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REALIA AND VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG YOUNG LEARNERS

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**Punta Arenas, Chile
Diciembre, 2008**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Infinitas gracias a todos ustedes que nos han brindado su inspiración, apoyo e incondicionalidad en todo momento. Por que sus palabras y presencia son nuestra fuente de inspiración. Es por esto, que no nos conformaremos con dormir en la meta, sino que nos quedaremos aún de pie...

ABSTRACT

This research was carried out in order to determine in what ways Realia contributes to vocabulary learning among young learners. A comparative analysis on the issue of Realia in contrast with other techniques is made regarding the ways vocabulary is taught and learnt. The research shows Realia as an effective technique that can be applied when learning newly presented vocabulary. It is, therefore, necessary for teachers to consider Realia when teaching since it offers a comprehensible input to young learners, and at the same time it is an effective methodological tool to learn new vocabulary.

INTRODUCTION

For many years philosophers and experts in education had the belief that the teaching of vocabulary was based only on the study of grammatical structures and rules rather than the acquisition of new lexical items. Clearly, vocabulary learning was omitted and suppressed by predominant and out-of-date approaches, which were influenced by grammar and translation procedures solely.

Regardless the fact that the teaching of vocabulary can seem a very daunting process especially when talking about a foreign language , many linguists and methodologists have attempted to give emphasis on how it should be taught and learned. The main reason of the latter is that the ways in which words are presented by the teacher, could have a great impact on students' motivation to learn a foreign language. Evidently, these days, the real concern has to do more with the function of a language and its practical and everyday use for communication. In other words, the techniques used to present vocabulary should contribute to make learning more enduring and long-lasting. Along with that, no word should be taught isolated, but in a context where students can understand the real use of the word and make

connections with other words belonging to the same group or inserted in the same situation.

Essentially, the context and frequency of words in a language is what teachers should consider at the time they present a new word or group of words.

CHAPTER 1

1. BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION

- In what ways does realia contribute to vocabulary learning among young learners?

1.2. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- Determine in what ways realia contribute to vocabulary learning among young learners

1.3. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- What are the advantages / disadvantages of realia?
- In what way does realia affect motivation intrinsically or extrinsically?
- How effective can the use of realia prove to be a good technique?
- In what ways can realia be used as an effective methodology?
- How closely are the senses related to vocabulary learning by means of realia?

1.4. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of realia
- Determine the impact of realia on young learners' motivation
- Determine the effectiveness of realia as a technique for vocabulary teaching
- State the ways where realia could be applied as a methodological tool
- Identify the relationship between the five senses and the vocabulary learning process by the use of realia

CHAPTER 2

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“You don't understand anything until you learn it more than one way”.

Marvin Minsky , 1987

2.1. WHAT IS LEARNING?

In accordance with Anthony Lewis (2007), “learning” is the **“cognitive process of acquiring skill or knowledge”**. Under this statement, learning is perceived as the action of gaining information not only from the classroom realm, but also from practical events in everyday life. By doing this, the new information becomes part of the way individuals think or behave.

Teachers are the ones who have the possibility to identify observable behaviours from learners when teaching. This viewpoint is supported by Robert Gagne (1965), a well-known American teacher, who held that conditions of learning are the various sets of observable circumstances that can be set up for learning to occur. Furthermore, Gagne distinguishes between two types of conditions, *“internal and external”*. However, when

talking about teaching, the internal conditions are associated with learners' own "*states*", in which attention, motivation and recall are included.

For Gagne, **“learning is progressive, and in that it occurs progressively it does so by way of a learning hierarchy”**. As a progressive process, learning is developed steadily through a series of states that can be arranged into different stages. In order to illustrate what has been mentioned previously, Gagne proposed the phases of learning, which are presented as follows:

- Phase I: Receiving the stimulus situation
- Phase II: Stage of acquisition
- Phase III: Storage
- Phase IV: Retrieval

From the list of phases shown above, it can be inferred that learning occurs starting with the first reactions to the stimulus, which is a response to something new. Being the stimulus received primarily, individuals get the knowledge, skills, etc. from what has been introduced. In order to make clear the concept of storage, Gairns (1986) suggested that some insights must be considered so as to get an understanding of how the learning process works: **“It seems that learning new items involve storing them first in our short-**

term memory, and afterwards in long-term memory. First, retention in short-term memory is not effective if the number of chunks of information exceeds seven. Therefore, this suggests that in a given class we should not aim at teaching more than this number. However, our long-term memory can hold any amount of information”. From the statement indicated formerly, the new skill or knowledge should be put into practice, due to the fact that by doing this, the new information is incorporated into the long-term memory, otherwise it may be lost. When learning is accomplished, learners are capable of accessing information in memory.

Bearing in mind Piaget's Stages of Development (1936), emerges the notion of restructuring the teaching methodologies and techniques towards a teaching aimed at the manner something is taught rather than what is taught. This premise is supported by Piaget as the cognitive development of human beings, in which individuals learn through memorable experiences by interacting with the environment. The ways in which these experiences are encountered or presented to the individuals are essential in their cognitive and learning process.

In accordance with what has been stated previously, there are many theories and methodologies which have been used in language teaching.

Some EFL¹ methodologies have based their implementation on the use of certain kinds of materials, depending on approaches in language teaching.

The following chart demonstrates this association of techniques, relying on the approach or method applied:

METHOD OR APPROACH	MATERIALS
Audiolingual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tapes • Visuals • Language laboratories
Total Physical Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No basic text • Voice, actions and gestures are required in initial stages • Materials and media required later
The Silent Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colored rods • Color-coded pronunciation charts
Community Language Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No textbook • Materials are developed as course progresses
The Natural Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realia
Suggestopedia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text with literary quality • Tapes • Classroom fixtures • Music
Communicative Language Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic Materials • Task-based materials

Table One: Materials required for the main approaches and methods of foreign language teaching. (Taken from “*On materials use training in EFL teacher education: Some reflections*”, by Adriana Gonzalez, 2006)

¹ English as a Foreign Language

When talking about foreign language learning, the Natural Approach was developed by Krashen and Terrell (1983). They maintained that this approach emphasised “Comprehensible Input”, and at the same time, it made a distinction between ‘acquisition’ and ‘learning’. Being the former regarded as **“a natural subconscious process and the latter a conscious process”**. On top of that, these theorists argued that the language learning process could not result in acquisition. The Natural approach whose basis was on meaning, not form, emphasizes the idea that the more visualization and recreational activities are applied in the language classroom, the better learners acquire a foreign language on the basis of a natural progression.

2.2. TEACHING VOCABULARY

Undoubtedly, in foreign language teaching learners and teachers are incessantly in contact with vocabulary.

As stated by Hatch and Brown (1995), vocabulary is defined as **“the list of words that speakers of a particular language use”**. This means that the use of vocabulary plays a predominant role in order to make communication successful no matter what language is being referred to.

