9-10)

instead of a grammatical structure like the example named before. If a person expresses an idea, the sequence of the events may vary, not seeming logical. For instance, Pienemann (2005) clarifies it through the use of the preposition *before*. Using a similar preposition, a sentence might look like this: *After John ran away, he was surprised stealing the money.* Finally, the four and last concept refers to the temporarily storage of new contents, how they are integrated and expressed in a sentence afterwards.

**Elizabeth Bates & Brian MacWhinney and the Competence Model**

Giving emphasis to an emergentist perspective, Bates and MacWhinney constructed a 21st-century model to aid second language acquisition. It presents functionalist and connectionist views of not only SLA, but also of first language acquisition (MacWhinney, 1997).

Since emergentism combines empiricism and nativism to show the importance of interaction and the power of the human brain, this model offers a direct interrelation between input, the learner and the context (MacWhinney, 2001). The input though, is analyzed from all the areas of languages such as phonology, syntax, semantics, etc. as well as how certain codes are generated for each branch. Then, the learner is associated with the individual skills he or she may bring by default. Finally, the context, time and space where the process takes place either in an instructed or unconscious way plays a significant role too. These three aspects provide the framework for the Competition Model carried out by these two researchers.

Apart from the three crucial factors mentioned above, this model comprises and integrates four theoretical focuses: lexical functionalism, connectionism, input-driven learning and capacity (MacWhinney, 1997). Firstly, by lexical functionalism it is understood all the forms in which language is presented, extending from just one word to an entire phrase, sentence or idiom. Secondly, connectionism is in charge of covering the influence of transfer. On account of the fact that learners usually tend to take certain structures from their mother tongue and apply them in the second language, transfer then may affect the process of acquisition. Finally, while input-driven learning is seen as more important than innate abilities, capacity represents all those inborn features that the brain may have concerning verbal memory.
Antonella Sorace and Francesca Filiaci and the Interface Hypothesis

Different kinds of knowledge are associated to the processes of language acquisition. This hypothesis takes just two of them and tries to describe a possible relationship between them. The knowledge studied is the implicit and explicit one. The first is defined as “knowledge that people can be shown to possess intuitively, but which they are unable to articulate”\(^{36}\) (Richards; Schmidt, 2002, p. 250). On the other hand, explicit knowledge is the contrast of implicit knowledge and its main characteristic is that it is “verbalizable” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 250), in other words it is the knowledge a learner has regarding the language which he/she is able to verbalize. Three different positions are taken when it comes to establishing the relationship previously mentioned:

- **No-interface position:** this position states that there is absolutely no connection between implicit and explicit knowledge, and despite the fact that this gap between both types of knowledge exists they can be both involved in relation to a specific linguistic feature. Krashen is associated to this position due to the similitude with his acquisition-learning hypothesis. There he states that what has been acquired cannot be learned.

- **Strong-interface position:** this position is associated to the studies made by DeKeyser in 1997 where he establishes that language learning is just like any other learning process. Language then moves from declarative knowledge, which is the type of knowledge that can be obtained just by observing and analyzing, to procedural knowledge, which is using the knowledge learnt in the previous stage in a meaningful way (producing speech for example); to a last stage where the procedural knowledge occurs fast and without hesitation. This last stage is achieved only through intensive practice.

- **Weak-interface position:** Nick Ellis (2005) believes that despite the fact that these two types of knowledge are contrastively different they can work together in any case. It is clear that while speakers of any language talk they do not think whether what they are

uttering is correct, and the only time they do stop to think for a while is when the right word to use in a specific situation does not seem to come up.

10. SLA NATURE

Phonology

The aim of any acquirer of a second language is probably going to sound as a native speaker. Nevertheless, the complex constructions that the sounds of an extra language might have, which are likely to include sounds that do not form part of the first language, seem to complicate the acquisition process in adults but not in children. Thus, the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) appears to state the relationship between age and SLA.

The CPH establishes that certain capabilities for learning a second language start decreasing at the age of two and completely vanish at puberty. It can be proved with the fact that adults learning a second language are unlikely to attain nativeness (Hanset; Zampini, 2008). Besides, the repertoire of sound production will remain virtually limited, making the process even more difficult to acquire new sounds.

In this goal to reach speech proficiency, Saville-Troike (2006) also gives aspects in which L1 is probably going to differ from L2. He states that:

- Certain phonemes are meaningful parts of one phonological system but not of the other. Phoneme means “the smallest unit of sound in a language which can distinguish two words” (Richards; Schmidt, 2002, p. 396). For example, the English words sat and sit differ only in their middle sound, so just one phoneme.

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• Some sequences of consonants and vowels. For example in the English word *strength*, a vowel is surrounded by three consonants at the beginning and four at the end, a characteristic that may not be found in other languages such as Spanish.

• The combination of one sound with another can be allowed in one language but not in the other.

• Intonation patterns. In English the stress provided to a word may change its function. For example if *record* is given emphasis on the first syllable (re), it is going to work as a noun, but if it is stressed on the second syllable (cord), the word automatically becomes a verb.

• Lastly, rhythmic patterns like some pauses and stops may differ between two languages. While English is a stress-timed language, where the length of a sentence will rely on the number of stressed syllables, other languages such as Spanish are syllable-timed languages, meaning that the duration of an utterance will depend only on the number of syllables (Richards; Schmidt, 2002).

With such probable differentiations, what learners usually do when producing L2 sounds is to take and transfer those already acquired in L1. Transfer in phonology seems to have a positive and negative influence at the same time. Thus, the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) arises to predict that the sounds which are similar in L1 and L2 are going to be easier to acquire than those which are different (Hansen; Zampini, 2008). Consequently, the main aim of CAH is to reinforce the sounds which differ between the two languages through a series of drills in order to create a habit of producing new sounds correctly and avoid incorrect pronunciation. For example an English speaker will probably have problems when learning Spanish and the different sounds of *r*, since Spanish has two ways in which *r* is pronounced like in *pero* and *perro*; it does not occur in English (Saville-Troike, 2006), imperiling the acquisition of the two dissimilar sounds.
Morphology

Morphology is tightly related to lexis and the attainment of grammatical accuracy. Words may vary by being the composition made of smaller units or by adding prefixes or suffixes to them, creating thus new words or changing the part of speech (from noun to adjective, from adjective to adverb, for instance) (Saville-Troike, 2006). Since the form of the word indicates the actual role of the lexical item, the knowledge of this branch becomes transcendental.

Inflection morphology is in charge of studying the changes that words may have in order to work grammatically correct. Any regular verb such as play will change by being added the inflection -d or -ed at the end becoming a past tense marker (played). The same word can also inflect into continuous tense by being incorporated -ing after y (playing). Another example would be when this verb is used with the pronouns he, she or it and a -s is added at the end to mark third person singular. Nouns may also suffer from some modifications when turning into plurals, thus pencil becomes pencils.

Now, why are researches interested in investigating morphology in SLA? Linguistics and cognitive researches are intrigued by the acquisition process and the explanation to the errors that second language learners often make, even when they could have learned the correct structure many years ago. Then, there is a claim for a natural order in which the different morphological structures are picked up. Saville-Troike (2006) exposes that studies carried out in second language learners prove that children as well as adults first acquire the progressive tense -ing and plurals in nouns (-s), and after a while the regular past tense -ed. These findings put in check the Critical Period Hypothesis, the fact that some inborn capacities to learn a language disappear at around puberty.

Finally, a functional approach called function-to-form mapping emerges to provide some morphological hints. The premise of this approach is that a learner is first going to express a word that functions as a marker and then, after some time, the form will be developed (Saville-Troike, 2006). For example if the acquirer is asked what he or she did the day before, the response could
be *I watch TV yesterday*. Then, after improving their language competence, this person will be able to properly convey *I watched TV yesterday* and use the correct form of the past tense.

**Lexis**

Words are indubitably the most crucial aspect to learn within a language. Even if someone is not familiarized with tenses or structures, the sole fact of having a notion of some words may help them communicate. As Saville-Troike (2006) mentions, "*there is a core of high-frequency words in a language that everyone needs to learn*"38 (p. 138) and the rest of specific words developed are going to depend on the purpose that the learner has. A trainee studying to become an English teacher will have to handle a wider range of vocabulary than a tourist guide whose main purpose is to deal with landscapes, history, flora and fauna for instance.

Undoubtedly, the significance of lexicon relies on the fact that from all the possible errors that can be made in language, vocabulary mistakes can be regarded as the most serious ones by native speakers. When producing grammatical errors the general idea is likely to be understood, whereas lexical mistakes may clearly affect effective communication (Gass; Selinker, 2008).

Covering the whole gamut of English words, it is possible to find function and content words. The former includes prepositions, conjunctions and articles. These are the ones having little meaning on their own while the latter takes in verbs, nouns and adjectives among others, which standing alone bear the underlying meaning in a sentence (Richards; Schmidt, 2002). In order to acquire all the kinds of words mentioned before, learners undergo a process of first recognizing the lexical items after seeing or hearing them (passive knowledge). Secondly, they have to be capable of using these lexical items at least in a limited context (active-controlled knowledge). Finally, they hopefully can gain full control and be able to use the words accurately (active free knowledge) (Saville-Troike, 2006).

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Not only the productive skills occupy a substantial role, but the receptive skills which are also important when considering the assimilation of new words. With the purpose of introducing both skills, Gass and Selinker (2008) distinguish the three dimensions in which word knowledge works:

- **Form**: the spoken as well as the written form in which the word is presented.

- **Meaning**: what a word stands for depending on the form it is structured. For example, if it is a noun, adjective, adverb or other can be noticed by noting the way it is formed (whether it contains suffixes or prefixes for instance)

- **Use**: which some of the common patterns where this lexical item occurs are, with what other words it collocates (usually going together) and under what circumstances or context it is appropriate to use it (slang and formal or polite structures)

After being aware of the three dimensions, it is possible to underline some of the points developed for both skills. On one hand, receptive skills focus on recognizing the word in a written and oral manner and knowing the general and/or specific meaning of the lexical item depending on the context. On the other hand, productive skills center on pronouncing and spelling the word accurately, being familiarized with the contexts in which this word is used, and being conscious of the different meanings and uses of it under different circumstances. “The lexicon also contains elements that are larger than words. These elements are also lexical items” (Juffs, 2009, p. 7). Within this category set phrases (right to life) and idioms (his goose is cooked) can be included.

The numbers of words that the learner is going to acquire cannot be predicted. It will count on the objective of the acquirer’s ability to comprehend and store words from a variety of contexts. It is not only the salience of the amount of lexical items he or she can manage, but also

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the fluency with which it is used. Becoming fluent results then from the automaticity of using these words in real time, making the task of speaking and writing easier in the long run.

**Syntax**

Learning a new language has never been an undemanding task. Several issues have to be considered when wishing to learn a language different from the mother tongue. A whole new set of words has to be learned and along with that, an important number of new rules and structures; at the same time, the person has to learn how to associate these new rules with the vocabulary to create meaningful and coherent statements.

Every single language has a defined structure to form questions or deny a statement. At the same time, sentences in all languages are composed by a subject and a predicate, the predicate is made up of a verb, an object (or sometimes more than one) and different features that express a variety of notions such as time, place, manner, etc. Yet, while all languages possess these characteristics, the way in which they are arranged in a sentence may vary from language to language; some of them being more flexible and others more rigid. Jae Jung Song (2012) shows the results of a study carried out in the 80’s and which yielded (consider S as subject; O as object; V as verb):

- **SOV**: corresponding to 45% of the languages analyzed (Turkish, Japanese, Korean)
- **SVO**: corresponding to 42% of the languages analyzed (English, Chinese, Romance languages)
- **VSO**: corresponding to 9% of the languages analyzed (Hawaiian, Irish, Hebrew)
- **VOS**: corresponding to 3% of the languages analyzed (Fijian, Malagasy, Baure)
- **OVS**: corresponding to 1% of the languages analyzed (Apalai, Hixkaryana, Tamil)
- **OSV**: corresponding to 0% of the languages analyzed (Jamamádi, Warao, Xavante)

Word order is just one of the features to bear in mind when learning a new language, but it is not the only one. The issue of gender and number is a very thorny one because it works differently in all languages. For example, in English the selection of pronouns is linked to the
concept of grammatical gender and number (which indicates if the noun is singular or plural). Thus *the boy* is used with *he/him* while *the boys* need the presence of *they/them*. On the other hand, in German the article must agree in gender and number with the noun. Thus *der Arm* would be *the arm* and *die Arme* would be *the arms*. Having this in mind it is easier for Germans to learn English because they can ignore the need for article arrangement, while for English speakers learning German is not very simple.

Another mammoth task that English speakers who start learning a language belonging to the Romance family, is labeling the different nouns into masculine and/or feminine. Besides they also need to choose the proper article that goes along with the noun considering both gender and number. So while English speakers have to differentiate between

- el auto rojo
- la casa roja
- los autos rojos

the speakers of Romance languages have a much increased understanding of how to acquire the English language feature due to the result seems to be simple. For instance:

- the red car
- the red house
- the red cars

Acquiring a new language involves multiple skills. It needs to be understood that the rules of the mother tongue are not probably the same as the ones from the target language and the acquirer will have to face a difficult adaptation in the process. In this section of the chapter English has been the language chosen to illustrate how a linguistic feature or gender, varies from one language to another. But just as English speakers come across many difficulties in acquiring a new language so does the rest of the world. For example, Chinese speakers (and a majority of Asian languages) have a hard time marking the plural form of nouns in English because in their languages that is something that does not exist.
Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the processes stated above are just by-products of a large array that must be mastered in order to achieve proficiency in the new language, being thus a laborious task. As it has been already mentioned, people acquire or learn a new language for different reasons. Sometimes they just need it so that they can communicate at not living in their country anymore. Others, in turn, need to pass an exam or it is a school requirement. A fine distinction has to be made in both scenario; the first case would deal with daily production (oral and written) and the second one with academic performance. Academic performance conveys much more than just getting the ideas across; it requires considerable skills to accomplish the hard task of understanding and producing certain structures to convey meaning.

**Pragmatics**

Pragmatics studies all the aspects related to language and its use in different contexts. According to this branch, users convey different utterances depending on the circumstances in which they are immersed, and it is important for them to be aware of those changes because if they behave in a way which is not suitable for a determined moment, they will look completely misfit and likely to be seen as strangers.

Concerning second and foreign language acquisition, it “*encompasses speech acts, conversational structure, conversational implicature, conversational structure, and sociolinguistic aspects of language use, such as choice of address forms*”\(^{40}\) (Bardovi-Harlig; Mahan-Taylorm, 2003, p. 37). These often subconscious rules are even unknown for native speakers; they are just capable of realizing about them when someone breaks the rules creating an odd situation. A pragmatic error may make one person appear brusque, obstructing optimal communication between two speakers (Bardovi-Harlig; Mahan-Taylorm, 2003), that is, there can be a mismatch between what the speaker has conveyed and what the utterer actually intends to mean. (Alcon; Martinez-Flor, 2008)

As well as second language acquisition is debated between two influential approaches (Nativist vs. Empiricism), so is pragmatics discussed between cognitivist and socioculturalist’s standpoints. The former refers to all the mental processes the acquirer goes through, while the latter focuses on the external factor provided by the environment (Alcon; Martínez-Flor, 2008). No matter the focus taken in SLA both nativists and empiricists recognize the importance of input. A similar scenario takes place in pragmatics. No matter the tendency approached, pragmatics sees social interaction as being pivotal at examining and comparing the language used by native speakers and beginners.

Language socialization theory (LS) also provides some clues to unravel the pragmatics mystery. Being an interactionist theory, its main objective is to study the social interaction in the acquisition process. Notwithstanding, LS is split into two perspectives: socialization to use language and socialization through the use of language, the former connected to all the circumstances in which learners are taught the adequate words to express in a specific context and the latter related to “the process by which learners acquire knowledge of the culture in question as well as of their status and role and their associated rights and obligations as they learn the language” (Alcon; Martínez-Flor, 2008, p. 27).

Without a doubt, the learning of pragmatics is not to be effectively learned in a classroom when the situations presented in a lesson are not real. The most efficient fashion to acquire such notions is to be immersed in real situations, with native speakers or just by going over the culture of a specific country. Besides, some researches claim that not only superior characteristics of the mind such as cognitive skills or thinking are sufficient when dealing with pragmatics, but emotional, spiritual and religious aspects should also be included in order to apprehend certain behaviors (Alcon; Martínez-Flor, 2008).

11. L1 VS L2

A host of intriguing mysteries have shrouded in the influential aspects underlying the impact of second language acquisition on the first, and vice versa. Linguists’ mounting concern
resides in the assumption that their coalescence is liable to wreak havoc on the final output, resulting in probable interferences. Celeste Roseberry-McKibbin (2002) defines interference as follows:

“...Interference...refers to a process in which a communicative behavior for the first language is carried over into the second language...A student is more likely to demonstrate interference when using English in a formal setting, such as a testing situation than on the playground...Thus, when second language learners produce errors in English, it is important to consider the possibility that these errors result from language interference or from student’s limited experience in English.”

A telling example of this real-life situation would be when a teacher of English asks his or her Spanish-speaking student to take a seat to settle a conversation about bullying. She or he, instead of sitting down on the noticed chair, takes hold of it as it was the explicit teacher’s instruction which combined with his staid tone. This language interference takes place as taking a seat would be worded as tomar una silla in Spanish (Rhodes; Ochoa; Ortiz, 2005). This recurrent fact demonstrates the manner how the semantics of the target language runs counter to the mother tongue.

Unraveling these mysteries has been an onerous task for the bulk of specialists in this domain, leading them to peruse the commonplace belief that L2 has significant effects on L1. Thus, the standard concept of interlanguage springs from the fact that upon learning a second language there are distinct language units which sharply differ from L1. Interlanguage is the knowledge that a speaker has of a language different from her or his first one pertaining to its whole system; that is to say, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, inter alia (Pavičić, 2008). Nevertheless, interlanguage is not a term used for referring to the knowledge of both second and first language.

From this problem the concept of multi competence spawns, which has reached its zenith today among the specialists who advocate the proposal that languages do not necessarily develop

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independently but the converse; they are bound to maintain a united front. Multi competence is the knowledge of two or more languages as they cannot be independent systems for they are in one same mind. This perspective underlies the fact that the competence of a monolingual native speaker is to some extent futile, on the grounds that it is the competence of the successful L2 user that gains momentum when it comes to comparing minds (Han, 2008). Multi competence, then, queries the role of a native speaker. Since it has become a general habit to establish models of comparison between the native speaker and the L2 user, both in terms of cognition and proficiency, Cook and Bassetti (2011) claim that there is no use overstating the competence of native speakers because they, unlike L2 users, are the ones whose language skills have reached a plateau for they continue speaking the same language since their childhood. Hence people ought to gauge L2 users for their success in their target language and not for the fact that their endeavor to speak like a native speaker fails (Cook, 2003).

Similarly, Cook considers four distinctive characteristics to bear in mind when the attempts to contrast native speakers and L2 users persist.

- L2 users employ the language for different multiple purposes than native speakers.
- L2 users’ knowledge of the second language might be akin to the native speakers’, albeit it is not identical.
- L2 users’ knowledge of their first language is not commensurate with that of a native speaker.
- L2 users’ minds differ from native speakers’.

That said, the question as to whether L2 impairs, benefits or effectively overlaps with L1 contains conflicting elements which are developed by the integration continuum. The separation model, as it is called, puts forward that it may exist a yawning chasm between L1 and L2. This model contends that all languages contain different intricate linguistic systems which unable both languages to overlap. In this respect, there would not be any apparent effect on the L1 for L2 learning. Nevertheless, when both of them undertake a process of assimilation which leads to their subsequent intertwinement, then the model of integration emerges. This model suggests that language users control their L1 and L2; therefore, they choose when and which language to use in
a given context, just like when a native speaker discerns which social register fits any particular situation. It is noteworthy to mention that the problem in this model does not rest in the feasible effects that L2 may inflict on L1, but rather the manner in which the elements of a single language system counterpoise.

Cook virtually discards both models for the reason that both languages cannot be totally separated as they are in the same mind, or totally integrated since L2 users can isolate one language or the other on their choice. These implications lead to the denouement of the integration continuum which is the interconnection model. This model posits that languages are either linked or partly integrated, meaning that L1 and L2 influence and transfer features to each other with the assumption that “the single conjoined system differs from monolingual versions of either language”43 (Cook, 2003).

Even so, the integration continuum does not solely concern the whole language system; namely, an individual can integrate the lexicon but set the phonologic system apart. Most importantly, whether the languages develop independently, fully integrated or within an interconnection they depend on influential factors whose salience is attached to the fact that the integration continuum model does not affect all individuals in the same way. These key elements capture personal factors such as the keenness for the language, the notion of language that the individual possesses, as well as the development of the second language in respond to the first language progressive enhancement (Grosjean, 2001).

This watertight argument tallies with the striking differences between first language acquisition and second language learning. Even though both of them hold critical insights within their tenets, they coincide with the fact that they are subordinated by determined processes which lead them to their success as and if their stages are effectively fulfilled. The circumstances under these stages are highly contingent on the facilitations which the environment of the speaker furnishes. For example, when an L2 learner does not face a first-hand interaction with a native speaker he or she can optionally read written texts, listen to radio broadcasts, and watch TV programs, among others. Similarly, the final results might be either all-pervading or interim

provided that the development is related to positive or negative aspects. On this score, a negative aspect would contribute to the negative transfer when interference occurs in a learner’s interlanguage; whereas the positive constitutes the appropriate commandment of the language owing to proper distinction between target language and prior knowledge (Saville-Troike, 2006). This nuance is subjected to the gradual process which implies to learn a second language; it can lead the L2 learner to cease at some point or seamlessly continue the track towards proficiency. When the former takes place, linguists refer to the fossilization of the language, or rather the state in which the language learning process reaches a stalemate out of fitful progress (Finegan, 2008). Figure 1 below shows a close comparison between both phenomena.

Figure 1. L1 – L2 acquisition comparison
CONCLUSION

To sum up, second language acquisition is as tortuous as first language acquisition. Seminal work has proven that its complexity lies in the dire necessity for a plethora of monolinguals around the world to master English as a second language. With the aim of attaining to a native-like language level, millions of people steeped themselves in the world of SLA which oftentimes verges on a grueling task. Loosely speaking, SLA not only comprises the powerful motivation to learn the language as accurately as possible, but learner’s age, aptitudes and interaction abilities also factor in the ultimate goal to become bilingual.

Moreover, SLA has hogged the limelight as its nature has become quintessential and slightly chaotic for years of exhaustive research. For this reason numerous models and hypotheses emerge to account for SLA essentials, albeit none of them is infallible to provide a solid argument to cast off widespread doubts. It is of primary concern for this study to overhaul the set of theories pertaining to the subject of SLA, given that their attempts to depict a precise model misfire when they consider native speakers as the perfect model to pursue.

Thus it is worth emphasizing the fact that when learners aim at learning English as a second language, it is not compelling for them to further their learning up to the patterns that native speakers master, or else learners are bound to become daunted for their forlorn attempt to never become native-like. This evasive action has to be seared in the current mainstream that instructors follow so that learners’ worthwhile endeavor to acquire the language is not blithely disregarded. This inevitable consequence of the misconception of learning a second language will be addressed in the following chapter as teachers’ background is analyzed with excruciating detail.
CHAPTER THREE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English has become a momentous task in a world where this prevalent language has come to unite continents and nurture international relationships. With millions of students itching to major in the teaching of English and an extraordinary amount of people wishing to manage the language for different reasons, English language teaching has become unanimously irrevocable and timeless in modern society. As a result, it is of essence to distinguish the key terminology which the domain of teaching English encompasses:

- ESL: English as a second language
- ESOL: English for speakers of other languages
- EAL: English as an additional language
- EFL: English as a foreign language
- ELF: English as a lingua franca
ELT: English language teaching
TEFL: Teaching English as a foreign language
TESOL: Teaching English to speakers of other languages
TESL: Teaching English as a second language
TEAL: Teaching English as an additional language
ESP: English for specific purposes
EAP: English for academic purposes
ELL: English language learner
LEP: Limited English proficiency

The ambivalence of the aforementioned acronyms and abbreviations is self-evident; nonetheless, teachers concur on the fact that they might be interchangeable depending on the situation and the country they are living. Be that as it may, teaching English refers to the teaching of English to students whose first language is not English. This instruction may take place in an English-speaking country or in the student’s own country, instructed by a native English speaker or a not-native one, within a scholar private system. Whatsoever the context is, English language teaching is germane to the contribution of an effective learning process, in which the interaction among students as well as between teacher and learners’ becomes indicative of eminent success.

A teacher’s role contains burdensome duties. This is not all about standing in front of a class to flaunt knowledge, but also to let students titillate with the promotion of an invigorated ambiance and the performance of a rich repertoire of strategies aiming at fostering learning. Learners, on the other hand, have the prerogative to whether or not avail themselves of the facilities granted. In case students prove amenable, a win-win situation occurs in which teaching delivery of their multiple roles becomes significant. Despite the fact that teachers were considered mandarins who assessed their students through their fount of all truth, they have become nowadays language partners and advisers intended to streamline the students’ learning process. Subsequently, he or she starts as a host in the classroom in lieu of an inflexible dictator.

