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TITULO	Vocabulary Learning Through Story Reading
SUBTITULO	
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PALABRAS CLAVE (Mínimo 3 y máximo 6)	**aprendizaje de vocabulario**		**enseñanza de vocabulario**
	historias cortas		**logs**
	lectura de historias		**significado.**

RESUMEN DEL CONTENIDO **(**Mínimo 80 máximo 120 palabras)

Este estudio analiza los resultados sobre el uso de historias para la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera a niños en grado cuarto. El estudio se realizó en un colegio privado de Bogotá, Colombia. Durante el proceso de investigación el profesor-investigador seleccionó las historias de acuerdo a los intereses y gustos de los estudiantes, creó las actividades, planificó las lecciones, recopiló y analizó los datos. El análisis cualitativo muestra que la lectura de historias conduce al aprendizaje de vocabulario. En general, los resultados indican que las historias hacen el aprendizaje más interesante y significativo para los niños; así como las actividades bien diseñadas, atractivas y divertidas promueven la participación y motivan a los estudiantes en su proceso de aprendizaje.

Vocabulary Learning Through Story Reading

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Research Report submitted

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in English Language Teaching – Autonomous Learning Environments

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Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures

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Abstract

This small-scale action research study examines the use of short stories for teaching English as a foreign language to children in fourth grade. It was carried out in a private catholic school in Bogotá, Colombia. During the research process the teacher-researcher was required to select the stories according to the students' interests and likes, create the activities, plan the lessons, collect and analyze data. The qualitative analysis shows that story reading practice lead to the students' vocabulary learning process. Based on the research results, short stories made children's language learning more interesting and meaningful; well-designed, attractive and fun activities involved and encouraged students in their learning process.

Key words: vocabulary learning, short stories, story reading, vocabulary teaching, logs, meaning.

Resumen

Este estudio a pequeña escala de investigación acción analiza los resultados sobre el uso de historias para la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera a niños en grado cuarto. El estudio se llevó a cabo en un colegio católico privado de Bogotá, Colombia. Durante el proceso de investigación el profesor-investigador seleccionó las historias de acuerdo a los intereses y gustos de los estudiantes,

creó las actividades, planificó las lecciones, recopiló y analizó los datos. El análisis cualitativo muestra que la lectura de historias conduce al aprendizaje de vocabulario. En general, los resultados indican que las historias cortas hacen el aprendizaje más interesante y significativo para los niños; así como las actividades bien diseñadas, atractivas y divertidas promueven la participación y motivan a los estudiantes en su proceso de aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje de vocabulario, historias cortas, lectura de historias, enseñanza de vocabulario, logs, significado.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Most people never forget their first kiss, how to ride a bicycle, how to swim, and the stories learned as a child. So, why do people forget their lessons? Teachers notice that students may retain the concepts that they have fully understood but the structures and vocabulary of a lesson are easily forgotten. The use of short stories help to alleviate this problem. Interesting stories stay in the memory and words learnt in the process are also retained when the images from the stories are evoked through recollection. Thus, storytelling can help in the learning of English as a Foreign Language and especially in learning vocabulary.

School funding is a major determinant of the quality of English language teaching and learning. For example, some schools in Bogotá not only lack study materials, such as textbooks, dictionaries, workbooks and posters, but also the few materials they have are outdated and sometimes difficult.

The lack of interesting material for vocabulary improvement has led me to undertake this research project which aims to help both students and language teachers by providing them with interactive and motivating activities to support their learning-teaching process. Considering that young learners are able to understand what is being said even before they understand the individual words; intonation, gesture, facial expressions, actions and circumstances presented in short stories, all help tell them to guess what the unknown words and phrases probably mean. By understanding the message in this way they start to understand the language which remains a fundamental part of human communication. Furthermore, children delight in imagination and fantasy. As Halliwell (1993, p. 7) argues, in the primary

school children are very busy making sense of the world about them, they are identifying patterns and also deviations from that patterns. In the language classroom this capacity for fantasy and imagination has a constructive part to play. If we accept the role of the imagination in children's lives we can see that it provides another very powerful stimulus for real language use. The purpose of this research project is to analyze the possible impact of story reading in vocabulary learning and to explore students' vocabulary learning through the use of short stories.

The target population of this research study is 15 fourth graders between 10 -11years old of San Bartolomé La Merced School in Bogotá, Colombia. The group is placed in Movers Level according to Cambridge test (A1), which means they are Basic Users. Remembering new vocabulary seems to be the main difficulty for this group; what they learn today is often forgotten tomorrow. It has been noticed that the students do not use vocabulary presented in reading and listening activities in their own writing and speaking. Finally, although they know some words (their meaning, how to spell and to pronounce them), they have some difficulties when using them in different contexts.

This research project seeks to find answers to the following questions:
To what extent can the use of story reading help students to build their own vocabulary?
What is revealed about vocabulary learning when using short stories?

After some years of teaching experience, I have noticed that although there is a broad variety of didactic materials for teaching and learning English, there are several factors that make them difficult for these learners. One problem is that in

most cases the materials are written by native speakers who present topics related to their own context, which is culturally inappropriate for our students. Some international publishers produce materials which are not intended for teaching vocabulary to Colombian children; the images and situations do not correspond to their context, and the language level is too advanced for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Furthermore, these materials are usually too expensive for them.

