

LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH MAKING CONNECTIONS

Making connections through realia and storytelling for vocabulary learning with EFL

preschoolers

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Abstract

This exploratory qualitative study explores how the use of realia and storytelling facilitates EFL children to make experiential and cognitive connections between real-life objects and words. The research was carried out in a private female school in Bogotá, Colombia with 12 A1 level preschool learners. This study is framed upon grounded theory and mixed-method approaches (statistical analysis) to analyze data. Data was gathered through different instruments such as a pre- and post-test, a focus group, recorded conversations, a teachers' journal, and students' artifacts. Findings revealed that the strategy of making cognitive and experiential connections and the use of realia along with storytelling not only engaged students in learning, increased the number of words they produced and helped them make connections between objects and words to learn new vocabulary but also allowed them to use oral language spontaneously.

Key words: Making connections, realia, vocabulary learning, preschool learners.

Resumen

El presente estudio cualitativo explora cómo el uso de realia y storytelling facilita a los niños hacer conexiones cognitivas y experienciales entre objetos de la vida real y palabras. La investigación se llevó a cabo en un colegio femenino privado en Bogotá, Colombia con 12 estudiantes de preescolar cuyo nivel es A1. Este estudio de investigación-acción educativa utilizo un enfoque metodológico mixto (análisis estadístico) para analizar la información. Se tuvo en cuenta diferentes instrumentos para recolectar información como un pre and posttest, un grupo focal, conversaciones grabadas, diario del docente y artefactos de los estudiantes. Los resultados evidenciaron que la estrategia de hacer conexiones cognitivas y experienciales y el uso de realia junto con storytelling hicieron que los estudiantes se comprometieran con su aprendizaje. No solo aumentaron el número de

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palabras que decían e hicieron conexiones entre objetos y palabras para aprender vocabulario nuevo sino que también usaron el lenguaje oral de manera espontánea.

Palabras claves: Conexiones, realia, aprendizaje de vocabulario, estudiante de preescolar.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the study

Different researchers have realized that vocabulary learning is essential for successful second language learning and plays an important role in the development of all language skills (Alqahtani, 2015; Hirsh, 2012; Pique, 2008). In fact, the comprehension of a language depends on the amount of words that are known. For this reason, students need to have enough word knowledge to understand what they read or listen to. In addition, vocabulary helps learners with language production; that is why it is an essential component to determine how much a student is able to communicate successfully (Fortes, 2007). Thereby, learners have to learn enough vocabulary in order to communicate effectively.

Research suggests that the lack of vocabulary competence affects students' speaking skill which is essential for language proficiency. One of the problems that most of the students complain about regarding vocabulary acquisition is that they easily forget the new words they have learned (Seffar, 2015). A similar situation occurred at the institution where this research was carried out; preschool children lacked a sufficient amount of vocabulary to communicate in English. A questionnaire and a criterion-referenced test showed that they did not recognize some of the vocabulary they should know at that level (See 3.3.1.1). Bearing this in mind, this research project sought to analyze how making connections between vocabulary and realia through storytelling influence preschoolers' vocabulary learning, specifically of nouns and adjectives, in order to communicate effectively in English.

Making connections helps students construct knowledge and remember what they have learned (Cross, 1999). In order to have students make connections, realia was chosen

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as an appropriate tool since it helps learners to activate their sensory memory. According to Lutz and Huitt (2003) a stimulus that is not sensed cannot be further processed and will never become part of the memory store. “If new information [in this specific case vocabulary] is not brought into memory in a meaningful way, it will not be stored as memory” (Lutz & Huitt, 2003, p. 4). Moreover, storytelling is also a helpful tool for preschoolers since it provides them with an enjoyable learning environment as children can take part in the activity and develop their imagination and creativity. Stories have significance in the teaching of literacy as well as in the development of speaking and listening skills (Fox Eades, 2006). Therefore, using realia and storytelling can provide students with a remarkable sensory experience that allows them to make connections when learning new words.

1.2 Rationale for the study

1.2.1 Rationale for the problem of the study

1.2.1.1 Needs analysis and problem statement

This research was conducted at a private school in Bogotá, Colombia. It is a bilingual school in which English is taught as a foreign language in preschool, elementary and high school and French as a third language in elementary school. The study involved a group of preschoolers consisting of twelve 6-year-olds whose English level, according to the Common European framework of reference CEFR, was A1. Regarding the students' needs explained below, although they were eager to learn, they lacked vocabulary to speak in English. In order to support this concern, the researcher decided to take into account two instruments: a questionnaire and a criterion-referenced test.

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The questionnaire (Appendix A) that was applied to the whole group indicated that 85% of the students did not interact with their classmates and teacher in the target language and 90% did not understand teacher's instructions. In terms of motivation, 85% of learners liked the English language and 70% of them wanted to learn new words with different activities. In regard to the criterion-referenced test (Appendix B), the results showed that they did not recognize some of the vocabulary they should know at this level. According to the school curriculum (2017), at this level children should be able to follow instructions in the foreign language with more than two variables, recognize some transitive verbs such as *brush, wash, study, drink, eat* and some vocabulary related to animals, days of the week, weather, numbers from 1 to 10 and food. The results revealed that 35% of the children identified the days of the week and 42% of them recognized vocabulary related to weather. In addition, 42% of the learners recognized some animals in English; 50% of them identified vocabulary related to food, 64% of them knew the numbers from 1 to 10 and 60% recognized some transitive verbs. This study therefore focused on how children can learn new nouns and adjectives so that they are able to communicate effectively in English.

1.2.1.2 Justification of problem's significance

This study focused on increasing preschooler's vocabulary learning in order to improve their oral communication skills in the second language (English). According to Roberts (2009), language development may occur spontaneously through exposure to language; however, it is also necessary to provide language-learning opportunities that involves characteristics that maximize language development (semantics, phonology, syntax, and pragmatics). In spite of the fact that language development involves all the aspects mentioned before, this research focused on vocabulary learning since "vocabulary

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limitations pose a significant challenge for the language and literacy achievement of English learners” (Roberts, 2009, p. 54). Therefore, it could be concluded that the lack of English vocabulary affects learners’ language skills over time.

Campillo (1995) also points out that vocabulary is a very important element within a language since the overwhelming majority of meaning is carried lexically and therefore it is an aspect that should be taken into consideration in both second and foreign language teaching. In her article, she argues that learning a language cannot be reduced to only learning vocabulary; however, it does not matter how well students learn grammar, how well the sounds of the L2 are mastered, without words to express a range of meanings, communication in the L2 cannot occur in a meaningful way. That is why, vocabulary learning was the main focus in the present study.

In addition, people might not think that very young learners have the capacity to learn words every day. However, preschool children learn an average of about three new words in English per day and they learn by listening to a large number of them (Bloom as cited in Roberts, 2009). Thereby, learners need to be exposed to many words in the foreign language and their meanings. Vocabulary learning may even occur particularly quickly for children when they know a word in their mother tongue since all that is required for learning vocabulary is an English label for a meaning they already have (Roberts, 2009). In fact, establishing a link between an L2 form and its corresponding L1 form can make learners aware of the target form and help them memorize easier since the relationship between the two languages is often asymmetrical (Du, 2016). Furthermore, when preschool teachers expose students to the language and use materials and the appropriate strategies that help learners to learn words, children’s vocabulary might increase.

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1.2.2 Rationale for the strategy selected to address the problem of the study

Learning is about making connections either by firing synapses in the brain, the experience of identifying the connections between two isolated concepts or recognizing the connection between an abstraction and a concrete application. Within a cognitive perspective, the mind has a schema or structure that consists of facts, ideas and associations organized into a meaningful system of relationships. Each new event or situation filtered by perception into this schema is connected to the existing structure to create meaning (Cross, 1999). Bearing this in mind, the making connections strategy was selected since learners can construct their own knowledge, relate concepts and understand vocabulary through the mental activity of making connections in their own schemata.

The moments when learning comes alive are when learners can see connections among different facts, situations or concepts. Making connections involves seeing how one thing can stand for another, figuring out differences, similarities and relations. Children begin to make these connections in preschool years and strengthen them throughout their growing-up years (Galinsky, 2010). That is why this strategy was appropriate for the population of this study. In addition, at this age children develop some cognitive capacities such as object and space sense which “are the foundations upon which children have many opportunities to enhance their skill in making connections” (Galinsky, 2010, p. 151).

In order to have students make connections, the researcher decided to use two different tools: realia and storytelling. Realia are objects and teaching props from the world outside the classroom which are used for teaching and learning (Nunan as cited in Paredes, Paredes, Jessica, & Rodrigo, 2008). It was chosen since knowledge that is presented non-linguistically is stored as mental pictures or physical sensations such as sight, sound, smell, touch, taste and movement (Hill & Miller, 2006). Realia was used along with storytelling

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that is defined as an oral activity in which stories are designed to be listened to and, in many situations, participated in (Cameron, 2001). Storytelling provides different opportunities for foreign and second language learning, especially for children since it makes learning interesting and fun. It not only develops imagination, oral and written communication skills, and helps to expand knowledge, but also enhances confidence and self-esteem (Colon-Vila, 1997).

Bearing this in mind, realia and storytelling were considered meaningful tools since they allow learners to make connections between concepts or vocabulary presented in the stories and real-life objects presented in the classroom. The more connections to a single idea, the more likely it is to be remembered (Lutz & Huitt, 2003). In other words, if students make connections to learn new vocabulary; they will remember those words easily.

1.3 Research question(s) and objective(s)

Based on the above findings, the objective of this study is to analyze the influence of storytelling and realia among preschool children aged 6 to 7 in order to learn vocabulary to speak in English. Therefore, the corresponding research question is: *How does using realia and storytelling to make cognitive and experiential connections influence learning of nouns and adjectives amongst CEFR A1 6- and 7-year-old learners?*

1.4 Conclusion

Teaching vocabulary plays an important role when learning a language since it helps to develop not only the productive (speaking and writing) but also the receptive (reading and listening) skills. It is considered an essential aspect of language that leads to success in reading, listening, writing, speaking and in general academic performance (Hirsh, 2012). It can be learned through different strategies and tools. However, realia and

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storytelling were selected since both provide children with opportunities to make connections between vocabulary and real-life objects. Those connections allow learners to understand, remember new words and construct knowledge within their own schemata. In addition, according to Galinsky (2010) making connections is an appropriate strategy for preschoolers since at this stage children start developing some abilities that help them relate different concepts to objects.