Teachers’ authoritarian representation was coeval with students’ passive subordinate learning. In those times the teacher was likely to jeopardize the students’ construction of learning
by their encumbering self-opinioned nature. The situation miraculously swerved into an active role for students and a facilitating one for teachers. This facilitative role has led teachers to boost their inventiveness and never cease to update themselves. The challenge posed by technology is a notable example. Technology has phased in the eminence of new types of learning which teachers have had to wrestle with. B-learning (mixes face-to-face classes with computer mediations), e-learning (electronically supported learning and teaching) and m-learning (learning with mobile devices) have contributed to broadening teachers’ teaching range as they earnestly strive to fulfill learners’ desires to learn by virtue of the use of the elements they show fondness and often familiarize with.

This chapter attempts to give a thorough account of cutting-edge research on contemporary ELT fields. Through this approach key terms in TESL which will be depicted to construct a secure footing on the comprehensive understanding of the following chapters. It will encourage teachers to learning and align with the current models that EFL educators are expected to employ to pepper their performances in the 21st century, a time which learners’ expectations are harder to please out of the permeating independence sense which they are embedded today in. Last of all, this chapter seeks to assist teachers of English and tutors in the reflection of their actions through the exposure of different approaches, methods and models whose groundbreaking research has favored thousands of teachers’ paucity of imagination when dealing with different learning styles.

12. TEACHING BACKGROUND

12.1 Language teaching history

The way people communicate has evolved since the very beginning of time. At first primitives had a complex communication system that consisted of gesturing, yelling, etc., and paintings on cave walls. As human beings evolved so did the means they used to connect with others; written and a more structured spoken language appeared. Each civilization had its own system of symbols used for communicational purposes. As centuries passed a common language came to be known in Europe, that language was Latin.
Latin became widely spread in Europe as it was used in every written text; it was a synonym of wisdom. The conception people of the time had about this language was that if they knew it (could speak it, write it or read it), it would make them different, more educated in a way. The language was used in education, religion and of course commerce and government. Therefore the first methods intended to teach a foreign language were thought for teaching this language. Then in the sixteenth century, and as a result of political changes in Europe, Latin lost its privileged position and languages like English, French, and German gained importance. The study of Latin was intended just to understand classical pieces of literature of Virgil and was therefore only instructed in schools.

As new languages, like the three mentioned before, started to appear in schools’ curriculum the method in which they were taught had to be transformed. During the eighteenth century teaching a foreign language employed the same procedures used for teaching Latin and focused on the same aspects. Grammar was the center of the class and was taught through rote learning of its rules; translation from one language to the other was the common activity of every class and it was intended to acquire long lists of vocabulary. The main goal was not to communicate but to understand what was written in books in another language. This method of language came to be known as the Grammar-Translation Method and will be treated in detail later on this chapter.

In the nineteenth century the mentality of educators and linguists switched and realized that the main goal of language teaching was not to translate books but to communicate in a more meaningful way. As this notion gained popularity the scope used to see language teaching was then changed; the most important aspect was to be able to speak in the target language. The way language was taught was completely reviewed and new methods appeared. Grammar was no longer seen as the key element when learning a new language; as a matter of fact, it was given less emphasis than before. During the late part of the century linguists realized that in order to teach a foreign language effectively it was needed to understand how it was phonetically produced. Then in 1886 the International Phonetic Association (IPA) was founded and its alphabet was arranged so that every sound of any language could be transcribed accurately.
The way language was being taught underwent important transformations during the late nineteenth century. Linguists like Wilhelm Viëtor and Henry Sweet agreed on how the teaching of a foreign language should be addressed and the principles and procedures behind it (Richards; Rodgers, 2002). Some aspects they considered to be important are:

- Translation should be avoided and native language used only for specific purposes.
- An oral-based methodology should be applied as spoken language is the main goal.
- Words should not be presented in isolation but in sentences and those sentences in a clear meaningful context.
- Grammar should be taught inductively.

These aspects have been seen as sacred ones and many of the methods that have appeared later on were based on it. Language teaching has continued evolving and so have the methods and approaches related to the topic. The Direct Method, Task-Based Approach, Suggestopedia, Audio-Lingual Method, etc., are just some of the many different ways teachers nowadays use to teach a foreign language and they are going to be presented later on this chapter.

12.2 Key terms

Syllabus

A syllabus, “a summary outline of a discourse, treatise, or course of study or of examination requirements”⁴⁴ (Merriam-Webster.com, 2012), is crucial to the development of classes at schools and universities. The outline of the course may be organized using different criteria (Richard; Schmidt, 2002); among these options, the most commonly used are the structural syllabus, the notional syllabus and the situational syllabus.

First of all, the structural syllabus includes items and structures such as tenses and grammatical rules to be taught. Of course, the complexity will increase gradually as the course goes. This is the most classic course arrangement used in the past, and is slowly being replaced

by most updated ones. Secondly, the notional syllabus, whose main purpose is to provide a sequence of communicative competences that the learner needs to express, emerged to give more options to follow a second language course training. Thus, the notions (concepts and meanings) needed to express, for instance time, quantity and location along with some functions to be able to request, suggest, describe, etc., are to be included in this type of organization. Finally, the situational syllabus covers a variety of situations in which a person may be involved in real life such as being at the bank, buying in the supermarket or being at home. The contents then are arranged according to the context in which different language items and grammatical structures usually appear.

Taking a quick look at the Chilean syllabi it is possible to find out that the contents are organized using a mixture of the three types mentioned before. By scrutinizing a 5th grade from elementary school (2012) it is clear that the syllabus is situational because it is divided into four units concerning different contexts: My world, The place where I live, What we eat and What the weather is like? Despite that the varied situations provide the global organization of the syllabus, it also includes notional and structural aspects. The grammatical structures are presented in terms of functions, that means that at the end of a lesson the students are expected to be able to describe, request or express certain English language contents. Lastly, the functional angle it takes is shown with structures such as: there is one... or there are two... or he is... and they are...

These English syllabi are provided by the Chilean Ministry of Education from 5th grade (elementary school) to 4th grade (high school), covering an amount of eight years of education of English as a foreign language.

**Structures**

Grammatical structures are the foundations needed to communicate effectively. These structures are basically the arrangements made to form sentences. In an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) situation structures are usually taught with fill-in-the gap example. The teacher writes the structures to be learned in the board and deletes the information which can be removed and replaced by other items but the root remains intact. What the teacher seeks to
accomplish with these sorts of activities is to mechanize the student’s learning process. A common paradigm used when teaching structures is the Present, Practice, and Produce (PPP).

A lesson that uses the PPP paradigm would look like the following:

- **Present:** the teacher presents the component to be learned in a specific and clear context, which could be a written text, dialog, etc.
- **Practice:** during this stage a controlled practice is carried out. It can be individual or through group drills. The gaps are filled and changed to create different situations in which the structure being learned can be applied.
- **Produce:** after a sufficient amount of practice students should be able to produce the target language with the new acquired structure and combining it with previously learned vocabulary to communicate meaningfully.

**Functions**

There are several functions in all language and they try to explain why something is being uttered. Asking questions, agreeing or disagreeing, comparing and contrasting, wishing, etc., are just a few examples of language functions but as they are related to communication context can never be left aside. The following is an example of how the main idea of a sentence can be misinterpreted:

- Michael: The phone is ringing.
- John: I am washing the dishes.

A student may ask the teacher why John said he was washing the dishes and the teacher might answer that it was what he was doing at that specific time, which is right. But considering the context in which this conversation may have taken place, it can be said that the function of language is different to what the teacher answered the student and the real meaning behind the sentence is that John will not answer the phone because he is busy doing something else; the function of language would be apologizing. In the particular case of the example stated above the
teacher is focusing on the meaning rather than in its function. When teaching in an EFL environment the educator has to be careful with these situations arise because they may create befuddle the learners.

**Skills**

When the word skill is conveyed, the first assumption that comes to mind is the ability to do something, though concerning language it takes a slight different connotation. As Michael Lewis (2005) states, there are different ways in which language can be divided into, being one of the most obvious the ways in which language can actually be found: listening, speaking, writing and reading. Sometimes, these four language features are subdivided into active or productive skills (speaking and writing) and passive or receptive skills (reading and listening) (Richard; Schmidt, 2002).

In order to master a language, receptive as well as productive skills should be managed by the learners. Even though, the skill development process is definitely going to differ between the first and the second language. While infants learning a first language receive all the new information by listening to the adults, second language learners can take advantage of their reading abilities to enrich their input through written words. The acquisition of lexical items is the first and most important step to acquire a second language either heard or read; the more handle of vocabulary, the more understanding of the language (Lewis, 2005).

On the other hand, speaking is probably the most important aspect of language. Even if a person is not able to write in the first or second language, he or she is going to be capable of expressing ideas through spoken words. The use of writing is going to depend exclusively on the purpose for which the language is being acquired. Any person who internalized their first language and learned how to read and write it is going to be able to write down ideas on a sheet of paper, nonetheless academic writing appears as a clear distinction which states that the learner “requires considerable knowledge of linguistic elements at levels of vocabulary, morphology and syntax, mechanics of orthographic representation and punctuation, and conventions related to
All that knowledge is needed to consider writers as good performers.

Competence

As the topic being treated so far is language, competence will be analyzed from a communicative perspective. Dell Hymes coined the term communicative competence in 1966 which can be described as the knowledge a language user possesses of linguistic aspects such as phonology, syntax, lexis, etc. Phonological competence is the ability to distinguish the sounds in a language and how they can be combined. The speakers of any language are able to discriminate whether a word belongs to the mother tongue just by listening to it. When it comes to learning a foreign language the main goal is to understand and try to reproduce sounds of the target language as accurately as possible.

Syntactic competence is the ability to understand how sentences are built. Speakers know how to form sentences in their own language but when it comes to one that is not their own they might run into difficulties. The prime goal for students of a foreign language is to be capable of distinguishing when sentences are grammatically incorrect on their own. Lexical competence is the knowledge of a broad amount of lexical items in one’s own language. Vocabulary of a foreign language is learned in different ways, but the overall objective is kept the same, being able to use the vocabulary properly in specific contexts.

So far grammatical competence has been described but it is not the only one. Sociolinguistic competence deals with specific communicative situations and the ability speakers have to create sentences which befit those situations, in other words, knowing what to say, whom to say it to and where to say it based on the context of the conversation. Finally, strategic performance is referred to the knowledge speakers possess to conserve communication. The idea is to use certain strategies to understand and be understood while communicating with other people. The main strategies used by speakers are intonation, gestures, and mimics.

Multiple intelligences

Multiple Intelligences (MI) is a theory developed by Howard Gardner in which he establishes that “all human beings possess not just a single intelligence (often called “g” for general intelligence). Rather, as a species we human beings are better described as having a set of relatively autonomous intelligences”46 (2003, p. 4). This means that there are multiple dimensions in which a person is able to pick up knowledge and learn according to their personal characteristics, capacities and abilities. At first, Gardner presented only seven intelligences in his book Frames of Mind, but added one more afterwards and even discussed the probable existence of a ninth (Armstrong, 2009). Richards and Rodgers (2002) describe the eight MI that humans can possess, intelligences which can be found in dissimilar combinations and strengths in people (Richard; Schmidt, 2002):

- **Linguistic:** Everything related to language such as the correct use of words in a written or spoken fashion characterizes people with this intelligence. A person mastering this feature is likely to become a poet, writer, story teller or a journalist.

- **Logical-mathematical:** Being able to effectively use reasoning before different situations by logically thinking of the cause and effect; and the handle of numbers, categorizations and classifications in varied types of tasks. People with logical-mathematical thinking over others MI have chances of turning into successful scientists, mathematicians, and accountants among other professions.

- **Spatial:** The capacity to appreciate color, forms, designs, etc. found in the visual-spatial world. A spatial person is able to picture ideas in their minds and transfer them into a real context. Architects, artists and inventors can be found in this category.

- **Bodily-kinesthetic:** Using the body to perform tasks successfully is the main aptitude of these people. For example actors and dancers will transmit their feelings by acting and

dancing, while sculptors and surgeons will work carefully using their hands to fulfill their job.

- **Musical**: A person whose world is better assimilated through rhythms and melodies is probably going to be a good musician or singer. For example, thinking of an English class, a student can easily learn through singing or listening to songs.

- **Interpersonal**: The one related to the effective relationship with others. One person with these intelligences highly developed may distinguish and perceive people’s mood and feelings easily.

- **Intrapersonal**: A striking management of one’s mood and motivations. A person possessing this characteristic will be able to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses and use that self-knowledge to carry out a variety of tasks.

- **Naturalist**: Any aspect related to nature will catch the attention of people mastering this ability. The landscape, animals and flora become their inspiration to develop their tasks.

Despite the fact that Gardner began this theory from a psychological standpoint, he then developed his studies, focusing on the educational area (Gardner, 2003). Consequently, these researches led educators to start including these intelligences in the classroom in order to foster the learning process. Today, the use of IM is carried out especially in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language. This fact takes place owing to myriad instances in which this subject-matter can be applied, such as listening to songs, reading comics or through miming.

**Performance**

Performance could be described as the physical manifestation of a speaker’s linguistic competence, in other words it is how the language is used. Chomsky (2006) states that the speaker and the situation in which he is involved play a fundamental role in the process of shaping how speech is produced and understood. He also believes that there are many factors that
affect a speaker’s performance and among those factors the most common ones are distractions, memory restrictions, and changes of attention and interest. Another non-linguistic feature that affects performance is hesitation; this could happen before and while producing speech.

**Explicit and implicit teaching**

The way how differently a language should be taught has always been one the most important and difficult decisions a teacher has to make at the beginning of his professional career. The formation of future teachers nowadays aims to instruct them towards a more implicit way of teaching, especially when it comes down to grammar, but the truth is that the explicit way and the methods used with it seem to be straightforward. Some people think of grammar as the foundations of languages and because of this conflictive fact learners should be taught explicit courses. Others believe that knowing the grammar will not lead the learner to become a master of the target language and that explicit teaching can make the learner a future unsuccessful user. So the question is, how should language be taught?

Two kinds of teachers can be differentiated according to how they teach. The first kind is the one concerned with language forms and has a more classical vision about how grammar should be addressed. For these teachers grammar should be explained in detail and practiced through repetition drills. This tends to create bored and unmotivated students who are in a way capable of mastering a language because of all the knowledge they have of grammar, but at the same time are unable to communicate in a meaningful contextualized situation. A common traditional method associated to this explicit practice is the audio-lingual method which will be treated more deeply later in this chapter.

On the other hand the second kind of teacher is the one who focuses more on meaning rather than on form. They believe that grammar can be acquired just as people acquire their first language and that conscious use of language affects linguistic performance. Contrastively to the teacher described in the previous paragraph this educator never refers to rules at all and uses contextualized exercises with authentic language. Two of the most common approaches
associated to the implicit practice of language teaching are *The Natural Approach* and *The Lexical Approach* (Lewis, 2005). The latter will be fully explored in the following chapter.

**Approach**

Maybe the concept approach is one of the most common terms used in language teaching. This is because an approach contains assumptions and beliefs about language (Richards; Rodgers, 2002), its nature (Lewis, 2005), and how languages are learned (Richards; Schmidt, 2002). Thus, any method to teach English or any other language will be based on an approach to support their existence.

Richards and Rodgers (2002) also present three different and rather basic views that an approach may take according to language’s nature.

- First of all, if language is granted as a set of structures that conveys meaning, then a *structural view* is taking place. Being the most classical perspective, this point of view divides language into phonological units, grammatical units, and lexical items that a person should master in order to be a successful exponent of the target language. Methods such as the Audio-lingual, Total Physical Response and the Silent Way fit in this assumption.

- Secondly, the *functional view* sees language as the means to express meaning; therefore, the communication is highlighted over other aspects. The organization of a method following this assumption consequently will be related to functions (requesting, asking, describing, among others) rather than following grammatical patterns. The Communicative Language Teaching comes across as a clear example of this philosophy.

- Finally, when language is seen as a fashion to develop social skills it is called the *interactional view*. Language is then the tool by which people create bounds and interpersonal relations. The contents will be designed according to the different interactional contexts in which the learners will need to apply the knowledge.
The views exposed above are only related to the nature of language and its uses, giving an explanation of why a language is taught in one way or another. Even so, there are other approaches which do not base their beliefs on language itself. Examples such as the Project-based and the Task-based approaches deal with the process students can follow to achieve the necessary competences to master the target language. Indubitably, new approaches will go on appearing to support the complex teaching-learning process and support the new methods to be used. By now, it is necessary to be aware of the most important ones which give rise to the commonest methods used not only in Chile, but around the world.

Method

If an approach explains why a second language is taught in a certain manner, a method shows the way in which the contents are going to be presented to the learners (Richards, Schmidt, 2002). This means that the same contents can be taught in different ways according to the method the teacher decides to use.

In order for an approach to turn into a method, it will have to include more than only beliefs and assumptions of the language. Richards and Rodgers (2002) give the points that any method should include:

- **Objectives:** What emphasis will the method take? Maybe it can focus on developing communicational skills over grammatical accuracy or vice versa. Besides, what skills are going to be given priority? Receptive or productive ones?

- **Syllabus:** As explained previously, the syllabus comprises the contents to be learnt by the students. A method then aligns itself with one kind of syllabus in order to outline what language and structures are going to be used.

- **Learners’ role:** Whether the learners will have an active or passive role in the classroom. This means that the activities they are required to perform may vary with the method. Besides, will learners interact with each other or just with the teacher?
• **Teacher’s role:** While there are methods in which the teacher is the center of the class and the only one who instructs the students, others may just facilitate and orientate learners in their process of acquisition.

• **Types of learning and teaching activities:** Depending on the objectives of the method, the process or the final product of the learning process may be valued over the other. This assessment procedure will be accompanied by the interaction among the learners, the teacher and the materials provided in the classroom.

• **Procedure:** Probably the most important of the aspects in a method; it shows what set of instructions will be used to present and practice the language contents decided by the teacher. Also known as techniques, they are inextricably connected to the methods and are going to be explained next.

**Techniques**

As previously mentioned, techniques are all the activities that are implemented in the classroom to teach and practice the contents. Depending on the approach and/or method applied by the teacher, the activities are going to vary in order to attain the corresponding competences in the learners. Larsen-Freeman (2000) provides several techniques that can be used according to the method carried out.

In a method whose main aim is the mastery of grammar structures, activities concerning memorization of rules, translating from the target language to the mother tongue or vice versa are going to be highlighted over others. Moreover, with the purpose of showing accurate use of words, students may be required to fill in the blanks with the correct term and create flawless sentences.

If a method in which a good pronunciation is emphasized, activities such as reading texts aloud and drills of repetition can be implemented. The use of songs and pair interaction in order to practice certain structures may be also used in the classroom. Finally, students may improve
their fluency and pronunciation by role-playing a great deal of situations that are likely to occur in real life.

The examples given before are just a few options that a trainer can carry out in a classroom. There are not established techniques to be used, they are just ideas that can perfectly be changed and adapted according to the teacher’s needs. Undoubtedly, experience is the best friend to decide what activities are going to be effective in one class or another depending on the students’ capacities and their tastes.

13. APPROACHES AND METHODS

Grammar Translation Method

This method dates back to the 1840s and dominated until approximately the 1940s (Richards; Rodgers, 2002) the area of language teaching. In spite of being used to teach classical languages such as Latin and Greek at the beginning (Larsen-Freeman, 2000), it then began to be applied to instruct modern languages such as English, German and French and is still practiced in some parts of the world today (Richards; Schmidt, 2002).

As the name suggests, the main aim of this method consists of studying and mastering the grammar of a second language. Based on the fact that the culture and arts are transmitted through literature and by being able to read foreign languages humans can enrich their mind; the main purpose of the method is not to apply the knowledge to speak, but only to be able to read (Richards; Rodgers, 2002).

Since the teaching of grammar is taught deductively, activities to fulfill this process deal with translating successfully from their first to the target language and vice versa. By doing so correctly, a person is considered a good exponent of the second language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Then, classes will be devoted to explaining grammar rules and practicing them through plenty of exercises, providing and memorizing huge lists of vocabulary, and reading a great amount of texts (Richards; Rodgers, 2002).
The words studied are not going to be found in a context but learnt in isolation through bilingual lists. Therefore, the whole class will be carried out in the first language in order to answer any question because communication is not a goal in the target language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The accuracy of constructing sentences grammatically correct is valued and any mistakes will be compared to the use of the L1 in order to clarify it.

Despite the fact that this old-fashioned method is no longer one of the major exponents, it is still used by some teachers because it demands little effort than others. Even though, children learning through this manner may get frustrated because of the high value that is put on accuracy. Because errors are corrected every time, this is likely to hobble the process and demotivate learners.

**Audio-lingual Method**

The roots of the Audio-lingual method have their grounds on believing that speaking and listening are the skills which should be practiced over the others. Besides, since every language contains their own structure and system rules, it should be learned apart from the first language and through habits that reinforce those new structures and rules. Thus, the focus of this new method that predominated in the 1950s and 1960s includes a mixture of linguistic, psychological and behavioral perspectives (Richards; Rodgers, 2002).

Unlike the Grammar-Translation and more similar to the Direct Method, this set of methodologies is based on an aural-oral approach that puts great emphasis on communicating in the target language. Larsen-Freeman (2000) presents some principles that are likely to be found in a lesson using the Audio-lingual Method:

- The language is not going to be found in isolation but in meaningful contexts.
- Since the first and the target language have dissimilar linguistic systems, the first language is going to be used as little as possible in order not to obfuscate the learning of the second one.
• The teacher will carry out the class in the second language with the purpose of becoming a model. From the instructor, the students will acquire the correct pronunciation of the words and will be able to replicate the sounds.
• Repetition is also given priority because it will turn the different structures of the new language into a habit.
• Errors are corrected because they can lead to the acquisition of bad habits. On the contrary, the accurate use of language will be praised to condition good habits.
• The purpose of learning another language is to be able to communicate and express spoken ideas.
• The role of the teacher will consist of conducting, guiding and controlling the correct use of language.

With all the points previously addressed, the student has to work hard in order to produce accurate spoken language which should be mechanized and expressed without even thinking about it. The more practice with the target language, the more expected to internalize patterns that will aid learners to convey correct sentences.

Direct Method

As the name states, this method consists of teaching language directly and came as a response against the grammar-translation method around the 1900s. The main idea of this method is that language is always taught in the target language and that mother tongue is not used at all. The most important aspect of this method is that learners are expected to learn a foreign language just as they learnt their mother tongue.

The direct method is described as “language teaching mainly through conversation, sometimes carefully arranged, but without explicit statement of grammatical rules or the use of the mother tongue.”47 (Broughton; Brumfit; Flavell; Hill; Pincas, 2003, p. 219). Among the main principles of this method it can be said that oral practice is enhanced; grammar is seen from a

functional perspective rather than a theoretical one; the unit of speech switches from single words to full sentences as words should not be taught or uttered in isolation, and the vocabulary presented to the student should be limited and taught concretely through the use of pictures, real objects, demonstrations, etc.

Some of the advantages of this method are:

- As oral production is fundamental good pronunciation is ensured.
- Fluency in speech is developed because of the link which is created between thought and expression.
- As the mother tongue is not used students learn and are capable of expressing themselves in proper English in a shorter period of time.

Some of the disadvantages of this method are:

- The teacher has to be competent to use this method. Sometime there are some words that are too hard to be interpreted in English and as the mother tongue cannot be employed a lot of time is wasted.
- As oral work is preferred, reading and writing are not given the importance and time they deserve.
- It can be somehow expensive for the teacher because of the many aids he would need to make students understand and relate words to their meanings without using the native language.

The direct method is a good way of teaching language but it has to be properly adjusted to the specific needs or the learners. This method is difficult to apply in young kids and it might be frustrating for teachers to notice that students are not learning as it was expected. Though it is not as easy to use as the translation method, it is more rewarding for teachers to see that students have learned without the help of the mother tongue.
Silent Way

The Silent Way is a language teaching method devised by the Egyptian scientist and educator Caleb Gattegno in 1963. The main principle of this method is that learners are autonomous and willing to produce as much language as possible while the teacher remains a silent monitor for most part of the class.

A very particular aspect related to this method is the teaching materials used in class. As Gattegno was as a mathematician he suggested using Cuisenaire rods, which became the trademark of the method as an innovative source for teaching. Merriam-Webster’s 11th Collegiate Dictionary defines Cuisenaire rods as “any of a set of colored rods usually of 1 centimeter cross section and of 10 lengths from 1 to 10 centimeters that are used for teaching number concepts and the basic operations of arithmetic”\(^{48}\); this element is used to represent different abstract objects. Color charts are also used as a means to develop spoken competence. Language sounds are taught through sound-color charts where each color represents a specific sound. Sentences are taught through colored word charts and each chart contains the functional vocabulary which is intended to be taught. The principle behind these charts is the same as the one of sound-color charts and each letter is colored to specify its pronunciation. As oral production is the main goal of this method fluency is seen as the first step of the process, being native-like language proficiency the final objective.