A short story is a valuable didactic material which has an undeniable capacity to teach. Why then, do teachers in SBLM School ignore this powerful resource in teaching foreign languages? Children enjoy reading and listening to stories over and over again; as soon as they see the expression "once upon a time…" they know what to expect next. Wright (1995, p.3) talks about children's hunger for stories: "Stories help them to understand their world and share it with others; children's hunger for stories is constant. Every time they enter the classroom, they enter with a need for stories." For this reason, stories can provide a great introduction to foreign language learning presented in a context that is familiar to the child.

According to Ellis and Brewster (1999, pp. 1-2), there are further reasons for using storybooks: Stories are motivating and fun, they exercise the imagination, they are a useful tool in linking fantasy with children's real life, stories encourage social and emotional development and, the most important, reading stories allows teachers to introduce or revise new vocabulary and by exposing the children to language in varied, memorable and familiar contexts, they will enrich their thinking and gradually their own speech.

Nation (2005, p.10) argues that reading stories is a source of learning and a source of enjoyment; reading them can help students learn more vocabulary and grammar, and through success in language use, it can encourage learners to learn more and continue with their language study. In other words, as learners gain skills and fluency in reading thus increasing their enjoyment.

This research attempts to show teachers the possible benefits of using story reading in the classroom to develop the vocabulary proposed for starters in their current program. This research study is supported with appealing materials presented through blogs to help children learn and share their understanding of new vocabulary.

Through my readings and reflections in the M.A. program, I have discovered that story reading is a field of study that could foster the vocabulary learning process among students because it describes human experiences and feelings, and learners can interpret their own reality. The storybook presented in a blog refers to a variety of short stories (four in total) which appeal to young learners. It also suggests a range of related language-learning activities which can be used with children in their primary education who are EFL learners.

This first chapter includes the rationale, the objectives and the research questions that guided the study. The second chapter includes the literature review considering the main constructs pertinent to the development of the study such as vocabulary learning, vocabulary teaching and meaning construction, short stories and story reading. The third chapter presents the research design which includes information concerning the kind of study that was constructed, a description of the setting and participants, the instruments and procedures for data collection and

analysis. The fourth chapter four contains instructional design with the activities the researcher developed in order to collect data. The fifth chapter presents the data analysis and the findings and the categories and subcategories that emerged from the information gathered. The sixth chapter presents the pedagogical implications of the study and some reflections about the teaching practice when developing the writing skill in students as well as some ideas for further research.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

Based on the research questions and the constructs which frame them, there are some aspects that need to be considered in this theoretical framework. First, some approaches and perspectives towards vocabulary learning and teaching are discussed. Different authors studies were used in order to support vocabulary learning and vocabulary teaching constructs: Hatch& Brown(1995), Thornbury (2004) and I.S.P. Nation(2008). In the second part of this chapter, the concepts "*short story*" and "*story reading*" are studied, as well as the relationship between these concepts and how children use that to learn vocabulary.

Vocabulary Learning

"Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary *nothing* can be conveyed." This is how the linguist David Wilkins (1972, p.111) summed up the importance of vocabulary learning. For long time vocabulary used to be the "poor relation" of language teaching, but now it seems to occupy an honorable position. Learners are more aware about it since they have experienced the frustration of not finding the words they need to express themselves in a foreign language.

Nowadays, the tendency is to present vocabulary in texts. For vocabulary learning purposes, texts have enormous advantages over learning words from lists. For a start, the fact that the words are in context increases the chances of learners appreciating not only their meaning but their typical environments, such as their associated collocations or grammatical structures.

According to Thornbury (2004), at the most basic level, knowing a word involves knowing its form and its meaning. Knowing the meaning of a word is not only its dictionary definition, but also knowing the words commonly associated with it as well as its connotations. The following chart considers how to measure a foreign language learner's vocabulary interpretation.

Table 1. What is involved in knowing a word

Form	Spoken	R	What does the word sound like?
		P	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	R	What does the word look like?
		P	How is the word written and spelled?
	word parts	R	What parts are recognizable in this word?
		P	What word parts are needed to express the meaning?
Meaning	Form and meaning	R	What meaning does this word form signal?
		P	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	concepts and referents	R	What is included in the concept?
		P	What items can the concept refer to?
	Associations	R	What other words does this make us think of?
		P	What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use	grammatical functions	R	In what patterns does the word occur?
		P	In what patterns must we use this word?
	Collocations	R	What words or types of words occur with this one?
		P	What words or types of words must we use with this one?
	Constraints on use (register, frequency…)	R	Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet this word?
		P	Where, when, and how often can we use this word?

What is involved in knowing a word (Nation, 2001:27). In column 3, R=receptive knowledge, P= productive knowledge

Hatch and Brown (1995), address five essential stages regarding vocabulary learning that were considered for this research project during the English classes before the pedagogical intervention and implementation:

1. *Encountering new words,* means having a source for words. Some learners could learn new words by reading books, listening to TV and radio and reading newspapers and magazines.

2. *Getting the word form,* which means to get the clear image – visual or auditory or both- of the form of the vocabulary item. It has been demonstrated that beginners are particularly likely to make mistakes that are obviously related to confusion of words similar in form either to native language words or to other English words.

3. *Getting the word meaning,* most often associated with the idea of vocabulary learning. The level of distinctions that must be made in word definitions seems to vary both with the requirements of the task or situation and also with the level of the learner. Learners often get close to the meaning of the words by using dictionaries, moving from picture dictionaries, to bilingual dictionaries, and then to monolingual dictionaries and thesauruses. Another way of getting definitions is simply by having a bilingual person explain. Finally, learners guess the meaning of words from the situation, discourse and /or context in which they are used, and from the structure of the words themselves.