In order to demonstrate the importance of the study, it is necessary to review inquiries related to the areas of interest. The following chapter explains in depth how realia and storytelling motivate, engage and help students to make cognitive and experiential connections to learn vocabulary and it indicates the relationship among different studies that have been done regarding vocabulary and making connections strategies by using realia and storytelling. Some of them focus on making connections to learn in different fields and some others focus on using the aforementioned tools in order to increase learners' vocabulary.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As was stated in the previous chapter, the needs analysis indicated that the population taken into account to carry out this research project evidenced a lack of vocabulary to communicate in English effectively. The strategy chosen to address the problem was making connections between real-life objects and vocabulary since learning occurs when learners can see connections among different facts, situations or concepts (Galinsky, 2010). In order to facilitate the process of making connections for the students, the researcher used realia, that is, objects which are not created with the purpose of teaching, and storytelling to engage and motivate students when learning new words.

Bearing this in mind, this chapter presents the literature review related to the constructs involved in this study. These constructs are: vocabulary, defined as the set of words learners understand to speak or read orally (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005); making experiential and cognitive connections; realia and storytelling. In addition, this section presents a discussion of how previous studies have analyzed learning through making connections and how realia and storytelling have been used in order to increase students' vocabulary learning. Those studies provide meaningful insights about this topic; however, none of them examine in depth how realia along with storytelling motivate and engage children to help them make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary.

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2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Vocabulary

According to Newman and Dwyer (2009) vocabulary can be defined as the words we must know to communicate effectively. This definition is a general view related to the lexicographical approach in which vocabulary is seen as a set of words. However, this interpretation is simplistic and limited from a linguistic perspective since words can be defined in different ways. For instance, based on semantics words are the smallest meaningful unit of language; in regard to orthography a word is a sequence of letters bounded by a space or punctuation mark (Pavičić Takač, 2008). Nonetheless, this study took words as lexical items that come in at least two forms: oral vocabulary which refers to the set of words learners understand to speak or read orally and print vocabulary that consists of those words for which learners understand the meanings when they write or read silently (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005). This study focused mainly on oral vocabulary since preschoolers are not used to read in English as they are in the process of learning how to read in their mother tongue. Besides, the main objective is to influence vocabulary learning so the children can speak in English.

The development of vocabulary is a fundamental part of the process of learning a foreign language. However, for a long time, vocabulary was a neglected aspect of language teaching since more emphasis was placed on grammar (Pique, 2008). Over time, the audiolingual method questioned this focus and started to prioritize listening and speaking skills. Therefore, this method provided a limited repertoire of techniques and strategies for promoting the development of vocabulary. Nonetheless, the Communicative English Language Teaching method emerged giving more importance to the acquisition of

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vocabulary since learners should be exposed to the language so that they can pick up new words and expressions incidentally and infer the meaning by context (Lindstromberg & Boers, 2008).

As vocabulary learning was given more attention, some researchers went over different strategies to learn vocabulary. Learners have been using some mechanical strategies such as simple memorization, repetition, and taking notes to learn vocabulary. However, research shows that those generally do not lead to meaningful learning. Psychologists believe that activities that require more engagement with and manipulation of the information to be learned (deeper processing) generally lead to better retention (Schmitt, 2007). One of those deeper strategies is making connections which is the strategy selected to address the problem of this study (See 2.2.2).

There are several distinctions between various word classes. The first distinction is between content and function words. Content words include nouns, adjectives, verbs, whereas function words include prepositions, determiners and conjunctions (Polinsky, 2004). The present study focused on the acquisition of content words such as nouns and adjectives.

2.2.2 Making connections strategy

As has been mentioned before (see 1.2.2) learning occurs when learners can see connections among different facts, situations or concepts (Galinsky, 2010). According to Cross (1999) making connections can be presented in four broad categories: neurological connections, social connections, experiential connections and cognitive connections. The neurological connections are related to the synapses that happen in the brain. When electrical signals travel down one neuron and reach the button-like ending, a chemical

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message crosses to connect with the bulb in the synapses. The more synapses and electrical impulses exist, the more children develop their brains. Social connections are based on social constructivism; constructivism theories emphasize social interaction and the discovery or construction of meaning (Brown, 2007). It means that children construct knowledge through interacting with others. These connections involve collaborative learning, learning communities and other forms of learning that allow students to be in a socially interactive environment.

Nonetheless, this study focuses on the experiential connections since it implies reflecting on an experience both before and after it; extracting meaning and applying what has been learnt. It makes learning truly experiential for students and helps students see the connection between content and its applications in other contexts (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016). Learning should be a concrete experience. Teachers have tried to make the connections between experience and learning through the use of simulations, games, and role playing to get students involved in a less abstract experience (Dewey, 1950). The concrete experience in this research was bringing realia to the classroom along with storytelling so that students could make connections between real-life objects and the vocabulary of the stories. While they listen to the vocabulary, they see, they touch, and they make connections. If children use this vocabulary to speak in English, they are using what they have learnt to improve performance.

Furthermore, this study is related to cognitive connections. From a cognitive perspective people have a schema in their minds; it is a working structure that changes and grows throughout life. That is to say each new event or situation filtered by perception into this schema is connected to the existing structure to create meaning (Cross, 1999). Children's cognitive structures are constructed as a result of the mental activity of making

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connections among what they see, smell and touch, the vocabulary they hear and their L1 prior knowledge (Piaget, 1997). It means that what students learn depends on what they already know. People learn something new when they are able to make connections between what they are currently experiencing and something they already know (Short, 1984). In this specific case, students have the vocabulary background knowledge of their L1; therefore, they were able to make connections in their minds when they had the experience of hearing a word in English and touching the object that represents those words.

2.2.3 Storytelling

Storytelling has been part of formal education for many years since it helps develop speaking and listening skills, thinking strategies and promote students' social and emotional development while they are engaged in a rewarding and enjoyable activity (Fox Eades, 2006). Storytelling is essential for educational development since it aids in the development of children's ability to interpret and understand events beyond their immediate experience; exposing learners to storytelling will allow them to associate meanings and emotions with words (Davies, 2007). Moreover, Hamilton and Weiss (2005) argue that storytelling is a shared and authentic activity that motivates students since they get excited and engage in learning. In fact, it engages reluctant learners.

Storytelling entertains and excites, which is an important part when learning. If children are having fun they are engaged and motivated to learn more (Davies, 2007). That is why this tool was chosen in this study. It creates an atmosphere of excitement and fun in which children are comfortable and able to learn through making connections. It is an active process that is effective for both visual and auditory learners (Frazel, 2010). Fox

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(2006), Davies (2007) and (2010) coincide when they claim that learners can make connections with stories and emotions. However, this study sought to find out if learners could learn words by making connections between the vocabulary found in the stories and real-life objects, in other words, *realia* (see 2.2.4).

2.2.4 Realia

According to Herrel and Jordan (2009) *realia* are real things, concrete objects that are used in the classroom to build background knowledge and vocabulary. *Realia* are used to provide experiences and opportunities to use all the senses in learning since they allow students to see, feel, hear and smell the object being explored. This sensory information is helpful in comprehension; that is why this is considered a meaningful tool that allows learners to understand new vocabulary.

Realia help learners to activate their sensory memory since they are associated with the senses. According to Lutz and Huitt (2003), a stimulus that is not sensed cannot be further processed and will never become part of the memory store. This does not mean that only stimuli that are consciously perceived are stored; however, perceptions that are not transferred into a higher stage (short-term and long-term memory) will not be incorporated into memory. “If new information [in this specific case vocabulary] is not brought into memory in a meaningful way, it will not be stored as memory” (Lutz & Huitt, 2003, p. 4). That is to say, *realia* are considered meaningful tools that help learners to store words in their memories and help them to remember those words easily.

So far it could be considered that *realia* along with storytelling are meaningful tools that create an environment with experiences that motivate and engage learners when making connections to learn.

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2.3 State of the art

2.3.1 Previous research on making connections

Some recent studies demonstrated that making connections is a good strategy to help students comprehend what they are learning in different fields of education. For example, Karakoc (2012) analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of real word connections in order to learn math and the factors that influence teacher's use of connections in math classrooms. The results showed that using those connections increased students' motivation and interest in mathematics since students could see where math is used in real life, why they are learning it, and why it is important to learn it. The current study also aimed at analyzing how making connections could influence learning, but in the field of second language teaching and learning.

In addition, according to Keene and Zimmermann (as cited in Correia & Bleicher, 2008) readers make three types of connections before, during, or after reading: text-to-self connections; text-to-text connections; and text-to-world connections. Those connections were taken into account to carry out a study that aimed at analyzing how making connections between the service-learning experience (SLE) and prior experiences in similar settings, personal life experiences, and knowledge gained in the world, helped students make better sense of their SLE (Correia & Bleicher, 2008). This research project is similar to the present study in the way that they used experiential connections; however, the current study also takes into account cognitive connections to help students learn new vocabulary. Regarding second language teaching, there was a study that aimed at providing students with opportunities to make connections between language and symbolic ways of making meaning (Kern, 2008). Connections were made within different fields such as art, music,

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film, history, among others. Kern concludes that those connections are not easy to make, but they are relevant if teachers want their students to use language and allow them to achieve their full communicative potential. Kern's study focused on language as does the present study since both sought to have students communicating effectively in English. However, the current study focused on a more specific aspect of language: vocabulary. This allowed for a more complete picture of how making experiential and cognitive connections between real-life objects and words allow students to learn vocabulary in order to communicate in English.

2.3.2 Previous research on vocabulary

Some studies have demonstrated that there are several effective strategies that could be implemented in the classroom to teach and learn vocabulary. Those studies have been carried out in different contexts and with different kind of populations. Although most of them agree with the fact that vocabulary plays an important role when learning a second language and it should not be taught in isolation and without a context, there is not a particular connection among them. For instance, Ohogain (2012) analysed how The Four Strands strategy helped bilingual high school students to increase their receptive vocabulary. Rohani and Pourgharib (2013) looked into the effect of word games on learning vocabulary knowledge of subjects with high school girls. In addition, He (2010) investigated learners' attitude and evaluation on L2 vocabulary learning strategies and the effects of those strategies on learners' learning process. The results of the aforementioned studies were positive since they proved that students learnt vocabulary; however, they agree that the results obtained cannot be generalized and that it is important to carry out studies taking into account each context.

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Research has never been conducted with the population of the school where the study is carried out. Kirsch (2016) argues that very little research has been carried out on vocabulary in primary and preschool classrooms since most of research studies focus on the acquisition of new words by adolescent or adult language learners.

Other studies have provided meaningful insights by using the tools that the present study took into account. They have used realia and storytelling and have demonstrated that those are effective for vocabulary learning. For instance, Paredes et al (2008) implemented different techniques within the classroom in order to enhance vocabulary learning. One of those techniques was realia and the results showed that realia were the most effective technique to introduce new vocabulary to young learners since it motivated them and caught their attention. In addition, Mulyani (2009) carried out a study in which storytelling was used as a strategy to improve young learners' vocabulary acquisition. The results indicated that it helped students improve their vocabulary mastery and it helped them increase their motivation since they were involved in stories.