Some key aspects of this method are:

- Sentences are the basic unit of teaching and they are approached from a propositional perspective.
- The selection of vocabulary to be taught is crucial and should be functional.
- Creative learning processes are preferred to repetitive ones.
- Formal test have no room in this method, the evaluation is carried out through observation.

• Self-correction and peer-correction are stressed as errors are seen as part of the learning process.

**Suggestopedia**

The term suggestopedia was coined by the Bulgarian educator and psychiatrist Georgi Lozanov in 1978 as a result of a series of investigations he developed in suggestology in the decade of the 1960’s. Suggestology studies how the power of suggestion can affect the learning processes. These suggestions can be conscious or unconscious, verbal or non-verbal. At the very beginning this method sought to apply positive suggestion when teaching, but as the model has evolved over time it has now turned into a method that focuses more on desuggestive learning which is described by Lozanov (2006) as the spontaneous acquisition of knowledge, habits and skills, where no suggestion to interfere with learning is found. The method is most commonly used in the field of foreign language learning, but used in others such as psychology.

Lozanov was opposed to learning a language focusing on its lexical elements as the most important aspect to be treated by educators, especially when translation was given more emphasis than contextualization. He believed that the correct way of teaching was to lead “the student not to vocabulary memorization and acquiring habits of speech, but to acts of communication”⁴⁹ (Richards; Rodgers, 2001, p. 101). Some important features of this method are the elements used by the teacher to make the students feel more comfortable during the learning process. The use of baroque music, comfortable chairs, stretching exercises, among others, help the teacher create a tranquil environment whose mellow mood eventually leads students to focus on the task with comfort. Also the teacher introduces the topics to be treated in a more playful manner and uses dramatization, singing and gaming as ways to assess whether what was intended for students to be learnt was actually accomplished. Some of the advantages of this method are:

• Students learn more freely and are not corrected every time they make a mistake, therefore they are more keen on speaking.

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- It helps build social skills.
- There is no use of the native language.

On the other hand, some of the disadvantages would be:

- The use of music could distract some of the students.
- It is heavier for teachers as they have to create an optimal setting which can be difficult.
- As mistakes are not corrected speech may not be accurate and grammatically incorrect.

**Total Physical Response**

The Total Physical Response (TPR) was a method developed by James Asher in the early 1970s that consists of an analogy between how children acquire their first language and how a second language may be taught and more easily acquired (Richards; Rodgers, 2002). Babies spend almost their entire first year listening to what adults say and they are not yet able to utter a word. Every infant ends up talking at different ages when they feel poised and confident about it (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Since the speech provided to newborns is mostly based on commands, TPR tries to replicate this in the classroom. Students are expected to develop communicational skills and vocabulary through the input provided by the teacher. Learners are required to listen to the teacher at the beginning without speaking a word, just making sure they understand what is being told. These orders and instructions are aided by pictures or actions and should also be performed by the pupils, demanding a physical response (Richards, Schmidt, 2002). For example, if the teacher says *stand up*, all of them are intended to do it.

Despite the fact that the commands usually are short phrases, they have to be introduced in chunks. The meaning of these actions should be performed by both the teacher and the students in order to memorize the target language through physical movements. This way, the learner will develop a full comprehension of the second language before starting to speak. This is actually an
amusing way in which students get motivated to learn, delaying their productive skill of speaking when they feel confident to do it (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

**Communicative language teaching**

The Communicative language teaching (CLT) was developed in the 1980s by British linguists to debate the approaches which were based on grammar structures. Therefore, this approach seeks to reinforce the communicative competences over the linguistic competences that characterize other methods (Richards, Schmidt, 2002). Researchers began to notice that even when some students were able to use the language accurately in the classroom, whenever they were exposed to real contexts they were not able to communicate.

The main aim of this approach then is to communicate in the target language different situations such as inviting, describing, and requesting. Larsen-Freeman (2000) consequently unravels a series of principles a class using this approach ought to contain:

- **Authentic material**, which has to be used by the teacher. It means that texts or videos of what occurs in a real context such as articles from a magazine or a TV interview should be shown to the students.

- **Students**, expressing their ideas in the target language even if some mistakes are made. This is because errors are considered part of the process of learning.

- **Language**, used as a means of communication rather than as a structure to be conveyed; learners should be able to express the same ideas using different words.

- **Activities**, devoted to promoting communication among the students. Besides, teachers act as facilitators of the activities and the students decide what to say and how to convey it.
By following these steps, students are supposed to achieve fluency and accuracy in the second language being learned, though the most important is that they are capable of developing the communicative competences in real contexts, out of the classroom when necessary.

**Content-based Instruction**

Content-based Instruction (CBI) seeks to jettison the idea of holding both teaching instruction and the subject-matter to be discussed separately. This content has particular effectiveness in giving learners full access to English language. According to Met (2008):

“Content in content-based programs represents material that is cognitively engaging and demanding for the learner, and is material that extends beyond the target language or target culture.”

CBI shares the premise that English learners on no account are allowed to translate content into their native language. Instead, they have to comprehend English as they learn communication skills from the subject-matter itself (Vyas; Patel, 2009). Developing the proper content is paramount; consequently, the design of the syllabus should be accurate, coherent and meaningful, starting by identifying the content to be studied (Killen, 2007). This content is not only meaningful for its importance in the students’ lives, but also the input is copious so as to promote second language acquisition through implicit learning (Creese, 2005). Paying attention to content, learners proceed to discern different forms and meanings which will be approached by teachers without direct grammar incursions.

In this way, the activities of the language class are entirely concerned with the subject-matter being taught and intended to nourish students’ thinking and learning through language usage. Likewise, it makes use of authentic reading material which encourages students to understand, rate and analyze the information. This uphill task eventually contributes to honing students’ academic skills, especially writing, as it derives from challenging listening and reading

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assignments (Richards; Renandya, 2002). This academic focus underlies the importance of academic language over daily communication, being social studies and science the most recurring contents. The development of these contents resides on the assumption that students’ motivation and interest are substantial because these elements gear them to explore the world and discuss their discoveries with older peers (Gordon, 2007).

**Sheltered Instruction**

Sheltered instruction constitutes a means to render a more comprehensible grade-level academic content for English language learners while they learn the language and improve their literacy therewith. Based upon Krashen’s concept about input, the teacher’s role boils down to the highlighter of key language features as they make the content more accessible through the development of diverse strategies (McIntyre; Kyle; Chen; Kraemer & Parr, 2009). In addition to these techniques so as to make language understandable, sheltered instruction embraces cognitive strategies like promotion of participation, communication and cooperative learning through interactions with peers. On the other hand, teachers have to adjust themselves to ELLs requests in order to develop the contents properly, bearing in mind the students’ needs when learning English language (Smiley; Salsberry, 2007).

Being formal language one of the chief goals of sheltered instruction, this approach also heads for native speakers, who benefit from this academicism even though they handle the input ahead of time. Likewise, this approach is mostly directed to advanced learners to all levels of proficiency so as to achieve high standards (Straube, 2007). Both elementary and intermediate students are not expected to become involved in this program since they have not developed the necessary competencies to tackle content in a cognitively complex and abstract fashion (Zuñiga; Marino, 2006). To attain to this objective, content is articulated and English negotiated through the use of visual aids that “make content and the relationship among the concepts and different lesson elements explicit”\(^{51}\) (Coleman; Goldenberg, 2010, p. 84). Yet, Syrja (2011) states that there are other strategies that sheltered instruction employs:

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• Friendly language usage to convey language and content objectives.
• Students’ prior knowledge usage to ascribe learning to their experiences.
• Proper modification of teacher’s speech by curtailing the use of colloquial expressions.
• Use of realia, graphic organizers, models and technology to expound nebulous content.
• Meaning negotiation and use of body language to expand word denotations.

**Project Based Learning**

Project Based Learning (PBL) appears to be one of the most used teaching methods today as it has proven to constitute an underlying instructional practice (Vender, 2012); it leads students to face complex situations that need to be solved, activating reflective, investigative and/or decision making skills. Being a student-centered model, the role of the teacher is mainly passive, acting mostly as a facilitator, guide, monitor and/or entertainer rather than knowledge provider. As students are often given authentic, real-world situations to work out the solutions for these problems, it could be a beneficial aspect for the community in which they are immersed. To accomplish the goal of reaching a solution for the problem, the student needs to devise a set of steps that will help him/her find the most appropriate solution after having gone through an extensive research process. These types of activities stimulate critical thinking in students which will develop more complex cognitive skills.

This method has gained a lot of acceptance since the 1990’s but it has also been criticized. A problem with this method is that sometimes too much emphasis is placed on the outcome, the final product delivered by the students, and the process is left aside as something which is not given much importance by them. Because of this, it is often difficult to assess and the traditional objective evaluations do not work. Some positive aspects this method has are:

• The use of contextualized situations which stimulate students’ motivation to learn.
• The integrative and social skills are developed through pair or group interaction.
• The use of all the possible available technologies makes it easier for students to gather the information needed to accomplish the objective proposed by the teacher.
It is important to clarify that this model has aided to:

- Serve scientific related subjects better than it does to language teaching.
- Make students become aware of the technological resources needed to stimulate language learning.
- Encourage collaborative team work as a means to accomplish the task.

**Task-based approach**

It is also known as Task-based Instruction (TBI), Task-based Teaching (TBT), Task-based Learning (TBL) and Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT). This contemporary approach operates under the premise that the more the students are engaged in real language use, the more effective their learning is in the classroom (Willis; Willis, 2011). This learning occurs when teachers map out meaningful and factual tasks, encouraging students to use the target language on their own. Nunan (2004) defines a task as follows:

“...a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end.”

The purport of having students going through a series of tasks is not the outcome, but the process which entails betterment in the language use (Tomlinson; Masuhara, 2011). Thus teachers become facilitators in charge of monitoring the manner how students maneuver to accomplish the chore given by drawing on the language as primary means of solution. Notwithstanding, this incipient involvement does not mean bombarding students with requests; after all, they are not machines. The idea is that students take cognizance of working as a team to obtain the goal of the task through strong interaction, from which they will eventually gain

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accuracy and fluency in the language. For these expectations to take place, students form part of the framework of the TBL which consists of three phases (Leaver; Willis, 2004):

- **Pre-task**: The topic and the task are introduced in this stage. The teacher highlights useful phrases and vocabulary, and assists the students in the understanding of the instructions.

- **Task cycle**: The students fulfill the task as the teacher monitors the development. Additionally, the students prepare a report in their planning stage, oral or written, in which they tell their classmates how the assignment was accomplished, how influential decision making was in their rapport and what their findings were. Finally, the class broaches discussions as to the comparison of their results.

- **Language focus**: The students analyze and discuss commonalities of the text in terms of language. The teacher goes on to implement practice of the vocabulary and language patterns emergent from the previous analysis.

Furthermore, the types of tasks which turn out to be effectual in their usage are the following:

- **Comparing**: Main points contrast, similarities finding.

- **Problem solving**: Ending prediction, solution agreement, investigation, case studies, and alternative comparisons.

- **Sharing personal experience**: Discussion sets and debates.

- **Sorting**: Sequencing events, actions, etc. for logical or chronological order; ranking items; classifying according to own criteria.

- **Listing**: Brainstorming, fact-finding.
**Competency-based approach**

Competency is a mélange of abilities, aptitudes and attitudes which bundled together for the realization of an effectual performance. Granted, the Competency-based approach or Competency-based Language Teaching (CBLT) focuses on what a learner is expected to do to cover a specific content (Cummins; Davison, 2007); that is to say, the emphasis is placed on the output rather than the input. As a matter of fact, it attempts to locate learners’ needs and then construct a curriculum in which objectives and assessment procedures consist of a list of competencies for learners to obtain (Murray; Christison, 2011). These competencies are laid down in can-do statements as they are measurable. For instance, some verbs which jibe with the aforementioned expectations are *synthesize, scan, illustrate* and *identify*, in contrast to the verbs *learn* and *understand* which are ambiguous and do not gauge students’ skills in the slightest.

Moreover, CBLT pays close attention to both function and interaction in its practices. In this way, language is taught in relation to the social background in which it is useful, especially when it proves to be the primary means of communication among people for the completion of a certain purpose. At adopting particular roles and revealing their needs in the same situation, students’ language skills (structures and vocabulary) are predicted at the expense of the obviousness of language occurrence, which brings their nuances into play if the situation calls for their development (Richards; Rodgers, 2002). In this attempt to develop functional communication skills, five principles for teachers to take into account when activating CBLT have been proposed (Norland; Pluett-Said, 2006):

- Focus on successful performances in society
- Focus on life skills
- Performance and outcome based orientation
- Progressive assessment
- Individual and students-centered instruction

In this way the learner attributes her or his needs and interests to particular and practical competencies which enable the learner to judge their relevance and usefulness. This judgment
contributes to the apprehension as to what the learner knows and what needs to be learned or reinforced. However, one of the drawbacks of CBLT constitutes the feasible reduction to checklists which do not warrant that learners are prepared to be absorbed in meaningful interaction, since it invests more effort in skills than language (Murray; Christinson, 2010).

The Dogme approach

The Dogme approach or Dogme ELT was initiated as a response against grammar-driven approaches to teaching English. It mainly promotes teaching without relying on textbooks or lesson plans, giving emphasis on communication among the teacher and learners through emergent conversations (Beltrán; Hobbs, et al. 2011). Dogme ELT posits that teachers have to seize the elements that the classroom contains, to the extent that students spontaneously generate language with them. Learners, in turn, are considered resourceful on the grounds that they possess experiences, beliefs, desires and knowledge which serve as main tools to flourish in second language learning. This notion lies in the fact that teaching is buttressed by the content, from talks among the people in the classroom (Thornbury; Slade, 2006). In the upshot, language is not grammar but social learning.

Likewise, Dogme ELT rebuffs the fact that teachers lean heavily on technology because it precludes the conditions needed to facilitate learning. CD-ROMS, Internet, videos, OHP, among other technological devices which students opt for using stymie the inner expression of the learners; therefore, language is slightly practiced (Bryndal, 2012). There again, given that SLA is contingent on the interests, concerns and needs of the user for its emergent nature, there are some rules to comply with in order to optimize Dogme ELT in the classroom (Thornbury, 2005):

- Content is generated by the students.
- Listening material is fabricated by the students.
- Learning is social and built between peers.
- Learning occurs through conversations which give rise to language and skill development.
- Vocabulary and grammar spring from the learning process. They emerge naturally and are not lesson-driven.
• Teachers maximize learning through drawing close attention to nascent language.
• The teachers should level themselves down to students’ language knowledge.
• Students are not distributed in groups for their level of English.

CONCLUSION

In sum, teaching is not only a prodigious task which has spanned throughout centuries, but also a science whose continuous modifications have altered the way it is carried out every day. No doubt are teachers arduous in their extensive search for enhancing their pedagogy by virtue of the edification of myriad students whom, in turn, reckon on their tutors conducting stimuli-driven performances. Under the umbrella of diverse methods and approaches selected by teachers, it is factual that their Zeitgeist has permeated most of their performances, which have remained equal owing to an evident want of insight into innovative research on teaching. These same old platitudes like Audio-lingual and Grammar Translation methods still elicit lukewarm responses with regards of the teaching of English, whereas some other teachers have ventured into the use of modern approaches like TBI or PBI.

Regardless of different shades of opinion in most efficacious methods, teachers cannot hold students’ interests in abeyance. As noted earlier, motivation overrides any other factor leading the student to participate in the class. Hence teachers are the characters who encourage the learner to muster enthusiasm to interact by means of techniques which not only promote interaction, yet activate SLA in a dynamic manner which does not ignore learners’ interests. As a result, it is worth reminding the industrious characteristic of successful teaching. In fact, it is diligence which must imbue teachers’ desires to construct a different scenario for TESL, especially fledgling teachers who cannot circumvent the detriments which defy fruitful teaching performances. With reflective teachers who are critical of their practice students will be able to become engrossed with the domain of ESL.

Last of all, the importance of meaning was tackled in previous chapters. In the following chapter, the importance of words as chief meaning carriers would be addressed as the core teaching approach, an approach which tends to highlight the importance of vocabulary mastery,
constituting a telltale vestige of English language success. Thus, the Lexical Approach assures to seek an optimal solution to the current emphasis given on grammar as the commandment of words deserves uppermost priority.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE LEXICAL APPROACH

INTRODUCTION

Words are essential for communication. Through words human beings can demonstrate how effectively they acquire a second language, and certainly a first one. Words pave the learning road and render it expeditious for students when certain bits of language appear to remain in the dark. As a matter of fact, it is the mastery of those words which can prove either language proficiency or language fossilization. Most importantly, vocabulary conveys the essence of a human being, the way they have lived, how their thoughts are shaped and what they feel in a particular situation.

It is not sheer coincidence then that when people travel overseas a dictionary can never be overlooked. The blunt truth is that when learning a second language vocabulary turns out a key element for successful communication. Learning grammar is what always made English a school subject as it is deemed a significant token of language correctness; but then again, what students carry is not a grammar book, but a dictionary. Grammar is not an element to be oblivious to, on
account of the fact that it verifies language accuracy; nevertheless, when people’s speeches contain grammar mistakes they are liable to be understood since it is vocabulary which carries the meaning of a sentence. On the other hand, when people mistake the right word, mispronounce it or write it with the wrong spelling they are not only faltering in language literacy, but also in its effectiveness, which eventually thwarts successful communication among speakers.

In spite of the indispensability of vocabulary, grammar still emerges in schools as the secret formula to become a successful second language speaker. While vocabulary seems to be an appropriate complement, grammar hogs the limelight for thousands of teachers who were instructed with the embedded notion of never obviating grammar, or else their practices were harshly criticized. This notion has been pervasive for learners, to the extent that English language has become tantamount to Math as it has been taught with grammar formulae committed to memory. These bleak prospects lurking SLA have scuttled a host of students’ hopes whose dismay is highly attributed to the approaches that teachers select when dealing with grammar and vocabulary.

Notwithstanding grammar-driven lessons are still rampant, there are teachers for whom the idea of central focus on grammar has not ossified in their precepts. Thus fully aware of how grammar centralism deters learners, these teachers have instigated new strategies as to the learning of a second language, which places considerable emphasis on vocabulary. This cornucopia of possibilities is not that broad as it narrows down to one teaching approach which was omitted in the previous chapter. This approach has gained enhanced status owing to the fact that it gives prominence to lexis and the large number of lexical units without keeping grammar in limbo. This approach posits that by acclimatizing to the existence of these lexical items learners might eventually master English with proficiency because they possess meaning which is grammar-pervaded. This postulate is called the Lexical Approach.

This chapter seeks to spell out the details which rest on the Lexical Approach principles and how they hazard to suggest a new focus on TEFL. In addition to these cornerstones, it will be examined distinct lexical units which belong to the wide range of teaching terminology so as to clarify not only their relevance to current teaching performance, yet their implications to the
principles that the Lexical Approach upholds. In this further attempt, activities and learning strategies will also be suggested as the application of the Lexical Approach entails the development of a new instrument for teachers, that is a lexical syllabus. This lexical syllabus will be proposed when Chilean syllabi and course books are vetted, weighing ups and cons for its plausible development to take place. Ultimately, this sharp contrast will lead the conduction of an investigation whose basics will be explored in the following chapter.

14. LEXICAL ITEMS

The first central issue to point out in the Lexical Approach encompasses a clarification for vocabulary and lexis. While vocabulary is usually seen as words having a fixed meaning, lexis not only covers isolated words and variations on meaning they may have, but combinations of these which help chunk the language (Moudraia, 2001). Thus, polywords, compound words, phrasal verbs, idioms, fixed phrases, and specially collocations are seen as the core of language and crucial to produce effective language (Lewis, 2005).

Therefore, lexical items, known as lexical units or lexemes, are abstract units which include several features of a word in terms of spelling, phonetics, grammar and semantics (Pavičić Takač, 2008).

Words

As observed in the previous chapters, there are multifold fashions in which a second language, in this case English, can be learned and taught. Whether the diverse approaches and methods are devoted to developing some skills over the others, most of them leave aside the significance of lexis, giving a major priority to grammar and pronunciation as the main components of language.

In the Lexical Approach, words go beyond just being a mere part of language; “it is though that with making clear the meaning of words and explaining some cultural concepts, it is
It is evident that culture is transmitted from generation to generation through words; therefore, the fact of learning vocabulary means at the same time learning a culture, giving these two terms a close and friendly relationship.

The importance that syntax used to have in the past has slowly been replaced by the focus on the lexicon and its organization (Lewis, 2005). Vocabulary is now seen as the building blocks of language, being one step forward grammar, functions and notions (Richards; Rodgers, 2001). It does not mean that all of them are not associated, but the fact that grammar would not exist without words (Forteza Fernández; Prahlad; Rubtsova; Sabitov, 2009) explains the current emphasis placed on lexis rather than on grammar today. Michael Lewis (2005) gives three primary characteristics that words present:

- Meaning is not totally predictable from form.
- Each is a minimal unit for certain syntactic purposes.
- Each is a social institution.

These three points mean that there are certain restrictions and generalizability which are important to take into account when learning or teaching new words. For example, is there any difference between synonyms? Leonardo Juliano Recski (2009) shows results of an investigation in which some teachers were not able to see dissimilarities in meaning and usage in pair of synonyms such as big and large, and lastly and finally. With the dichotomy tall vs. high a teacher acknowledged knowing the usage of the two words, but not being able to explain it to their students because both words have the same meaning if translated them into Portuguese. Since “words are used in patterns which learners need to notice” (Lewis, 2000, p. 142), effectual manners to teach these two lexical items seem to be through a great deal of examples or by acquiring them naturally within a real context.

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Despite that the number of words used every day by a native speaker may be exceedingly large, all of them might not be crucial to develop effective communication and should be smartly discriminated by the teacher at the moment of instructing their learners. Lewis (2005) helps clarify this issue and states that “the criteria most frequently used in establishing the relative usefulness of words have been frequency of occurrence, range of text-type in which the item occurs, availability, familiarity and coverage”\(^55\) (p. 91).

**Polywords**

Polywords are described by Willis (2003) as phrases which “are made up of a number of words, but they can reasonably be learnt as if they were single words because the same string of words occurs again and again without variation”\(^56\) (p. 144), in other words, polywords are to be learned as only one lexical item. Examples of polywords are: over there, in the middle, on the other side, in fact, etc.

As polywords are just a string of lexical components a great number of them are based on verbs. The following are some examples of two-part verbs (the first two) and three-part verbs:

- **Verb + preposition**: look after, believe in, work with, wait for, insist on, win by, and think of. When a preposition is added to a verb the meaning of the verb changes entirely; for example Juan believed Bastian is not the same as Juan believed in Bastian. The selection of a preposition affects the meaning of the sentence.

- **Verb + adverb**: go away, stay in, and hang around. In these particular cases the word following the verb acts as an adverb because they are not followed by a noun. Some of these combinations of words are rather difficult to understand for beginners because they cannot be torn apart and analyzed independently as their meaning changes. Words like these have to be learned as polywords.


Three-part polywords: put up with, get up to, stand up for, talk down to, etc. Most of these words have a different meaning as a whole unit than the sum of their parts, just as it was the case with the words from the second example. These words will maintain their meaning even if their form changes (when the verbs change their tense).

Some adverbials are also considered polywords:

- **Place adverbials**: over here, in there, in the middle, to the corner, far from here. The adverbs of place are used to describe location (where someone or something is), direction (where someone or something is moving to) and distance (to show how far someone or something is from our position).

- **Time adverbials**: next week/month/year, the day after tomorrow, all day. The adverbs of time are used to express an action to occur or that may occur, for how long and how frequently (if it happens more than once).

- **Sentence adverbials**: as a matter of fact, in fact, beyond any doubt, to some extent. These are short units that modify the meaning of a sentence and often appear at the beginning of the sentences; they usually work as linking units.

Finally, some polywords are formed by nouns and a modifier following it; examples of these words could be washing machine, carrot peeler, and sport-utility. Adjective can also work as modifiers as in fresh eggs, instant coffee, yellow school bus, etc.

**Compound words**

Compound words are words which are put together to create different compound structures. This new lexeme is usually made up by two or three parts. Though compound words are conformed by more than one word, they are considered to be just one whole unit.

Compound words can be divided into three categories based on their forms:
• **Closed forms**: Two words are just merged together to create a new meaning. Examples of close forms are: *notebook, baseball, keypad*, etc.

• **Hyphened forms**: The words are fused together by a hyphen. Examples of hyphened forms are: *six-pack, mother-in-law, three-year-old, high-speed*, etc.