4. *Consolidating word form and meaning in memory.* Many kinds of vocabulary learning tools such as flashcards, crossword puzzles and matching games are used to strengthen the form-meaning connection. For decades mnemonic devices and their uses have been studied extensively by various researchers such as Cohen and Aphek (1981) and Oxford (1990).Oxford (1990) established nine specific memory strategies that help learners to consolidate the connection between word form and meaning in memory.

5. *Using the word.* This final step could be considered as a form of hypothesis learning, allowing learners to see if the knowledge acquired in the previous stages is correct. Sugawara (1992) demonstrated that having students use the

new words at least once was likely to lead to increased use of the words eventually because of the greater confidence which the students had in the word's connotation for a particular communicative purpose.

Vocabulary Teaching

Implementation of vocabulary activities in the classroom. According to McCarthy (1990) and Thornbury (2004), there are many ways in which vocabulary can be formally presented in the classroom. The way and the quantity of words to be presented depends on the level of the learners, the learners' likely familiarity with the words, the difficulty of the items, their "teachability" and whether the items are being learned for production or for recognition only.   Based on that, McCarthy (1990) and Thornbury (2004) have suggested the following stages; which were used during the implementation of this research project:

1. Pre-teaching: the aim of pre-teaching is to get some vocabulary problems out of the way before the students meet them in the text. At this stage new knowledge is most efficiently absorbed when it is assimilated to the already known (student's pre concepts), and when the appropriate conceptual frameworks are activated in the mind of the learner. It can have a positive effect on vocabulary learning and text comprehension.

2. Form and meaning

    Meaning: An alternative way to explain meaning is simply to use words. Some of these means of clarifying meaning are: providing an example of a situation, giving several example sentences, giving synonyms, antonyms, or giving a full definition. Another strategy to be used is called *situational presentation* which consists of providing a scenario that clearly contextualizes the target

word. McCarthy (1990) also recommends maps and grids as an alternative to the disorganized word-lists; these materials help to organize vocabulary for teaching in terms of lexico-semantic relations. It is important to emphasize that learning the meaning of a word is a gradual process.

Form: Some authors suggest that lower level learners may particularly benefit from perceiving acoustic and orthographic similarities in words. Redman and Ellis (1990) encourage the learning of words in trios that have the same stress pattern and which rhyme - for example: *repair – despair – compare.* On the other hand, Thornbury (2004) argues that the sound of words, as much as their meaning, determines the way they are stored in the mental lexicon; he suggests that highlighting the stress and general shape of the word is a useful aid to retention. The author proposes three ways of highlighting the spoken form of the word: listening drills, oral drills, and board work. In the first one the teacher does the repeating, so as to accustom the learners to the phonological features of the word; this modeling process can be accompanied by some kind of visual stimulus. For the second one, learners are asked to repeat the new word, both in chorus and individually, in order to reinforce it in memory. The third one refers to the use of symbols to indicate where the primary stress is placed. A useful strategy, therefore, might be to ask learners, soon after hearing a new word, to attempt to spell it.

3. Types of stimuli: Teachers can use written, spoken or visual stimuli. The most common stimulus is the written word, either in the form of words in contexts, or in lists or grids, but this kind of stimulus is usually backed up by pronunciation practice and drilling of the word (spoken stimuli). Visual stimuli

such as pictures are a versatile resource for introducing new words; however, words that denote judgments, opinions, or evaluations are least amenable to visual stimuli. (Taylor, 1986)

4. Input, reinforcement, and uptake: According to McCarthy (1990), methods like keyword and rote learning of lists presuppose the descontextualization of words, but it may be argued that the best way of assuring that a word is remembered and assimilated is by meeting it in some meaningful context. Nevertheless, Nation (1982) argues that context may not necessarily be the most efficient way of getting the meaning of a word across, and in the early stages of language learning, a word and its translation may be more effective stimuli.

Since the target group consists of 10-11 year-old children, the way of making learners remember and assimilate new words was focused on some techniques for teaching vocabulary to beginners. French (1983) suggests the following techniques for beginners' classes:

• Showing the meanings of words: In some classes for beginners, teachers use all three ways to show the meaning of vocabulary words: pictures, explanations in the students' own language, and definitions in simple English, using vocabulary that the students already know. At this point this process might consider drawing attention to meanings before drilling words; the teacher must try to offer their students some sort of experience with an object for which the English word will be taught; in other words, the teacher thinks about ways of drawing learners' attention to the ideas represented by those words, not the words themselves. It

is very important to give students some experience with the use of the new words for communication.

- Commands are useful in vocabulary classes: When teachers ask students to respond physically to oral commands which use the new words, the activity is very much like what happens when one is learning one's mother tongue. Children have frequent experiences in obeying commands during the early years of learning their mother tongue before they master the words and constructions they heard from form adults. When learners have observed an action (command) and have wondered what the action is called, it is not difficult to teach them the new word.

- Using real objects for vocabulary teaching: Real objects are better than pictures whenever we have them in the classroom. There are a few exceptions, however, these exceptions include clothing that students are wearing (some of them could feel uncomfortable) and words like man, boy, boy, girl (it seems awkward to point to an individual and say "He is a boy"). On the other hand it is recommended to use both real objects and pictures, and a series of commands. That could be the case of introducing parts of the body (First show the picture of the hand, then recognize your own hand and finally perform the action "raise your right hand").

- Using visual aids: Visual aids are available in many forms. When learners see actions performed by someone in the class that is a kind of visual aid, and it is considered the best way of teaching meanings of many verbs. Routine commands are also useful to teach new words. When teachers point to some

objects or bring them to the class, they are using visual aids. -Pictures -can come from many sources: flashcards, story books, magazines, newspapers, posters, drawings made by students etc.