The studies mentioned before took into account realia and storytelling as techniques to increase vocabulary. Both showed positive results since they concluded that those techniques help develop young learners' vocabulary acquisition and motivation. Some years later, Fuertes (2015) posed a research project in which both realia and storytelling were used to develop very young children's vocabulary. It indicated that picture book storytelling with realia provides a meaningful learning experience that facilitates young learners listening comprehension and the acquisition of new vocabulary in the L2. Besides, children engagement increased significantly.

In spite of the fact that these studies provided important insights when teaching vocabulary through storytelling and realia and how they motivate and engage children, they

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did not examine in depth how those tools allow children to make experiential and cognitive connections between real-life objects and vocabulary as the present study did.

2.3.3 Previous research on enhancing vocabulary through making connections

Many studies rely on students making connections between visual aids and vocabulary learning since they have proved that students understand words better with these useful tools. For instance, Al-Jarf (2006) offers considerable insights regarding visual techniques in order to enhance students' vocabulary. This study proved that there is a strong need to relate concrete visual experiences to vocabulary development. As Al-Jarf did, Konomi (2014) also analyzed the effect of visual materials in the EFL classroom and concluded that using visual aids can help learners understand the deep meaning of a topic and realize similarities and differences between each topic. In addition, Krčelić and Matijević (2015) evaluated the use of visual tools in the classroom in order to facilitate learning of language content, including vocabulary. They conclude that visual tools provide students with the opportunity to use their imagination in an attempt to simulate authentic situations.

The studies mentioned before share similar goals since they wanted students to improve their vocabulary mastery. In order to achieve the goals, they implemented some visual aids and tools to facilitate learning. However, the studies did not make explicit how those tools allow learners to make connections between visual aids and vocabulary. That is why the present study sought to make explicit the way in which realia and storytelling provide an environment where students are able to make cognitive and experiential

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connections with the objective of learning new vocabulary, especially with the target group of young learners.

2.3.4 Justification of research question/objectives

Several studies have been done regarding vocabulary teaching and learning. (He, 2010; Ohogain, 2012; Pourgharib & Rohani, 2013). Although all of them share similar objectives and results, their contexts are completely different and do not show any particular connection. They agree that the results obtained cannot be generalized and it is important to carry out studies taking into account each context. Furthermore, little research about vocabulary has been carried out in primary and preschool classrooms (Kirsch, 2016); that is why the present study is relevant.

Some studies have demonstrated that vocabulary can be taught in various ways. In fact, some researchers have used realia; others have used storytelling and few studies have implemented both in order to foster vocabulary learning (Fuertes Prado, 2015; Mulyani, 2009; Paredes et al., 2008). The results have proved that realia and storytelling motivate and engage children. However, none of them examined in depth how those tools allow learners to make experiential and cognitive connections between real-life objects and vocabulary. In addition, other studies have used visual aids to facilitate vocabulary learning and they showed positive results (Al-Jarf, 2006; Konomi, 2014; Krčelić & Matijević, 2015). This means that students somehow made connections in order to learn; nonetheless, those studies did not make it explicit as the current study.

2.4 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, it can be observed how a meaningful experience within the classroom allows students to make experiential and cognitive connections in order to learn

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new vocabulary. This meaningful experience was provided by using realia and storytelling since those tools engage and motivate students when learning. According to the findings mentioned above, it is important to carry out studies focused on vocabulary which take into account the context, needs and interests of students since results cannot be generalized.

Other studies have focused their attention on different strategies to improve students' vocabulary acquisition but none of them have used storytelling along with realia to help learners make connections between real-life objects and the vocabulary of the stories.

In the following chapter, it is explained in depth why this study was a practical mixed-method research and why the researcher took an active role throughout the study. It also explains why these five instruments were taken into account in the research project: a questionnaire, a criterion referenced test, recorded conversations, focus groups and the teachers' journal.

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Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

The existing literature indicates the importance of learning vocabulary in order to speak in English. In the previous chapter, it was found that realia and storytelling are useful tools which help learners to understand vocabulary. Although several studies have been done related to those tools and vocabulary, there are no studies that have analyzed and made explicit how students are able to make experiential and cognitive connections between real-life objects and words in the preschool context.

This study made use of a mixed-method research in which the teacher carried out observations, data collection, implementation and analysis of the results. In order to determine how the application of realia and storytelling allowed children to make connections and thus to learn vocabulary, five instruments were designed and implemented to collect data: (1) Two criterion referenced tests (pretest and posttest) which aimed at identifying the number of adjectives and nouns participants recognize in a specific different context. (2) Recorded conversations that aimed at indicating how children used the vocabulary presented in the stories in different contexts. (3) A focus group in order to describe students' views on how they learnt through the storytelling implementation. (4) Artefacts which aimed at demonstrating if students could make cognitive connections through personal examples and (5) A teacher's journal which aimed at providing information about what the researcher observed during the implementation.

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3.2 Context

3.2.1 Type of study

This study was a mixed-method research project that allowed the researcher to gather information in order to develop reflective practices, provide positive changes in the school environment and improve students' outcomes (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). This kind of research seeks to find a problematic situation and to analyze it while being immersed in the context of the observation. The researcher followed the steps of the research cycle posed by MacNaughton and Hughes (2009) which are: identifying a social practice to change or improve, asking a question about that social practice, going through the literature review, ethical responsibilities and critical reflection and practice, collecting data and analyzing it, deepening data and understandings, and drawing conclusions from the analysis. The researcher decided to use this type of research since "the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone" (Creswell, 2013, p. 32)

3.2.2 Participants

This research project was implemented with a group of 12 preschool children between 6 and 7 years old. According to the Common European Framework for languages (2001), they are level A1. They study at a private institution for girls and come from families with a middle-high socioeconomical status. They are in transition and most of them have had three years of instruction: nursery, pre-kinder and kindergarten. Participants were selected taking into account the participants' accessibility for the researcher (Patton, 1990).

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3.2.3 Researcher's role

In this study, the researcher had an active role since she was the teacher who observed her own teaching context, analyzed students' needs, implemented the strategy chosen, and analyzed the data collected in order to answer the research question. A mixed-method research investigator should carefully think about their research questions, purposes, and contexts to decide on the appropriateness of a mixed-methods approach. Then, the researcher should develop a design strategy that best fits their research questions and objectives, employ multiple modes of data collection and proceed with a mixed-methods data-analysis approach (qualitative and quantitative) in order to make useful and credible inferences from these analyses (Venkatesh, Brown, & Sullivan, 2016). In addition, the teacher is seen as a catalyst for change in teaching practices, course design and problem solving. It means that the teacher should be an agent for change in her educational environment (Fareh & Aziz, 2011).

3.2.4 Ethical considerations

The present study took into consideration ethical principles for research. According to McMillan (2014), one of the most important principles is respect for persons; that implies informing all the participants about the study. To guarantee this, two types of permissions were considered: a consent letter to inform and gain the students' participation (Appendix C) and a permission from the school. As the participants were children, the consent was signed by their parents. This principle involves protecting the confidentiality of participants. It means that the researcher has to maintain the security of data that may identify individual participants (Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007). Another important aspect is beneficence that refers to maximize the benefits and minimize the possible harms

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(McMillan, 2014). Participants of the current study were not exposed to risk since it was carried out in their own context and they experienced the study in the course of a typical day.

3.3 Data collection instruments

3.3.1 Descriptions and justifications

3.3.1.1 *Criterion-referenced tests*

Criterion-referenced tests are designed to measure knowledge gained from educational contexts. When standardized tests are not appropriate for the population or for the objectives of the study, it is better to construct a test (Morgan & Harmon, 2001). The researcher looked for a Cambridge test (starters); however, she realized it was too advanced for the population of the study. For this reason, the researcher designed the tests used in this study (Appendix D); she took into account the school curriculum in order to know what vocabulary learners should manage at preschool level to express their ideas in the second language. The tests were done individually and consisted of an open-ended question based on a picture. Each student answer was recorded.

3.3.1.2 *Focus group*

In this study, the purpose of the focus group was to identify how students learnt through making connections between realia and the vocabulary presented in the stories (processes, behaviors and reactions). This instrument was selected since it is an ideal way of capturing original ideas, emotions, and experiences from a developmental perspective that allows children to interact in a less structured environment (Kennedy, Kools, & Krueger, 2001). This method can be used with children if appropriate language and

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activities for development levels are used. In addition, using an activity to guide the discussion helps children to understand better and facilitates trust, interaction, and positive group dynamics (Christian, Pearce, Roberson, & Rothwell, 2010). It was carried out through a game in which students randomly selected the questions that guided the focus group.

3.3.1.3 *Recorded conversations*

The purpose of this instrument was to identify how children used the vocabulary presented in the stories in a spontaneous conversation. The spontaneous conversation could be a collegial dialogue, experience sharing and joint problem solving (Stringer, 2007). The current study took into account spontaneous conversation as an experience of sharing because of the population. “It is unrealistic to expect young children to sit still for long, but joining them in some activity can create a climate for focused talk” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 106). That is why this instrument was appropriate in this study.

3.3.1.4 *Artifacts*

Artifacts are materials or files used by researchers in order to collect qualitative data. Artifacts can be pictures, articles, documentaries, educational material, books or recordings (Silverman, 2001). In the present study, the artefacts were worksheets in which students had to recall and draw realia related to the vocabulary they learnt throughout the whole implementation. Those artefacts aimed at identifying if students could make cognitive connections between concepts and real-life objects.

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3.3.1.5 *Teacher's journal*

Teachers' journals are written records of experiences, feelings about planning, preparing and delivering teaching and learning. They contain general accounts of learning sessions and allow the identification of critical incidents which can be the basis for learning and continuing professional development (Scales, Briddon, & Senior, 2013). In addition, journals are useful tools for promoting and understanding research development since they provide information that helps researchers to be aware of what is happening in the process (Borg, 2001). For this reason, it was chosen for the present study. The researcher wrote what she observed during the implementation of the strategy selected (appendix E).

3.3.2 Validation and piloting

The instruments were validated by considering the principle of content validity which consists of an expert opinion taking into account literature review (Brod, Tesler, & Christensen, 2009). The instruments of the present study were validated by the researcher's colleagues, professors and the research tutor who provided feedback in order to improve the instruments. They revised a first version of all the instruments and the researcher modified them taking into account the importance of asking contextualized and clear questions. A second version was revised by professors and colleagues. All the reviewers worked independently, and this allowed the researcher to bear different points of view in mind when correcting the instruments. In regard to piloting, the tests were piloted a week before the implementation with a different population in order to adjust some questions and technical aspects. Those tests were redesigned and validated as mentioned before.