• **Open forms**: The words are not put together but when they are read as if they were, a new meaning is created. Examples of open forms are: *ice cream, middle class, post office, real estate*, etc.

Compound words can also be classified according to their semantic composition. In this case the classification is made up of four categories:

• **Endocentric**: It consists of a head and a modifier where the latter specifies the meaning of the first. For example, the word *steamboat* denotes a very particular kind of boat. The head of the word is *boat* and the modifier is *steam*; the second then conditions the first.

• **Exocentric**: It lacks a head and there is no clear relation between the two constituents. For example the word *skinhead* is made up by the words *skin* and *head*, but when combined and turned into one unit a new meaning is formed, one that describes a particular kind of person who believes in a specific political ideology.

• **Copulative**: Two heads are merged to form a new meaning, in this case the lexemes do not condition the other, but their meanings are combined. For example, the word *bittersweet* is used to describe food which has a bitter but sweet taste at the same time.

• **Appositional**: The two lexemes have opposite meanings. For example, the word *coach-player* describes a person which is both the player of a sport but at the same time the coach of the team where he plays in.
Collocations

Collocations are natural word arrangements which combine with each other in order to generate fluency and exactness in English language. These lexical units require being heeded in order to increase the vocabulary range so that the learner is able to discern with precision which word best fits one particular context (O’Dell; McCarthy, 2005). According to O’Dell and McCarthy (2008) it is of considerable relevance to become acquainted with collocations for the reasons that follow:

- Collocations attest accuracy in the language. For example, a person makes progress (NOT does progress).
- Collocations make words occur in a natural manner, either in text or speech. When learners achieve this condition they are likely to become fluent language users.
- Collocations embellish and vary both writing and speech, especially to avoid repetition and vagueness.

Moreover, collocations punctuate the complexity behind SLA on account of their multiple convoluted characteristics, albeit in contrast to other lexical units their meanings are clearer and therefore to encode them turns out to be straightforward (Seretan, 2011). This intricacy lies in the arbitrariness that collocations hold as their semantic and syntactic properties draw boundaries in their full prediction (Evert, 2004) given that grammar does not prescribe rules and the affinity among words does not rely on the fact that the combinations are synonymous, making the combinability wide but the collocability limited (Nesselhauf, 2005).

In addition to the arbitrariness and unpredictability of collocations, their presence in English language is ubiquitous as native speakers use them rather frequently. By and large, this frequent recurrence is part of the learning experience in a SLA student’s case, since the more word partnerships are encountered in oral or written discourse the easier they will be incorporated in their minds. That said there is more than one type of collocation as they vary in the degree to which they collocate with other words (Spratt; Pulverness; Williams, 2011), or rather the freedom
they possess in their reciprocity. In fact, the more susceptible to collocability, the more meaning is expressed through these co-occurrences (Bara, 2010).

There again, linguists disagree not only on the number, but also on the proper terminology behind the notion of collocation. As a matter of fact, these combinations fall into two major groups: grammatical and lexical collocations. Grammatical collocations are the ones which include one dominant word (a verb, noun or adjective) followed by a preposition. For example, *stick to, damage to, familiar with* (Ma, 2009). On the other hand, lexical collocations are the ones which combine two words of equal dominance, such as two verbs, two adjectives, among other combinations. This latter will be developed in the investigation as it conveys more meaning and becomes more complex for the subdivisions that they have exposed. As for the limited range that collocations produce, or fixedness, they can be classified as follows:

- **Strong collocations:** Collocations in which words co-occur not by chance, but for close relationship (Lindstromberg, 2010). For example, *hearty laugh, auburn hair, mitigating circumstances* and *inclement weather*.

- **Fixed collocations:** Collocations in which the word partnership is so strong that their bond cannot be undermined (O’Dell; McCarthy, 2005). For example, *to and fro*. Idioms are also considered fixed collocations, and these lexical units will be discussed later.

- **Weak collocations:** Collocations which co-occur more haphazardly than for stringent rule (Lipske, 2006). For example, *hold a meeting, carry out a study, broad shoulders, broad smile, broad accent* and *broad hint*.

Others consider these various degrees of fixedness as fixed, unique or frozen collocations instead of the previous distinction between strong and fixed, as well as free instead of weak collocations (Gramley; Pätzold, 2002).

On the other hand, according to Darwish (2010) collocations can be classified into different patterns according to the grammatical categories they belong to:
• **Adjectival collocations**: Collocations formed by the combination of an adjective and a noun. For example, *bleeding heart, high quality, abject poverty* and *spitting image*.

• **Adverbial collocations**: Collocations which are framed by an adverb and a noun, an adverb and a verb, and an adverb and an adjective. For example, *terribly wrong, hurt badly* and *intensely personal*.

• **Verbal collocations**: Collocations made up of nouns and verbs, or a verb and a phrase. For example, *draw up a contract, standards slipped* and *foam at the mouth*.

• **Genitive collocations**: Collocations consisting of two nouns joined by the preposition *of*. For example, *a pack of dogs, a spate of theft* and *a pride of lions*.

Another pattern is the combination of two nouns without the preposition *of* like *ceasefire agreement* or *village community*.

**Phrasal verbs**

Phrasal verbs are verbs whose monosyllabic verb merges with an adverbial or a prepositional particle in order to give rise to an idiomatic lexical unit. This fuse of words gives form to a new meaning which differs from the one that the verb itself used to have as an individual word (Coelho; Rivers, 2004). The meaning of phrasal verbs can be readily comprehensible from their constituents at times; still, their meaning is habitually abstruse due to both the existence of more than one meaning in one particular phrasal verb, and the collocational status with other words that they naturally possess (Pütz; Niemeier; Dirven, 2001).

This idiomaticity renders phrasal verbs a bane for learners, given that their existence is an inborn feature of English speakers (DeCapua, 2008). This stiff challenge makes students face a semantic gap when dealing with phrasal verbs, especially if it becomes factual that they have an innate penchant for single words, whereas native speakers have it for phrasal verbs as in *confuse* vs. *mix up*. The neat solution for this problem thus far is holistic memorization (Karlsson;
Sinnemäki; Miestamo, 2008). Further, Sujit (2010) considers different types of phrasal verbs which vary in the grammar they bring into play with regard to presence of an object and the position of it within a sentence or phrase:

- **Intransitive phrasal verbs**: They do not have objects because they expand the meaning by themselves. For example, *She tried to get up, but could not.*

- **Transitive phrasal verbs**: They are followed by objects. For example, *I went through the questions and found them easy (questions is the object of the phrasal verb went through)*

- **Separable phrasal verbs**: In these phrasal verbs the verb and its particles can be separated and something else can be added between them. For example, *She left out the third question, or She left the third question out.*

- **Inseparable phrasal verbs**: The verb and its particles cannot be separated. For example, *Tom takes after his father.*

Thus, these categories can blend and result in intransitive inseparable phrasal verbs, or transitive separable, intransitive separable and transitive inseparable. It is noteworthy to remark that some phrasal verbs have three parts, the verb and two particles. In this case the object is placed after the whole combination; for example; *She couldn’t put up with such bad insults being such bad insults* the object (McCarthy; O’Dell, 2008).

**Idioms**

Idioms are word clusters whose powerful combination results in an entirely dissimilar meaning from the one that the individual words convey (Helterbran, 2008). What makes them even more defying is the fact that idioms tend to flout the laws that grammar holds, rendering them all but unfeasible to be translated into other languages. Having a metaphorical essence, idioms may be considered part of informal language as they comprise other lexical items listed as follows:
• **Proverbs:** Concise expressions which convey a general truth and are highly appreciated by people (Mieder, 2008). For example, *the early bird catches the worm*, which adduces to the fact that the more stamina an individual has when dealing with hard toil the more successful he or she will become.

• **Slangs:** Colloquial words which vary in meaning and status. They create a sense of belonging to a specific group as they deploy Standard English either figuratively or narrowly (Coleman, 2012). For example, *dodgy, bloody* and *crack*.

• **Clichés:** Commonplace expressions which feature hackneyed ideas and colorful situations (Kelly, 2005). They characterize for being overused and sometimes worn out (Kaplan, 2009). For example, *an acid* and *a bad hand*.

• **Jargons:** Special vocabulary items intended to make communication more effective among members of a specific group. They are ascribed to particular occupations to exclude non-members by the usage of secret language (Van Herk, 2012). For example, medical or legal jargon.

• **Adages:** Sayings whose import lies in the constant transmission and testing throughout time as they convey wisdom and the speaker’s perception of their reality (Bronner, 2011).

Furthermore, idioms are circumstantial and changeable alike. Although some of them can endure for long, others are fleeting given that they stick to the necessities that society demands in terms of language usage. Therefore, before taking first steps towards idioms it is worth concentrating on the following points developed by O’Dell and McCarthy (2010) who depict the intent and importance of idioms. That is,

• To give emphasis to an unstable idea.
• To show agreement with what a previous speaker stated.
• To remark on what is being discussed either a situation or people.
• To make an anecdote more lively.
• To prove membership of a specific group.
• To draw the reader’s attention in advertisement, headlines or any other situation when business is involved.

Likewise, idioms take different forms as they bear obscurity in their meaning. Lim Tan (2009) deems the following types of idioms as the foremost to accurate and forceful use:

• Phrasal verbs, such as do away with or put off.
• Prepositional phrases, such as in a nutshell or from time to time.
• Idioms with verbs as key words, such as leave much to be desired or come in handy.
• Idioms with nouns as key words, such as food for thought or child’s play.
• Idioms with adjectives as key words, such as plain sailing or cold comfort.
• Idiomatic pairs, such as safe and sound or sink and swim.

However, McCarthy and O’Dell (2010) sharply distinguish other types of idioms:

• **Similes:** Idioms which use like or as to compare disparate elements (Justice, 2009). For example, as thin as a fiddle or like a maniac.

• **Binomials:** Idioms in which two words are joined by a preposition, generally by and. In addition, both words belong to the same part of speech and their combination is fixed (Boers; Lindstromberg, 2008). For example, still and all or far and wide.

• **Trinomials:** Idioms whose form consists of three words jointed by a comma and a preposition. Like binomials, the words involved belong to the same class (Granger; Meunier, 2008). For example match, lock and stock or cool, calm and collected.

• **Euphemisms:** Idioms used instead of disagreeable words in order to spare offence. For example, adult films instead of pornographic movies (Coopman; Lull, 2012).
• **Fixed statements**: Idioms which include clichés and common phrases intended to describe generalizations. For example, *look on the bright side* or *ignorance is bliss* (McCarhty; O’Dell, 2010).

**Fixed phrases**

Even if a second learner recognizes a myriad of words, phrasal verbs, and polywords among others there is still another characteristic of the language highlighted by the Lexical Approach they need to be aware of. In spoken and written English and in probably many other languages too, there are some structures having a high rate of daily usage commonly referred to as institutionalized utterances (Richards; Schmidt, 2002). These fixed phrases, also known as lexical phrases (Richards; Schmidt, 2002) or institutionalized phrases (Lewis, 2005), play a significant role in the process of learning a second language. In fact, a wide repertoire of these phrases highly contributes to the learner’s fluency (Lewis, 2005).

Michael Lewis (2008) subdivides fixed phrases into two categories and provides some useful examples to facilitate their comprehension:

- **Fully fixed phrases** may be defined as the set of words which allow no variations. This means that a phrase such as *I’ll get it* (Moudraia, 2001) will remain the answer for a variety of questions. Also, the question *how long will it take?* (Lewis, 2008) may be asked in different contexts in order to get replies containing minutes, hours, days, months, years, and so on.

- **Semi-fixed phrases** on the contrary may leave a) some blank spaces which should be properly filled by the speaker according to their needs or b) a choice between two options. For these two variations of semi-fixed expressions, Lewis (2008) exemplifies the former with utterances like *Could you pass … please?* and *I haven’t seen you + time expression with for or since*, and the latter with *It’s / That’s not my fault* ⁵⁷.

Michael Lewis (2008) ends up pointing out that phrases like these have to be treated differently from other possible sentences by the teacher. This means that at the moment of teaching, utterances with high frequency have to be taken as examples. Even if the phrase *I’m going to buy the blue one even if it is a bit more expensive* is a correct sentence likely to occur every now and then; its low frequency makes it turn into a sentence that an instructor applying the Lexical Approach should leave aside. Thus, indubitably learning a great deal of fixed expressions will make the learner sound more natural and native-like, helping avoid misunderstanding between communicators.

Nonetheless, there are other lexical items with which learners have to pay rapt attention to:

**Cognates**

Cognates are lexical elements which are identical or similar in either meaning or spelling in two different languages. The benefits from recognizing cognates are that once they are identified reading occurs more efficiently (Hershberger; Navey-Davis; Borrás, 2011), as well as words prediction is facilitated to the extent that it becomes uncalled-for to refer to the dictionary. In fact, as soon as EFL learners are acquainted with words formation they will readily notice the presence of cognates (Spinelli; Torres; Galvin, 2008)

In order to identify cognates learners have to bear in mind the following aspects:

- **Suffixes**: A syllable or array of letters placed at the end of words to alter their meanings (Aronoff; Fudeman, 2011). For example, in German the suffix *-sch* equals to *–ic* in English, as in *alphabetisch* vs. *alphabetic*.

- **Prefixes**: Combination of letters which are attached to the beginning of words to modify their meanings (Kame’enui; Baumann, 2012). For example, in Spanish the prefix *–esp* equals to *–sp* in English, as in *espléndido* vs. *splendid*. 
• **Punctuation marks:** Sometimes the only critical element which makes the difference between two words is punctuation as it varies among languages (Nord, 2005). Examples of this kind in Spanish cognates in English are *región* vs. *region*; French cognates in English *téléphone* vs. *telephone*; or German cognates in English *affäre* vs. *affair*.

However, there are words which seem to be cognates but this similarity is fake as they are *false cognates* (Iguina; Dozier, 2008), meaning that they have close points of comparison yet they signify differently. Some French false cognates in English are *réclamer* vs. *reclaim, hasard* vs. *hazard* and *apologie* vs. *apology* (Darwish, 2010).

**False friends**

Teachers should let their learners know about being chary of the risks involved in translating lexical items into their own languages, as they may encounter new ones which are akin to their mother tongue. Assuming they are facing cognates, students become unsuccessful in their attempts to manage the second language efficiently. In order to mitigate this problem, students have to be notified with these special words, being false friends one of these lexical items.

False friends are words which are graphically or phonetically equivalent to two or more languages, yet they bear different meanings. It is worth remarking that both false cognates and false friends are different concepts because the former forms part of the group of false friends but this latter does not belong to the set of false cognates. For instance, the Italian word *burro* meaning *butter* in English is *donkey* in Spanish, being both false friends and false cognates. Conversely, the French word *personne* meaning *nobody*, and English word *person* are false friends on the grounds that their relation is etymological, but they are not false cognates (Chamizo-Domínguez, 2006).

**Synonyms**

In the questions *what was his answer?* and *what was his reply?* the final words are seen as similar in meaning. Both questions stand for the same and are likely to obtain equivalent
responses. As in the comparison just exposed above, when two or more words are akin to each other in meaning they are called synonyms (Richards; Schmidt, 2002).

Despite that some words may be equivalent in meaning, they will not always be interchangeable. Context plays a fundamental role to decide which word is suitable for every occasion (Yule, 2010). For instance, “whereas the word answer fits in the sentence Sandy had only one answer correct on the test, the word reply would sound odd”58 (Yule, 2010, p. 117). Furthermore, the choice of the words may influence on the formality of the utterances (Richards; Schmidt, 2002). Yule (2010) exemplifies formality through the sentences my father purchased a large automobile and my dad bought a big car, where the latter example is clearly more casual or informal than the former.

**Metaphors**

In everyday speech people use a myriad of words to express diverse ideas. In most contexts, the lexical items or phrases conveyed carry literal meaning, but in other situations these same words may denote a different signification (Merrian-Webster.com, 2012). The phrase “Her words stabbed at his heart”59 (Richards; Schmidt, 2002, p. 201) depicts a perfect example of a metaphor. It is obvious that words cannot stab someone, but in some cases they may hurt people as much as a knife. Therefore, second or foreign language learners should beware of the metaphors that a language has amassed over time in order to facilitate the comprehension of certain phrases found in the target language and commonly expressed by native speakers (Richards; Schmidt, 2002).

**Neologisms**

Neologisms are new words which are incorporated in a given language out of the contribution to new communication systems, like technology or the Internet. Some neologisms are not neologisms per se, but rather new uses of old or archaic words. A cogent example is the

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word *gay* which today conveys a different meaning than hundred years ago. Other neologisms occur when a combination of existing words takes place; for instance, the word *wannabe*. Lastly other neologisms originate when teenagers coin new terms like the word *phat* which is likely to be misunderstood by older adults (Paxson, 2004). Similarly, children create new words on account of their active imagination like *paintlipster* meaning *lipstick* (Bogdashina, 2005). Doubtlessly, Internet has become the most fertile source of neologisms as both children and teenagers have emerged in its networks, giving rise to words like *blog, netizen, mashup, tweet* or *wiki*.

**15. THE LEXICAL APPROACH**

The Lexical Approach (LA) has bridged the gulf between methodology and the teaching of vocabulary, proposing that words are the perennial source for learning success (López-Mezquita, 2007). Michael Lewis initiated this movement in 1993 supported by the basis of the Communicative Approach with the dual purpose of never neglecting vocabulary and minimizing the importance of grammar when the learning process unfolds. As a matter of fact, Lewis’s novel ideas were inspired by earlier studies conducted by Willins in 1990, Nattinger and DeCarrico in 1992, indicating that learning stunts when grammar serves as a central focus; but still and all, grammar is not overlooked in this approach but lexicalized (Lewis, 2000). This complex notion implies that grammar incorporates lexical meaning in their patterns by assembling grammatical words, or chunks in collocational patterning which are interrelated (Sinclair; Jones; Daley, 2005). When these ready-made patterns are stored or retrieved, they occur as an outward regular flow of ideas (Ma, 2009). This chunking process carries profound implications in students’ success since they increase the possibilities to produce natural discourse which will be noticed by experts or native speakers (Boers; Lindstromberg, 2009).

However, it is not all about incorporating massive amounts of words to an individual’s vocabulary range; on the contrary, there is a particular size which determines recommended limits as to integration of chunks. Lewis (2005) defines vocabulary size as the lexical repertoire speakers have, he states that native speakers have an enormous range in comparison to those who are learning a new language. Likewise, he makes a distinction between active and passive
vocabulary and declares that native speakers are capable of recognizing a vast number of items which are not part of their daily speech. On the other hand, Carter (2012) believes that “second-language learners need to increase their vocabulary size by about 1,000 words a year, in addition to making up a 2-3,000 word shortfall, in order to match the growth of native speaker’s vocabulary.” (Carter, 2012, p. 236). As the Lexical Approach focuses on lexis rather than grammar, Lewis posits that sometimes the amount of words known by a speaker is not as important as knowing what kind of words they are; some words have high information content while others have a lower content. Lewis’ investigations have yielded that the majority of words in English language are nouns and that though many intermediate learners possess a vast repertoire, they find themselves unable to use the items properly as they do not know the words that co-occur with nouns. It is because of this that teachers should be encouraged to include collocations, fixed phrases and other lexical items mentioned before in this chapter so as to help students increase their repertoire, not with words in isolation but full meaningful chunks.

Moreover, learning is non-linear for the Lexical Approach, meaning that it is constructed by an assortment of direct experiences. These experiences are marshaled after inner conflicts which lead to making connections with the exposure and its subsequent discoveries (Carroll, 2007). At emphasizing both exposure and input, the Lexical Approach simply describes learning as follows:

- **Conscious and unconscious**: Students learn from their own hypothesis about language patterns by making conscious and unconscious generalizations (Lewis, 2008).

- **Reflective**: Students learn from inner struggles to comprehend how language patterns function.

- **Experimental**: Students learn from experience and continuous exposure.

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• **Cyclical:** Students’ leaning obeys to an unbroken sequence in which they observe, then formulate hypotheses about their observations and finally experiment their learning (Lewis, 2003).

• **Involving:** Students learn by drawing sharp contrasts between former experience and what has been witnessed. This process entails new knowledge perceptions and adaptations (Lewis, 2003).

• **Holistic:** Students ingrain features of learning as a totality.

When it comes to other aspects of language, like pronunciation, the Lexical Approach does not sidestep to further its concrete proposals. Production of spoken language obviously requires accurate pronunciation so as to interact with others in a variety of communicational situations. As well as in the teaching of lexical items, the Lexical Approach focuses pronunciation on chunks rather than in single units (Lewis, 2008). When learning the correct pronunciation of phrases, students are able to deduce the enunciation of the single words that compose the sentence. At the same time, this process enhances students’ confidence, improving not only their fluency, but the capacity to pause in suitable places as well (Lewis, 2008).

Under this compromising situation, the Lexical Approach holds forthright views as to the influence of L1 in SLA as well. It states that the learner should not waive the right to translate words into their mother tongue but the contrary, using translation as a mental approach to L2 can be a necessary prelude to overall SLA learning process. This condition resides in the fact that learners do retain information through translation, which turns out to be inevitable as students not only interact in the classroom, yet in their external world which intrinsically demands approximate equivalents in L1. All the same, in order to blunt the crippling effects on L2, the Lexical Approach submits that chunk translation can become the bulwark against the disadvantages of rendering (Lewis, 2008). In this way through the use of L1 as a resource of conscious raising, learners become acquainted with the ability of processing chunks whose meaning will be conveyed despite grammar encumbers with limitations.
This previous technique constitutes one out of a great deal of strategies that the Lexical Approach embraces. These techniques are sustained by the idea that wisely chosen, high frequency chunks rather than isolated words lead to effective SLA (Mader; Köper, 2012), along with the principles that this burgeoning movement posits. The following tenets are summarized as they have noted major distinctions in contrast to other approaches, gaining upsurge of interest recently.

15.1 Language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar

As seen in the previous chapters, some approaches and methods are mainly focused on, for instance, mastering the grammar of the target language, reaching high standards of fluency, giving priority to one or two skills over the others, and so on. At the same time, there has always been a tendency of dividing grammar and vocabulary into two large areas which the learner has to be aware of and learn in order to handle a language. As Michael Lewis (2008) states in his book Implementing the Lexical Approach, these approaches of teaching a second language are devoted to providing lists of words to name objects (mostly nouns) and grammar as a way to put these lexical items together and talk about them.

In simple words, this principle states that in order to learn a language, the attention has to be drawn on lexis rather than grammar. This is because the combination of words carries meaning and consequently grammatical structures which are inherent to a set of prefabricated language. Grammar is thus used only to convey those phrases that are not previously stored in the brain, constructing language through new sentences that require grammatical accuracy (Lewis, 2000).

No matter the level of the students, the exploration and acquisition of a new language will be easier if a starting point as concrete as lexis rather than the abstract teaching of grammatical structures is prioritized (Lee, 2004). This does not mean that grammar should be excluded by the teacher, but words, polywords, collocations, fixed phrases, and the like, should be emphasized because they contain grammatically accurate frames which are worth storing in the brain.
Since grammar and words depend on each other, their dichotomy is completely invalid (Lewis, 2000). They are both part of the nature of language and inseparable (Lee, 2004). As stated previously in this chapter “grammar would not exist without words” (See Words), meaning that language consists of grammaticalized lexis instead of lexicalized grammar.

15.2 Chunking as a successful language process

If real and effective communication is prioritized over other aspects in the process of acquiring a second language, it turns out obvious to include whole phrases instead of single words when teaching (Lee, 2004). Lee (2004) establishes two convincing explanations for choosing these whole structures, improving thus the learner’s abilities on the target language.

- **Lexical phrases are what constitute language**: one of the reasons why a native speaker is fluent is because they convey institutionalized sentences instead of constructing their own. Whether they are fully or semi-fixed utterances, native speakers are believed to store at least hundreds of thousands of these prefabricated units.

- **Phrases are useful to learners**: If learners identify and internalize combination of words, they are likely to foster their fluency and grammatical accuracy in speech and writing; while words may have different meaning depending on the situation these set phrases are used in predictable social contexts, increasing the chances of memorization. Since most of the lexical phrases can be taken as examples of grammatical accuracy, it can also help learners understand certain structures of the language inductively.

The term chunk was coined by Nattinger (Lewis, 2005) as a way to explain the storage of language beyond individual words. All these formulaic items called *chunks* reduce the struggle to process and convey language more naturally, avoiding the recreation of phrases from the outset (Lewis, 2005). Thus, one of the central activities when teaching is to encourage the identification of chunks when expressing ideas and facing daily communicative scenarios. This process will promote the mental creation of a vast range of word sets which can be accessed when necessary.
15.3 The primacy of speech over writing is recognized

The whole linguistic process a child goes through in their first years of life, from the moment it utters a single sound to the day he or she is capable of conveying words and phrases, reflects an accurate analogy of this principle. While written discourse is instructed years after the first sentences are expressed, the ability to generate speech is inherent in children and acquired naturally, demonstrating thus the value of speech over writing.