French (1983) summarizes the most important aspects to keep in mind when teaching vocabulary:

- People are best able to learn a word when they feel a personal need from that word.
- Teachers can create in students' minds the feeling that certain English words are needed.
- To produce that sense of need it is not enough just to mention an English word and give students its meaning.
- Understanding, hearing, and seeing a word are only first steps toward knowing it.
- Those first steps should be followed by activities that require students to use the new words for communication.

In other words, what French argues is that when someone has to accomplish something which can be done only by using certain words, those words will be learned.

What Is a Short Story?

A Short story is commonly understood as a narrative genre that shows the daily life of people (the characters' or the author's) in relation to their historical moment or particular circumstances (Quiroga-Clare, 2001).Based on this notion, short stories take into account real events and they are related to the literary creativity. At this point students may interpret the situations and particular details that short stories show in order to generate word connotation.

A short story may have a theme, or several themes, but it will not be an explicit illustration of a single theme or moral or lesson. The point of the story is not to hammer home one clear "theme." Instead, writers offer readers opportunities to make their own meanings, and there might be many themes. The modern form of the short story is more expansively descriptive, providing more complexities of character, setting, and events. However, it is possible to recognize some of the basic elements of the modern story writer's craft, even in this early form. There is plot, character, setting, point of view, and even a dash of symbolism and irony here. Stories are the building blocks of knowledge, the foundation of memory and learning. Stories connect us with our humanness and link past, present and future by teaching us to anticipate the possible consequences of our actions.

A short story is a tool by which one can approach students' development of their reading skills; likewise, it invites them to discover an unlimited range of sensations. When we are reading a text, the information we can find gives us a message and also a possibility to interact and create our concepts. According to Gee (1991), "when elementary school students approach *literacy practices*, it could be a benefit for pedagogical goals" (p. 86). From this perspective, this study aims to explore how reading short stories can provide useful pedagogical support for the enhancement of the vocabulary learning.

Story Reading

To young learners, few contexts are more meaningful than a story. That children's interest in stories is strong and powerful is evident from the quality of attention they engage; through stories children can try out new experiences and

test new ideas; thus, kids have the opportunity to activate their critical thinking in areas such as conflict resolution, problem solving and cause and effect, among others. A story, with its elements of novelty, humor, conflict and surprise, heightens the awakening level and this in turn creates its own motivation to attend to the situation and learn from the context. By reading and listening to stories children are introduced to a number of words in context. Barton (1994) states that very often repeated use of words in the same context, or in varying contexts helps learners to infer the meanings of words and gradually assimilate them into their growing lexicon.

Taking into account the previous concepts, the purpose of reading stories is to give students language input and a bridge to literacy in the new language within particular situations. For effects of this study, using stories allows the researcher to introduce new vocabulary by exposing children to the language in different contexts, thereby enriching their thinking skills and introducing them to the productive skills. Also, as noted by Ellis & Brewster (1999), many stories have natural repetition of key vocabulary and structures that help children remember details and learn to anticipate what is about to happen next in the story.

The language of storybooks can enhance the oral English children have been listening to in the classroom, motivating them to produce oral language and different expressions as a consequence of this input. The pictures and the teacher's expression help children to understand the vocabulary and the story; children can see the English they have learned come alive through storybook characters. For the purposes of this study, the teacher- researcher is suggested to do pre-reading tasks focused on building up vocabulary through different activities

that should help students to become familiar with the new vocabulary; and post-reading activities focused on the story comprehension; hence children will learn both new vocabulary and new reading skills. Rereading the story often helps fixing vocabulary and structures, plus children enjoy repetitions. Repetition helps them learn the patterns and structure of a story and, eventually word recognition. It also makes books predictable and helps develop vocabulary and sequencing.

Related Studies

Most of the early studies on learning English as a foreign language were done on the field of reading skills development; however not enough of these studies, to my knowledge, have explored factors about vocabulary learning through short stories reading in this particular context, Colombia or similar contexts. Thus, there is a need for an action research study to fill this gap in the research literature.

Porras (2010), found that children showed high motivation when the stories were told or read and the use of written stories based on their interests and likes increased their participation in the different activities as well as their comprehension of the stories and acquisition of the new vocabulary. She concluded that stories made children's learning the foreign language more interesting, amusing, and memorable. She also stated that students have an amazing ability to absorb language when activities are familiar and enjoyable to them. In brief, teaching a foreign language using stories as a basis creates a learning environment that is both familiar and fun.

Norato and Cañón, (2008) on the other hand, aimed at developing cognitive processes explicitly through the reading of short stories. Their study was based on reading strategies and Bloom's cognitive domain which was applied in sixth

graders English classes. They determined that reading at early stages is a useful tool to develop not only cognitive processes and skills, but also higher motivation and a better environment in the English class. Therefore, the short stories used were not only the tool but the media to have students work cooperatively on a topic they like, hence developing high level thinking processes.

Hickman (2004) proposes storybook reading for improving vocabulary and comprehension for English language learners. Although she recognizes that several studies have been done making emphasis on improving instruction and educational outcomes for struggling readings, she considers very little discussion has addressed how to use teacher read-alouds as an effective practice for enhancing vocabulary and comprehension. The author highlights the importance of recognizing that learners might not always be familiar with knowledge or concepts necessary to understand new vocabulary words or comprehend topics within the storybook. To face this situation, she proposes careful scaffolding, which may focus on using pictures or briefly demonstrating concepts with simple objects.