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3.4 Conclusion

The present study was a mixed-method research project which allowed the researcher to participate in each step of the process while she gathered information, analyzed it and designed an action plan in order to find a solution of the problem of the study (see 1.2.1). This research project aimed at determining the influence of realia and storytelling in making connections to learn vocabulary. In order to achieve this objective, the researcher decided to design and implement five instruments: criterion referenced tests, recorded conversations, focus groups, artefacts and a teacher's journal. Those instruments were selected because they can be adapted and designed taking into account the age range of participants.

Chapter 4: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explained the type of study of this research and the instruments used in order to collect data. Instruments were piloted and validated by colleagues, professors and the supervisor of this study (see 3.3.2). This chapter indicates the process followed during the intervention and the implementation of storytelling along with realia to make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary. The chapter describes the four cycles that were taken into account throughout the intervention with their lesson plans and the theoretical framework about vision of language, learning and curriculum that guided the pedagogical implementation of the present study.

4.2 Visions of language, learning, and curriculum

4.2.1 Vision of language

Language can be understood from different perspectives. It can be understood as culture and ideology, which deals with issues of how the social and political forces of power and domination impact on language structures and language use; as discourse, which refer to the coherent and cohesive features of language in communicative contexts; as self-expression, that involves building up personal relationships, express emotions and aspirations and explore interests (Kumaravadivelu, 2008). However, this research study understood language as a linguistic system that focuses on the phonological, semantic, and syntactic elements of language (Tudor, 2001). The present study sought to explore how the use of storytelling along with realia facilitates EFL preschoolers' ability to make experiential and cognitive connections between real-life objects and concepts in order to learn new words; therefore, the main focus of the research is vocabulary. It is one of the

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most important components of language since it allows people to express meaning.

Vocabulary is seen as a major aspect of knowing a language; in fact, it is considered the basis of language (Lewis as cited in Tudor, 2001).

4.2.2 Vision of learning

This research is guided by some cognitive learning processes since it sought to analyze how students make cognitive connections between real-life objects and vocabulary to speak in English. Metacognition is one of the processes taken into account since it comprises two sets of skills. These skills are: understanding what skills, strategies and resources a task requires and understanding how and when to use these skills and strategies to ensure the task is completed successfully (Schunk, 2012). In this study the strategy students needed to use was making connections to learn new words. The activities posed in the lesson plans allowed learners to be aware of how making connections helped them to understand the vocabulary and how and when to use it.

In addition, this study took into account the student as the center of the learning process. That is to say, the implementation followed a student-centered approach in which learners have an active role and influence content, activities, materials and pace of learning. They all have the opportunity to become an integral part of the management of the classroom and share responsibilities (Garrett, 2008). The activities posed in the lesson plans allowed students to work collaboratively, to construct knowledge, and participate actively in their own learning process.

4.2.3 Vision of curriculum

In this study, curriculum is seen as the content to be taught and the objectives to be achieved within one school or educational system (White as cited in Medgyes & Nikolov,

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2002). There are different types of curriculum. The forward design curriculum, the central design curriculum and the backwards design curriculum. However, the present study is framed within central design of curriculum since it starts with the selection of teaching activities, techniques and methods rather than with the elaboration of a detailed language syllabus or specification of learning outcomes (Richards, 2013). The researcher first selected the strategy *making connections* and the tools *storytelling and vocabulary*. Then, the content, input and output expected were taken into account to develop the lesson plans. Central design is concerned with learning processes; it is learner-centered and seeks to provide learning experiences that allow student to learn on their own (Richards, 2013). Through realia and storytelling, the researcher sought to provide students with different kinds of experiences so that they could make connections and learn.

4.3 Instructional design

4.3.1 Lesson planning

The researcher designed four lesson plans. Each lesson plan had six stages: (1) The warm-up that sought to activate prior knowledge; (2) The predicting stage in which learners made predictions about what was going to happen in the stories; (3) Listening to the story where they compared their predictions; (4) Realia intervention where they felt, tasted, smelt and listened to different real objects; (5) Post-realia intervention where they practiced with the new vocabulary and (6) The making connections stage in which they showed how they connected the vocabulary with other real-life objects (See figure 1). Students had an active role in all the stages since they had to carry out all the activities on their own with the guidance of the teacher.

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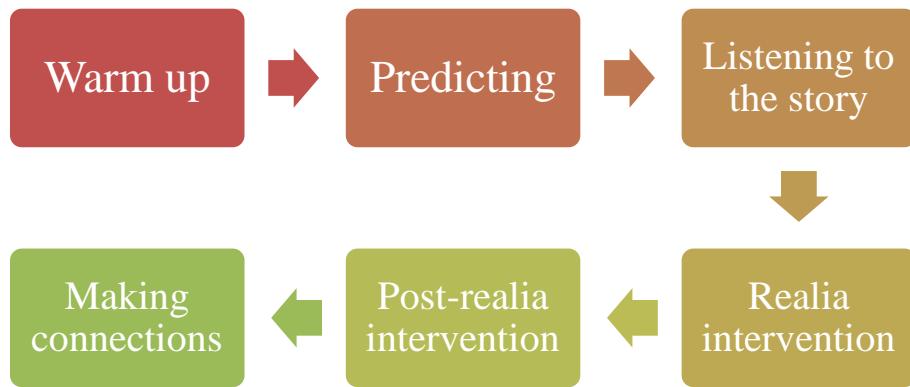


Figure 1 Lesson plan stages

The objective was to scaffold and challenge students by starting from simple tasks and going on with complex tasks. Each lesson plan activated prior knowledge and used vocabulary from the previous lesson. The last lesson plan included everything they had learnt throughout the whole implementation that is described in the next section. The main goal of the first lesson (Appendix F) was to describe textures of different real-life objects and the subsidiary aim was to make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to textures. The objective of the second lesson (Appendix G) was to describe the way food tastes and the subsidiary aim was to make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to flavors. In the third lesson (Appendix H), the goal was to describe the way something smells, and the subsidiary objective was to make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to smells. The last lesson's (Appendix I) objective was to describe the way something feels, tastes, smells and sounds. The subsidiary aim was to make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to sounds.

4.3.2 Implementation

The implementation was carried out during the first semester of 2018 throughout a 5-week period of 20 face-to-face sessions with the participants. It included three main

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moments as shown in table 1: the pre-implementation where the pretest was applied; the while-implementation that included the four cycles along with their lesson plans and the post-implementation where some instruments such as the focus group and the recorded conversations were carried out. In each moment, the researcher collected data relate to the use of realia, storytelling and making connections in order to answer the research question. See 6.7 Appendix J: Pedagogical implementation to find the objective of each lesson plan, some of the activities in each stage, and the time it took to carry out the cycles.

4.4 Conclusion

The pedagogical intervention of the present study was designed taking into account a student-centered approach in which learners were able to make connections, work collaboratively, share opinions and live different experiences. The organization of the cycles allowed students to move from simple to complex tasks and reuse vocabulary from the previous lessons. Those tasks promoted interaction and allowed them to speak using the vocabulary learnt. During the implementation, the instruments were useful tools to gather information. The next chapter will discuss how that information was analyzed and organized keeping in mind the grounded theory approach.

Chapter 5: Results and Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The last chapter gives a detailed description about the intervention of the present study. The pedagogical implementation was designed taking into account cognitive learning processes theory, a student-centered approach and the central design of curriculum in which learners take an active role in learning and language is seen as a linguistic system. This implementation consisted of a 5-week period of 20 face-to-face sessions. There were four cycles and each of them had a lesson plan with a main and a subsidiary objective. During the last week, the researcher carried out the post-test, the focus group interview and the recorded conversations in order to collect data.

This chapter describes the procedure used to analyze the data gathered during the implementation. Data was analyzed and organized in an MS matrix™ and chart files. It was color coded and grouped so that the researcher could establish relationships and some categories keeping in mind the principles of the grounded theory. Regarding the quantitative data, the researcher used descriptive statistics to analyze the artifacts, pretest, and posttest results.

5.2 Data management procedures

The pretest, the posttest, the conversations and the focus group were recorded in order to keep all the details in mind when analyzing the information. Preparing these recorded data for analysis required transcribing all the recordings and typing the transcriptions into computer files (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). That is why all the data collected from these instruments were digitized in individual word processing files. In all the transcriptions, the researcher worked alone and kept natural conversations including incomplete sentences and grammar mistakes. Then, this

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information was organized in an MS matrix™ created in Excel to establish relationships, compare the results and establish different categories. The use of a mixed method allowed the researcher to understand the relations of the data in a more complete way since “it involves the collection of both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (closed-ended) data in response to research questions or hypotheses.” (Creswell, 2013, p. 266). Bearing this in mind, the students’ artifacts, the pre-test, and post-test were quantitatively analyzed while the focus group, the conversations and the teacher’s journal were treated in a qualitative way.

5.2.1 Validation

To validate the information collected, peer debriefing and triangulation techniques were applied. The triangulation involved examining evidence from different sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, the researcher read and reread the information gathered, to compare the evidence collected from different instruments and justify the results. Peer debriefing refers to locating people who review and ask questions about the qualitative study so that the account will resonate with people other than the researcher (Creswell, 2009). Bearing this in mind, the researcher presented the information collected to some colleagues and some experts in the field who gave their opinion and suggestions about the interpretation of the data in a debriefing session. They gave feedback regarding coding and categorizing.

5.2.2 Data analysis methodology

The analysis of the qualitative data collected was carried out considering the principles of grounded theory. This involves generating categories of information (open coding), selecting one of the categories and positioning it within a theoretical model (axial

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coding), and then explaining the interconnection of these categories (selective coding) (Creswell, 2009). This systematic analysis began with an open coding procedure in which the researcher used colors to group chunks by themes and labeled them with a name; this initial coding was carried out bearing in mind the research question, asking analytical questions, and reflecting upon the participants' answers. After completing the coding process, similar codes and patterns were grouped into categories with different factors to explain the phenomenon under discussion. In this study categorizing is organizing and ordering the data collected from a study because it is from these larger and meaning-rich units that we can better comprehend the particular features of each one, and the possible interrelationships among categories (Saldaña, 2011). Finally, selective coding was carried out. That is, codes were integrated in a core category to identify to what extent storytelling and realia influenced the vocabulary learning of preschoolers.

5.3 Categories

5.3.1 Overall category mapping

The open coding procedure helped the researcher identify the initial codes and analyze the data collected from the instruments. Those initial codes were identified through the process of color coding. The researcher made a rigorous analysis and comparisons in order to triangulate, support and make sense of the findings. In the second stage (the axial coding), those codes were grouped in broader categories considering their similarity and relation. This process led to the identification of two categories as it is shown in the figure below.