Pullum and Huddleston (2002) demonstrate that grammar can have two approaches, prescriptive and descriptive. While the former states the correct manner in which people should write and speak, the latter shows the way people actually use language either spoken or written. While prescriptive grammar users have to follow strict rules that a dictionary establishes, the rest of the people are just guided by their instinct, supported by the experience that language has provided them with.

In order to master proficient writing skills, students need to have a suitable management of the oral language so as to start developing an accurate use of grammar (Pullum; Huddleston, 2002). Notwithstanding, writing does not mean transcribing oral production into words, some modifications are necessary to improve the quality of a written paper. Jamieson (2010) makes a clarification that assists in improving learners’ expertise when writing:

- **Formal grammar**: It is intended to avoiding casual words or phrases, and follows a strict and correct use of language to convey ideas clearly through words.

- **Informal grammar**: It tends to incorporate familiar feature of spoken English such as colloquial terms, contractions, and abbreviations.

The existence of informal grammar does not mean that it is incorrect (Jamieson, 2010), but formal grammar has to be used in written documents such as papers, thesis, researches, and so on in order to demonstrate seriousness and accuracy. The quality of the writing intended to be
developed here is out of the concerns of the Lexical Approach whose main aim is to attain real communication through spoken English, clarifying again the supremacy of speech over writing.

15.4 Errors as part of the learning process

The way errors and their corrections are treated has always been a sensitive subject for teachers. Some instructors believe that errors should be corrected as soon as students commit them; others, however, hold that overlooking the minor ones and highlighting only the crass mistakes carve out a pathway which contributes to the learning process. The ideal scenario would be a balanced one between the two situations just exposed. Teachers should not be rough when correcting students’ mistakes because it may trigger frustrations in future interventions. At the same time, they cannot let mistake pass because they would be harming the students learning process as the language being produced would not be accurate and would affect future situations. “Error has a central and valuable role to play; somehow teachers, and in their turn students, must see it in this positive light.”61 (Lewis, 2005, p. 165).

The avoidance of errors is clearly a counter-productive aspect to the learning process. Students feel inane every time they make language mistakes so they opt to remain silent and evade an awkward situation. Giving increased emphasis on accuracy helps neither the teacher nor the students. For example, if a person says: “I don’t must to work tomorrow, it is Sunday” she/he is not producing a correct sentence for it has a mistake but the overall idea can be clearly understood. This statement does not indicate that the person does not know English at all; on the contrary, it shows a certain level of mastery of the language as she or he has been able to communicate what was thought. Lewis (2005) cites Wilkins on this topic:

“There make mistakes. But if they make mistakes by manipulating language to achieve the meanings they want to achieve teachers should learn to recognize this as a sign of useful creativity and ingenuity.”62 (p. 172).

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Lastly, students are not the only ones to be blamed for making mistakes; the fault should be with the teachers. The Observe-Hypothesize-Experiment paradigm assumes that once the students have learned and retained the language they would be able to produce it accurately in free situations as well, but does not bear in mind the possibility of a poor presentation of the items to be treated by the teacher, or the ineffective practice drills carried out by both teacher and students. Overall “many grammar mistakes are caused by vocabulary deficiency, and particularly by lack of collocational power”63 (Lewis, 2005, p.167), trying to correct each one of them would be both time-wasting and time-consuming.

15.5 Receptive skills over productive skills

One of the key aspects of this approach is that it focuses mainly on lexis and not grammar; as a consequence students are expected to increase their linguistic competence through different learning channels. Input is fundamental when incorporating lexical elements to the own linguistic repertoire and a common way to acquire these elements is through listening and reading.

The two above mentioned skills are receptive ones while speaking and writing are described as productive skills. For a long time the first two were called passive skills because they were not considered to be as important as the second two, which were called active skills. As time passed and language teaching evolved the new methods and approaches started to give more emphasis to passive skills because they are the source of the contextualized input required by learners. It is a common belief among teachers that students understand more than what they are actually capable of producing,

“students cannot create the language they are learning without first receiving input from the teacher, peers, television, etc. At each level of proficiency, students who are literate in the language they are learning are able to better comprehend what they hear and read. They are

then able to express themselves with more accuracy through speaking and writing” (Winne; Alexander, 2006, p. 579).

Students believe that they understand more than what they can produce and a common assumption is that their receptive skills are higher than their productive ones, but when it comes to facing an academic scenario this supposition changes. Students think they can perform well enough in normal conversation, but have a hard time during lectures; they believe that their receptive skills are not up to the new challenges they are to face with.

Finally, when it comes to the evaluation process carried out by teachers the most common tendency is to evaluate productive skills over the receptive ones. This can create frustration among students as they see that their receptive skills have not been given the same emphasis and therefore, they begin to deteriorate with time as there is a lack of motivation to improve them.

15.6 Grammar is a receptive skill

So far it has been said that lexis is the main aspect in which this approach is based and that grammar plays a secondary role. Traditionally, grammar is seen as a means to reach a final objective, a product. Teachers set up their evaluations according to what their students are capable of producing, so emphasis is placed on productive skills. The Lexical Approach stresses the importance of receptive skills and the way in which grammar is addressed is also from a receptive point of view.

As it was mentioned in previous chapters, the grammatical composition of a language is not learned, but acquired as a subconscious learning process. Therefore, considering what has just been said plus the idea that receptive skills are accentuated in this approach Lewis (2005) claims that,

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“‘Awareness rising’ is a term which has recently acquired currency in language teaching terminology. The unifying feature behind all these commentators is the assertion that it is the students’ ability to observe accurately, and perceive similarity and difference within target language data which is most likely to aid the acquisition of the grammatical system. Within this theoretical framework, grammar as a receptive skill has an important role to play.”\(^{65}\) (p. 334).

The previous idea can be summarized as the fact that language should be firstly observed before producing it.

From an instructional standpoint, teachers should understand that grammar practice must aim to the development of awareness and understanding instead of a more productive one. This would change the way they have approached language teaching and evaluation through their professional careers. The activities they are used to evaluate such as gap-filling or sentence transformations would switch to ones with a more holistic background such as:

- Recognizing
- Comparing
- Checking activities which seek to develop students’ critical thinking

16. APPLICATION OF THE LEXICAL APPROACH

16.1 Learning strategies

So far it has been said that this approach focuses on the lexical components of language and that analytical learning processes are preferred to productive ones. This system exposes students to a lot of input as a way to acquire lexis from contextualized situations. When the students begin building their lexical repertoire the items are known in different degrees. Some of the items are fully available for producing speech (oral or written), some others are understood in

context but not completely incorporated to the student’s range, and others are known but not truly understood so that cannot be used properly.

The teachers’ main concern has to be on how to address these issues and the amount of time they will provide in class to improve the students’ deficiencies. It is obvious that the focus on class will be to help students expand their lexical collection through listening and reading activities where the main goal is to try to guess the meaning of the different items in context. At the same time teachers need to make sure that the specific patterns used to communicate later are recognized and acquired.

Teachers have to make students comfortable with their language performance and motivate them when they might feel discouraged. This can be accomplished by:

- Letting students know that not understanding everything from a listening or a reading means they have failed; sometimes it is better to understand just a part of what is being communicated than not understanding anything at all.
- Helping students realize that mistakes and confusion are just part of the learning process and that those errors show partial instead of full failure to understand what was trying to be exposed.
- Pointing out that grammar mistakes are made due to the lack of vocabulary and a way to avoid this is to increase the students’ lexical range; this works better than grammar practice alone.
- Encouraging students to learn whole expressions which enclose useful words than just learning the words in isolation, which can be much harder.

16.2 In the classroom

In order to implement the Lexical Approach in the classroom, learners have to be cognizant of how to arrange vocabulary in chunks. Most of the techniques propose that lexis has to be organized in the following categories (Lewis, 2008):
• Topics
• Situations
• Collocations
• Notions
• Person
• Grammar

Further, features which distinguish the presence of the Lexical Approach in the classroom are characterized as follows (Grace, 2006):

• Exercises aiming at raising awareness based on extensive and intensive listening and reading which are authentic in the target language.
• Exercises in which students contrast chunks with their first language, not word by word translation but for obtaining chunk meanings.
• Contextualizing language and paying increased attention to differences in vocabulary which bears similarities, such as vie, grapple, struggle and combat.
• Frequent repetition and recycled vocabulary from oral audio or written texts.
• Holding a lexical notebook which records vocabulary in form of mindmaps, graphic organizers, infographics and other visual formats.

Ultimately, some exercises which enhance the awareness of chunking are listed below (Lewis, 2008):

• Matching
• Completing
• Sequencing
• Categorizing
• Deleting
16.3 In the syllabus

For the Lexical Approach’s theory to be put into practice, teachers should follow a syllabus which guides the contents. Because lexis is seen as the core of language, none of the kinds of syllabuses named in Chapter 3 could be implemented to the LA. Thus, the Lexical Syllabus appears to organize English courses from the most crucial, useful and high-frequency lexical items in the language, sequenced by an amount of lexical items that level each unit. (Richards; Schmidt, 2002). Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that 70% of English texts are mostly composed by an amount of 700 words; namely, a good start could cover these 700 words along with their corresponding patterns and uses. After learners successfully pass the first level, they would be able to move on to other new 700 words for example.

Indubitably, technology is a good friend that contributes to simplifying everybody’s lives. The Lexical Approach is not the exception to the rule and thanks to the invention of corpuses, teachers can use this digital tool to plan their lessons. A corpus is clearly defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002) as:

“a collection of naturally occurring samples of language which have been collected and collated for easy access by researchers and materials developers who want to know how words and other linguistic items are actually used. A corpus may vary from a few sentences to a set of written texts or recordings. In language analysis corpuses usually consist of a relatively large, planned collection of texts or parts of texts, stored and accessed by computer. A corpus is designed to represent different types of language use, e.g. casual conversation, business letters, ESP texts.”66

(p. 126)

Moudraia (2001) explains that different corpuses such as the Cambridge International Corpus, British National Corpus, and the COBUILD Band of English Corpus examine patterns of written and spoken language aimed to reach an effectual description of English with the purpose of being the basis of a lexical syllabus.

16.4 The Lexical Approach in the Chilean syllabus

16.4.1 5th and 6th grades book analyses

There are strong similarities between English 5 & 6 concerning design and the fashion in which contents and activities are presented. It can be observed an extensity of 8 units throughout both books, dealing with simple contexts mostly connected to the students’ real life such as In the classroom, At school, In the family in the 5th grade textbook and Family and I and My friends and I in the 6th grade course book. This content-based approach supplies the students with meaningful context so as to present contents through environments they are familiarized with and sequence the level of English which increases as the units go by.

Both books introduce the units through comic strips where students figure out the topic that will be covered in the following pages. The main characters acting out the stories remain the same during the two years that the students use these course books. The two of them also take in a mixture of several approaches and methods already explained in past chapters. The Direct Method is probably one of the most observed in the books because the presentation of vocabulary and/or lexical items involves the association with some pictures. Despite the fact that no translation into Spanish can be found, the Grammar-translation Method is also present throughout the books. The presentation of grammar structures is developed through green boxes called “how to...” where students usually get familiarized with ways to ask about a specific topic and the accurate manner to answer these questions. One box in the 6th grade course book, page 37, explains students how to compare people. The first example, Pablo is more hard-working than Pedro is followed by the rule: more + long adjective + than, while the second exemplification, Antonio is older than me, teaches that with short adjectives -er + than is added after the word. This explicit fashion to introduce the correct use of English grammar is perfectly observable all along both books, except for some remarkable exceptions. Since the LA prioritizes high-frequency words and phrases, some of these “how to...” boxes also teach some useful institutionalized utterances that learners are likely to use in their own reality such as what does she do? and what do you look like? Finally, the Project-based approach also takes part of these
course books. Activities like making a calendar with birthdays appear in order to give children autonomy in their learning process.

Certainly, the Lexical Approach is devoted to providing plenty of input through the presentation of words within a context. Despite that all the units contain listening activities as well as diverse types of texts, they falter in being authentic material from which students may obtain useful structures. Sometimes the activities only consist of isolated words or collocations accompanied by a picture in order to associate the new lexical items with the meaning, although in a few occasions certain emphasis to antonyms is given. Most of the time, the recordings listened to by the learners lack context and are just presented in order to be repeated. An example taken from the 6th grade textbook (page 42) demonstrates that collocations related to hobbies such as play volleyball, make jewelry, do skateboarding, and practice karate among others, are only heard and repeated. Instead, the 5th grade course book includes basic but useful collocations that students might unconsciously incorporate by frequent usage. Take out your book and be quiet seem to be handy classroom phrases that are likely to be used by many English teachers every day. Some compound nouns like white board, computer room and teacher’s room also provide students with simple combination of words embedded in their daily educational lives. There are also some recordings such as dialogs, interviews, radio programs, and so on which present words and structures in context, even though, little attention is paid to lexical units since the activities are concerned with completing charts, discriminating between true or false sentences, and circling or underlining what has been listened to by the students instead of making students become aware of useful structures.

As seen previously, some of the methods focus on producing an accurate pronunciation permitting no errors while the Lexical Approach sees them as part of the process of learning. Because English includes some different sounds from Spanish, along with the activities concerning presentation of the words by repetition, there are also sections in which some of the words previously learned are brought together in order to highlight the specific pronunciation all they have in common. An example provided by English 6 lists words like she, short, and shy with the purpose of reinforcing the correct pronunciation of the initial consonants. Although the Lexical Approach pays special attention to communication and consequently pronunciation, it is
reinforced through meaningful interaction rather than through repetition drills. Thus, the books lack activities to enhance communicative competence; they only provide pair work activities where the oral practice encompasses simple ask-and-answer structures.

In order to check whether students understood the contents viewed, activities like fill-in-the-blanks, circling the correct answers, underling vocabulary or unscrambling sentences are included at the end of each unit. All these exercises are clearly dedicated to reaching grammatical accuracy rather than noticing diverse lexical items that the Lexical Approach highlights. Lastly, the self-check section demands learners to specify what they can and cannot do with the English language, for example *I can describe people.*

The syllabi designed by the Ministry of Education for 5th and 6th grade show a strong disagreement with the course books. Despite that the contents treated are similar, they are distributed differently. While both course books present eight units, both syllabuses are divided into four sections; however, it does not interfere with the main aim of the syllabi which deals with outlining the competences that the students should handle at the end of each term. These competences cover listening, reading, writing and speaking goals which fit in with most of the activities found in the books. Concerning receptive skills, students are required to identify explicit information, high-frequency words and recognize words accompanied by images. All these tasks seem to be extremely demanding according to the activities both course books offer to the students. Regarding productive skills, students are aimed to be familiarized with simple structures like greeting, giving instructions, thanking, apologizing, and asking for permission, among others. In this case, contents are treated as institutionalized utterances rather than grammatical structures, a positive fact that strongly agrees with the classroom language students should handle in order to promote peer-interaction and teacher-student communication in the target language.

16.4.2 7th and 8th grades book analyses

The books provided by the ministry of education for 7th and 8th grade have a very similar design in terms of how the units are distributed (four units per book; each unit is then subdivided
into two parts), components of each unit (activities and resources) and topics related to the students’ country, Chile.

The main objective in each unit is to introduce the grammar aspect of the unit implicitly first and then gray boxes, where the rules are explained. In most cases students have to complete the information in each of these boxes as if they were fill-in-the-gap activities to demonstrate understanding of the topic. During the revision of the books the research team noticed that the way in which tenses were taught was not coherent, for example in the book used in 7th grade the first unit dealt with the present continuous tense while then introduced the past simple in the second unit. The book then lacks continuity in this aspect as it goes back and forth and may confuse the students instead of facilitating the job of understanding.

While the Lexical Approach seeks to encourage receptive skills these books are far from following that principle. Listening activities aim to hear for specific information and do not seek to expand the students’ lexical repertoire by introducing new items. Reading activities are more used and as the books have been specially designed for the Chilean Ministry of Education some of the readings are related to the country, its traditions and places. For example, on page fourteen of the 8th grade book, there is a reading that focuses on the many churches that can be found in Chiloé, which is considered to be authentic material. Speaking activities designed for peer interaction are reduced to a minimum, students either ask a classmate for information to complete a table or practice a short dialog. Finally, the writing skill is developed using fill-in-the-gap activities so it is assumed that more complex activities, such as writing short paragraphs, are introduced by the teacher as something extra to the book work.

It was also noticed that translation is used to help students understand better. For example, in page forty of the 8th grade book there are two boxes, one contains lexical items such as at least, get rid of, spend while a second box has their translation into Spanish; por lo menos, librarse de, pasar tiempo. This clearly proves that the method employed, at least in that particular case, is the Grammar-Translation method, which is counterproductive in today’s teaching world.
An aspect that is worth highlighting is the use of a chart called Pictionary. Each chart presents some of the items which will be used in the unit. Some of these charts introduce some compound words such as computer game, week plan, left-handed, on your left, olive crown, roller coaster but not in context. On the other hand, the items are presented with pictures to create a mental association. It could be said that the method behind these charts is the Direct Method as it employs pictures to help students understand the meaning of the new items being presented without using the native language.

Finally, thinking of the programs and books provided by the Ministry of Education it is worth dedicating some time to compare both features. For example, the listening activities try to make students identify specific vocabulary or phrases, comprehend the central idea of the heard text and establish relations between the recordings and the topics of the unit. After analyzing both, the programs and books, they were found to be coherent with each other. Regarding reading comprehension there is also coherence between the programs and the books. Written texts include more complex vocabulary and structures as the units go by. Visual aids are less common but the use of comic strips is still present in every unit. When it comes to oral production some differences can be seen between the programs and the books. The complexity is supposed to increase as there should be more interaction between peers but the truth is that throughout the book the exchanges between the participants are always the same. Something which is in fact coherent is that the interactions become more difficult as the communicative functions increase their complexity as well. Lastly, based on what the program says the aim of the written production section is to make students write ever more intricate short texts and include more words every time. This is not coherent with the activities which can be found in the book as most of them are just completing exercises which only require students to write a couple of words in isolation.

16.4.3 Secondary level

The textbooks that the Ministry of Education deploys in Chilean secondary levels are called Teens Club, Looking Ahead, English for Success and Global English for each respective grade from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> level of high school in the present year 2012. These materials bear
similarities in the layout, characterizing for having academic-focused and outcome-based structures. They are largely concerned with a holistic learning process which is not only tacitly addressed within particular situations expected to be solved, but also truly progressive in its attempt to gauge students’ understanding by the reflection on their skill development and performance rate. This stepwise learning is emphasized by different sections which intend to shed light on possible misunderstanding like exceptions in vocabulary usage, distinctions between registers and writing tips, added to games, teasers and challenges aiming at reinforcing what every unit sets out to develop.

Nevertheless, grammar constitutes a challenge. Even though it is mostly covered through authentic readings there are still language sections which vary in the extent to which grammar is explicitly taught. For example, the textbook of 2nd level of high school gives prominence to the functions of grammar structures, whereas in 1st level of high school grammar is exposed with pedagogical orientation. It is worth pointing out that grammar is not given immense importance, since exercises are limited and vocabulary alongside task development come under careful scrutiny.

As for the skill treatment, there is an evident predilection for productive skills, being writing the foremost. On the whole, writing is developed through project-based learning in which students are expected to write out reports, essays, formal letters or emails, among others for real contexts in every final section. Similarly speaking is honed in every introduction by brief sets of discussion, role-plays and free activities creation. This development intends to wrest the topics out of the textbook so as to be discussed in the current students’ reality. On the other hand, reading is trained by scanning and skimming, showing certain rejection towards both extensive and intensive reading. Finally, listening is broadened by sharpening comprehension and subsequent analysis of not extensive audios which attempt to polish vocabulary and sound discrimination. The activities are consistent, coherent, and concentrated to measure comprehension, following up with reflection activities.

Yet, these textbooks have tenuous connection with the Lexical Approach with regard to vocabulary development. Even if there is a certain exposure to diverse lexical items like
synonyms, cognates and informal words, there is a narrow focus on collocations, fixed phrases, polywords, idioms and chunks overall. As a matter of fact, not all the units deal with these groups of words as it does with vocabulary in general. Some proverbs, idioms, phrasal verbs, compounds and polywords are present in every unit, more indirectly than directly. Even so, there are some boxes and bubbles which provide students with counsels as to the approach of vocabulary, stating that collocations are important. Collocations mostly appear on reading sections and dialogs, although there are some units which include games with these lexical elements. Most frequent collocational patterns detected are the distinction between the verbs *do* and *make*.

**CONCLUSION**

In sum, there is still a self-evident shortage of material to support the grounds for chunking as students may falter in making jejune generalizations of lexis. Then, the onus is on the teachers to foreground the notion of chunking from the outset by raising consciousness as to word grouping as major means of meaning conveyance, rather than grammatical structures. This idea is transcendental to turn chunking skills to good account. However, the orthodox idea which holds that notions like tense, agreement and number lead to the thorough comprehension of the target language is still pervasive in teacher’s motifs, encouraging students to bear the brunt of EFL; or rather, vapid repetitions and insipid grammar exercises.

The odds are that Chilean learners of English run into severe difficulty as the Ministry of Education has not proposed studying collocations in excruciating detail. As evidenced above, grammar continues to be a paragon of excellence in SLA. This deep-rooted impression predominates in textbooks and general syllabi, making students not only become dispirited, but also recalcitrant to have English lessons since this reality squashes the interest for leaning a second language by all odds.
III. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are in essence enquirers. As a matter of fact, in their first steps infants attempt to discover the world through senses. Touch, sight, smell and taste provide the child with reliable information as to how the world is made up and the brewing limitations they have to face as their undeveloped nature impends. This central component is intrinsic to people who in their venture into the intricacy of life make their most to increase their breadth and depth of knowledge. This gradual process unfolds when a thoughtful reflection leads to question what besieges or ails the human being. To confirm the questions posed individuals embark themselves on a systematical procedure which portrays how people react to feasible breakthroughs or failures. This vetting process is what is known as research.

Research is the gathering of information to make a sound decision in view of a specific problem which comes between determined subjects. The advantages of a meticulous investigation are listed below:

- Decision-making
- Consultive
- Conclusive
- Team-boosting
- Adaptive

The following chapter will delve into the essentials behind the research conducted on the subject already described, setting forth convoluted aspects pertaining to this broad concept. Likewise, it will establish correlations between the type of research selected and the subjects who were submitted to comprehensive examination. Lastly, as veracity constitutes the part and parcel
of any thorough investigation, the potential constraints will be addressed so as to suggest viable alternatives to enhance the work carried out.

17. EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH

When conducting a research on any specific topic the first principal aspect to consider is how the research will be approached, either in a qualitative or quantitative perspective. Each of these options has their strengths and limitations and clearly one will suit the researcher better than the other according to the purposes of the investigation. This section of the chapter will try to expose the characteristics of each approach and explain how they are different and to which kind of researches they are linked to.

The qualitative approach is the system of analysis used in many different academic disciplines, especially those related to social sciences but also in marketing and other fields (Denzin; Lincoln, 2011). This method employs unique strategies of inquiry and data collection and analysis. Though some processes are akin to the ones used in quantitative researches “qualitative procedures rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diverse strategies of inquiry”67 (Creswell, 2009, p. 179).

Georghiou (2008) lists a series of foresight methods used in qualitative researches among which the most common are literature review, expert panels, scenarios, conference/workshops and brainstorming. Georghiou indicates that literature review is selected as the research method to support the investigation.

Some of the most common characteristics of a qualitative research are that it:

- Takes place in the actual location.
- Is developing rather than anticipated.
- Is essentially interpretative.

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• Uses multiple interactive methods for collecting data.

The other approach used in researches is the quantitative one. Given (2008) refers to this approach as an empirical investigation of social phenomena through systematic mathematical related techniques. As the collected data is then transformed into numbers, a variety of methods can be applied for exposing the results, being graphs, tables and charts the most used ones. At the same time, as technology evolves every day so do the tools which are used to analyze the data collected in these kinds of investigations. Nowadays results can be obtained, coded and exposed faster and more accurately than before.

Georghiou (2008) provides some foresight methods used in quantitative researches among which the most common are: benchmarking, bibliometrics, modeling, patent analysis and time series analysis. The use of surveys is also a common method employed by researchers to acquire data. This particular type of studies is widely used in social studies and can be commonly seen in political science where numbers and statistics are of profound importance.

The most distinctive characteristics of a quantitative research are that it:

• Gathers data from participants.
• Conducts the investigation in an objective, unbiased way.
• Analyzes data in terms of statistics.
• Looks for data on variables which can be measured.