Finally, Biemiller (2000) has investigated - vocabulary acquisition and learning through reading skills development and came to the conclusion that vocabulary growth was inadequately addressed in current educational curricula, especially in elementary and preschool years. He suggests that a greater teacher-centered effort is needed to promote vocabulary development, especially in the kindergarten and primary years.

As discussed above, the theories and perspectives about vocabulary learning differ in some issues as well as present some common aspects among them. In conclusion, learning vocabulary implies an ongoing process in which semantic networks of related words must be constructed, communication signals must be acquired, and lexical phrases must be learned, (Hatch, 1995). The previous literature review gives the researcher important elements to have in mind as a base to the entire research study.

The next chapter will show the type of study developed, and also the setting, participants, and instruments to collect and analyze data.

Chapter Three: Research Design

This study researched the possible impact of using short stories in vocabulary learning and followed the principles of action research.

Action research is defined by Halsey (1972) as a small scale intervention in the performance of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention. Stenhouse (1979) suggests that action research should contribute not only to the practice but also to a theory of education and teaching that will be accessible to other teachers, making educational practice more reflective. The principle purpose of action research is to provide teachers with new tools, techniques and methods.

As Cohen (2007) mentioned, action research allows teachers to give a justification of our educational work to others because we as teachers can show how the evidence we have gathered and the critical reflection we have done have helped us to create a developed, tested and critically-examined rationale for what we are doing.

Type of Study

This research project aimed to investigate the implications of teaching vocabulary through short stories. This study is not intended to transform the school's syllabus into a story reading based one; its objective is to provide students with opportunities to learn vocabulary in a different way following clear input processes. This study examined this by answering the following research questions:

- To what extent can the use of story reading help students to build their own vocabulary?

- What is revealed about vocabulary learning for language skills development in primary students when using short stories?

By answering the research questions, the researcher intended to accomplish the objectives described below:

- To analyze the possible impact of story reading in vocabulary learning for language skills development.

- To explore students vocabulary learning through the use of short stories.

A qualitative action research study guided this research methodology. In this methodology the researcher focuses on how people interpret their experiences, that is, what meaning people attribute to them. As Merriam (2009) states, qualitative research studies draw on the data collected to make sense of human behavior by using different instruments. In this study three instruments were used to provide validity, reliability to the research project. Additionally, some quantitative data were used to support research findings. These data consist of a set of pre-tests and post-tests. The collection of this information provided for a more objective analysis of the intervention and the vocabulary learning improvement that occurred during the implementation.

Instructional Setting

This research project was carried out at San Bartolomé la Merced School, which is located at Carrera 5 # 34 -00 (Localidad Santa Fé). This is a catholic institution which is committed to the education of the whole child by meeting the

spiritual, intellectual, social and emotional needs of each individual. At San Bartolomé School, the teaching practices are based on Personalized Education that bears in mind the person as a particular human being. In this perspective, students during their school life, have the opportunity of enriching their principles of creativity, socialization, singularity and transcendence, which search for articulating academic and personal life experiences.

Furthermore, the PEI (Educational Institutional Project) dedicated to developing students' holistic education is based on the Constructivist approach as the style of how students use their funds of knowledge to build up new knowledge. Hence, these students select and transform information, construct hypotheses and make decisions, relying on a cognitive structure to do so. This cognitive structure provides meaning and organization to experiences and allows the learner to go beyond the given information. The teacher and students engage in an active dialogue in which the instructor translates information to be learned into a format that is suitable to the learner's current stage of understanding. Curriculum must be organized in a spiral manner so that the student continually builds upon what they have already learned (Bruner, 1973).

Thus, in English language teaching, teachers design five content-based worksheets during the academic year, one per term and one that serves as a diagnosis to determine what students have learned the year before. Each worksheet intends to work on a specific grammar structure with its corresponding communicative function contained in the PIA (Integrated Area Program). Teachers use the worksheets as the basis of their teaching planning (6 hours a week) and

also make use of some complementary activities related to the main topic. Moreover, the English area follows the communicative approach and works under the common European Framework standards.

Participants

This is an elementary group of 15 mixed gender fourth graders (6 girls and 9 boys) at Colegio San Bartolomé La Merced. They have six lessons a week of 45 minutes each. The average age of the learners is 10 years. Students are using two-month worksheets designed by the grade teachers, focused on communicative approach. The most relevant strength of the group is motivation, which is a great starting point for learning. On the other hand, they are not very autonomous; they show high dependence of their teacher. In terms of skills, their educational background was the communicative approach. They need to work hard on listening comprehension and written production. Pronunciation is acceptable; however, they need work on connected speech and question forms to avoid L1 interference in their oral production. Although their reading comprehension is adequate for their level, some of them show apathy for this skill and have expressed that they do not understand many words from the texts. The majority of learners enjoy pair and small team work; however, some students need to strengthen their self-esteem due to the fact that they refuse to talk in front of the class and some of them have been discriminated against the group. They appreciate the confident environment given by their teachers.

Researcher's Role

It has been said, as Johnson (1994) quotes Wolfe: "Teachers often leave a mark on their students, but they seldom leave a mark on their profession". Through the process and products of action research teachers can do both.

Qualitative research assumes that the researcher is an integral part of the research process, an instrument that interacts and collaborates with the participants, and also gathers data himself/herself. According to Loughran (2002), a teacher researcher can be characterized as a practitioner who attempts to better understand his/her practice and its impact on his/her students, by researching the relationship between teaching and learning in his/her world of work.