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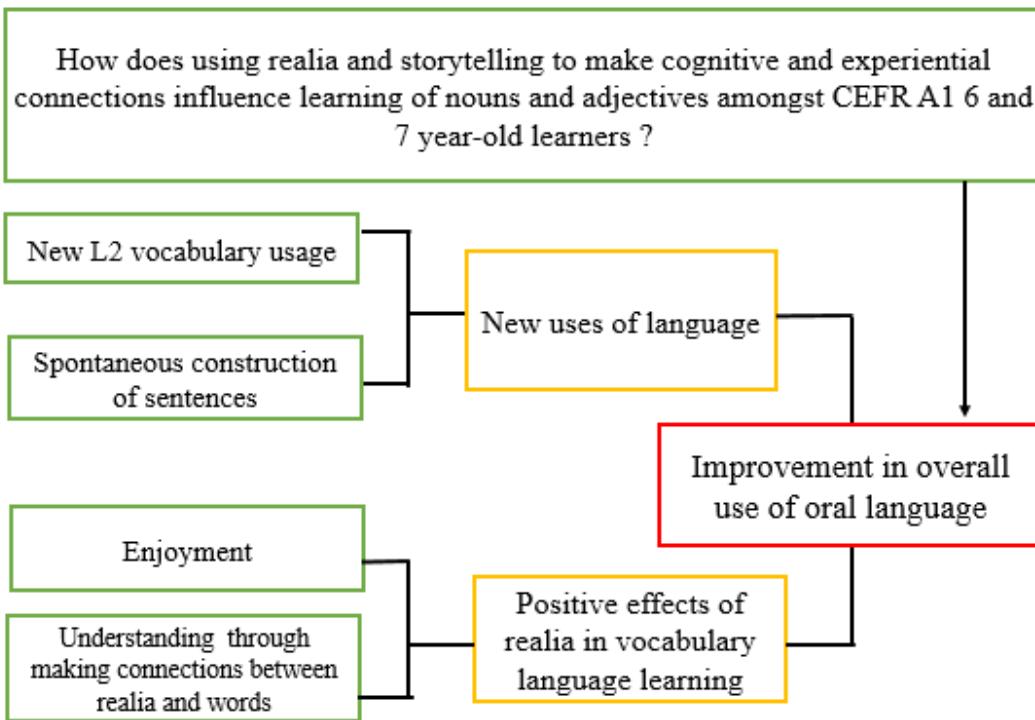


Figure 2 Categories and subcategories

5.3.2 Discussion of categories

Two main categories emerged after the open and axial coding process: *New uses of language* and *positive effects of realia on vocabulary language learning*. These two categories provided information that allowed the researcher to answer the research question: How does using realia and storytelling to make cognitive and experiential connections influence learning of nouns and adjectives amongst CEFR A1 6 and 7-year-old preschoolers?

The first category, *new uses of language*, was supported by two subcategories: new L2 vocabulary usage, and spontaneous construction of sentences. In regard to that category, findings evidenced that participants construct sentences and learnt and used the new vocabulary presented in the stories. The second category, *positive effects of realia on*

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vocabulary language learning, was supported by two subcategories: *enjoyment* and *understanding through making connections between realia and words*. Here, students and the researcher expressed their perceptions about how they felt when using realia within the classroom and how they learnt through making connections. Results showed a positive influence when learning new words.

The next two sections provide a description of each category and the subcategories the researcher considered to answer the question of the study.

5.3.3 Discussion of categories

5.3.2.1 New uses of language

The strategy of making cognitive and experiential connections increased the number of words produced by the students. At the end of the implementation students were able to use the adjectives and the nouns presented in the stories. It was easy to make the connections between realia, pictures and words since knowledge that is presented non-linguistically is stored as mental pictures or physical sensations such as sight, sound, smell, touch, taste and movement (Hill & Miller, 2006). This is the most important category since it describes how the participants learnt and used the new words throughout the process.

5.3.2.1.1 New L2 vocabulary usage

After analyzing the data, the results showed that participants were able to use some of the words they learnt throughout the whole implementation. In the first week, they used their mother tongue to describe textures. However, they started to use the new vocabulary in the L2 during the rest of the intervention. They used the words they learnt in the first week during the other three weeks since they found out that some of the adjectives could be used in different contexts. Some students used the new vocabulary when having lunch at

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school. “*This taste (sic) so yummy and sour*”, a student referring to tomato soup (See excerpt 3). This situation evidenced that students could use the new words in a context different from the classroom. Successful English learners seek out opportunities for language input and interaction outside the classroom (Ellis, 2000). Vocabulary improvements were reached little by little from the first to the final experience. This was reported in the teacher’s journal, as shown in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 1 – Second week teacher’s journal

Students remembered the vocabulary they learnt in the 1st lesson plan since they use it to answer the questions.

Excerpt 2 – Third week teacher’s journal

Students could use some of the new vocabulary by repeating from the book.

Excerpt 3 – Third week teacher’s journal

I was with my students having lunch when suddenly one of them said: “this taste (sic) so yummy and sour” and her classmates started saying some similar sentences such as “this taste (sic) bad” or “this taste (sic) good” and express their opinions. I was surprised and excited since they were applying the new vocabulary in this specific context.

Moreover, the posttest results indicated that the vocabulary level increased during and after the whole intervention since students used the words they had learnt. The table below shows the number of adjectives and nouns they produced in the pretest and the number of words they used in the posttest. The researcher calculated the percentage of each student so that she could analyze the difference of words produced.

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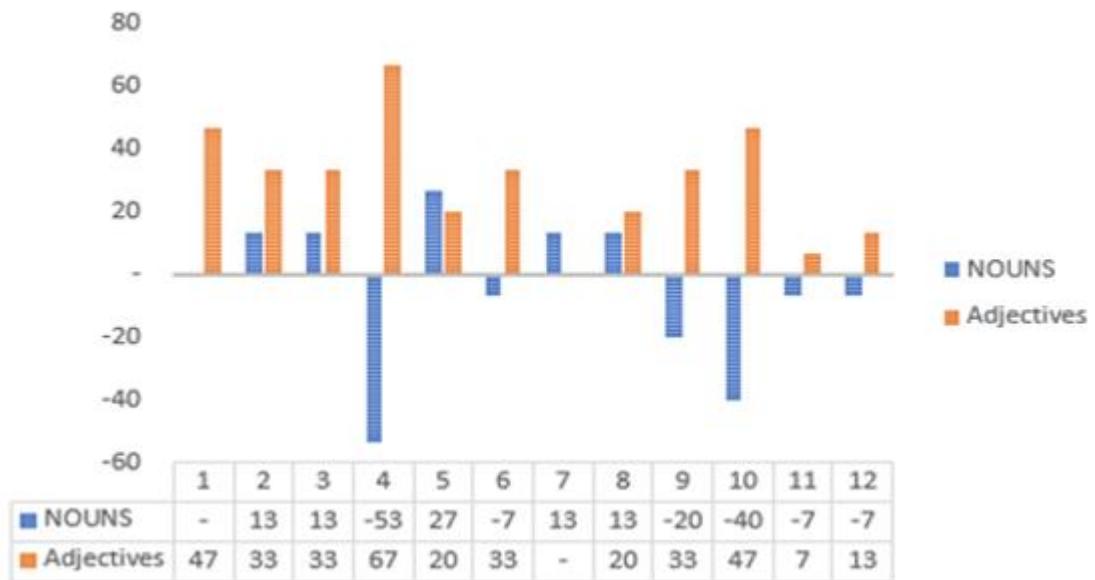


Figure 3. Lexical improvement

The graph above shows the percentage of improvement of each student. For instance, as it shown in table 1 student 4 stated 12 nouns in the pretest and 4 in the posttest. It means that she reduced the number of nouns produced by 53% (see excerpt 4). According to the test results, 92% of students increased the usage of adjectives when describing the picture and those adjectives were different from the ones they used in the pretest. 8 % of them did not increase nor reduce the use of adjectives. Regarding nouns, 50% of the students reduced the use of them when describing the picture. This possibly happened since most of them used demonstrative adjectives when they took the test. See excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4 – S4 answer in the posttest

This is so cold; this is so yummy; this is so noisy; this is so bad; this smells so good.

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The stories presented the vocabulary within simple structures that included demonstrative adjectives as nouns, followed by verbs, and adjectives (see figure 5).



Figure 4 Examples of the stories. Taken from Learning A-Z 2019 LAZEL, Inc.

This might be the reason why some students decided to use them in the posttest. The following excerpt shows student number 10's answers in the posttest:

Excerpt 5. S10 answer in the posttest

This smell (sic) so good; the snowman feel (sic) so cold; the rabbit feel(sic) so soft; this sound (sic) so quiet.

5.3.2.1.2 Spontaneous construction of sentences

After analyzing the qualitative data, the researcher realized that students learnt new words during the implementation. The following excerpts show some of their answers regarding learning adjectives and nouns:

Excerpt 6 – Student's answer in the focus group

Aprendí a decir nuevas cosas en inglés que yo no sabía decir.

Excerpt 7 – Student's answer in the focus group

Yo aprendí que las texturas no son iguales, unas son duras otras son suaves, hard, rough, soft. Que todos los sabores no saben igual, unos saben dulces, otros picantes, spicy, juicy y así.

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Students not only learnt isolated words, they were also able to construct structures by using nouns, adjectives, and verbs. It was evident in the recorded conversations since students started producing different sentences (See excerpts 8, 9 and 10). Thus, it has been proven that storytelling helps learners to produce more longer, more complex oral sentences in the L2 since they do not only passively listen to stories, but have the opportunity to retell them and practice the new words and sentence structures introduced to them (Rezende, 2016). Participants had the opportunity to practice the new words in the *Listening to the story* stage in each cycle of the implementation. They were listening to the words while interacting with realia. Although the researcher expected students to use the new words introduced, she found that they could also produce more complex oral sentences. That is why storytelling also had a positive impact during the process.

Excerpt 8 – Student’s answer in the recorded conversations

The lemon is sour!

Excerpt 9 – Student’s answer in the recorded conversations

The dog smells bad!

Excerpt 10 – Student’s answer in the recorded conversations

The teddy bear is soft and beautiful!

The excerpts above show the influence the stories had on students since the researcher did not give them nor ask them to produce specific structures. They just did it spontaneously.

5.3.2.2 Positive effects of realia in vocabulary language learning

Using realia stimulates the mind, and it encourages creativity by involving the senses in the learning process (Bably & Nusrat, 2017). During the implementation, students

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had the opportunity to experiment with all their senses and the results evidenced that they were really engaged during the experience.

5.3.2.2.1 Enjoyment

Real objects attract learners' attention, aid concentration and help them associate words easily (French, 1983). Realia attracted students' attention since they were engaged, and they liked interacting with those objects. They could listen to different sounds, eat, smell and feel in order to understand the meaning of words. According to student and teacher perceptions, the learners enjoyed and had fun when they listened to the stories and explored realia, as indicated in the excerpts below.

Excerpt 16 – Student's answer in the focus group

Yo me sentí feliz probando nuevas texturas, sabores y olores y muchas cosas.