18. PARADIGM OF THE INVESTIGATION

When talking about the paradigm of an investigation what is being discussed is how the framework or lineaments of the methodology to be used to gather information and collect data are going to be carried out. Methodology refers to the universal principles which stipulate how the investigation is going to be held and how the knowledge generated after it is going to be demonstrated as valid. Then the methods used to answer the research question have to be appropriate to the research layout so that the correct instruments are designed to generate data.
In the particular case of this research as a quantitative approach was adopted by the research team an experimental method was selected to gather information. The idea is to manipulate certain variables and see whether they are repeated and become a trend among the subjects involved in the investigation, with the final aim of generating data which is statistically analyzed. To accomplish this goal a survey-type series of activities were designed after having considered that it was the best way to try to prove if certain trends do occur or not.

Some aspects to bear in mind when choosing this type of method are:

- To pose research questions that can be answered once the investigation is finished.
- To identify the proper sample to be investigated.
- To create a list of questions which are later shared with a colleague to be validated.
- To ensure that premises are well laid out and not confusing and/or leading.
- To make sure that the data can be statistically analyzed later.
- To have a good (adequate) sample so as to have valid results.

19. TYPE OF RESEARCH

It is a fact that people face different problems in their daily lives, and while some just give up, others think of solutions and actions to change the origins of their varied troubles. In 1946 Kurt Lewin, then an employee of the American government, developed some studies to change food habits and the attitude towards ethnical minorities of the population (Santoro, 2005). The method or kind of research used in this experiment gave rise to the first record of action research, a term coined in literature by the same Lewin (Tripp, 2005). Although Lewin’s investigation was probably the first one to employ the term action research in written words, it still turns out impossible to determine when it was actually originated (Tripp, 2005).

Action research (AR) is part of a series of action inquiries that researchers may implement. “Action Inquiry is a generic term for any process that follows a cycle in which one improves practice by systematically oscillating between taking action in the field of practice, and
inquiring into it” (Tripp, 2005, p. 2). Thus, Stringer (2007) presents one of the numerous ways in which the cycle of AR may be conceived, such as:

- **Look**, consisting of gathering relevant information in order to define and describe the situation.
- **Think**, exploring and analyzing the situation by theorizing the causes of the problem.
- **Act**, creating a plan to take place to be evaluated afterwards.

Through this cycle (which may suffer modifications according to the investigators’ needs) Action Research seeks to provide solutions to daily problems that people are likely to face in different areas (Stringer, 2007). Tripp (2005) points out that by the end of the twentieth century AR could be found in different fields of application such as in administration and in community development, but it was not until the late 1940s and early 1950s that it started to be applied in education. In educational settings, teachers act as researchers who try to improve their praxis and consequently the students’ learning process (Tripp, 2005). Thus, Stringer (2007) also clarifies that “*unlike traditional experimental/scientific research that looks for generalizable explanations that might be applied to all contexts, action research focuses on specific situations and localized solutions*” (p. 1). Today, teachers probably confront problems that they rarely found twenty or thirty years ago (Stringer, 2007). These situations demand immediate action that should be taken in order to adjust or change trainees’ practices (Tripp, 2005).

Since this thesis’s main objective consists of presenting an innovative manner to teach English through collocations, poly words, and fixed phrases among others, the Action Research approach shows up to provide solutions to problems that teachers may face when doing their classes. First of all, it was necessary to **think** about the different methods in which English as a foreign or as a second language can be taught. Different theories, approaches and methods were explored in order to comprehend the varied teachers’ performances. After exploring these ways of instructing students, it was essential to take a **look** at the current situation in the Chilean

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education. Through the data gathered in some schools of Punta Arenas as well as the analyses of the course books provided by the Ministry of Education, it has been possible to figure out today’s reality in English teaching and learning concerning collocations, poly words, fixed phrases, etc. Finally, the act stage provides the reader with the Lexical Approach, a method which will help teachers plan actions to include the lexical items mentioned before in their teaching practice and consequently improve students’ performance.

20. INSTRUMENTS

The instruments utilized to glean information characterize for trying to find accurate answers systematically as they are reliable and valid to pinpoint growing problems in educational fields. In this research, which seeks to outline a divergent view of the Lexical Approach in Punta Arenas, the instruments are described as follows:

Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a form containing a set of questions or statements submitted to certain amount of subjects in order to gather information about a particular problem (Brace, 2008). Its completion consists of formulating answers to open-ending and closed-questions, or selecting from provided answers with probing instructions (Brown, 2001). Since the terminology tailors to the respondent’s knowledge, this written instrument guarantees to yield direct results as questions are all appropriate to the subjects and posed differently to different people from various realities. “In the questionnaire, the researcher articulates the questions to which he or she wants to know the answers and, through the questionnaire, the subject’s answers are conveyed back to the researcher”70 (Brace, 2008, p. 4)

As Dornyei and Taguchi suggest (2010), questionnaires can record three types of data about the respondent:

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• **Factual questions**: They are also called subject descriptors. These questions seek to identify the respondent’s background as they include personal information like age, gender, education among others. In addition, they are likely to capture data about L2 in terms of students’ language learning history, proficiency or use of coursebook.

• **Behavioral questions**: These questions try to locate what the respondents do or have formerly done. There is no wonder that the most recurrent questions in L2 fields are related to language learning strategies and use of resources.

• **Attitudinal questions**: These questions are meant to examine respondents’ thoughts. This category embraces three particular aspects, such as attitudes, beliefs, interests and values. In L2 fields they are concerned with the rationale behind the teaching notions, what teachers consider right or wrong or preferences and goals.

Nevertheless, the questionnaire suffers from potential setbacks, being one of them that people do not always provide veridical answers about themselves as they can mark what is expected, desirable or accepted from the research point of view (Dornyei; Taguchi, 2010). Secondly, people tend to conceal their truth, as they cannot be oblique, by deceiving themselves. This negative aspect occurs either unconsciously or consciously, depending on psychological factors. Lastly, the acquiesce bias and the halo effect are salient to this moot point. The former depicts how people’s hesitations lead to agreeing with the statement despite the dubious state of mind, whereas the latter refers to human being’s tendency to generalize according to the attractiveness of certain elements to their personality traits (Lewis-Back; Bryman; Liao, 2004).

The questionnaire in this research is applied to a sole segment of the total sample, which will be described in the following point. Moreover, it possesses three criteria which head for teachers only.

• **Criterion A. Personal Information**: This criterion attempts to obtain data about the teacher’s experience in education, as well as age, gender and the level that their teaching attends to.
• Criterion B. *Teaching foundations:* application of strategies and use of resources. This criterion intends to visualize general teaching backgrounds when it comes to the relationship with technology, principles in the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, and the importance of input, among others.

• Criterion C. *Teaching forays into the Lexical Approach.* This criterion expects to amass data about rudimentary knowledge, concerning the Lexical Approach and its indirect application in the classroom.

It is worth mentioning that the questionnaire purveys the teacher with step-by-step instructions so as to guide them carefully in their meticulous and honest fulfillment of it. (See Appendix 5)

**Achievement tests**

An achievement test is a research instrument which is administered in order to gauge the learning that a certain individual has developed after their experience has been broadened (Johnson; Christensen, 2012). This experience takes place in the classroom after a teacher has delivered a set of contents and he or she wishes to measure to what extent that content has been successfully learned. The application of these tests has various purposes, such as the measurement of quality instruction or the identification of faulty areas in which active learning needs to be promoted. The achievement is thus recognized in specific subject areas, focusing on different academic domains or skills.

The achievement tests in this research were applied to the second part of the total sample, the students. They were four different tests, one consisting of two items, two of three items and the other of four items. The fundamental aim of this instrument was to compile precise information from the students’ knowledge about chunking, especially the management of idioms, compounds and collocations above all.
In the first achievement test, item one sought to make close associations between image and word, as well as the resulting meaning of the combination. Regardless of the low cognitive depth of this exercise, it demands consummate attention skills and full assimilation of concepts. The second item was elaborated to locate different collocational patterns through dynamic and slightly challenging wordsearch. This exercise strengthens the perception of dual elements as attention skills, memory and visual processing are required (See Appendix 1).

As for the second achievement test, the first item strives to detect the recognition of the most noteworthy collocational contrast: do versus make. The bulk of the sentences include everyday situations as both words have heavy usage throughout daily input and learners’ syllabi alike. Item number two is more challenging as students have to demonstrate the word partnerships which immediately come to their mind when prime focus is on one word only. This exercise requires memory and visualization as words elicited have to fit a crossword which includes two patterns of collocations, both verb and noun, and noun and adjective. Lastly, item three gives emphasis on adjectival collocations which are not only abstract but also mostly contrary to the equivalence in the students’ mother tongue (See Appendix 2).

The third achievement test reaches higher cognitive depth as it heads for more intermediate level. The first item consists of unscrambling words and consequent matching. Even if the nature of this type of exercise does not entail measuring complete knowledge on compounds it traces one step further to the matching exercises, calling for logic and careful reasoning. Further to the second item, it serves to prove comprehension success given that two types of collocations are inserted in meaningful context which provides the student with pertinent information so as to make a careful choice. Finally, item three deals with idioms. In this section students are asked to fill in the gaps with the corresponding word, which expands the meaning of each idiom. This exercise insists on accurate recognition of key words since some of them may be mistaken out of either literal translation or synonymous meanings. (See Appendix 3)

The final achievement test is all-embracing in its concentration on the Lexical Approach. All in all, items prompt recognition about multiple collocational patterns which additionally have to be distinguished from other lexical elements in the first item, like idioms and compounds. This
classification is substantial since it will show how students differentiate random chunks out of content. On the contrary, in item two students are expected to spot all the collocational patterns existing in a text. This exercise will bring a preview of the general collocational management that learners possess as they are liable to stumble upon thirteen disparate collocational patterns of core importance for their daily use and frequent view at schools. Finally, both items three and four are devoted to expanding knowledge on collocations. In the third item a matching exercise intends to contribute to the sharp distinction of verbal collocations as the verbs exposed are of high teaching and usage incidence. The last part extends a multiple choice item containing numerous collocations of different nature which have to be identified by conscientious discrimination (See Appendix 4).

It is of utmost importance to point out that the questionnaire and the achievement tests alike are theoretically interconnected; therefore, the questionnaire will account for possible weaknesses and strengths to occur and predict possible responses as the teacher’s rationale is pervaded on the students results.

21. SCENARIO AND SUBJECTS

EFL in Chilean Education

The Chilean government is laying bare the importance of English language in the development of the country owing to tourism and foreign investment (Harris, 2006). All the same, a sizeable minority of 3% of the country can maintain effective communication in English as Chile is ranked 39 out of 54 countries whose first language is not English. According to EF English Proficiency Index 2012, Chile has very low proficiency level as it scored 48.41 in contrast to 68.91 from Sweden which ranked top one. To increase the level of English among Chilean people, the Ministry of Education initiated the English Open Doors Program since 2003 in order to make EFL teaching more accessible and effectual. This program has suffered multifold modifications to fuel the perception of multiple English language uses. For example, volunteers from different English-speaking countries have arrived in Chile to support activities from this program, like debates, public speaking, English camps, among others.
Nonetheless, the grim outlook still persists. Students are pigeonholed according to the type of school they attend: public, private or privately subsidized. Public schools are run by municipalities as they receive public financial endorsement (Barra, 2009). Students from public schools have the general tendency to have low socio-economic status, which has led them to regard English language as pointless and futile given that globalization is virtually alien to their reality. What is more, the classes are overrun with more than forty students in classrooms which are not properly equipped (Porterfield; Brezina, 2004). With limited hours of English teaching, crowded classrooms, raucous students and little emphasis on English as multi-purpose tool to brighten the future, public schools have barely gained recognition in Chilean education as they still present cultural barriers to surmount.

On the other hand, private schools are managed by institutions, corporations or companies as they do not receive public funding. Similarly, privately subsidized schools are owned and managed by institutions with for-profit and non-profit nature (Barra, 2009), which like public schools receive financial support based upon students’ attendance called subvention (Gvirtz; Beech, 2008). On the whole, privately subsidized schools represent middle socio-economic status while private schools symbolize high-class status, in which parents pay for schools which guarantee effective EFL atmosphere as they reform their curricula according to English-speaking countries and prepare their learners for taking international examinations. These features have led both private and subsidized schools to win more accolades in the current educational system because students tend to obtain better academic achievements as they do not face risks from their cultural background. In other words, economic stability, family commitment and value instilment favor their performance, unlike students from public schools who perform poorly out of restricted access to comprehensive knowledge and numerous inequities in the quality of the education provided still waiting for decisive solutions.

These socio-economic stratifications are pervasive in national schools as social imbalance abounds in the entire country. Worse enough, statistics appear to compound this critical overview. As a matter of fact, SIMCE has demonstrated low results in public schools, meanwhile privately subsidized schools and private schools have met the Ministry of Education expectations. SIMCE stands for Measurement of Quality Education System and it is a rigorous and compulsory
test which aims to extract objective information in order to check the thorough cover of contents from national syllabi (Teese; Lamb; Duru-Bellat, 2007). In 2010 English SIMCE was established and firstly taken by Chilean English learners of 3rd grade of high school. It was the first censal English test taken in Latin America, yielding poor results.

In its second version in 2011, the scenario was self-evident: English language needs reinforced instruction as most of students are not apt to reach an elementary level. These results showed that a scarce 11% of Chilean students are able to comprehend daily expressions and brief basic texts, being students from private schools; whereas the other 89% cannot even be considered as elementary level students. Furthermore, this study contemplates that 65% of high-class status students passed the test as opposed to a 0.3% of low-class status students who could pass it successfully. Both the Metropolitan Region and Magallanes had results which were above the national average. According to educarchile.cl, the Ministry of Education has pored over the following factors to have incidence in poor performances since schools which had salient scores share the following features:

- **Years of contact with English language:** Students commence with English classes in 5th grade in public and some subsidized schools, while private ones from kindergarten.

- **Amount of hours of English lessons:** In public schools students have between 2 and 4 hours per week, while some subsidized schools generally have 6 and private ones over 6 hours.

- **English courses:** High-class families and some middle-class pay extra English courses to bolster students’ knowledge of English, which is rare in low-class families.

- **Teacher’s English speaking:** There are some teachers who do not speak in English when teaching, which is a stringent rule in private schools whose board devotes considerable time to watching over their teachers’ performances. On the contrary, teachers in public schools have difficulty speaking in English both for the hurdles that students’
nonchalance pose and the inveterate habit that educators adopt in neglecting their English language after considering it worthless and time-consuming.

Moreover, there are some EFL teachers who do not rely on their language skills. In this hidden assumption, the professional development granted by teachers’ universities plays a central role to the degree of proficiency that a teacher possesses. In Chile there are currently two types of universities: traditional or state-owned universities and private ones. Traditional universities receive funds from dissimilar means, albeit many of these universities are not public. They have gained recognition as most of the investigations carried out in Chile are on their behalf and the best national student accomplishment occurs in these institutions. There again, private universities are institutions which like any other private organization is self-sustained. There are fifty-nine universities in Chile, being twenty-five of them traditional or Universities belonging to the Rector’s Council. The quality of education that every university facilitates is measured by CAN, or National Commission of Accreditation, which grants this benefit to universities which attain the requirements prescribed by the Ministry of Education in its attempt to promote high quality education.

There are roughly thirty universities and institutions which offer the career of English Pedagogy in Chile for both levels of education, or for either elementary or secondary level. One of them is the University of Magallanes (UMAG) whose career of English Pedagogy has tallied with CAN demands as it comes to the foreground like one of the most distinguished careers in the institution of Punta Arenas. This university is more than thirty years old and in 2012 was ranked 22 out of 59 universities in the Ranking of Best Chilean Universities 2012. The career of English Pedagogy at UMAG lasts ten semesters and has been accredited for five years, from 2009 to 2013, becoming one of the most long-standing and promising careers in the region. The course structure has gone through three modifications since the year it was established; the first one taking place in 1995, the second in 2005 and the last one in 2010. English Pedagogy at UMAG seeks to develop professional teachers who are not only able to arouse students’ interests in learning English, but also to promote competencies in processes of communication, socialization, autonomy and creativity.
Subjects

The subjects under investigation share a rudimentary knowledge on collocations, multiwords and other lexical items expounded in previous chapters, although in different levels. The solidity of this knowledge fluctuates as it depends on the expertise of EFL. The subjects are listed as follows:

1) 5th grade and 6th grade students of different schools in Punta Arenas. Some of them have their first encounter with English language, arousing a frisson of excitement or outright rejection. Schools that this classification includes are:

- Colegio Luterano
- Colegio Nobelius
- Escuela Villa Las Nieves
- Instituto Don Bosco
- LEUMAG
- Liceo San José
- The British School

2) 7th and 8th grade students from different schools in Punta Arenas. They are familiarized with English language for at least two or three years. These schools are the following:

- Colegio Francés
- Hernando de Magallanes
- Liceo Contardi
- Liceo San José

3) Secondary level, ranging from 1st to 4th of High School belonging to public, private and subsidized schools in Punta Arenas. All the students have had contact with English for more than four years. Grades in this category have not been subdivided and the differentiation of levels of
English is of considerable magnitude from one to another. As a categorical distinction is not illustrated, the schools are the named below:

- Charles Darwin
- Colegio Alemán
- Colegio Luterano
- Instituto Don Bosco
- LEUMAG
- Liceo Polivalente Sara Braun
- Liceo San José
- The British School

4) University students of English Pedagogy at UMAG; students from 1\textsuperscript{st} year to the 4\textsuperscript{th}, taking the following subjects:

- Inglés Integrado I
- Inglés Integrado III
- Lengua Inglesa VI
- Lengua Inglesa VIII

5\textsuperscript{th}-year students are excluded as they are no longer taking academic subjects. These subjects were selected as they pursue a progressive continuum of both grammatical and lexical teaching.

5) Teachers from school levels named above: These teachers are the ones who perform classes at the schools listed above. They have different principles as they face diverse backgrounds.

6) Tutors and/or professors from the career of English Pedagogy: These academics are teachers’ teachers. They have culled solid knowledge throughout years of illustrious career on the subject under study.
22. LIMITATIONS

Unfortunately, investigations generally have to cope with a series of limitations which attempt to impair their accuracy. Broadly speaking, these limitations constrain the effectiveness of the instruments as these restrictions are largely ascribed to: the time they are distributed, the subject’s nature, and certainly the quirks of fate. The strictness of these difficulties resides on the validity of the instruments since their fabrication has to contemplate feasible erroneous perceptions or impressions of the research. The following limitations are inherent and others are methodological, being stated below:

- **Accessibility:** Not all schools of the region could take the instruments. The choice mainly rested on the access that trainees of English Pedagogy from UMAG had as the Department of Education of the same university assigned their centers of practice, making the level scope restricted as well. Moreover, other cities could not be included for their remoteness and poor access to the investigators.

- **Instruction delivery:** As stated, the instruments were delivered by trainees developing their practicum at schools hence they might have not been fully aware of the proper procedure to follow, albeit the instructions were clearly given to them. Besides, the conditions in which the instructions were delivered can have probable adverse effects. If the instructions are given while students are messing around, misbehaving, weary or have a lull after a grueling task, the commands are likely to be misunderstood or omitted.

- **Chance:** Students can get good results in tests by guessing and controlling the outcomes.

- **Time:** The instruments can be taken hastily for a matter of tight time. Accomplished in a tearing hurry, the tests are bound to yield poor results as students take them for granted. This temporal condition will hang on the teachers who authorized the development of the instrument in their class and their previous or subsequent expectations.
• **Motivation:** Some students dislike English and dread tests; consequently taking an adlib quiz deters them to the core. Added to this blunt truth, students’ distaste to English language leads them to become blasé about their results, and not even a modicum of encouragement can perk them up.

• **Type of class:** As earlier exposed, some classes are exceedingly large, having more than forty five students inside. When this occurs a lack of control is plain, abetting cheating, scribbling or feckless answering. Cheating becomes rampant at times when students are used to working in pairs or groups.

• **Type of students:** Some students are diffident, responsive and others are wayward. Additionally some of them balk at the idea of having a test which will not grade them and spare the pressure for sheer cooperation.

• **Type of teachers:** Teachers’ experience varies same as their essence. Some teachers are obstinate on their principles, and then their answers may be swayed by their inner adamant refusal to respond the questionnaire. Others may have a flagging career for different reasons, demonstrating misunderstanding in some concepts or specific words. Other teachers are strained as the final part of semester draws, in which they have to burden with heavy-going work. Finally, some veteran teachers are not acquainted with the Lexical Approach since it is a virtually novel movement.

• **Content delivery:** Some schools rigidly stick to the textbook given by the Ministry of Education and national syllabi, while others develop their own English classes by using different textbooks and syllabi, or fostering independence in the students’ learning process. Besides, it remains unknown whether teachers skip some units or section at their discretion, or do not have time to cover all the contents requested.

• **Attendance:** Sometimes the attendance can be sparse as students miss classes for various reasons.
Course structure version: Further to university students, some of them are coursing the 2005 studies program, in which overt teaching of grammar and vocabulary is emphasized by subjects like Grammar I, Grammar II, Language I to VIII, Composition I and Composition II. Yet, 2011 studies program is otherwise. Students developing this program do not take explicit grammar or lexical content subjects, but integrated which graft summarized linguistic contents onto their development. Last of all, they have little contact with English in contrast to 2005 students, on the grounds that their subjects are closely related to education and pedagogy in their first years.

CONCLUSION

Conducting a research is not a straightforward process. Researchers have to be punctilious and attentive to any distractor arising from incognito origin. First and foremost, objectives have to be clear and duly specified so that they become buttressed by solid theory. Most importantly, the instruments need to be elaborated with theoretical foundations since they try to find the way to stem the decline of any problem menacing a group of individuals.

The instruments in this research are simple and clear. Even though this study espouses the premise that tests do not verify students’ performances or goals, it does promote that congenial atmosphere has to be settled in order to obtain prosperous results. This notion attests the researcher’s attitude of not only becoming an enquirer, but also a mediator and facilitator. In relation to the tests, they were not of high cognitive depth as collocations are not deeply embedded in the Chilean syllabus which is still grammar-driven. Thus, problem solving skills and critical thinking were not included in the instruments as they deal with production, while these tests bear on recognition.

Notwithstanding this research presents multiple limitations, it tries to promote future forays into the investigation of the Lexical Approach in Magallanes. This encouragement does mean locating the panacea for the restrictions presented, but rather easing them or making them less draconian by being proactive as benefits accrue during the ongoing process.
CHAPTER 6: RESULTS ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

Three weeks after the instruments were delivered to be answered, most of them were gathered to analyze the results. In order to collect the data quantitatively it was necessary to assign values to the different answers with the purpose of obtaining percentages, tendencies and patterns.

The tests were designed for 5th and 6th grades, 7th and 8th grades, high school students, and English pedagogy students in University of Magallanes; every correct answer was assigned the value 1 (one) and the incorrect ones were labeled with 0 (zero). This way, it was possible to tabulate all the results and obtain accurate data per item, per questions, and per every subject. After the sum of the answers was attained, percentages were calculated to design the tables and bar graphs and draw the conclusions presented.

As for the data collation from school and university teachers, the three criteria were separately analyzed. In criterion A, chief facts were selected as general information did not fully contribute to final results. Thus teachers’ age group, level they teach and the amount of years in education were considered in the construction of a summarizing table. In criterion B, the five assessment criteria were assembled to form three final ones, combining strongly agree with agree and disagree with strongly disagree. No opinion remained the same. After this step was accomplished, preferences were summed as they fit a particular column, leading to subsequent percentage averages.

All the same, raw data from criterion C was differently organized as questions presented varied structures. For example, in open questions in which there was less than four alternatives the preferences were counted to arrive at overall averages; nevertheless, when the alternatives exceeded four the same procedure took place, but the three highest preferences were taken into account to be graphed. Moreover, in question two from the same criterion the mode was found as it was a sorting question whereby the individuals marked preferences with assigned numbers.
The following chapter shows the direct results from the research presented. In their attempt to show their tangibility, they are arranged in tables and pie charts, as well as bar graphs so as to show the ranking in a clear and distinguishable manner. They are accompanied to their corresponding analyses which are eligible for drawing definite conclusions.

23. SAMPLE

The following tables show in detail the sample that this research included. All these individuals participated voluntarily by taking the tests and questionnaires designed according to their category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Luterano</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Nobelius</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escuela Villa Las Nieves</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instituto Don Bosco</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEUMAG</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liceo San José</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The British School</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>190</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. Table illustrating 5th and 6th graders’ sample in local schools.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Francés</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contardi</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernando de Magallanes</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liceo San José</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>105</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. Table illustrating 7th and 8th graders’ sample in local schools.*
The total of subjects consisted of two classes. Sample of English Pedagogy students at University of Magallanes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; year</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; year</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; year</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; year</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The total of subjects consisted of two classes.

Table 4. Table illustrating English Pedagogy students’ sample in University of Magallanes.

Sample of School Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles Darwin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Alemán</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Francés</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Luterano</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Nobelius</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contardi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escuela Villa Las Nieves</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernando de Magallanes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instituto Don Bosco</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEUMAG</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liceo San José</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Braun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The British School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Number of teachers tested at local schools.