2.2.1. Lexical Approach

For years philosophers and experts in education had the belief that the teaching of vocabulary was based only on the study of grammatical structures and rules rather than the acquisition of new vocabulary. The Lexical Approach was developed by Lewis in 1993. Lewis emphasizes on **“the importance of vocabulary as being basic to communication”** i.e. it concentrates on developing learners’ proficiency with lexis, or words and words combinations. When referring to lexical items, they are associated with *“words and phrases”* used in a particular language (A. S. Hornby, 2000). Thanks to this approach, from then on, vocabulary was regarded as the core of foreign language teaching, owing to the fact that, as maintained by this author, **“language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar”**. This statement refers to the idea that words convey the meaning of a message clearly, but not their structure. Following the ideas established by Lewis and his Lexical Approach, there is a taxonomy which classifies lexical items.

Lewis's Taxonomy

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

In accordance with this taxonomy, lexical items are subdivided into five categories, based on their functions in a given language.

This research will be focused on the learning of the first category of the taxonomy, "Words", as single units, due to the fact that these are linked to vocabulary learning primarily.

A common definition of "word" taken from Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2000) is **"a single unit of language which means something that can be spoken or written"**.

By “words”, Hatch and Brown (1995) mean **“not only items consisting of one word, but also strings of words which together form one lexical item”** such as idioms or expressions which are distinctive characteristics of any language.

2.3. PRESENTING NEW VOCABULARY

What does it mean to know a word? Ur (1996), Cameron (2001) and Nation (2001) have discussed what it means to know a word. These authors state that there are three aspects of knowing vocabulary, which are commonly mentioned: form, meaning, and use. **“Form refers to spelling, pronunciation, and to word parts (i.e. prefixes and suffixes). Knowing the meaning of a word means knowing what object or idea it refers to. It also means knowing what other words are associated with it. Knowing the use of a word means knowing the grammatical patterns it occurs in, knowing what other words it occurs (i.e. collocates) with, and knowing which contexts (e.g. topics or situations) the word is used in”**. It can be deduced that what involves identifying a word is not only how to write or pronounce it, but how to use it properly, depending on the communicative intention involved. Making allowances for these three aspects could be thought as the first step to become a competent speaker in a particular language.

When presenting a new content, teachers should bear in mind that they have to study the form, meaning and use of words very carefully and the way they are presented to learners beforehand. The reason of the latter is that it is the first moment when learners are faced with these new words.

2.4. TEACHING TECHNIQUES

According to Gairns and Redman (1986), there “**are several techniques that favour the long-term retention of newly-learned vocabulary**”. In fact, numerous researchers have referred to procedures in order to aid learners to store enduringly vocabulary.

As proposed by French (1984), Gairns & Redman (1986), Schmitt & McCarthy (1997) there are several techniques that can be used to teach and present new lexical sets. These techniques are described as follows:

- **Illustrations and pictures:** Words can be represented through illustrations and pictures to teach their meaning more directly. These words are concrete, not abstract.

- **Mime, expression and gestures:** By using gestures, mime, and facial expressions words can be presented, especially the ones that refer to any action or movement.
- **Contrast:** Words presented are compared in order to show a clear difference between them.
- **Guessing from context:** Words are presented in a given context. Learners guess or grasp the meaning of these words from context.
- **Translation:** The meanings of new words are presented in students' first language.
- **Explanation:** New words are given through verbal explanation or a statement that makes them easier for students to understand.
- **Realia:** The words are presented by the use of real objects.

Giving consideration to the list of techniques previously presented, “realia” is seen as unusual and appealing, because the presentation of new vocabulary is introduced by means of real objects which are brought into the classroom. But, what does it make it noticeable or distinctive from other teaching techniques?

2.5. REALIA

According to Nunan (1999) Realia is defined as **“objects and teaching props from the world outside the classroom that are used for teaching and learning”**. Under this statement, realia is considered as real objects, which are used to aid in practicing a new language, as a way to present meaningful examples from the real world. Along with this idea, the British Council site states that **“realia refers to any real objects we use in the classroom to bring the class to life”**. In this way, realia is seen as objects used as a way of teaching, considering it as examples or aids of a foreign language.

Richards and Platt (1998) regards realia as **“actual objects and items which are brought into a classroom as examples or as aids to be talked or written about and used in language teaching such as: articles of clothing, kitchen utensils, items of food, etc.”**, while Zukowsky and Faust (1997) contemplate it as **“concrete objects and the paraphernalia of everyday life”**, i.e., realia is understood as an infinite number of things from the real realm. Nevertheless, there are certain contradictions over this term because realia is considered as an “authentic material” in EFL terminologies by some authors, associating it with audio-visual resources (real objects,

pictures, photographs, etc.), thus dealing with a misconception of this phrase in language teaching.

Firstly, Cancelas and Ouviaña (2003) mention that these concepts, realia and authentic materials, are dissimilar due to their various uses in the language classroom and especially, their ambiguous definitions. Furthermore, these two authors exemplify realia as a **“tailor’s box which constitutes the means of easy use, minimal cost that does not need any kind of previous preparation”**, because it includes a variety of resources, such as: toys, bags, pieces of clothing, photographs, maps, puzzles, menus, letters, magazines, timetables, films, etc. Secondly, Berwarld indicates that **“Realia refers to real objects, specimens or artifacts – not copies, models or representations- from a particular culture. Indeed, authentic materials are designed for use in real life situations, not for used as instructional tools. Realia and other authentic materials provide a wide range of printed and spoken messages that can be used as primary or secondary material in a foreign language classroom”**, by saying this, this author associates realia with a foreign culture jointly.

Regarding the definition of authentic materials, Hubbard et al. (1987) describe it as **“samples of language, which are not designed for language teaching purposes”** while Gower et al. (1995) define it as **“texts**

which are taken from newspapers, magazines, etc. and recordings of natural speech taken from radio and television programmes”. From these definitions, it can be concluded that realia refers to a wide range of materials, of any kind, which are brought to the classroom with the aim of doing innumerable activities based on language learning goals, whereas authentic materials are ideally used in order to work with socio-cultural aspects of a foreign language, by **“making the learner and the language studied come together through samples of real life situations in places, where this language is spoken”** (Cancelas and Ouviaña, 2003).

Realia is closely related to the Natural approach. Accordingly, realia comes to be indispensable for the effectiveness of language acquisition, because the implementation of these materials create a more natural setting, where the learner learn a foreign language, much like a child learns his native language in early stages. Considering this, through the use of realia, language acquisition is generated naturally, thus representing a paramount advantage.

2.6. REALIA: A METHODOLOGICAL TOOL

Nowadays, for a great number of language teachers, “teaching” is not an easy task, especially for those who teach in EFL classrooms. Among the reasons that emerge from this statement are included: large classes, the English language is not deemed as a second language, students’ motivation towards the learning of English is not the best, and finally the techniques used by the teachers are not the most appropriate in relation to the students’ needs, that is to say, their learning styles, type of intelligence, social background, and disabilities are not considered as prominent elements, in some cases.

In point of fact, students learn more when information is presented in a variety of modes than when only a single mode is used. As maintained by Stice (1987), **“students retain 10 percent of what they read, 26 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they see and hear, 70 percent of what they say, and 90 percent of what they say as they do something”**. Under the results of these data, it can be deduced that the way how vocabulary is presented is regarded as crucial, therefore diverse techniques must be applied in order to promote the students’ involvement and engagement in it.