For this study, there was a teacher–researcher who provided a reading environment for students in which they had the opportunity to learn more vocabulary and improve their reading skills. The main researcher's purpose was to apply in fourth grade students new vocabulary learning strategies through the use of short stories. They were provided with periodic reports, and the researcher wrote a final report to share the conclusions and the impact that the research project could have.

Instruments

The materials in this study included a student's log which checks the student's progress, follow their process and determine weaknesses and strengths, advantages and disadvantages of using short stories to learn vocabulary (See appendix A). Also included are students' tests: pre-test, follow-up activities and

post-test, adapted from Cambridge University Flyers Tests to have evidence about students' vocabulary knowledge (Appendix B). The students developed a mini-project in which they had the opportunity to use the new vocabulary; for that purpose, they created short stories using the website S*torybird*. The first part of the research design process was to share the data collection instruments designed with our master program classmates in order to obtain feedback.

Tests. In Tests, researchers have at their disposal a powerful method of data collection, an impressive array of tests for gathering data of a numerical rather than verbal kind. This study was focused on norm-referenced tests. A norm-referenced test can only provide the researcher with information on how well one student has achieved in comparison with another, enabling rank orderings of performance and achievement to be constructed.

Logs. According to Fogarty (1994), a log is an academic diary focused on students' activities, not personal life-like journals. It must accomplish the following characteristics:

- Collect qualitative data – summarize experiences and thoughts.
- Make a relation between knowledge and experiences.
- Reflect in order to summarize, self-evaluation, development of metacognition processes.
- Make decisions.

Based on some practical considerations made by Cohen and Morrison (2007), the log was piloted, using a group of respondents who were drawn from the

sample (4B) but who did not receive the final, refined version; in the case of this study the group 4E was used.

A cover explanation was also included, thanking the participants (4B students) for anticipated cooperation, indicating the purposes of the research, how anonymity and confidentiality was addressed, and who was party to the final report.

Ethical Considerations

During data collection process, the study followed Winter's (1996) ethical suggestions in regards to the following aspects: To inform participants and their families (considering they are underage students) of the purpose of the study and data collection procedures and also the benefits of the study, to sign consent letters and to protect the participants' anonymity. To make sure that relevant persons in the institution accept to carry out this study, the Academic Coordinator and the Principal of San Bartolomé la Merced School were also informed. (Appendices C, D)

Before applying tests and logs; the research objectives, the data collection procedures and benefits of the study were described in detail. Furthermore students' right to participate and their right to withdraw at any time were clarified. It was also explained to participants that this study would not have any impact on their grades. This information was given in Spanish to avoid misunderstandings.

The participants' names were not used in this study; instead some numbers were assigned based on the alphabetical order. For instance, the symbols (S1), (S2), (S3), and so on were used.

Validity

For data analysis, triangulation and validity were achieved by following Cohen's (2007) recommendations that validity might be improved through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatments of the data. In this study validity was addressed by:

- Selecting an appropriate methodology and material for answering the research questions.

- Selecting appropriate instrumentation for gathering the type of data required and bearing in mind the students' profile.

- Using an appropriate sample, in this case 20 fourth grade students.

- Persistent observation of students' performance.

- Triangulation of instruments: tests (pre- follow-up activities and post), logs and the mini-project. For this study, the researcher applied time triangulation, specifically longitudinal triangulation in order to collect data from the same group (4B) at different point in time sequence.

The previous research design provides the researcher with clear information about the type of study, description of the setting and participants and finally the instruments and procedures for data collection and analysis. The next chapter shows the instructional design with the activities to be developed in order to collect data.

Chapter Four: Pedagogical Intervention

Based on a literature review and the research design, the pedagogical intervention was designed. Following a description of the instructional design based on Richard Mayer's (1992) constructivist learning theory, the instructional goals were set. After that, the instructional method to work with the chosen stories to teach vocabulary was explained. Finally the instructional material was presented.

Instructional design theory proposed by Mayer (1992) is goal oriented, offering guidelines about what methods to use in what situations. Its methods are componential, offering varying levels of guidance for educators. The methods are also probabilistic, not always fostering the desired results, (Reigeluth, 1999)

As this study intended to examine the possible implication of using short stories for vocabulary learning, and bearing in mind that the school uses a constructivist methodology, the instructional design was organized based on the proposal for constructivist learning stated by Richard Mayer from University of California, Santa Barbara.
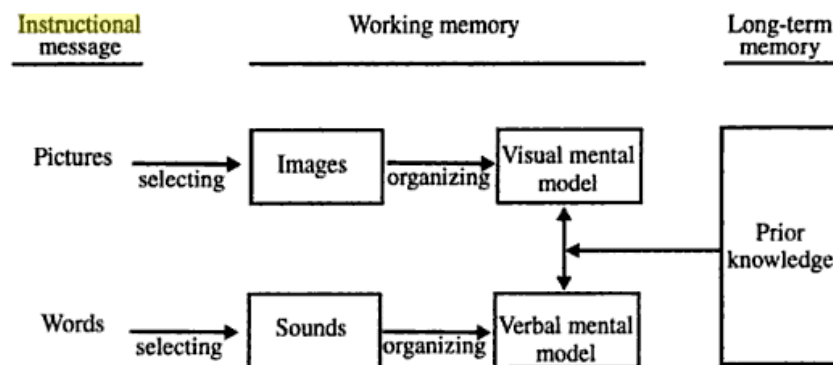

Figure 1.SOI (Selecting- Organizing- Integrating) model of constructivist learning from words and pictures.