Sample of High School students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles Darwin</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Alemán</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Luterano</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instituto Don Bosco</td>
<td>74*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEUMAG</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liceo San José</td>
<td>71*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Braun</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The British School</td>
<td>49*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Table illustrating high school students’ samples in local schools.

Sample of School Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles Darwin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Alemán</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Francés</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Luterano</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Nobelius</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contardi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escuela Villa Las Nieves</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hernando de Magallanes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instituto Don Bosco</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEUMAG</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liceo San José</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Braun</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The British School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Number of teachers tested at local schools.
24. RESULTS

24.1 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

5th and 6th grades

The following diagrams and tables will represent in a more graphical manner the students’ results in the different items of the test applied in this level. At the same time a final graph will show how each institution, where the investigation was held in this level, did according to the overall results of the test.

The first graph, Fig. 2, illustrates a ranking of the five compound words which scored higher in the test. From the results it could be inferred that students were able to accordingly relate the words to the pictures presented in the activity. Five of the ten words were clearly easier for students as the word which scored lowest in this ranking was accurate almost fifty percent of the times. A reason for having this result could be that these words are alike to their corresponding meaning in Spanish, so the use of cognates could have helped students to correctly guess the correct combination of words. Personal experience is also a factor as polar bear is considered to be a high frequent word used in primary schools and it also appears in the course book, which may be the reason why it was correct almost 80% of the times.
Table 7 clearly shows how the pattern which composes verbal collocations was the most recognized one among the students of this level, pushing adjectival collocations to a second place. A plausible explanation for this result is that most of the chosen verbs for these activities where placed next to a noun which is very often used after the selected action, therefore students were able to recognize these actions as routines they are familiar with. On the other hand, when it comes down to the adjectival collocations it can be noticed that the students’ results dropped as they are not yet familiar with describing nouns in detail. Their descriptive skills go no beyond using adjectives to refer to a person’s specific color of hair or eyes, or simply to indicate the size of a particular noun. It could be then said that students are more familiar with adjectives which describe color and/or size, instead of those which illustrate a noun’s shape and/or condition.

Fig. 3 shows schools’ test achievements as certain statistical features can be identified. First of all, it comes as no surprise to see The British School leading over the rest of the institutions. As it was mentioned in Chapter 5, this school has considerable more amounts of hours of English and the students find themselves immersed in a demanding environment from a early age. Another aspect that is worth considering is the amount of students per class; while Instituto Don Bosco has thirty-six students in its English class LEUMAG has almost half as many, just twenty. The difference in results is considerable as LEUMAG did twice as better than Instituto Don Bosco. Another example can be found comparing Liceo San José which has
twenty-six students and Colegio Nobelius which has twenty-five. The result of both institutions is similar so it can be said that the class size does condition, to some degree, the students’ performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocation</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read the newspaper</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to music</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ride a bike</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play the guitar</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best friend</td>
<td>A + N</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy family</td>
<td>A + N</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curly hair</td>
<td>A + N</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast cars</td>
<td>A + N</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Table showing the recognized collocations and their pattern.

Fig. 3. Graph showing the ranking of schools according to their achievements in the test.
The following diagrams and tables will represent in a more graphical manner the students’ results in the different items of the test applied in this level. At the same time a final graph will show how each institution, where the investigation was held in this level, did according to the overall results of the test.

The following graph, Fig. 4, shows the four collocations which had the higher score in that section of the test. That part dealt with collocations formed with the verbs *do* and *make*. From the results it can be interpreted that those four collocations are related to daily routines, like *make your bed* or *do the dishes* which may be the reason why it was easier for students to choose the correct answer. On the other hand, *make mistakes* and *do your homework*, are expressions related to the classroom environment. The reason why students may have had achievable results with these two expressions is that teachers use them all the time. A final aspect which is worth considering is that results may have been low as a class unit related to the use of the verbs *do* and *make* is taught in high school so it may have been difficult for younger students.

**Collocations with do and make**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>make your bed</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make mistakes</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do your homework</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do the dishes</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig. 4. Graph showing the four most recognized collocations using *do* and *make*.**
Fig. 5 is a list of the five collocations with the highest scores in the test. Results are low and the expression *go crazy* was the correct answer of 28% of the students. Two conclusions can be drawn from these results: the first one is that the fact the design of the activity may have helped the previously mentioned expression to have the highest score as it was found in crossword puzzle exercise and there is no other available option to match with *crazy* that could fit in two squares. The second conclusion is that the same trend found in the first level is seen here; verbal collocations are correctly recognized that adjectival ones. The graph clearly shows this as those expressions which started with a verb scored higher than those which did with adjectives.

![Collocations](image)

**Fig. 5.** *Graph showing the five most recognized collocations by students of this level.*

Finally *Fig. 6* shows schools’ test achievements and one major conclusion can be drawn from the results exposed there. It can be observed that almost the four schools where the test was applied had pretty similar results, as all of them scored very low, but one school was significantly below the average. A reason for these poor outcomes may have been that none of the students of Colegio Francés answered the item three on the test which automatically leaves them with no score or chance to compete with the other institutions. Nevertheless, statistics illustrate that all schools had weak use of collocational expressions.
The graphs and tables below encompass the results obtained by high school students in their tests. The outcomes are divided into the items compound words, idioms and collocations to show the most frequent answers.

Fig. 7 shows junk food as the most recognized compound word out of ten possible answers. This word is commonly seen in units related to sports and healthy life in both elementary and high schools, and is usually related to the students’ personal experiences. In general terms, the rate of accuracy was really low in this first item of the test. Most of the students did not inconvenience themselves in completing this first part because it included unscrambling words and matching them with the corresponding pair afterwards. Despite that some learners took the time to unscramble the lexical items but made no association with the words in the opposite column, the answers were not considered correct and the accuracy decreased. The combinations stainless steel, fairy tale, and junk food are usually found together in written as well as spoken discourse, giving an explanation to the tendency of these over the others. Besides, unscrambling short words might have turned out easier for students.
Table 8 provides the percentages of correct answers for the second item, idioms. Most of the students are likely to be familiar with the meaning of the verb learn, and the association with lesson seems to be caused by its resemblance to the Spanish word. The second most frequent idiom is a popular proverb that has a strong similarity with the Spanish version and can be easily deduced by the students. On the contrary, the least recognized saying lacks cognates and literal meaning which could have aided to interpret its connotation.

Table 8. Table providing the results obtained by students in relation to idioms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idioms</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn a lesson</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome wasn't built in a day</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not to look a gift horse in the mouth</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get on someone's nerves</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kill two birds with one stone</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get in touch with someone</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 shows the percentages of the collocations included in the test. The low average in all the collocations surprises and allows concluding the little emphasis given to the teaching of the different lexical items that the LA highlights. From 1st to 4th grade in high schools, the course books take in units related to culture, traditions, and celebrations among others in which the word
ancient is found with some of its possible collocations, giving a sense of familiarity to the students. The explanation for the high rate of bring chaos seems to be the fact that it is a strong collocation usually found together in descriptive texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collocation</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancient monuments</td>
<td>A + N</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring chaos</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a chat</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm welcome</td>
<td>A + N</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release an album</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick learner</td>
<td>A + N</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a decision</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earn a good salary</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make an effort</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take drugs</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell the truth</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sore throat</td>
<td>A + N</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell the time</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad shoulders</td>
<td>A + N</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wear a ponytail</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star in a film</td>
<td>V + N</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Table illustrating the scores of the collocations found in the test for this level.

Fig. 8 provides an average of the results accomplished by the students of each high school. Similar to the 5th and 6th grades category, The British School also leads the ranking but this time with a 47% of accuracy in the answers. On the other hand, Instituto Don Bosco presents the lowest score with a 5% that scares any English teacher. Even though, these 5% may have external variables which may have interfered with the appropriate development of the test. In general terms, all the high schools’ results were poor and below the 50% demonstrating the importance given to other aspects of language over the instruction by means of lexical items.
The three items this test had consisted of the identification of compound words, idioms as well as collocations. Idioms lead the ranking with a 93% of correct answers, since they are easier to be recognized because they are long expressions and the meaning of their words in isolation is completely different from the meaning of the phrase as a whole. On the contrary, collocations are required to be stored in the brain in order to be properly recognized, lowering thus the percentage to 60% of accuracy. The contrast between idioms and collocations is that the former can be identified even if the meaning is unknown for the students while the latter demands not only recognition, but memorization and application as well.

24.3 ENGLISH PEDAGOGY STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF MAGALLANES

The three items this test had consisted of the identification of compound words, idioms as well as collocations. Idioms lead the ranking with a 93% of correct answers, since they are easier to be recognized because they are long expressions and the meaning of their words in isolation is completely different from the meaning of the phrase as a whole. On the contrary, collocations are required to be stored in the brain in order to be properly recognized, lowering thus the percentage to 60% of accuracy. The contrast between idioms and collocations is that the former can be identified even if the meaning is unknown for the students while the latter demands not only recognition, but memorization and application as well.
Within the three items of the test it was possible to find different kinds of collocational patterns that the Table 10 classifies. The top one is composed of an adjective plus a noun with a 49% of right answers. The consequence of the percentage may be the high frequency in which these adjectival collocations are used by the students with the purpose of being accurately descriptive in their writings. The noun + noun combination tended to be confusing as compound words, leaving it at the bottom of the table with a 15%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLOCATIONAL PATTERNS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADJ+N</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADV+ADJ</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V+N</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N+V</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V+PREP. PHRASE</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N+N</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V+ADJ</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 10. Table presenting the collocational patterns included in the test.*

At the end of the analysis of these tests, it was expected to observe a progression along the years. It turns out strange to explain why the 1\textsuperscript{st} year students performed better than their 2\textsuperscript{nd} year classmates and obtained almost the same percentage as the 3\textsuperscript{rd} year. One key factor could be the implementation of the new curriculum in the career. Another aspect could involve the previous experience of the students with the English language. The 4\textsuperscript{th} year scored 60% and demonstrated the years of learning they have had so far. In general terms, the results were low taking into consideration that they will be in charge of instructing Chilean students in a couple of years.

*Fig. 10. Graph showing the ranking of students according to their achievements in the test.*
24.4 SCHOOL TEACHERS

CRITERION A: Personal information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Number of Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 – 30</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 35</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – 40</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 – 45</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 +</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Table showing the age groups among school teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of years in education</th>
<th>Number of Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 +</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. Table showing the amount of years in education among school teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of English attended to</th>
<th>Number of Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further studies</td>
<td>2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Most of the teachers attend to more than one level

Table 13. Table showing the level of English which school teachers attend to.
CRITERION B: Teaching foundations, application of strategies and use of resources.

Table 14 indicates how teachers from schools under study uphold their teaching praxis. All in all, teachers are cognizant of the importance of promoting a SLA atmosphere to allow students to learn the target language successfully. This positive factor accompanies the teaching principles that most educators adhere to like continuous self-updating, further reflections on their performances and heightened awareness of students’ multiple roles and necessities. Nonetheless, there is a confictive juxtaposition in questions related to the use of textbooks, the emphasis on the progress and the balanced approaches to mistakes. These results show how teachers still tailor their performances to the use of textbooks and the demands of a general syllabus, leading them to ignore students’ progress to some extent. In fact, these teachers do not share the premise that fallacies or significant learning growth can be detected through progress check as most of them belong to rigid educational systems, in which direct performances and ordinary mistakes are informative and subjected to stern assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTORS</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>DO NOT ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My teaching comprises the ongoing search for sources and materials which guarantee to fulfill students’ necessities.</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My teaching involves the search for updated bibliography to support my pedagogical principles.</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My teaching attempts to activate different learning styles or types of intelligence.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My teaching includes a series of critical reflection on my performances.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My teaching leads myself to look for information about training courses so as to improve my performances and enrich my professional development.</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My teaching encourages me to utilize pedagogical resources that the school/institution supplies me with.</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My teaching handles and applies numerous strategies to accomplish my students’ goals.</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My teaching includes further reflection on my students’ results.</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My teaching fosters interaction among students.</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My teaching focuses on the students’ active participation than my role as a main character.</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My teaching acts as a facilitator to the students’</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
progressive construction of knowledge.

12. My teaching mingle dynamism with the assumption that students need certain freedom to gather knowledge. 69% 23% 0%

13. My teaching seeks to reinforce the premise that experience is the best resource for students to develop learning competences. 92% 0% 0%

14. My teaching involves teaching grammar as a receptive skill. 62% 38% 0%

15. My teaching places heavier emphasis on communicative functions than grammar contents. 62% 31% 8%

16. My teaching characterizes for creating a SLA atmosphere in which the target language usage is more important than the mother tongue. 77% 23% 0%

17. My teaching promotes enough input to stimulate students’ language learning and successful communication. 77% 15% 8%

18. My teaching rigidly sticks to a determined syllabus, even though it comprehends that language bits are emergent. 46% 54% 0%

19. My teaching rather pays attention to mistakes than the attempts to convey meaning. 46% 54% 0%

20. My teaching heavily relies on a textbook as it is the main teacher’s tool. 46% 54% 0%

21. My teaching gives prominence to the process rather than the product. 54% 38% 0%

22. My teaching obeys to the existence of different levels so my language scope and the tasks given are limited. 62% 38% 0%

23. My teaching principles hold that vocabulary carries more meaning than grammar. 69% 23% 8%

24. My teaching is based on a specific content so that the vocabulary is not treated in isolation. 92% 8% 0%

Table 14. Table displaying school teachers’ results in a self-evaluation questionnaire.

CRITERION C: Teaching forays into the Lexical Approach

Fig. 11 shows the identification of the Lexical Approach by school teachers of English in Punta Arenas. A significant number of teachers allege to be apprised of the Lexical Approach, whereas a minimal but not trivial sum of teachers acknowledges that it is still unknown for them. Even so, it is fundamental to notice that some teachers can admit their familiarization with the
approach under study for the name that it hints, relating the word *lexical* to the focus on vocabulary. In this respect, what teachers are doing is to predict the answer to create positive perceptions instead of affirming their matter-fact knowledge on the Lexical Approach. On the other hand, the 15% of the teachers who are acquainted of the Lexical Approach are instructors who have performed their teaching praxis before this approach became popular not only overseas, but in Magallanes as well.

"Do you know what the Lexical Approach consists of?"

![Pie chart showing 85% yes and 15% no.](image)

*Fig. 11. Graph illustrating the identification of the Lexical Approach by school teachers.*

*Fig. 12* displays the emphasis that school teachers from Punta Arenas place on their students’ skills. It is no wonder that one of the most trained skill is speaking, as most of the teachers relate language success to the ability to speak it as accurately and fluently as possible. However, the major skill in teachers’ preferences is reading. Various schools are implementing literature approaches to improve language, as textbooks also intend to hone reading subskills like scanning, skimming or intensive reading. This fact demonstrates that teachers pursue the basis of the Lexical Approach which gives prominence to the receptive skills over productive ones, being the former the one which provides the students with contextualized vocabulary.

Vocabulary is the basis of language according to school teachers of Punta Arenas, as *Fig. 13* indicates. This result matches Lexical Approaches principles anew as teachers take
worthwhile time to build up words. Nevertheless, other teachers deem coherence as the most significant element in SLA, given that it combines all the elements emerging from language aside from grammar and vocabulary. On the other hand, grammar has lost momentous by apparent word relevance.

**Fig. 12. Graph showing the preferred skills trained by school teachers.**

**Fig. 13. Graph illustrating school teachers’ preference for teaching English.**
Fig. 14 shows the manner whereby teachers teach vocabulary. 39% concurs on mixed vocabulary teaching, which is both direct and indirect; yet, it is followed by 31% of an indirect approach to vocabulary teacher. This fact overlaps with the emphasis on the receptive skills exposed heretofore, by which meanings are unconsciously inferred as words are encountered. On the other hand, there are still teachers who develop vocabulary through constant repetition, use of flashbacks and translation. Finally, the ones who did not answer claimed that they did not comprehend the distinction between both terms.

![How is vocabulary taught?](image)

**Fig. 14. Graph indicating school teachers’ method towards vocabulary teaching.**

Fig. 15 indicates ample evidence as to the amount of words which teachers intend to achieve in a month’s time. It certainly fluctuates among different levels, although in general terms both elementary and secondary teachers coincide in the rough teaching amount of twenty words and over eighty words respectively. It hinges on the type of class one teacher faces and the chances for them to attain to their expectations. However, an 8% assures to teach less than twenty words as students are likely to disremember meanings out of slight association or practice in different contexts.
Fig. 15. Monthly desired vocabulary range school teachers want their students to learn.

Fig. 16 shows the most distinctive features of an unfurling learning process according to schools teacher from Punta Arenas. 46% agrees on the holistic nature of learning as it is comprehensive in both language and skill development. Likewise, the coincidence in 38% demonstrates that not only learning is based upon ongoing progress and continuous thinking, but also that teachers beliefs agree with the Lexical Approach once again.

Fig. 16. Graph presenting school teachers’ opinion in the three most important characteristics of the learning process.
Table 15 shows the preferences that school teachers of Punta Arenas possess in their election for different lexical elements. The whole total prefers the teaching of synonyms, followed by false cognates and collocations. As noted, collocations are not neglected in vocabulary instruction, even though its percentage ought to be higher to appreciate a pervasive notion of Lexical Approach in word expansion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical elements</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synonyms</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False cognates</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrasal verbs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neologisms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idioms</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collocations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poly words</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. Table showing school teachers’ preferences for the lexical items included in their classes.

The following Table 16 displays the strategies that school teachers of Punta Arenas employ to teach grammar. The highest percentage is for reading comprehension, in which grammar teaching is implicit. This high peak along with the least requested strategies like translation and transformation highlight the teachers’ penchant for the Lexical Approach as opposed to their reluctance to old teaching approaches, which emphasize insipid and pointless exercises. Still, matching, gap-filling and multiple choice continue to be strategies which satisfy teachers to train their students with grammar contents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading comprehension</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap-filling</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple choice</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16. Table showing school teachers’ preferred strategies to teach grammar.
Table 17 displays the strategies that school teachers of Punta Arenas use to expand vocabulary. 77% of the teachers rely on pictures to teach vocabulary since this resource provides the students with proper input, sparks creativity and nourishes reflection which are key skills to develop both lexis recognition and production. It is followed by the use of texts, as pictures supply the students with a vast amount of input meaningfully contextualized. Finally, games, riddles, brain teasers and other interactive activities are also among major preferences, on the grounds that they readily activate students’ minds and add dynamism to the classroom to make learners entertain when these strategies are applied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text-based work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games, riddles, etc</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture-based work</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-play</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunking (grouping words)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word analogies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual redefinition</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17. School teachers’ preferred strategies to expand students’ vocabulary.

Fig.17 shows how school teachers of Punta Arenas correct their students’ mistakes. It is worth mentioning that some teachers claimed that they do not correct their learners’ errors whatsoever because mistakes prove their effort to produce language. Behind this notion, which is sustained by the Lexical Approach, two methods approached it most: body language and reformulation. Both methods are indirect and their appreciation lies in the importance of not dispiriting learners’ approximations to English as they are meaningful and serve to keep track of their progress. Body language is concerned with the use of gestures and eye contact, meanwhile reformulation stands for using the mistake to formulate a new clarifying sentence. However, there are still teachers who aggravate towards saying the right version without giving the student time to reflect on their flaw occurrence.
Fig. 17. Graph illustrating school teachers’ error correcting method.

24.5 UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

CRITERION A: Personal information.

It will not be included as respondents were four academics only and the analysis of their personal information will not produce potential effects on the final results of the investigation.

CRITERION B: Teaching foundations, application of strategies and use of resources.

University teachers’ background is in evidence in Table 18. Most of them agreed on key points pertaining to the use of strategies and resources, especially the student-centered premise, proving the fact that students are the ones who build their knowledge as proper input is facilitated. Nonetheless, there is a slight concern with the significance of grammar which is dependent on the approach chosen by the academic. Clearly, the subjects that these teachers intend to develop are overall language competences, being grammar one of them. As the table shows, a significant amount of teachers regard grammar as a receptive skill and vocabulary the essence of the language, agreeing with the Lexical Approach. This fact demonstrates primary
teachers’ links with the Lexical Approach, even if a 25% of the teachers support the constant use of textbooks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTORS</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>DO NOT ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My teaching comprises the ongoing search for sources and materials which guarantee to fulfill students’ necessities.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My teaching involves the search for updated bibliography to support my pedagogical principles.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My teaching attempts to activate different learning styles or types of intelligence.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My teaching includes a series of critical reflection on my performances.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My teaching leads myself to look for information about training courses so as to improve my performances and enrich my professional development.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My teaching encourages me to utilize pedagogical resources that the school/institution supplies me with.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My teaching handles and applies numerous strategies to accomplish my students’ goals.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My teaching includes further reflection on my students’ results.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My teaching fosters interaction among students.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My teaching focuses on the students’ active participation than my role as a main character.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My teaching acts as a facilitator to the students’ progressive construction of knowledge.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. My teaching mingles dynamism with the assumption that students need certain freedom to gather knowledge.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. My teaching seeks to reinforce the premise that experience is the best resource for students to develop learning competences.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. My teaching involves teaching grammar as a receptive skill.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. My teaching places heavy emphasis on communicative functions than grammar contents.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. My teaching characterizes for creating a SLA atmosphere in which the target language usage is more important than the mother tongue.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. My teaching promotes enough input to stimulate students’ language learning and successful communication.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18. My teaching rigidly sticks to a determined syllabus, even though it comprehends that language bits are emergent.  
19. My teaching rather pays attention to mistakes than the attempts to convey meaning.  
20. My teaching heavily relies on a textbook as it is the main teacher’s tool.  
21. My teaching gives prominence to the process rather than the product.  
22. My teaching obeys to the existence of different levels so my language scope and the tasks given are limited.  
23. My teaching principles hold that vocabulary carries more meaning than grammar.  
24. My teaching is based on a specific content so that the vocabulary is not treated in isolation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>0%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. My teaching rigidly sticks to a determined syllabus, even though it comprehends that language bits are emergent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. My teaching rather pays attention to mistakes than the attempts to convey meaning.</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. My teaching heavily relies on a textbook as it is the main teacher’s tool.</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. My teaching gives prominence to the process rather than the product.</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. My teaching obeys to the existence of different levels so my language scope and the tasks given are limited.</td>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. My teaching principles hold that vocabulary carries more meaning than grammar.</td>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. My teaching is based on a specific content so that the vocabulary is not treated in isolation.</td>
<td></td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18. Table displaying university teachers’ results in a self-evaluation questionnaire.

CRITERION C: Teaching forays into the Lexical Approach

Fig. 18 demonstrates total recognition of the Lexical Approach among university teachers at University of Magallanes. This fact obeys to higher aptitudes that academics have in relation to English language knowledge as they possess more experience or studies in contrast to school teachers.

"Do you know what the Lexical Approach consists of?"

Fig. 18. Graph illustrating the identification of the Lexical Approach by university teachers.
Table 19 shows the skills which university teachers train the most in their classes. Once again a receptive skill is emphasized. Academics show definite preference for listening as it contains multiple words which are not only in context but also in speech as correct pronunciation is included. It is followed by speaking, for teachers boost communication in the classroom so that language production is to guarantee that as future teachers, students can perform classes entirely spoken in English. On the other hand, reading and writing gain little prominence in Language on account of the attention that subjects like Literature and Composition give to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19. Table showing the ranking of preferred skills trained by university teachers.

Fig. 19 shows the dominant features of learning as far as teachers at University of Magallanes are concerned. Most of them agree on the reflective characteristic of learning, as students never cease to ponder on their success and limitations. This fact has encouraged university tutors to foster self-assessment as fundamental element to notice learning. Moreover, this deliberate choice leads academics’ principles of learning to harmonize with the ones which the Lexical Approach submits.

Fig. 19. Graph presenting university teachers’ opinion in the three most important characteristics of the learning process.
Fig. 20 displays the chief constituents of language that university teachers deem significant for proper learning. As vocabulary and coherence overlap with the same percentage, it is certain that these academics include word development in the category of coherence as this latter comprises overall competencies. This scenario indicates that vocabulary does not gain meticulous attention as some teachers have the inclination to treat language development as a sole undivided skill.

![Basis of language](image)

**Fig. 20.** Graph illustrating university teachers’ preference for the most relevant element in language.

Fig. 21 indicates the monthly amount of words that teachers at University of Magallanes consider when expanding students’ vocabulary. Self-evidently, as university students have solid background in English language they expect them to acquire more lexical elements, over eighty words. Yet, other teachers consider eighty and twenty words. This last compact size is not optimal for university students as they are inured to learning more words in different subjects, at least this quantity is thought as effectively learned for future production, and not only for assessment in the subject.
Fig. 21. Monthly desired vocabulary range professors want students to learn.

Fig. 22 illustrates the approach that university teachers give to vocabulary teaching at University of Magallanes. They significantly agree on both direct and indirect approaches as the former implies to clarify conflictive elements and potential misunderstanding, whereas the latter is conveyed through the teacher’s own speech, skills development and students’ own progress to successful language.