Oxford R. L. (1990) held that teachers should balance their teaching methods, somehow structuring the class so that all learning styles are simultaneously or at least sequentially accommodated, so as to achieve effective foreign language learning. Furthermore, to motivate students to learn, teachers may contextualize vocabulary in situations where students can relate to in terms of their personal experiences, rather than simply as more vocabulary to memorize. It can be assumed that by linking the students' experiences with their own learning process guarantees an effective storage of newly learned vocabulary.

The following comparative chart shows some of the most common techniques that can be used with realia. This chart includes the name of the technique, the learner's role, teacher's role and the sort of materials used in each activity.

COMPARATIVE CHART

Technique	What do learners do?	What does the teacher do?	Materials used
Role-play	Learners perform a situation with the aid of materials	Teacher creates a scenario, in which learners have to perform accordingly.	Materials promote and encourage communication in a real-like setting.
Concentration	Learners, instead of saying their own names, say the name of an object, which is given them.	Teacher gives any object to learners and waits for their answers.	Any object (such as: classroom objects or items of clothing)
Drilling	Sitting in a circle, learners pass on object to their classmate on their left. They say the name of the object, and then they pas the object to the next learner.	Teacher monitors how the students work on the activity.	Objects from everyday life, such as fruit, utensils or articles of clothing.

2.7. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FIVE SENSES AND THE VOCABULARY LEARNING PROCESS BY THE USE OF REALIA

"Our sensory systems are like little scientists that generate hypotheses about the world"

Mobshom, 1997

First and foremost, it is exceedingly important to mention that for decades many methodologists and linguistics have carried out numerous investigations concerning the method how students learn. A good illustration of the aforementioned facts is the well known Doctor Howard Gardner. Gardner contends that **"Students learn in ways that are identifiably distinctive."** In addition, he adds that **"The broad spectrum of students would be better served if disciplines could be presented in a number of ways and learning could be assessed through a variety of means"**. Gardner means that every single student is different as well as their learning process.

Nevertheless, currently in our society some teachers take for granted those investigations. For that reason, Gardner states that **"The educational systems assume that everyone can learn the same materials in the same way and that a uniform, universal measure suffices to test student**

learning". That is the reason why it is extremely important to take into account the significance of learning as well as teaching styles when talking about foreign or second language education in order to achieve the purpose that teachers are looking for.

In addition to this, there are five dimensions of learning style described by Felder, R. M. (1988, 1993): **"sensing and intuitive learners, visual and verbal learners, active and reflective learners, sequential and global learners, and finally inductive and deductive learners"**.

It is widely known that realia refers to tangible or real objects that teachers use in the classroom to bring the class to life. Those objects are useful to teach motor and cognitive skill. Besides, they are appropriate for use not only with individuals, but also with groups. Realia may be used to present new vocabulary realistically but it may be equally important that the presentation corresponds with the way learners represent information internally, so that teachers can utilize those objects to help students' understanding. In accordance with Heather McGuire (2005) **"Realia can enliven a classroom, using the senses to involve the audience in what is being presented. The learning is natural and not forced. By using realia, a teacher can create an environment that is rich enough to compete with the common "This is boring!" complaint"**.

It is important to mention that the human body uses five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) to get information about the world around it. Regarding to this, there are two dimensions that have relation with the five senses that students use when learning. The first one is the sort of *sensing learners*. Here, Jung (1971) introduces *sensation* “**as the way in which people are likely to perceive the world**”. In other words, sensing entails observing together with gathering data through the senses. It is vital to stress that sensors are prone to relying on memorization as a learning strategy and are more comfortable learning. Apart from that, sensors tend to be concrete, methodical and they like experimentation.

The second category, which includes touching, tasting and smelling, plays a significant role in language teaching, due to the fact that in most EFL classrooms the lessons are taught in the student’s first language and with little active use of the foreign language. Apart from that, the lexical items are taught in the form of isolated word lists, and often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the foreign language into the students’ first language, and vice versa.

Since the five human senses are seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling, it is suggested that, to be effective, vocabulary teaching should therefore contain elements that appeal to the students’ senses.

2.8. THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF REALIA

One of the challenges of teaching English as a foreign language is the lack of innovatory materials, in fact; Domke establishes that **“a solution to the scarcity of effective materials is the implementation of creative classroom activities that move beyond reliance on textbooks”**. The implementation of real objects, in the foreign language, in accordance with the Department of Language and Cultural Equity, can **“enliven a classroom, by using the senses to involve the audience in what is being presented. The learning is natural and not forced”**. This idea agrees with the Natural approach conception, previously stated, in which the learners are presented and taught a foreign language in a more realistic way, i.e. there is nothing artificial or contrived about objects, by which young learners are taught in an authentic setting, all to be performed on the spot of the class. It can be deduced that the main asset of realia is that it makes the learning experience more memorable for the learner, because realia comes to be innovatory and unusual when it comes to language acquisition.

According to Gairns and Redman (1986), there **“are several techniques that favour the long-term retention of newly-learned vocabulary”**. Indeed, realia is primarily included in a category of teaching techniques to present vocabulary, associated with *“Visual techniques”*. In accordance with Gower et al. (1995), when presenting new vocabulary, realia often **“illustrates meaning more directly and quickly than through verbal explanation”**, *i.e.*, this technique gives the opportunity to cut down unnecessary teacher talking time, because it helps the students to understand the meaning of new language as well as to convey the meanings and context in a clearer way. Apart from that, Hunt & Beglar (1998) states that realia **“can help learners because they not only hear the word but also receive visual reinforcement”**. Taking into account visual aids, French (1983) states that **“real objects are better than pictures whenever we have them in the classroom”**, it is believed that when referring to real objects in the classroom, it makes allusion to windows, doors, walls, floors, desks, clocks, etc. This author promotes the idea that real objects are more accessible and cheaper than any other resource.

Needless to say, French (1983) says that **“real objects attract the students’ attention and aid concentration”**, the latter could be supported by the idea that realia adds variety and interest to a lesson and helps to make the associated language memorable.

There are a few exceptions when using realia in the foreign language classroom. The exceptions, according to French, are articles of clothing, because teachers should be careful about calling attention to clothing which is worn by members of the class. The reason of the latter is that such attention may make the wearer feel uncomfortable.

CHAPTER 3

3. STUDY

3.1. REALIA AS SUBJECT OF STUDY

At the beginning of this research, bibliography was needed in order to develop a general understanding of the topic. Primarily, the search was focused on finding a research in which realia has been subjected to study so as to verify its effectiveness. It was then when Hamed Al-Azri's research appeared. This study was similar to the one to be carried out in this research. The study consisted of the following characteristics:

First of all, as its main objective the research sought to compare different strategies for presenting vocabulary for secondary learners. The theoretical framework included a definition of "word" and also what it means to know a word, the types of meaning relationships, for instance, synonyms, antonyms, superordinates and hyponyms. It also included a range of strategies for presenting new vocabulary, such as, using objects (realia), illustration and pictures, mime expression and gestures, contrasts, guessing from context and translation. In the method, the author explained the aim of the study,

which was to compare the effectiveness of different strategies to introduce new vocabulary to Omani learners of English in a Second secondary class. Then, it is given a brief description of the participants, whose ages range from fifteen to sixteen years old. All the students were boys who were in their eighth year of learning English. From them, twenty learners were chosen in accordance with their mid-term exam marks in English, which were the highest.