A mí también me gustaron mucho las actividades y también me gustaron las texturas, todo me gusto fue tan chévere porque comimos mucho y me gusto todas esas cosas que tu trajiste.

Excerpt 18 – First week teacher's journal

They were excited touching the objects. They even shouted when touching the ice and hugged the teddy bear.

Excerpt 19 – Second week teacher's journal

They were excited tasting the flavors. They made some gestures and expressed their feelings while tasting. Mmm delicious, bad and so on.

When the researcher finished the implementation, participants asked for more stories. They wanted to continue listening to other stories and exploring more realia.

5.3.2.2.2 Understanding through making connections between realia and words.

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Participants had the opportunity to make cognitive and experiential connections when interacting with realia. They expressed that they understood the new words when the teacher brought realia into the classroom. It is demonstrated in the following excerpts.

Excerpt 12 – Student's answer in the focus group

Yo no entendía, pero cuando la profesora trajo la comida entendí un poquito.

Excerpt 13 – Student's answer in the focus group

Yo creo que si porque nos sirve para entender más porque si tú no sabes que es lo que estas comiendo y yo digo por ejemplo una manzana y si dice que es una apple ya sabes que es una apple si tienes una manzana.

Excerpt 14 – Student's answer in the focus group

Yo no entendí las palabras que tu dijiste, pero cuando trajiste la comida entendí...

Excerpt 15 – Student's answer in the focus group

No entendí los olores, pero cuando la profesora trajo los vasos con olores entendí las palabras nuevas.

Learning occurs when learners can see connections among different facts, situations or concepts (Galinsky, 2010). In the case of excerpt 6, the student was explaining how she could make connections with the help of realia. Students also found connections between the new vocabulary and realia since they drew different real-life objects in the artifacts. People learn something new when they are able to make connections between what they are currently experiencing and something they already know (Short, 1984). Students already had the knowledge of their first language, and it helped them to make those connections. In fact, they used their first language to say some real-life objects they did not know in

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English. The artifacts demonstrated that although they used L1, they really could find the connection between those objects and the words they learnt. The use of the L1 is beneficial for language learning since it helps in the process and completion of tasks and creates a social and cognitive space in which students will be able to help each other (Pan, 2010).

Within the intervention, the L1 served as a facilitative tool to learning English that helped students to develop a deeper understanding of the vocabulary.

The artifacts also demonstrated that students could make many connections.

Connections between the new vocabulary and real-life objects we did not use within the classroom and objects that were not showed in the stories. The following photos are some samples of students' artifacts:

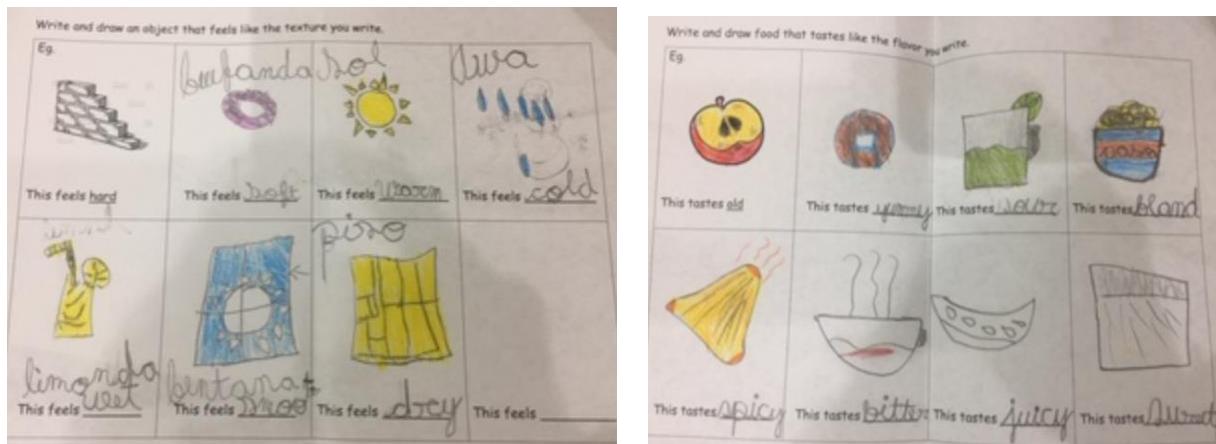


Figure 5 Samples of students' artifacts

After analyzing all of them, the researcher found out that most of the students remembered the new words and were able to make connections among their L1, real-life objects, and the new vocabulary. The graph below shows that 100% of the students could make connections. Students number 8 and 11 made 63% of them and they got the lowest results, while students' number 2 and 7 made between 92 and 96 % of the connections. They got the best results in the whole group.

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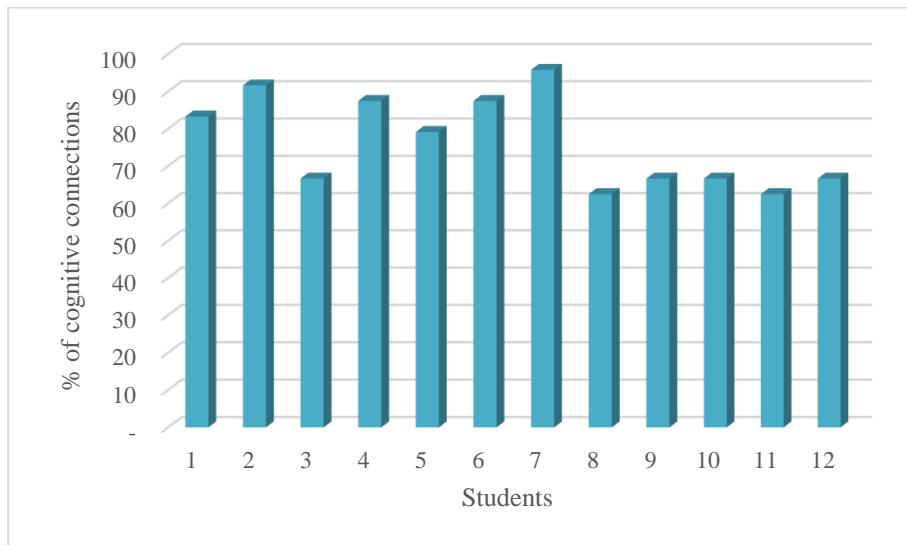


Figure 6. Percentage of connections made

5.3.4 Core category

The core category describes and explains most of the data collected, the relation and integration of the constructs and subcategories to generate theory and therefore to answer the research question (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). After analyzing the data, two categories emerged: *new uses of language* and *the positive effects of realia of vocabulary language learning*. The core category is *improvement in overall use of oral language* since it explains how participants learnt and used the new vocabulary presented in the stories. It also explains the influence of storytelling to construct oral sentences and use them spontaneously.

5.4 Conclusion

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered through the instruments demonstrated that realia was a meaningful tool that allowed children to make cognitive and experiential

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connections among real-life objects, new English vocabulary and L1 prior knowledge.

Bringing realia to the classroom had a positive influence when learning new vocabulary since students were engaged and participated actively in each experience. They were able to use the new words in different contexts spontaneously; therefore, students realized that language is not just for the English class but also for daily life. Storytelling also had an important impact since learners could describe objects by using the vocabulary and more complex structures, structures that were not taught by the teacher but presented in the stories. Bearing the above in mind, using realia along with storytelling allowed children to make cognitive and experiential connections and engage them in vocabulary learning.

The next chapter discusses the pedagogical implications of the results found, limitations and contribution of the study and some recommendations for further research.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of realia, storytelling and making cognitive and experiential connections strategy on children's vocabulary learning (See section 1.3). English is regarded as a priority in Colombia in terms of foreign language teaching. Law 115 Section three, Article 22 of February 8th (1994) points out that it is mandatory to acquire speaking and reading skills in a second language in primary and high school. In fact, a student that completes the four grades of primary education must be able to understand and express themselves in a second language. Conducting this research was necessary to prepare and help children face the primary challenges regarding English learning since they belong to a bilingual school where content is taught through language and language through content.

This chapter reports on how the findings of the present study are related to the ones presented by similar inquiries and describes the significance and pedagogical implications that the research brought to the academic community, its limitations, and any further research. This study had great significance not only in the way children learn new vocabulary to speak, but also how they make connections among realia, words in English and their first language. It is recommended to continue exploring the making connection strategy to learn.

6.2 Comparison of results with previous studies' results

There are several studies that have addressed how the use of different strategies such as The Four Strands, games, realia, TV shows, flashcards and storytelling help students learn new vocabulary (He, 2010; Mulyani, 2009; Ohogain, 2012; Paredes et al., 2008; Pourgharib & Rohani, 2013). Their findings are similar to the results of the present

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study since the data demonstrated that students learnt and used the new words presented in the stories during the posttest and the recorded conversations. As in those studies, the tools used in this research, realia and storytelling, are considered meaningful since children were engaged and participated in all the experiences. Regarding the differences with those previous research projects, this study found that students not only learnt isolated words, but were also able to construct simple structures when speaking and they could use them in a context different from the classroom. Therefore, they understood that English is not just for the classroom but for their daily lives.

The making connections strategy has been explored in different fields of education and some comparable studies (Correia & Bleicher, 2008; Karakoc, 2012; Kern, 2008) achieve similar results to those of the present study. Students made connections considering their prior knowledge and the new situations they were experiencing. Karakoc (2012) demonstrated in his study that making connections increased students' motivation and interest since students could see where math is used in real life. The data collected in this study indicated that students also applied their knowledge in real-life situations since they used the vocabulary and produced some simple sentences spontaneously outside the classroom. The strategy of making connections allows learners to put into practice what they have learnt. This is an important skill in their lifelong learning process since they might be able to apply knowledge from different fields in their own lives.

Many studies rely on students making connections between visual aids and vocabulary learning since they have proved students understand words better with these useful tools (Al-Jarf, 2006; Konomi, 2014; Krčelić & Matijević, 2015). Although those studies did not make explicit the way students made connections, their results are similar to this study since they concluded that there is a strong need to relate concrete visual

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experiences to vocabulary development since those tools help learners understand the deep meaning of a topic and realize similarities and differences between each topic. Using realia along with storytelling led to vocabulary development. Unlike those studies, the present research found out that using concrete visual experiences help learners to make connections among their prior knowledge in their first language, real-life objects and new words.

6.3 Significance of the results

The present study has provided evidence that using realia and storytelling help learners make connections between real-life objects and words. Making connections allowed students to learn new vocabulary and use it to speak the language. These findings might be of interest to local, national, and international language teachers. In the first place, the results are relevant to the school involved in the study since students learnt more vocabulary to speak English and use it spontaneously in different contexts. Teachers can adapt and replicate the making connections strategy and the tools used to promote vocabulary learning and provide students with meaningful experiences. It is even more relevant for those teachers who work with preschool children since the study provides them with a strategy that makes kids learn more vocabulary and enjoy stories while learning.