Fig. 22. Graph indicating university teachers’ method towards vocabulary teaching.
Table 20 indicates the lexical elements that predominate in university teachers’ classes. With a clear predilection to synonyms, phrasal verbs and idioms, teachers demonstrate their high expectations to include as many words of different nature as possible in their classes. This assurance suits the Lexical Approach; after all, phrasal verbs and idioms require knowledge on collocations. Even though the latter does not present the majority of preferences through the previous selection, it is tacitly noticed that students assimilate collocations to some extent. Poly words should be given more emphasis though, as their singular but complex nature has relevance in solid English vocabulary management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical elements</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synonyms</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False cognates</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrasal verbs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neologisms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idioms</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collocations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poly words</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20. Table showing university teachers’ preferences for the lexical items taught.

Table 21 shows the strategies used by university teachers to deal with grammar. Notwithstanding there is no broad agreement, they mostly lean to employ strategies which involve indirect focus on grammar structures, such as reading comprehension, comparing and transformation. On the other hand, traditional techniques like translation, gap-filling and multiple choice in which there is direct exposure to dissimilar grammar contents are given scant attention.

It can be noted in Table 22 the different strategies that university teachers at University of Magallanes employ in order to increase vocabulary development. Like the Lexical Approach tenets, academic teachers acquiesce in the use of chunking and various types of texts to promote optimal vocabulary management. Therefore, tutors at UMAG are pursuing similar trends which
are ad hoc with contemporary ideas from international teachers, proving their updated knowledge on lexical treatment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading comprehension</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap-filling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple choice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 21. Table showing university teachers’ preferred strategies to teach grammar.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text-based work</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games, riddles, etc</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture-based work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-play</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chunking (grouping words)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word analogies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual redefinition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 22. Table showing university teachers’ preferred strategies used to expand students’ vocabulary*

Finally, *Fig. 23* shows the method that university teachers draw onto to correct their students’ errors. Reformulation is clearly distinguished among marked preferences as it actively promotes reflection and indirect learning construction. It is followed by saying the right version which is peremptory when students’ flaws have to be emphasized so that they no longer occur again. After all, they will probably correct the same mistakes in their forthcoming performances as school teachers.
CONCLUSION

In short, this research plainly showed how vocabulary is still an ultimate challenge for both students and teachers at all levels in which the English language is a core subject. On one hand, students are defying the cumbersome task to learn vast groups of words and on the other, teachers are coping with the exhaustive search for the proper methodology to lessen students’ worries when they run across new items. On the whole, students not only performed poorly on the tests, but their results are contrary to what teachers contended as well. This nightmare scenario leads to supporting the assumption that the Lexical Approach has not been implemented yet, as traditional approaches appear to persist in the local educational system.

Elementary schools reflect a sobering reality. Students raging from 5th to 8th grade possess more concrete knowledge on compound words than collocations. At its simplest, students are able to recognize compounds as these lexical elements immediately evoke close associations with the equivalent words of their mother tongue. Indeed, inasmuch as compounds were primarily in their open forms, students had no difficulty relating them to their personal experience because cognates in their combinations made them more noticeable. As for collocations,
elementary students did not achieve a fair result on the grounds that the use of collocations seems to be an individual discipline which has been apparently postponed until secondary level.

However, a similar situation prevails in secondary schools. In spite of the fact that the word collocation is alleged to be firstly named at this level, students’ results reveal that it is still a technical term whose recognition requires previous pedagogical knowledge. As a matter of fact, secondary students could barely encode collocations which include basic vocabulary related to everyday expressions, with monosyllabic words and cognates. These characteristics outline most students’ reality: they access to word meanings as they bear more similarities to their first language. This promotion to translation obfuscates collocational awareness as students are not notified with their existence. Translation can only become beneficial when there is growing consciousness of collocations and their variations in different languages. Without having students thinking in English and familiarized with the idiomatic aspects within the target language, it is by no means possible to institute a perceptible change in the school system.

Unfortunately, university students endure similar inconveniences in their expertise in the language. Even though most of them recognized the types of lexical elements that every word and expression belong to, the broad difference of accuracy among their choices blurs the rigid distinctions in collocations, idioms and compounds. This early indication of the misunderstanding of key lexical terms displays that students not only are partly oblivious to their existence, but also that they have not engaged constructively in their learning development. Assuming that this substantial knowledge gap is due to either teachers’ oversight or students’ idleness, it is imperative to remedy this deficiency; otherwise it is likely to become cyclical throughout the career and the students they instruct thereby. This dire situation is exacerbated when the research conducted reveals a pattern of low collocational recognition along the four years of contact with English, demonstrating that university students are not able to distinguish intermediate-level collocations in their different shades of meaning. The ills of this situation reside in the little emphasis that academic teachers have placed on vocabulary, as they underline the importance of coherence over words. If this problem lingers it is highly suggested to incorporate a workshop about lexical development as an adjunct to minimize students’
weaknesses; after all, these students will become teachers who can encounter students with high level of English in their classes someday.

Conversely, teachers seemingly pursue nuances of the Lexical Approach after considering vocabulary as an indispensable tool to succeed in SLA. In general terms, most of the teachers manifested a tendency towards not sticking to a rigorous syllabus, relying heavily on textbooks and regarding grammar as an essential constituent of the language. All the same, this pioneering overview fails when teachers’ reality is contrasted to the students’. Apparently, what teachers claimed was their unshakable convictions rather than a plain unvarnished truth. This retorted reality evinces teachers’ interests and conscious or unconscious knowledge on how the Lexical Approach can be applied; however, they eventually prioritize their students’ disciple out of the growing lack of commitment with the subject. Moreover, both school and university teachers do not provide central focus on collocations and poly words as other lexical items like synonyms or phrasal verbs bear more relevance. This fact indicates the degree to which students are unconscious of the process of chunking, albeit it is an activity which a great deal of teachers exploit in the development of vocabulary.

Finally, despite certain limitations skewed in the finals results it is certain that any difficulty can be overcome when knowledge is factual. These low results do not intend to lay the blame on teachers, their institutions or the Chilean educational system, but to reflect on the learners’ necessities so as to enhance their level of English. These major breakthroughs seek to hearten teachers to raise awareness of chunking as a new inside mechanism to process vocabulary in students’ minds and promote the teaching of collocations from the beginning as general content is covered.
FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Vocabulary reveals the essence of human being. In fact, words serve as the bridge to unite minds, hold and orient a conversation. Without words people could not communicate with the world, share their discoveries or express their emotions. Words open doors; not only to a new future, but also to a professional, spiritual, moral, psychological and cognitive development. As a matter of fact, words facilitate the expansion of knowledge as they record what others have ever stated. Luminaries like Socrates, Aristotle and Plato have inspired millions of people through thoughtful vocabulary; the legacy of distinguished writers’ magnum opuses by Chaucer or Shakespeare have spanned throughout centuries owing to their word power; presidents’ impassioned speeches have persuaded myriad listeners by their remarkable eloquence in their vocabulary choice, and so on. Words change as people change. Nonetheless, a limited vocabulary impairs communication as it leads to people’s vain efforts to engage in social improvements. The dominance of vocabulary in every social aspect has marked people’s progress in a globalized world, in which word mastery is not only required in a first language, but most importantly in a second language.

This conception pinpoints the compelling reason for having schools promoting vocabulary teaching of a second language, especially English which has gained worldwide respectability out of being the business, legal and technical language which all people manage in any inner corner of the world. Yet, whether in a native or a second language the acquisition of words is a holistic, empirical and never-ceasing process. The full exposure with nature permits vocabulary to grow and evolve with age as it takes place after unwieldy mental procedures. Be that as it may, words of wisdom may simplify the world or render it more complex if the speaker intends to attain, particularly in the English language which possesses more than 500,000 words. This vast word range has turned English into the most powerful tool to spread motifs, feelings and worthwhile ideas through books, poems, songs or any other means which give prominence to the teaching of its vocabulary.

However, acquiring an intensive vocabulary range in English primarily depends on the effective acquisition of the speaker’s first language. Even though first language acquisition
conforms to certain accepted conventions, it is an intricate process per se. Interaction with peers and the environment have proved to be fundamental in the growth of language, given that first words derive from accurate imitation provided by parents and caregivers who stand for a model to pursue for children. Thus babbling, cooing, gurgling and first inchoate words take shape through constant polish with direct instruction, affective caring, body language and the unconscious realization of proper language functions, structures and patterns that the child assimilates as he or she grows. Throughout this pathway vocabulary is activated by burning desires to convey what the body demands from the immediate environment, culminating at the age of seven when children are able to transcend their lexical limitations.

In such being the case, the seven-year old child or any human being with lexical cognition has the option to continue developing their first language or incorporate a second one to their broad repertoire of skills. As a matter of fact, learning vocabulary is one of the initial steps to learn a second language, albeit the last step towards vocabulary is never reached as words never cease to emerge. There is a host of factors which can militate against the productive approach to vocabulary in the second language, especially those limitations that originate from intrinsic nature like motivation, age, the background in which English learning is occurring and the overall level of cognition. For example, a twenty-one-year old student majoring in English translation would steadfastly insist on learning twenty words about tourism, whereas a fourteen-year old student learning actions verbs to move on to the next grade would not have the same motivation to enrich their lexicon as the purpose varies. Despite multifold theories veraciously seek to unveil the long-standing mystery behind SLA, most of them coincide in the approach given to vocabulary. Lexis in a second language resides in the quality of input and the direct focus on competences which ensures language success. When the input abounds with words and concentrates on a specific skill then vocabulary development becomes imminent.

On the contrary, when words are misunderstood in a second language the English speakers’ messages are likely to fail to the extent that their performance nullifies the effort. Remembering words has always challenged ESL speakers; however, there is a diverse array of methods which contributes to effective vocabulary recognition, production and storage. These methods fall into million EFL teachers’ hands who earnestly strive to enhance the teaching of
English. Whether or not words are the main focus of such methodologies, learning English vocabulary has been mainly attributed to committing words to memory by tedious and dull mental repetitions. This fact reflects students’ dismay when learning English, which has been grammar-based for long irrespective of the staunch refusal to constant challenging exercises which measure nothing but memory. To ameliorate this situation teachers have struggled to move swiftly on to the following rung of the teaching ladder. This ladder comprises a wide diversity of methods which intend to impart knowledge through interaction, innovation and outcome-based approaches. One of them has become epoch-making in contemporary English teaching due to its emphasis on the importance of vocabulary is called Lexical Approach.

The Lexical Approach proposes to scaffold learning through the diversion from grammar and single lexical items to group of words called chunks. These chunks are of essence as they carry lexical meaning and contain grammatical notions therein. To spare teachers’ exhaustive construction of own group of words, the Lexical Approach puts forward to direct exclusive focus on multi words, poly words, fixed phrases, idioms and collocations, being this latter the one which deserves sustained attention. Collocations, in their ample indication of language mastery, have maintained alignment with the complexity behind English vocabulary given that their combinations occur naturally without a firm reason or a pre-established rule to follow.

To sum up, the research conducted on the Lexical Approach proved to be efficient to assure that this set of premises has not been applied in Punta Arenas. Even though there are signals which indicate strenuous effort to implement it, they are of no avail as the Ministry of Education designs the general syllabus, placing emphasis on other language contents like functions rather than lexis. This fact has been reflected on the textbooks provided to teachers, which although have shifted to a content and project-based layout, they place decreased prominence on the use of chunks. This plain truth juxtaposes with the fact that English is considered as any other scientific discipline made out of prescribed rules, strong reasons or logic in the Chilean education. Therefore, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and functions of language are seen as individual subjects, requiring considerable time to cover them all. In order to bear fruitful results teachers have to pervade the notion which attests that vocabulary does not come from dictionary words, but in clusters. As this mental lexical processing commences to take
place in the Chilean education, teachers will find out that language is not a multifaceted system but an integrative holistic universe.

Despite the fact that teachers’ grounds for selecting an approach in Punta Arenas was beyond the scope of research, it is highly suggested to continue developing the foundations of the Lexical Approach. This importance lies in the nature of collocations and how they are likely to balance poor results in language performance and accuracy, currently measured by the test SIMCE from the Ministry of Education.
References


Barra, G. (2009). Oral narrative skills of Chilean preschool children. Amherst, MA: PorQuest, LLC.


The following achievement test constitutes the research instrument for an investigation conducted on the application of the Lexical Approach at schools in the city of Punta Arenas by trainees of the career of English Pedagogy currently majoring in the field. Having this test accomplished, it is intended to locate testers’ major weaknesses and strengths in the management of English collocations. Ultimately, it is guaranteed to secure your privacy as it is fully appreciated the honest fulfillment of this test.

LEVEL: 5th and 6th

I. MATCH THE WORDS WITH THE PICTURES.

1. _____ STOP
2. _____ ACCOUNT
3. ALARM _____
4. ADDRESS _____
5. HIGH _____
6. POLAR _____
7. ______ FRIES
8. _____ PARK
9. POST _____
10. TEA _____

II. FIND THE PARTNER WORDS WHICH THE OTHERS NEED IN THE WORDSEARCH.

1. _____ the newspaper
2. _____ TV
3. _____ a bike
4. _____ the guitar
5. _____ to music
6. _____ friend
7. _____ family
8. _____ hair
9. _____ cars

Thanks!
The following achievement test constitutes the research instrument for an investigation conducted on the application of the Lexical Approach at schools in the city of Punta Arenas by trainees of the career of English Pedagogy currently majoring in the field. Having this test accomplished, it is intended to locate testers’ major weaknesses and strengths in the management of English collocations. Ultimately, it is guaranteed to secure your privacy as it is fully appreciated the honest fulfillment of this test. **LEVEL: 7th and 8th**

I. CIRCLE THE CORRESPONDING VERBS.

1. Mrs. Frankinson is (doing / making) a course now.
2. I’ll (do / make) a phone call to remind you to bring me the letter.
3. My mother always (does / makes) the dishes right before lunch.
4. Please, (do / make) your homework.
5. Peter (does / makes) money to survive.
6. You always (do / make) mistakes in your tests.
7. Would you (do / make) me a favor when you go out?
8. Patty and Elle (did / made) a promise not to break their friendship.
9. My neighbor (did / made) a lot of noise last night.
10. You will have to (do / make) your bed before you go to school.

II. COMPLETE THE CROSSWORD WITH WORDS WHICH GO TOGETHER. LOOK AT THE CLUES GIVEN.

**ACROSS**
3.- They ___ photos to animals on vocation.
4.-They ___ crazy when you touch that picture.
6.- Irving and I ___ fun when dancing at parties together.

**DOWN**
1.- Women ___ hats when go to formal ceremonies.
2.- Backstreet Boys ___ famous in the 90’s.
5.- My grandparents always ___ ill in winter.

III. WRITE THE NUMBER OF EACH ADJECTIVE IN THE LINES OF THE WORDS BESIDE.

1. DEEP  ___Taste  ___Smell
   2. HIGH  ___Price  ___Love
   3. STRONG  ___Speed  ___Rain
   4. HEAVY  ___Sleep  ___Traffic
The following achievement test constitutes the research instrument for an investigation conducted on the application of the Lexical Approach at schools in the city of Punta Arenas by trainees of the career of English Pedagogy currently majoring in the field. Having this test accomplished, it is intended to locate testers’ major weaknesses and strengths in the management of English collocations. Ultimately, it is guaranteed to secure your privacy as it is fully appreciated the honest fulfillment of this test.

**LEVEL:** Secondary

I. **UNSCRAMBLE THE WORDS FROM 1-10 AND MATCH THE COLUMNS TO COMPLETE COMPOUND WORDS.**

1. RAYFI ________________  ALARM
2. NTTCCOA ________________  FOOD
3. RZABE ________________  BREAKDOWN
4. NJKU ________________  TALE
5. REONUVS ________________  BAG
6. GTNNEORAE ________________  GAP
7. LUBARRG ________________  STEEL
8. AGHWNIS ________________  MACHINE
9. GELEPSIN ________________  LENS
10. NAITSLESS ________________  CROSSING

II. **CIRCLE THE CORRECT ALTERNATIVE.**

1. After pregnancy, British singer Adele is expected to (**release/free/let out**) her second album.
2. When my elder brother got home after two years he was received with a (**tender/warm/unique**) welcome.
3. “As Tommy always misbehaves in classes, I will have to (**take/have/sit**) a chat with his father who is actually a friend of mine” – thought the teacher.
4. Selena always falls ill in wintertime. She has a (**painful/hurting/sore**) throat twice a month.
5. Most of the 27-year-old singers died because they (**drank/took/had**) excessive amounts of drugs.
6. Girls are allowed to only (**wear/use/brush**) ponytails in this school.
7. I learnt to (**dictate/say/tell**) the time when I was 4. I didn’t (**do/make/take**) much effort on it because I am a (**fast/rapid/quick**) learner.
8. Living in Italy (**carried/brought/took**) chaos in my life. After (**winning/earning/gaining**) a good salary I started eating a lot of food. At first, I had (**large/wide/broad**) shoulders but now I have such a fat tummy!
9. Visiting Greece was the best decision I ever (**made/took/did**). Those (**antique/ancient/aged**) monuments were awesome, but what got on my (**mind/nerves/head**) was that I couldn’t get in (**contact/touch/connection**) with any other visitor after that.
10. “Just (**say/tell/speak**) the truth! In that way you can kill two birds with one (**shot/bullet/stone**) and finally (**appear/act/star**) in that film”

III. **FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE MISSING WORDS.THERE ARE TWO EXTRA WORDS.**

ROME – GIFT – PRESENT – GOAL - LESSON

1. _____ wasn’t built in a day. So take your time.
2. If it’s not the computer of your dreams I advise you not to look a _____ horse in the mouth.
3. I learnt my _______. I will never hit my brother again.
The following achievement test constitutes the research instrument for an investigation conducted on the application of the Lexical Approach at schools in the city of Punta Arenas by trainees of the career of English Pedagogy currently majoring in the field. Having this test accomplished, it is intended to locate testers’ major weaknesses and strengths in the management of English collocations. Ultimately, it is guaranteed to secure your privacy as it is fully appreciated the honest fulfillment of this test.

**LEVEL**: Further studies

I. PUT THE EXPRESSIONS FROM THE BOX INTO THE CORRECT CATEGORY IN THE TABLE BELOW:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPOUND</th>
<th>IDIOM</th>
<th>COLLOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>make a mistake</td>
<td>a storm in a tea cup</td>
<td>live music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. UNDERLINE THE COLLOCATIONS IN THE TEXT.

When I left university I made a decision to take up a profession in which a I could be creative. I could play the guitar but I’d never written any songs. Nonetheless I decided to become a singer-songwriter. I made some recordings but I had a rather heavy cold so they didn’t sound good. I made some more, and sent them to a record company and waited for them to reply. So, while I was waiting to become famous I got a job in a fast-food restaurant. That was five years ago. I’m still doing the same job.
III. MATCH THE BEGINNING OF EACH SENTENCE ON THE LEFT WITH ITS ENDING ON THE RIGHT.

1. He’s having __________ his duty.
   a) his duty
   b) doing
   c) making
   d) taking

2. He’s taking __________ a lecture
   a) his duty
   b) doing
   c) making
   d) taking

3. He’s giving __________ a party
   a) his duty
   b) doing
   c) making
   d) taking

4. He’s making __________ an exam
   a) his duty
   b) doing
   c) making
   d) taking

5. He’s doing __________ ongoing progress
   a) his duty
   b) doing
   c) making
   d) taking

IV. CIRCLE THE CORRECT ALTERNATIVE.

1. Economists have detected a ____ rise in sales this year.
   a) sharp
   b) strong
   c) both
   d) none

2. Mark’s parents ____ with pride once he got his degree.
   a) filled
   b) glowed
   c) swelled
   d) none

3. You’d better warm up. It’s ____ cold outside.
   a) utterly
   b) hugely
   c) bitterly
   d) completely

4. The president is ____ aware of the damages caused by the hurricane.
   a) greatly
   b) fully
   c) wholly
   d) none

5. Leaving Punta Arenas was a ____ decision to make.
   a) large
   b) big
   c) vast
   d) all of them

6. Before the universe ____, time and space did not exist.
   a) began
   b) started
   c) commenced
   d) all of them

7. Whenever you purchase a new car bear in mind it has a ____ engine.
   a) strong
   b) powerful
   c) potent
   d) forceful
Dear teacher,

The following questionnaire constitutes the research instrument for an investigation conducted on the application of the Lexical Approach at schools in the city of Punta Arenas by trainees of the career of English Pedagogy currently majoring in the field. Having this set of questions accomplished, it is intended to spot local teachers’ knowledge/awareness in the management of English collocations and the use of multi words. Ultimately, it is guaranteed to secure your privacy as it is fully appreciated the honest fulfillment of the following questions.

Instructions:

a) Read every question carefully.

b) Mark with an X the option that better fits your answer.

c) If doubtful seek assistance in the person who delivered the questionnaire.

A. PERSONAL INFORMATION:

SCHOOL / INSTITUTION: _____________________________________________________

GENDER: _____ Male  _____ Female  AGE: ______

AMOUNT OF YEARS IN EDUCATION: ______________________

LEVEL YOUR TEACHING CURRENTLY ATTENDS TO:

_____ Elementary  _____ Secondary  _____ Further studies

B. TEACHING FOUNDATIONS, APPLICATION OF STRATEGIES AND USE OF RESOURCES

Express your high extent of satisfaction regarding teaching resources and hands-on strategies by the identification of assessment criteria provided as follows:

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

1  Strongly agree  2  Agree  3  Disagree  4  Strongly disagree  5  No opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTORS</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My teaching comprises the ongoing search for sources and materials which guarantee to fulfill students’ necessities.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. My teaching involves the search for updated bibliography to support my pedagogical principles.</td>
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<td>3. My teaching attempts to activate different learning styles or types of intelligence.</td>
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<td>4. My teaching includes a series of critical reflection on my performances.</td>
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<td>5. My teaching leads myself to look for information about training courses so as to improve my performances and enrich my professional development.</td>
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<td>6. My teaching encourages me to utilize pedagogical resources that the</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>My teaching handles and applies numerous strategies to accomplish my students’ goals.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>My teaching includes further reflection on my students’ results.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>My teaching fosters interaction among students.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>My teaching focuses on the students’ active participation than my role as a main character.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>My teaching acts as a facilitator to the students’ progressive construction of knowledge.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>My teaching mingles dynamism with the assumption that students need certain freedom to gather knowledge.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>My teaching seeks to reinforce the premise that experience is the best resource for students to develop learning competences.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>My teaching involves teaching grammar as a receptive skill.</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>My teaching places heavier emphasis on communicative functions than grammar contents.</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>My teaching characterizes for creating a SLA atmosphere in which the target language usage is more important than the mother tongue.</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>My teaching promotes enough input to stimulate students’ language learning and successful communication.</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>My teaching rigidly sticks to a determined syllabus, even though it comprehends that language bits are emergent.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>My teaching rather pays attention to mistakes than the attempts to convey meaning.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>My teaching heavily relies on a textbook as it is the main teacher’s tool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>My teaching gives prominence to the process rather than the product.</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>My teaching obeys to the existence of different levels so my language scope and the tasks given are limited.</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>My teaching principles hold that vocabulary carries more meaning than grammar.</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>My teaching is based on a specific content so that the vocabulary is not treated in isolation.</td>
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</table>

### C. TEACHING FORAYS INTO THE LEXICAL APPROACH

1. Do you know what the Lexical Approach consists of? ____YES  ____NO

2. From 1-4, 1 being the first one and 4 the last one, which skills do you train the most?
3. Which three characteristics are the most important when describing the learning process?

- Involving
- Progressive
- Planned/unplanned
- Receptive
- Holistic
- Experimental
- Collective
- Individual
- Empirical
- Reflective
- Conscious/unconscious

4. What is the basis of language as far as you are concerned? Mark one alternative.

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Coherence
- Accuracy and performance
- Pronunciation

5. What is the monthly vocabulary size that you expect your students to learn?

- Less than 20 words
- 20 words
- 40 words
- 80 words
- over 80 words

6. Is vocabulary taught directly or indirectly? _______________________

7. Which lexical elements do you include in your vocabulary teaching?

- Synonyms
- False cognates
- Phrasal verbs
- Neologisms
8. What are the strategies applied to teach/assess grammar?

_____ Translation
_____ Matching
_____ Sorting
_____ Comparing
_____ Reading comprehension
_____ Matching
_____ Transformation
_____ Checking
_____ Gap-filling
_____ Multiple choice

9. What are the strategies applied to teach/assess vocabulary?

_____ Text-based work
_____ Translation
_____ Games, riddles, brain teasers, etc.
_____ Picture-based work
_____ Role-play
_____ Chunking (grouping words)
_____ Paraphrasing
_____ Word analogies
_____ Contextual redefinition

10. How do you correct students’ mistakes?

_____ Body language
_____ Repetition
_____ Reformulation
_____ Saying the right version

Other (specify): ________________________________