Among the characteristics of this study, the students were divided into four groups of five students each. Using different techniques, the students from all the groups were taught five lexical items. It is important to remark that these words presented in this study were new for each student. The day after the presentation of the new words, the students were asked to complete a written test.

Then, the author gave an explanation of the procedures followed to introduce the new words for each group by the use of the following techniques:

- Pictures
- Explaining in English

- Explaining in Arabic
- Realia

These techniques were applied separately, depending on the group selected for each one. As it was formerly mentioned, the students had to answer a written test, which consisted of a gap-filling exercise with the definitions of the newly-presented words. An example of this activity is presented as follows:

- **Sentence 1:** “_____ is a large vegetable with smooth purple skin. It is grown a lot here in Oman” (answer: an egg plant)

From the results obtained from this study, it could be deduced that the most effective technique to present vocabulary was explanation, i.e. explaining in English. The author argued that these results suggested that the use of English to introduce new vocabulary was more effective than the other techniques applied. The factors that influenced this analysis were the advantages of explaining words in English, including the simplicity to remember the words presented and recall them during the test.

The limitations, according to Hamed Al-Azri, influenced the results previously described, such as:

- Different level of vocabulary knowledge.
- The range of vocabulary was limited to five words from the same lexical group.
- Teacher's preference for one of the technique used.

This study was concluded with the idea that there was an importance on pre-tests, the influence of the teacher and testing procedures jointly.

Considering the elements, procedures, data collection and analysis of the aforementioned study, it has been decided to carry out the same research but changing the assessment and the tabulation of the results.

From the work presented by Hamed Al-Azri, it was found some advantages and disadvantages that influenced the decision to base this study on his research, especially the suggestions and conclusions made.

Concerning the assets of the previous research, the patterns to be followed were:

- A limited number of students
- Words presented in context
- Groups divided with the same number of students
- Different techniques for each group
- One day-after test

Among the drawbacks to be considered in order to improve the learning and assessment procedures were:

- No pre-test taken so as to know the students' level of vocabulary knowledge
- No relationship between the test taken and the way of presenting new vocabulary
- The influence of the teacher regarding to testing procedures, i.e. the teacher has a personal preference for one of the techniques used.

Regarding Hamed Al-Azri's work, the present research will make use of the same techniques that were used in his study. Along with that, it will take the most valuable elements of that study and at the same time this research will try to improve those areas which were deficient or had some weaknesses. Likewise, the former study made use of the quantitative method which will be adopted by the current investigation, but supported by a different author.

3.2. METHOD

According to Kuhn, Thomas (1961) **“the quantitative research is used to develop and employ mathematical models. Theories and hypothesis pertaining to natural phenomena. The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connections between empirical observations and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships. It is also used as a way to research different aspects of education”**. Therefore, this research was applied in accordance with the quantitative procedures, for the reason that through a test, the results are expressed by means of mathematical expressions (numbers and percentages), making the research easier to understand for readers.

3.2.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to compare and identify the effectiveness of realia in comparison with other techniques for presenting new vocabulary.

3.2.2. PARTICIPANTS

The students who took part in this research were in their fourth year of English from different primary schools in Punta Arenas. Their ages ranged from ten to eleven years old. It is important to mention that these mixed courses consisted of students from different social classes.

The total number of learners was sixteen. All the students were members of different courses from an English workshop offered by The Universidad de Magallanes. They took these workshops one hour a week on Saturdays.

3.2.3. DATA COLLECTION

The participants were divided into four groups of five students each. Every group was introduced with seven words by using a different technique.

Group 1: Translation

The teacher wrote the new vocabulary on the board. On one side he wrote the words in English and on the other he did it in Spanish. After presenting the new vocabulary the students were asked to write down the list of words and their equivalents on their notebooks.

Group 2: Explanation in English

The teacher wrote the new vocabulary on the whiteboard. After that, every single word is taught through verbal explanation, i.e., what the word is used for. Having presented the words the students are asked to write the words on their notebooks.

Group 3: Realia

The teacher brought some real objects to the classrooms, which were used to present the new vocabulary. As he showed the objects he passed them around for the students to touch them and see them more closely. At the same time the pronunciation of the objects was being practised.

Group 4: Pictures

The teacher posted some flashcards on the whiteboard. After that, the teacher wrote the words on the board while practising oral drilling.

The new words presented were:

- Scarf
- skirt
- belt
- tie
- trainers
- coat
- sweatshirt

3.2.4. INSTRUMENT

As stated previously, the purpose of this research is to prove and verify the effectiveness of realia in comparison with other widely used techniques, and how the newly-presented vocabulary is learnt by the use of these techniques. This test had as its main goal to confirm the effectiveness of these techniques by means of a drawing test. A drawing activity was chosen

and selected for the reason that it allows students to answer freely, i.e., students are not being assessed on their writing and listening, and speaking skills strictly when learning a foreign language, but expressing their own understanding of words through images created by themselves. Secondly, these students are used to working on these kinds of activities, in other words, among the activities performed by them during the English workshops, drawing activities come to be their most efficient working style, in fact, it is distinguishable the way most of the students indicate or demonstrate their own comprehension of the world around them.

In contrast with the study carried out by Hamed Al-azri, the drawing activity is seen as “neutral”, which means that it is neither focused on, nor it favors any specific technique used when presenting new vocabulary. However, when students are asked to write words, there are numerous factors that can be assessed or influence their performance, such as: punctuation, spelling, word structure, grammar, among others. When pronunciation is being assessed, this includes elements, namely stress, intonation, prominence, etc. Nonetheless, when they have to draw an image of a word, the chief objective is to corroborate whether students have assimilated the new vocabulary. Besides, it is relevant to mention that every single student has a different image of a particular word therefore each drawing made by the students was correct as long as it was closely related to

the word taught. By stating this, all the drawings are different or exclusive although they convey the same meaning or portray the same concept.

At the end of the lesson all the groups were given the same test based on the dictation-drawing activity justified formerly. This test was designed so as to check if the students had identified the new vocabulary. In this test, the students were asked to make a drawing of the words the teacher said. In this way, the students illustrated their own concepts of the words.

3.2.5. ASSESSMENT

In this test, the students were asked to make a drawing of the words said by the teacher. In this way, the students illustrated their own concepts of the words.

Each technique had to reach more than 70% to be considered as effective. The 70% represented five correct answers out of seven. In this case, the 70% was deemed as achieved, and under this percentage was considered as not achieved.