It is also practical and useful nationwide since according to the National Standards for Language Learning and Teaching set by the MEN (2006) children are expected to have A1 level at first grade. At this level children should be able to understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type (Council of Europe, 2001). The results showed that students were able to use basic phrases and simple structures after the implementation of the study. In regard to the global context, international teachers can adapt the lesson plans considering their own students' needs and contexts.

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The strategy of making connections can be transferred to other areas of knowledge. For instance, to other subjects such as math, science or social studies since students can learn through making connections among their prior knowledge, experiences and new knowledge. Furthermore, students can use the making connections strategy when learning another language, even their mother tongue in order to apply prior experiences or knowledge in their own lives.

6.4 Pedagogical challenges and recommendations

The researcher identified two main pedagogical challenges. The first one was to ensure that realia and storytelling serve as a bridge to make connections and learn. Taking into account that bringing new objects and stories to the class might be distracting for children, they can easily forget the objective and think that they are just having fun. They can also feel uncomfortable. Although all the students were engaged in the experience of this implementation, there were specific moments in which some of them felt uncomfortable and afraid of touching some textures, tasting some food, and smelling some things. To avoid this situation, it is important to make students understand the real purpose of bringing new experiences to the classroom and make explicit the importance of everybody's active participation during the activities.

The second challenge was to select appropriate stories for children that relate to real-life objects and engage them while learning. Although different researchers (Bably & Nusrat, 2017; Fuertes Prado, 2015; Konomi, 2014; Paredes et al., 2008) point out that using realia and storytelling involve very young learners in their learning process, it is meaningless to bring those tools within the classroom if students do not make connections to learn. To guarantee that students learn through the use of those tools it is recommended to consider learners' prior knowledge, needs and interests so that they make connections

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not only between objects and words but also with previous experiences and their mother tongue.

6.5 Research limitations on the present study

Even though this research accomplished the goals proposed, there were some limitations during the implementation in terms of the number of students, time management and data collection instruments. First, the researcher only had 13 students in the classroom, and she carried out the study with 12 students since one of them did not have the permission to participate. For further studies, it would be advisable to make the intervention with more students so that the researcher would identify other important factors such as motivation, collaborative learning when analyzing the data. Second, there was a limitation regarding time. In some of the lesson plans there was not enough time to carry out all the activities proposed; therefore, it was necessary to modify some of them. In particular, the activities in which students had to exchange information.

Third, the researcher designed a focus group which aimed at identifying students' views on how they learnt by using storytelling and realia during the implementation. After analyzing the data of the focus group, the researcher realized she only got perceptions about the use of realia since none of the students made any reference to the stories. However, the researcher found information in this regard in the teachers' journal and she found out the influence stories had when analyzing the recorded conversations.

6.6 Further research

The findings of this research indicated that the pedagogical proposal carried out was successful. However, it is advisable to continue working with the making connections strategy since it demonstrates learning and it can be used to develop other skills such as reading and writing. In addition, it can be implemented in other fields of education. This

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study only focused on the cognitive and experiential connections; there are other kinds of connections that could be studied and implemented with other populations.

The present study used realia and storytelling to allow children make those connections. In the future, researchers should look for other innovative tools that help children make connections among their prior knowledge, their first language, new vocabulary, and their environment in order to make lifelong learning connections. One of those tools could be digital storytelling or another digital strategy since nowadays teachers face a different generation and should aim at developing 21st century skills.

According to the results of this study, students could use the new vocabulary within simple structures within and outside the classroom, structures presented in the stories. It would be recommendable to study deeply the influence of stories from various genres on the creation of more complex structures when communicating a message.

6.7 Conclusion

The globalized world demands the ability to communicate in English since it plays an important role in our everyday life and it is the medium of communication in different fields such as education, business, and media (Reddy, 2016). The present study aimed at analyzing the influence of using realia along with storytelling to make cognitive and experiential connections in very young children vocabulary learning to speak in English. Although the participants in this study were eager to learn, questionnaires and tests revealed that they lacked vocabulary to speak English.

The results demonstrated that students learnt new words in English since they significantly increased the numbers of words produced after the intervention. They could make the connections between real-life objects and vocabulary by using their prior knowledge. Moreover, they could use the vocabulary within simple structures and use some

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of them spontaneously in a context different from the classroom. Realia and storytelling allowed children to make connections since they understood words when they were listening and interacting with real-life objects. Those tools engaged children when carrying out all the activities since they participated actively.

This study provided evidence for the contribution of teaching vocabulary to preschool children and the effectiveness of using realia and storytelling to allow students make connections and learn. The findings of this research project show an approach that can be adapted and implemented in different levels and grades as a first step to improve English speaking skill.

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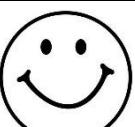
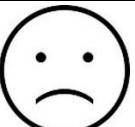
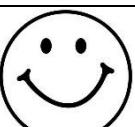
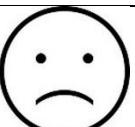
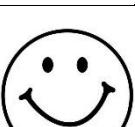
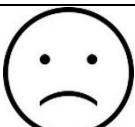
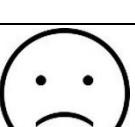
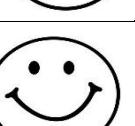
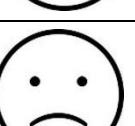
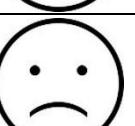
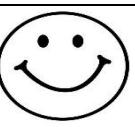
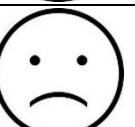
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LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH MAKING CONNECTIONS

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Colorea la cara feliz si estás de acuerdo con la oración. Colorea la cara triste si no estás de acuerdo.

Me siento bien en mi clase de inglés.		
Entiendo a mi profesora.		
Entiendo las actividades.		
Canto canciones en inglés.		
Juego con mis amigas.		
Hablo inglés con mis amigas.		
Sé decir <i>ir al colegio, bañarme los dientes, correr, saltar, caminar, comer</i> en inglés.		
Me gustaría hablar más en inglés.		
Me gustaría aprender más palabras.		
Me gustaría leer y escuchar historias en inglés.		

LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH MAKING CONNECTIONS

Appendix B: Criterion-referenced test

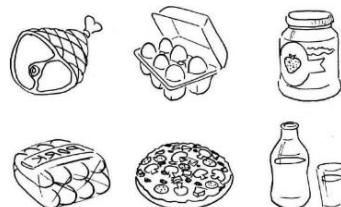
1. Order the days of the week

Sunday	Monday	Friday	Thursday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Saturday
	1					

2. Circle what you usually eat at lunch.

1.

- a) Eggs, milk, pancakes.
- b) Rice, meat, chicken, salad.
- c) Ice-cream, candies, hamburgers



3. Match the picture with the name using different colors.

Windy



Rainy



Sunny



Cloudy



Snowy



4. Draw and color a black cat and a green frog.

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5. Match the picture with the corresponding sentence.

I always brush

I usually wash

I have lunch at

I sleep at home



6. What number is it?

Two _____

Five _____

Eight _____

Ten _____

Eleven _____

Fourteen _____

Sixteen _____

Nineteen _____

?

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Appendix C: Consent letter

Señores Padres de Familia
Preescolar

Apreciados padres de familia:

Actualmente estoy realizando un proyecto educativo titulado *Enhancing Very Young Learners' Vocabulary Acquisition through Making Connections between Realia and Concepts* dirigido a las estudiantes de preescolar (transición), con el propósito de contribuir y enriquecer los procesos de aprendizaje del inglés como segunda lengua.

El objetivo de este estudio es analizar el proceso de adquisición de vocabulario de las niñas de transición y cómo este afecta su habilidad para expresarse en inglés. Así mismo, se busca proveer estrategias que complementen y mejoren su proceso de aprendizaje en la segunda lengua. Dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado para la *Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés con Énfasis en Ambientes de Aprendizaje Autónomo* de la Universidad de La Sabana.

Durante la implementación de este proyecto, los estudiantes desarrollarán algunas actividades y talleres guiados por el profesor. Cabe mencionar que la ejecución de este estudio no entorpecerá ni atrasará la planeación de clases o actividades inherentes al currículo del área y tampoco tendrá incidencia alguna en los resultados correspondientes al curso.

A los participantes se les garantizará el uso de nombres ficticios para mantener su identidad en el anonimato, así como estricta confidencialidad con la información que se recolecte. Agradezco de antemano su valioso aporte para llevar a buen término mi investigación.

Para que quede constancia que conocen esta información y aprueban la participación de su hija, por favor firmar el presente consentimiento.

Atentamente,
Yuliana Barrera
Profesora de proyecto preescolar

.....
Nombre de la estudiante: _____ Grado: _____

Acepto participar

Sí

No

Firma de la madre: _____ Firma del padre: _____

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Appendix D: Pretest and posttest

What can you see in the picture?
For example, I see a cold snowman.
Pretest picture



Silly Swim
Client Highlights Puzzlemania

Student	Nouns	Adjectives
S1		
S2		
S3		
S4		
S5		
S6		
S7		
S8		
S9		
10		
S11		
S12		

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What can you see in the picture?
For example, I see a cold snowman.
Posttest picture



Student	Nouns	Adjectives
S1		
S2		
S3		
S4		
S5		
S6		
S7		
S8		
S9		
10		
S11		
S12		

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Appendix E: Teacher's journal template

Date _____
 Story _____

week _____

	Students understanding	Difficulties	Engagement
Step 1: Warm up			
Step 2: Predicting			
Step 3: Listening to the story			
Step 4: Realia intervention			
Step 5: Post realia intervention			
Step 6: Making connections			

Taken and adapted from Prado (2015)

Positive aspects of the intervention	Aspects I should improve

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Appendix F: First lesson plan

Main objective: To describe textures of different real-life objects.

Subsidiary objective: To make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to textures.

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Stage	Aim	Procedure	Time and interaction
Warm up	To activate prior knowledge.	Students are going to play the telephone game. They are going to stand in two lines. The teacher is going to tell the last students of the lines a sentence. Each student has to tell others the sentence until the first student of the line. This student has to go in front of the classroom, choose the flashcard (appendix A) that relates to the sentence and say it out loud.	2 hours (100 min) Pair work
Predicting	To predict what the story is about.	Students are going to look the cover of the digital book and answer the following questions: What can you see? What do you think the monkey is doing? Is the monkey happy or sad? Why? Do you think there are more characters? Which ones? What do you think will happen next? Students have to organize some pictures in order to guess what happens next (Appendix B).	
Listening to the story	To listen to the story	Students are going to listen to the digital story “This feels” twice. They are going to work in pairs to compare if what they organize happened in the story.	
Realia intervention	To relate some vocabulary to real-life objects.	They are going to listen to the story again and there are going to be some pauses in order to show them some objects: a rock, a teddy bear, sand, a wet sponge, a glass, ice cream, bottle of warm water and a trunk. They are going to touch and feel the objects while listening to the story. After listening the story, they have to say how the objects feel.	2 hours (100 min) Pair and group work
Post realia intervention	To identify different textures.	Students are going to work in pairs with the objects. They are going to ask each other: <i>How this rock feels?</i> <i>How this teddy bear feels?</i> Students have to carry out a worksheet in order to write their classmate’s answer (Appendix C). The instructions are going to be modeled by the teacher and a student so that they can carry out the activity properly.	
Making connections	To make connections between vocabulary and real-life objects.	Students have to draw on a piece of paper an object (different from the one we use in the classroom) that has a specific texture (Appendix D, artefact). Then, they are going to share and compare with a classmate.	1 hour (50 min)

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Vocabulary	Adjectives: hard, soft, dry, wet, rough, smooth, cold, warm Nouns: rock, sand, hose, trunk, fire, snowman
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LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH MAKING CONNECTIONS

Appendix G: Second lesson plan

Main objective: To describe the way something tastes.