Figure 1 presents the SOI (Selecting-Organizing-Integrating) model for instructional messages containing words and pictures. It distinguishes between visual working memory and auditory working memory. Visually presented materials, such as pictures and text (that is the case of short stories), are initially retained in visual working memory, although text can be converted to sounds that are retained in auditory working memory. Given the limited capacity of visual and auditory working memory, not all of the incoming material may be retained and processed.

The primary goal of SOI model is to foster knowledge construction (understanding) through direct instruction. It is intended primarily to use with textbook-based learning, lectures, and multimedia environments in which behavioral activity is not possible. Since the purpose of this study is to make use of short stories for vocabulary learning, presented in a blog, the researcher found the steps Mayer suggests valuable for the blog design.

These are the steps of the blog design followed by the teacher researcher:

1.   Select relevant information (During selection of the stories):

- Highlight the most important information for the learner using different sources such as italics, font size, icons, underlining, and repetition, among others.
- Define the instructional goals.
- Provide a summary.
- Be concise.

2.   Organize information for the learner using (During the design of the stories):

- Structure of the text
- Outlines

- Headings
- Pointer (signal or words)
- Graphic representations.

3.   Integrate information (During the design of the activities) :

- Illustrations with captions
- Worked-out examples
- Elaborative questions

Finally, both the instruction and the materials were evaluated based on the feedback received from the students. At the end of the second and the third story, a transfer and retention test was applied to check learners' understanding and use of the new language. These tests were used for data collection.

Instructional Goals

- Students will develop their vocabulary through follow up activities based on short stories.

- Students will learn more vocabulary through reading short stories.

Instructional Method

Children love the language of storybooks. This language can enhance the oral English they have been listening to in the classroom, motivating them to produce oral language and artistic expression as a consequence of this input. Pictures help children to understand the vocabulary, and of course, the story. Children can see and hear the English they have learned come alive through short stories characters. Rereading a story often helps fixing vocabulary and structures,

plus children enjoy repetitions. For this study, six stages were proposed to be followed: pre-test, warming up, pre-reading, while reading, follow up activities, post reading, post-test and evaluation. (Lesson plan: Appendix F)

The blog contains three short stories with reading and writing activities, which were carried out during a period of 12 weeks corresponding to a two-hour session per week. There is a timeline to organize steps that were followed between February and May (Appendices E, G). At the beginning of the web sites, students found an introduction to the course and its purpose. Then, students found a Power Point presentation with the short story and the follow up activities that foster their reading skill and their vocabulary learning. There were clear instructions in order to download the presentation and develop the task. Finally, they found an output activity to check their understanding and to use the vocabulary they have learned. This activity also contained instructions in order to develop the task.

At the end of each story and set of activities, students found a self-evaluation format (log) they had to develop after finishing all the activities (Appendix A). It is important to take into account that the blog was designed in order to motivate students not only to the acquisition of the second language but also to foster autonomy by means of the virtual environment.

Instructional Material

Since instructional goals are defined, it is essential to assemble the needed instructional materials.   For this study three short stories have been chosen: "The Wishing Fish", "The Three Little Pigs, and The Wolf's Side of the Story", and "Mrs.

Wood Comes Back Home". These stories were presented in a blog with their corresponding activities.

A blog is a website where someone can write material on an ongoing basis. New items show up at the top, so the visitors can read what is new. Then they may or may not comment on it, or link to it, or email.

According to Teeler and Gray (2000), "An Internet classroom is like an ordinary classroom apart from one thing: the students can use the Internet to complete activities and tasks". This means that we as teachers may encourage our students to function in the Internet world in order to foster motivation and autonomous learning. Furthermore, those technological tools such as social networks, web sites, videos and blogs, among others easily catch people's attention, so it is important for teachers to take advantage of these tools in order to help students to enjoy Internet for both entertainment and academic purposes.

To sum up, the knowledge construction approach to instructional design is based on several underlying values about the appropriate goals of instruction, including a focus on process as well as product, on transfer as well on retention, and how to learn as well as what to learn.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis

In this chapter, the results of the implementation are presented, following the procedures of qualitative research. Also some conclusions of the data analysis that emerged from this research project are included. As a result of the interpretation, the last part reports the findings of this investigation based on the categories and subcategories.

Procedures for Data Analysis

This chapter presents the findings which emerged after analyzing the information collected from the instruments which were applied with a group of 15 fourth grade students who were selected to work on vocabulary learning. These instruments were useful in terms of gathering data to find what story reading tells us about students' vocabulary learning.

This analysis was based on the grounded theory approach proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), which consists of a set of steps whose careful execution, they proposed, would generate a new theory as the outcome; the quality of the theory can be evaluated by the process by which it is constructed. As grounded theory has become a much-trusted qualitative research approach, it is common to find researchers adopting some of its procedures in the analysis of data. (Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2011, p.364). For this study the researcher has adopted the following procedures of the Grounded Theory to help in analysis of data:

- Conduct data collection and analysis simultaneously in an iterative process.

- Analyze actions and processes rather than themes and structure.

- Use comparative methods

- Draw on data (e.g. narratives and descriptions) in service of developing new conceptual categories.

The basic idea of this theory is to represent the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.57).The illustration below is presented as a pyramid to represent the reduction in the number of codes as the researcher progressed in this study from one level of coding to the next. The way to do it is by assigning codes to patterns identified to "reduce the large amount of data that may be collected" (Burns, 1999, p.157). For instance, some codes such as numbers were used to identify where the data came from; color labels were used to highlight repetitive vocabulary or expressions.