The following chart below gives the name of the group and the number of participants:

GROUP	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Translation	Two boys and two girls
Explanation	Two boys and two girls
Realia	Two boys and two girls
Pictures	Two boys and two girls

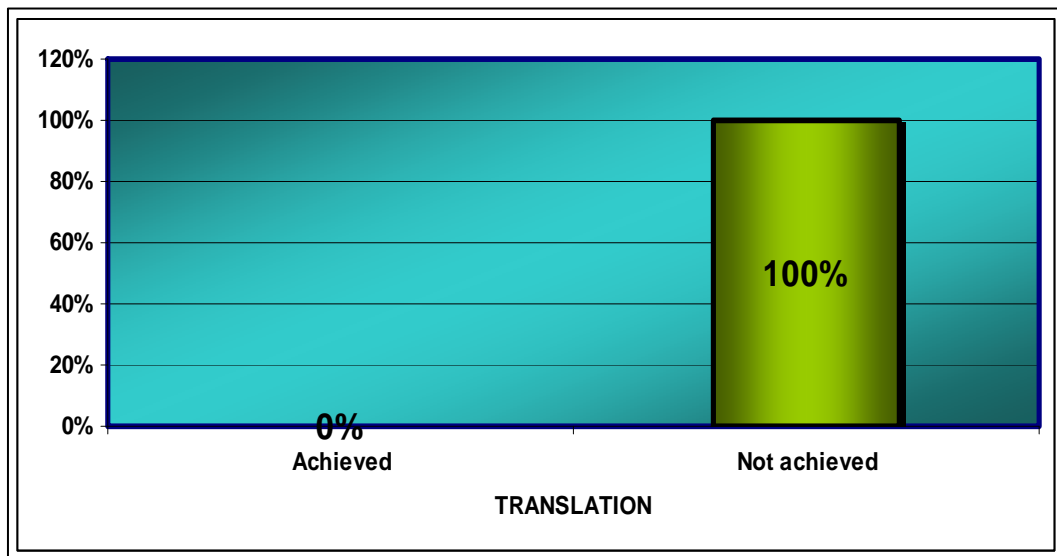
Table Two: Composition of groups by gender and number of participants

3.3. RESULTS

3.3.1. TECHNIQUES

In accordance with the results obtained on the drawing test, the following graphs show the students performance depending on the techniques used for each group.

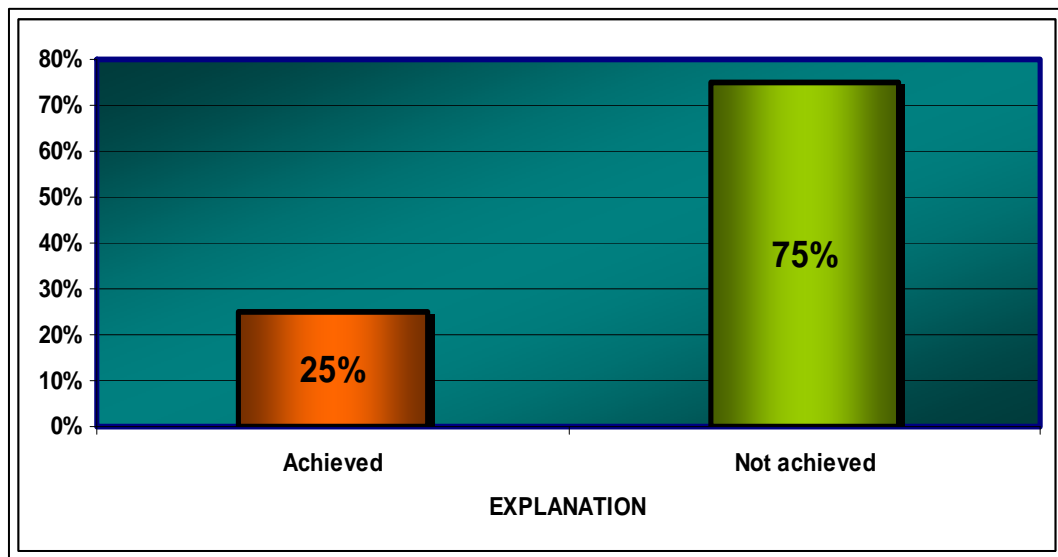
3.3.1.1. GROUP 1: TRANSLATION



Graph One: Students' performance in the drawing test having used the translation technique.

All the students who were taught the new vocabulary by the use of translation could not achieve the 70% expected. Most of their drawings demonstrated the meanings of these words, but the level required in this test was not showed

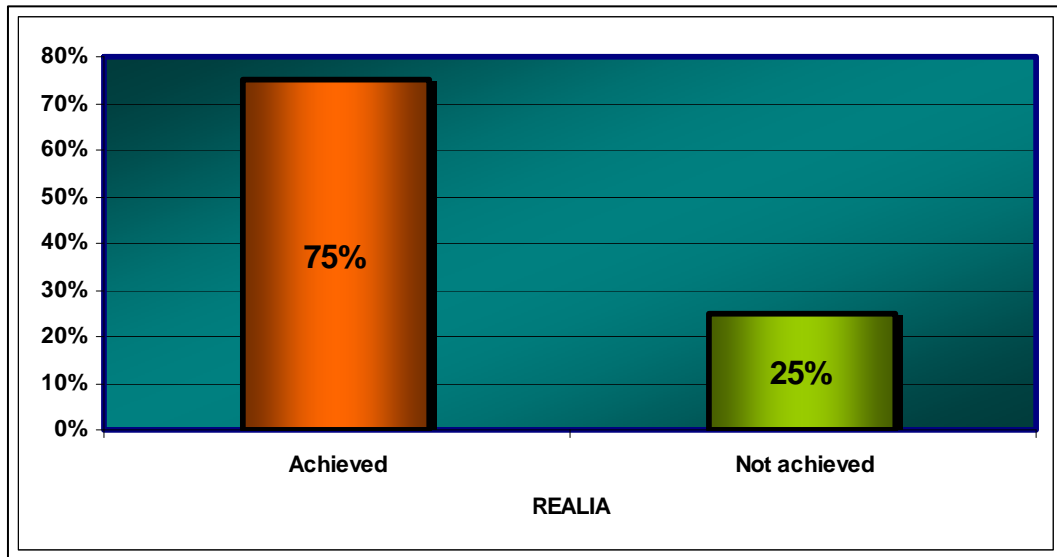
3.3.1.2. GROUP 2: EXPLANATION



Graph Two: Students' performance in the drawing test having used the explanation technique.

One out of every four students, who were taught the new vocabulary in English, could make the meaning of the newly-presented words clear enough in the drawing test as expected, i.e. his score was reached in accordance with the 70% required.