Subsidiary objective: To make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to flavors.

Stage	Aim	Procedure	Time and interaction
Warm up	To activate prior knowledge.	Students are going to play <i>What is missing?</i> There are going to be some fruits in the classroom: two tangerines, two apples, a tomato, grapes, two bananas and a peach. Students have to look at all the fruits and answer: What can you see? How many fruits are there? After that, they have to close their eyes. One of them is going to hide a fruit. Then, they open their eyes and they have to guess which fruit is missing. The student who guesses the fruit answer the following question: <i>How the tangerine feels?</i> <i>How the peach feels?</i> <i>How the banana feels?</i> Taking into account the fruit that was hidden.	
Predicting	To predict what the story is about by drawing what will happen next.	Students are going to look the cover of the digital book and answer the following questions: What can you see? What do you think the squirrel is doing? Is the squirrel happy or sad? Why? Do you think there are more characters? Which ones? What do you think will happen next? What is the squirrel eating? How it feels? Students have to draw what they think the squirrel is going to eat (Appendix A) and their favorite food. After that, they are going to share it with their classmates.	2 hours (100 min) Pair work
Listening to the story	To listen to the story and compare predictions	Students are going to listen to the digital story “This tastes”. They are going to work in pairs to compare if what they draw is what the squirrel is going to eat.	
Realia intervention	To relate some vocabulary to real-life food.	They are going to listen to the story again and there are going to be some pauses in order to show them some food: old bread, lemons, peaches, cookies, jelly, chili pepper, cakes and a cup of coffee without sugar. They are going to taste some of them while listening to the story. After listening the story, they have to say how the food taste.	2 hours (100 min)

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Post realia intervention	To identify different flavors.	Students are going to ask 3 of their classmates: <i>How this peach tastes? How this bread tastes?</i> Students have to carry out a worksheet in order to write their classmate's answer (Appendix B). The instructions are going to be modeled by the teacher and a student so that they can carry out the activity properly. Then, they have to compare in pairs if answers are similar or different.	Pair and group work
Making connections	To make connections between vocabulary and real-life objects.	Students have to draw on a piece of paper food (different from the ones we taste in the classroom) that has a specific flavor (Appendix C, artifact). Then, they are going to share and compare with a classmate.	1 hour (50 min)
Vocabulary		Adjectives: old, juicy, sour, sweet, bland, spicy, bitter, yummy Nouns: bread, peach, lemon, cookies, chili pepper, ginger, cake.	

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Appendix H: Third lesson plan

Main objective: To describe the way something smells.

Subsidiary objective: To make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to smells.

Stage	Aim	Procedure	Time and interaction
Warm up	To activate prior knowledge.	Students are going to play Pictionary. A student is going to choose randomly a word on a piece of paper (Appendix A). She is going to draw the word on the board and the other students are going to guess it. They have a minute to guess the word; if they do not guess it in that period of time, another student will be given another word. At the end, the teacher is going to show them pictures of both the words they guessed and the ones they did not.	
Predicting	To predict what the story is about by designing book's cover.	Students are going to look the title of the digital book and answer the following questions: What do you think the story is about? How do you think the cover of the book is? How many characters will you find? Students have to design the cover of the book. After that, they are going to share it with their classmates.	2 hours (100 min) Pair work
Listening to the story	To listen to the story and compare books covers.	Students are going to listen to the digital story “This smells”. They are going to work in pairs. They have to exchange the covers they designed and their classmates should identify if the cover is similar to what is happening in the story. They are going to share it with the whole group.	
Realia intervention	To relate some vocabulary to real-life objects.	They are going to listen to the story again and there are going to be some pauses in order to show them some objects: lemons, flowers, vinegar, an old book, clothing, an incense and a nail polish remover. They are going to smell those objects and tell their classmates how they smell.	2 hours (100 min)
Post realia intervention	To identify different smells.	Students are going close their eyes. They are going to smell some things (perfume, vanilla essence, lemon essence, chili pepper, liquid soap). Then, they open their eyes and answer some questions: <i>How this smells?</i> They have to guess and draw what they think they are smelling (Appendix B). Then, they are going to compare their answers with their classmates.	Pair and group work

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Making connections	To make connections between vocabulary and real-life objects.	Students have to draw on a piece of paper objects (different from the ones we smell in the classroom). (Appendix C, artifact). Then, they are going to share and compare with a classmate.	1 hour (50 min)
Vocabulary	Adjectives: sour, sweet, old, new, dirty, clean, bad, good, Nouns: flowers, vinegar, socks, purse, nail polish remover.		

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Appendix I: Fourth lesson plan

Main objective: To describe the way something feels, tastes, smells and sounds.

Subsidiary objective: To make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to sounds.

Stage	Aim	Procedure	Time and interaction
Warm up	To activate prior knowledge.	We are going to brainstorm what students have learnt. In groups of 4, they are going to cut some pictures from different magazines in order to design a mind map (textures, flavors, smells). They have to classify the pictures. Then, we all are going to design the mind map.	
Predicting	To predict what the story is about.	<p>We have learnt about textures, flavors and smells. Students are going to answer the following questions: What do you think the next story is about? How many characters will you find? What would you like to find? Where do you think the story takes place? Can you imagine the story?</p> <p>Students are going to work in pairs. They are going to tell the story they imagine and find out the similarities and differences between the two stories. They have to draw it in a Ven diagram (Appendix A). Instructions are going to be modeled so that they can carry out the activity properly.</p>	2 hours (100 min) Pair work
Listening to the story	To listen to the story and comparing predictions.	Students are going to listen to the digital story “This sounds”. They are going to compare if their stories are similar to the one they are listening to and share it with the whole group.	
Realia intervention	To relate some vocabulary to real-life objects.	They are going to listen to the story again and there are going to be some pauses in order to show them some objects: alarm clock, a xylophone, a toy with sound, icopor. They are going to hear those objects and tell their classmates how they sound and if they like that sound.	2 hours (100 min)
Post realia intervention	To identify different smells.	Students are going to close their eyes and listen to the following audios: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVHx1l6MZn8 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CVkmq5ZIK4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhW5BPUJDYU https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PF-KjL7xCDU https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcoZNqzRxq0 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3Svf5LGiQ4	Pair and group work

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		<p>They are going to classify the sounds into noisy, quiet, squeaky, boring and fun (Appendix B) and compare with a classmate.</p>	
Making connections	To make connections between vocabulary and real-life objects.	<p>Students have to think about their favorite toy or food. They have to draw it and write how it feels, tastes, smells and sounds if it is the case. (Appendix C, artefact). Then, they are going to share it with the whole group.</p>	1 hour (50 min)
Vocabulary		<p>Adjectives: noisy, quiet, squeaky, loud, calm, silly, boring, fun. Nouns: alarm clock, party, toy, horn, tv program.</p>	

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Appendix J: Pedagogical implementation

LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH MAKING CONNECTIONS

Pre-implementation stage					
Date	Cycle	Objective	Activities	Hours	Instruments
March 24 th		To identify how many adjectives and nouns participants recognize in a specific context.	Pre-test: It will be done individually. Students look at a picture and describe what they can see.	2	Pre-test
While Implementation stage					
April 3rd	1	Main objective To describe textures of different real-life objects.	Step 1: Warm up <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The telephone game Step 2: Predicting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pair work: organizing events Step 3: Listening to “This feels” <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pair work: comparing events Step 4: Realia intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploring objects• Answering questions Step 5: Post-realia intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pair work: asking how does this feels?• Worksheet Step 6: Making connections <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying real-life objects with different textures.	2	Teachers' journal (ongoing assessment of students) Students' artefact (making connections)
April 6 th		Subsidiary objective To make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to textures.			
April 9 th		Main objective To describe the way food tastes.	Step 1 Warm up <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What is missing?</i> Game Step 2: Predicting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pair work: drawing what will happen next Step 3: Listening to the story <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comparing predictions Step 4: Realia intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tasting food		Teachers' journal (ongoing assessment of students) Students' artefact (making connections)
		Subsidiary objective			

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		To make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to flavors	Step 5: Post-realia intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pair work (asking how something tastes?)• Worksheet <p>2.</p> Step 6: Making connections <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying food with different flavors.	2	
April 13th				1	
April 16 th	3	Main objective To describe the way something smells.	Step 1: Warm up <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pictionary game Step 2: Predicting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pair work: designing book's cover Step 3: Listening to the story <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exchanging covers and comparing Step 4: Realia intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smelling objects	2	Teacher's journal (ongoing assessment of students)
April 20 th		Subsidiary objective To make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to smells	Step 5: Post-realia intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pair work (asking how something smells)• Guessing Step 6: Making connections <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying objects with different smells.	1	Students' artefact (making connections)
April 23 rd	4	Main objective To describe the way something feels, tastes, smells and sounds.	Step 1: Warm up <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mind map Step 2: Predicting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating a story• Finding out similarities and differences Step 3: Listening to the story <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comparing the real story with students' story. Step 4: Realia intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none">3. Listening to different objects sounds	2	Teachers' journal (ongoing assessment of students)
April 27 th		Subsidiary objective To make connections between real-life objects and vocabulary related to sounds.	Step 5: Post-realia intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classifying sounds and comparing Step 6: Making connections <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describing how something feels, tastes, smells and sounds	1	Students' artefact (making connections)
Post-implementation stage					

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April 30 th		To identify how many adjectives and nouns participants recognize in a specific context.	Post-test: It will be done individually. Students look at a picture and describe what they can see.	2	Post-test
May 2 nd		To identify how students learn though making connection between realia and the vocabulary presented on the stories.	Focus group: open-ended questions through a game (groups of 4 students).		Focus group game
May 4 rd		To identify how they use the vocabulary presented in the stories in a different context and their reactions when learning and making connections.	Recorded conversations: open-ended questions to the whole group. Eliciting knowledge.	1	Recorded conversations

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