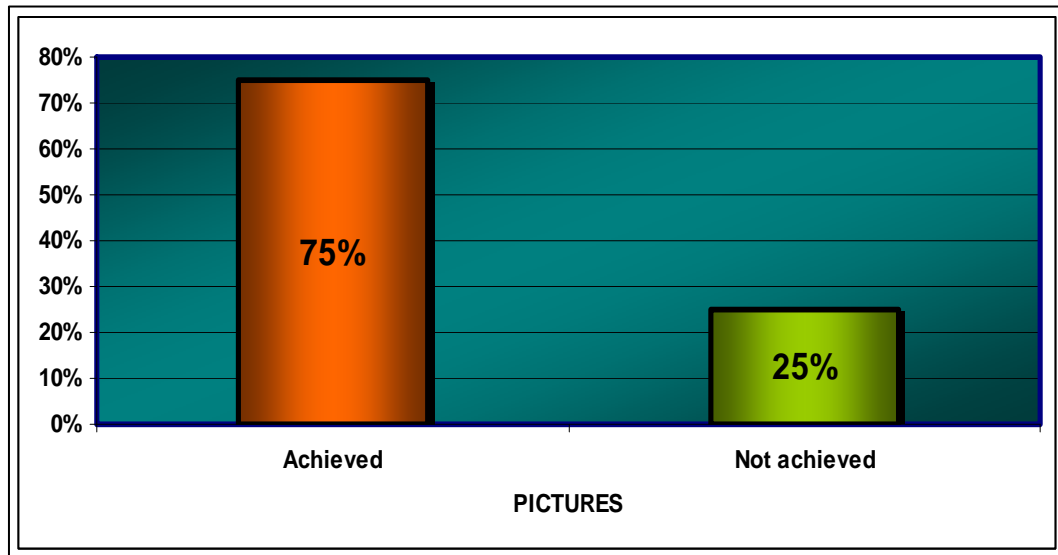
3.3.1.3. GROUP 3: REALIA



Graph Three: Students' performance in the drawing test having used the Realia technique.

One out of every four students in this group could not reach the expected level of exigency in the drawing test. In contrast, the rest of the students were able to illustrate the meaning of the new words by the use of Realia, in other words, their drawings elucidate the meaning of the newly-introduced vocabulary.

3.3.1.4. GROUP 4: PICTURES



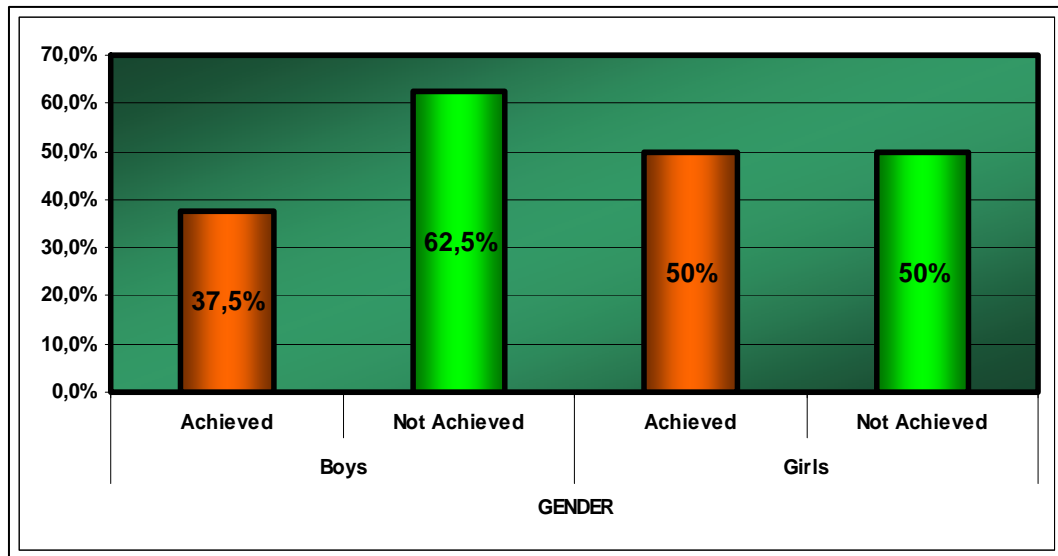
Graph Four: Students' performance in the drawing test having used the Picture technique.

Having being taught the new vocabulary through pictures, one out of every four students could not accomplish the expected level (70%) in their answers. Most of the students could demonstrate their understanding of the new vocabulary in this drawing test.

3.3.2. GENDERS

As it was explained when describing the instrument for this study formerly, the students were assessed in agreement with the expected level, therefore, the answers that were seen as achieved were those that reached a 70%:

As presented below, this study examines the influence of genders in the results obtained in the drawing test. The aim of this comparison is to demonstrate the effect of genders when learning new vocabulary among young learners. It is important to mention that all the students were classified as male and female groups, without considering the techniques used when presenting the new words to them.



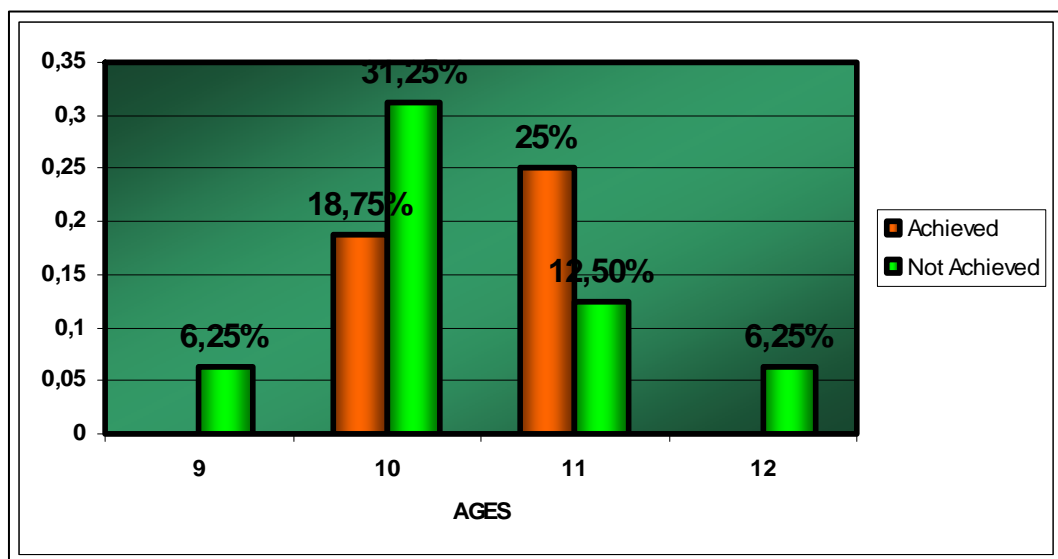
Graph One: Students' performance in the drawing test classified by gender.

Certainly, there is equality in relation to the results obtained among girls, considering those who achieved and did not achieve the expected level in the drawing test coincidentally. The boys' performance and results were obtained asymmetrically, in other words, there was a significant difference between those boys who accomplished and the ones who did not accomplish the expected level, being the latter the group that led the category in number of participants.

Comparing the number of girls and boys who reached the expected level in the drawing test, the former exceeded by 12,5% the number of the boys. On the other hand, the number of boys who could not accomplish the respective level established at the beginning of the test was 12,5% higher in comparison with the number of girls who did not achieve it.

3.3.3. AGES

The following graph shows a comparison of results. However, this time the contrast will be made in relation to the students' ages who participated in the test, not minding their gender. The main purpose of this comparison is to determine how influential the age of students can be when learning new vocabulary.



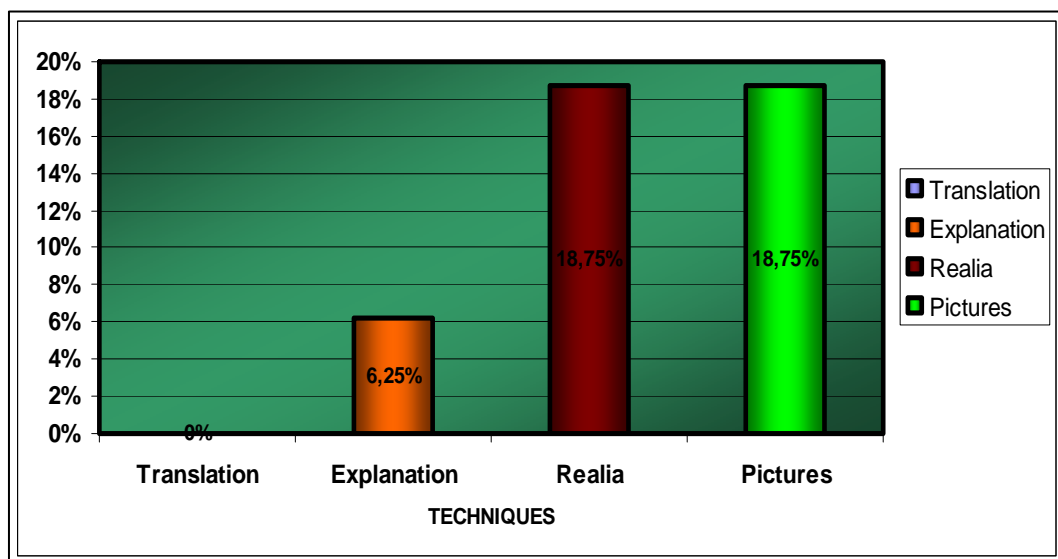
Graph One: Students' performance in the drawing test classified by age.

With reference to the information presented in the graph, it can be said that the students who are eleven years old obtained the best results in comparison with boys and girls of the same study but of different ages who attained a lower level of achievement.

Concerning the students who are eleven years old it can be inferred that they accomplished 6,25% better in comparison with the ten-year old students. Probably, the presence of just one student of nine years old could be the reason for this tendency. Similarly, the same happens with the 12-year old category since it also has just one student. Apart from that, it can also be said that the difference between the ten- year old group who achieved and the ones who did not achieve the level is directly proportional to the percentage of 11 year-old students who did not accomplish the level of exigency required.

3.3.4. ACHIEVEMENT PER TECHNIQUE

The following graph presents the percentage of accomplishment per technique individually, that is to say, it does not include the aspects analyzed earlier on.



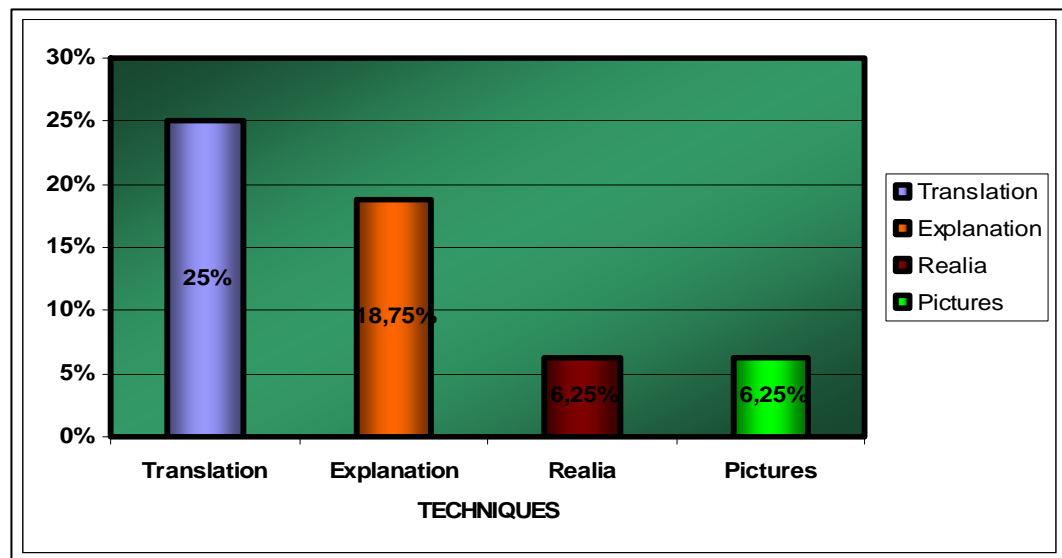
Graph One: Students' performance in the drawing test classified by techniques.

First of all, it can be clearly seen that fifty percent of all the techniques tested, obtained the same percentage of achievement, whereas the third best technique got a twelve point five percent lower results. In addition to that, it can also be highlighted that the percentage of achievement of realia and picture techniques is three times better than the explanation.

On the other hand, it can also be said that none of the students who worked with the translation technique could reach seventy percent which at the same time represents a twenty five percent of not achievement of all the techniques. Besides, it can also be stated that the seventy five percent of all the techniques was over six point five percent of achievement.

3.3.5. NON ACHIEVEMENT PER TECHNIQUE

The following chart below shows the percentage of students who did not achieve 70% in the test.



Graph One: Students' performance in the drawing test classified by techniques.

As it can be seen from the chart, one half of all the techniques, that is to say, realia and pictures, was over the six percent of not achievement. On the other hand, the explanation technique group attained twelve point five percent higher in comparison with the groups of realia and pictures. In relation to the translation group, it can be stated that it reached six point five percent of non achievement more than the explanation technique. Of course, the difference of non achievement between the translation and the explanation technique is directly proportional to the percentage of non achievement accomplished by the realia and pictures groups respectively.

CHAPTER 4

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

From the results obtained in the test, it can be inferred that realia and pictures represented the most effective techniques when presenting new vocabulary throughout this study. On the other hand, translation and explanation techniques produced unsatisfactory results, in other words, they did not reach the expected level of effectiveness.

Since realia and pictures provide visual reinforcement to the learning and presentation of unknown lexis, it could be assumed that this advantage is a decisive factor in the results provided.

Considering the characteristics of the participants of this study, it is important to mention that the effectiveness of visual resources among young learners is reliable. Probably, these students are used to this kind of resources, thus representing helpful aids for learning and storing newly-presented vocabulary.

Apart from that, the success of the aforementioned techniques could be related to the students' intrinsic motivation to attend the workshops every Saturday morning. Moreover, most of the students who attended the

workshops were visual learners. This was assumed because of their personal preference for getting information visually rather than written. It is valid to mention that the favorable results for realia and pictures could not be attributed to a specific personality trait since there are a wide variety of personalities in the class.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION

Vocabulary teaching has evolved through the time and old approaches and techniques have given way to new ones. Firstly, the teaching of grammar has proved ineffective at the moment of communicating with other people. Secondly, the use of new techniques for the improvement of learning of vocabulary has put the emphasis on dynamism and the use of as many senses as possible in the learning process.

Concerning techniques, there is one, which through the findings of this study, has proved to be a reliable and effective one. That is the case of realia, which can make use of different real objects to present vocabulary. Besides, it not only makes use of visual reinforcement, but also it can include more senses, such as smell or taste depending upon the object that is being presented.

It is relevant to say that in the light of the facts mentioned above, realia has not been given the importance it should have as an effective technique. Indeed, realia cannot simply be regarded as one more technique, but it should be recognized as a valid and efficacious means for the students to

store the words easily in their minds. In addition to that, the relevance of realia lies also on the motivation that a real object can produce on students in comparison with other techniques such as, pictures or translation.

Furthermore, it can be said that realia can be of great use when teaching a language, however, when teaching a foreign language it is far more advantageous due to the fact that by using realia it is not necessary to make use of translation or the students' mother tongue to make them understand the words being taught.

Needless to say, realia gives a context by itself owing to the fact that the teacher uses real objects which makes the experience be more worth remembering for the students thereby easier to be recalled from their memories.

In this research, considering the results obtained from the drawing activity, it could be concluded that factors such as gender and age had a significant effect on the effectiveness of the teaching techniques when presenting new vocabulary to the students. A clear illustration of this would be to mention that, in this case, girls attained a better performance in comparison with the boys. What can be deduced from this statement is that girls could have the ability to retain new information more lastingly than boys

do. Additionally, girls' motivation to learn new vocabulary about clothing was a considerable element that affected the results of this research considerably. Considering the age of the students, it could not be concluded that realia or other techniques are effective among young learners, notwithstanding ten and eleven-year-old students demonstrated their ability to learn the newly-presented vocabulary not minding the techniques applied.

Coincidentally, those techniques that obtained results under the expected average were the ones which are commonly used in most of the language classrooms at the state schools in Punta Arenas by the teachers of English. On the other hand, realia and pictures are the techniques that are often left aside by teachers when presenting new vocabulary in these schools. The reason of this is that the collection and creation of these resources are regarded as drawbacks, due to the lack of time, financial support and large classes, who are taught by these teachers.

After analyzing the results and findings from this research, it is important to state the effect that the teacher's preference has over a particular technique could influence at the moment of learning new vocabulary as well as the results obtained on the tests. Furthermore, it has a great importance the concordance that must exist between they way the students learn and

how the teacher could use the different teaching methodologies in order to achieve better results.

Another important fact to reflect on is that the results that were categorized as “Not Achieved” do not mean that the students were not able to learn new vocabulary or answer the tests appropriately, but the required level that was used to corroborate the effectiveness of the techniques was high. If it is true, the test applied could have been assessed with a 60, 50, or 40%; nonetheless, the results would have been totally different and with this all the techniques would have been deemed as effective. As expressed formerly, it was decided to have a 70% in the assessment, due to the fact that it is an equitable percentage when trying to find out the real effectiveness of the techniques, especially Realia.

On balance, it would of great significance to take into account the results produced in the findings as well as the facts which were contemplated throughout the theoretical framework regarding the Realia technique, because this data could be useful to the way this technique is applied in the language classroom. By doing this, teachers can motivate the students to learn a foreign language with objects which are known by them because those objects are familiar and of everyday use. Realia becomes a thread

between the student's own knowledge and what it could be totally new for them when learning a language.

5.1. RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the findings analyzed in this research, it is important to state that the materials used in the presentation of new vocabulary in EFL classrooms play a predominant role. The reasons of the aforementioned fact are that the presentation of new vocabulary represent the students' first encounter with these words, therefore it should be memorable and motivating. By saying this, teachers are the ones in charge of selecting and searching innovating, interesting and appropriate resources in accordance with the students' needs, reality and level of English.

Additionally, the number of words presented is essential in the vocabulary learning process as well, owing to the fact that these should not exceed seven; otherwise this process could be more demanding for the students.

What is more, nobody learns in the same way, the reason being that every student has his own learning style. Notwithstanding, the use of visuals aids and realia promote reinforcement of newly-presented vocabulary,

connecting their own experience or knowledge of the world, which is relevant to considerate when teaching a foreign language.

It is worth mentioning that the bibliography plays a significant role at the moment of starting a research. The main reason of this is that the whole investigation must be supported by authors who are deeply involved or have made researches on the topic. To develop this thesis efficiently, the books and research papers that were used were mainly taken from web pages, due to the fact that the University library did not have a list of references that could be associated with the investigation subject, but also that could aid to carry out the present research satisfactorily. Therefore, it is necessary to suggest Universidad de Magallanes to increase the amount of books which are connected with teaching and methodological procedures and techniques.

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Taking into consideration the lists of references mentioned before, another research can be done on the basis of the present one. Nevertheless, this study could be developed in order to discover new facts or information about Realia. It is important to bear in mind that Realia is not only closely related to young learners, but also to learners of all ages.

An interesting study could be done with the purpose of identifying the use that is given to the Realia technique when presenting and learning new vocabulary in language classrooms, especially where learners are offered

technical careers by universities, institutions or technical schools. Besides, ESP² is widely connected with presenting vocabulary in context with the aim of providing professionals with the necessary tools in order to perform on their respective areas of study satisfactorily, such as medicine, architecture, business, tourism, engineering, and journalism, among others.

Another aspect that could be regarded as a complement to study, verify or corroborate the effectiveness of realia is the procedures applied in this research. However, the time and characteristics of participants could be modified; for instance, the participants may belong to the same school, grade and social background, or have the same level of vocabulary knowledge in a prolonged period of teaching. By changing some elements of the present research, this can lead to corroborate the effectiveness of the realia technique in different educational settings.

² English for Specific Purposes

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX Nº1: RESULTS OF DRAWING TEST

GROUP 1: TRANSLATION

Nº	Name of the Students	SCORE	EFFECTIVENESS
1	Constanza Zamora	4	NOT ACHIEVED
2	Enzo Estay	3	NOT ACHIEVED
3	Andrés Ojeda	4	NOT ACHIEVED
4	Catalina Villegas	3	NOT ACHIEVED

GROUP 2: EXPLANATION

Nº	Name of the Students	SCORE	EFFECTIVENESS
1	Susan Gonzáles	5	ACHIEVED
2	Milenka Nazar	3	NOT ACHIEVED
3	Matías Contreras	4	NOT ACHIEVED
4	Sebastián Barría	3	NOT ACHIEVED

GROUP 3: REALIA

Nº	Name of the Students	SCORE	EFFECTIVENESS
1	Lucas Prieto	6	ACHIEVED
2	Paula Uribe	4	NOT ACHIEVED
3	Valentina Sepúlveda	5	ACHIEVED
4	José Mansilla	5	ACHIEVED

GROUP 4: PICTURES

Nº	Name of the Students	SCORE	EFFECTIVENESS
1	Ricardo Caibul	4	NOT ACHIEVED
2	Constanza Sepúlveda	5	ACHIEVED
3	Joselyn Oyarzo	6	ACHIEVED
4	Manuel Hernández	5	ACHIEVED