Figure 2. Coding procedures
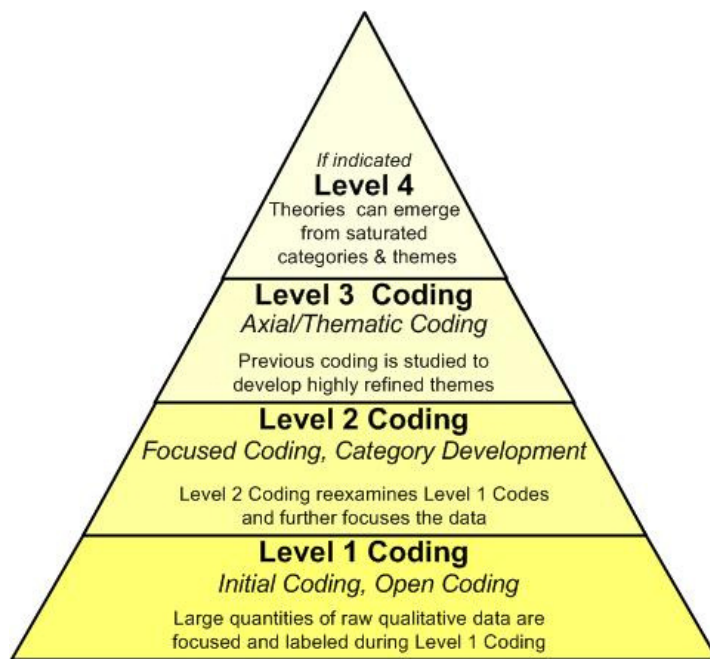
Taken from: Hahn,C. (2008) *Doing Qualitative Research Using Your Computer.*

Data Management

To follow the process of collecting data, storing and retrieving information, three files were opened in the computers to store and classify the information. The first file contained the information given by the logs; the second had the information taken from the tests (pre- post) and the third one stored the students' opinions and posts in the blog. The participants were numbered by using the form S1 to S15 in order to identify the fifteen students who participated in the research project. Besides the files in the computer, the follow up activities for each story were filed and checked. The instruments were chronologically organized and numbered according to the story: "The Wishing Fish" (#1), "The Three Little Pigs, The Wolf Side of the Story" (#2) and "Mrs. Wood Comes Back Home" (#3).The data was collected from February to May 2012 in nine sessions.

Data Reduction

The units of analysis were students' perceptions of using short stories and vocabulary learning improvement. For the purpose of this project some steps were used to analyze all data collected. The process of data reduction was done story by story. It started by checking the pre-test, then the follow up activities and the post-test, and finally checking the answers from the blog and the log. At the end of the three stories, the information was transcribed in different charts designed for each instrument. A chart was also used for monitoring the instruments students had developed. In the first chart, every answer students wrote was typed in the log, which gave a general idea of each aspect and facilitated the categorization of the data and the analysis as well. The second chart shows the control of the

instruments delivered, thus the researcher could notice if the participants were following the whole research process. (Appendix H)

The researcher attempted to identify patterns in the data and simplify the information. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.74), in open coding concepts are identified and developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. Similar events and incidents are labeled and grouped to form categories. In the case of this research, first, the researcher read the tests to try to find commonalities. She also tried to determine frequencies in students' new words learning and usages (follow up and post-test). Subsequently, she grouped the patterns she discovered.

Afterwards, the teacher read the students' logs and posts in the blog as she determined the properties from the information that could help her with the issue of students' perceptions and improvement. Once again she grouped the codes she found and she reduced them to establish categories. Consequently, the researcher triangulated the data collected from the instruments by identifying similarities in the information gathered to be used as a valid indicator which would give reliability to the data (Cohen et al., 2007). Subsequently; she displayed the main and relevant findings.

Categories

The core of this research was to explore fourth grade students' vocabulary learning through the use of short stories. Also, the researcher wanted to analyze the possible impact of story reading in vocabulary learning. To guide the research objectives, the teacher-researcher established the following research questions: To

what extent can the use of story reading help students to build their own vocabulary? And what is revealed about vocabulary learning for language skills development in primary students when using short stories?

Table 2. Defining categories and subcategories through open coding

Research questions	Categories	Sub categories
To what extent can the use of story reading help students to build up their own vocabulary?	Vocabulary learning improvement	1.1 New words learning 1.2 Students' Self- assessment and strategies used 1.3 Use the new vocabulary in students' productions
What is revealed about vocabulary learning when using short stories?	Perceptions students have of using short stories to learn vocabulary	

Through the analysis of students' tests, follow up activities, logs and comments in the blog, two categories emerged, that allowed the researcher to answer her research questions, and supported the analysis of students' vocabulary learning through the reading of short stories. These categories show not only the aspects that stood out in her analysis and understanding of the vocabulary learning by the students, but also the way in which students perceived short stories to learn new words.

The first category is called *vocabulary learning improvement*. In this category, the researcher focused on the way students used new words and their performance during the research implementation. From this point of view, three subcategories related to the students' vocabulary learning emerged. The first one was *new words learning*. The second subcategory - *Students' self-assessment and strategies used* - were considered *as* a key element that not only helps students assess their performance when using short stories to learn new vocabulary, but also fosters student's autonomy. Then she presented the subcategory "*Using new vocabulary*

in s*tudents' productions"* as a meaningful element for checking vocabulary internalization and usage.

The second category is related to the *perception students have about using short stories to learn vocabulary*. The researcher presented the personal opinions students had in the reading of three different styles (fable, comic and ghost story) topic and presentation of stories.

These two emergent broad themes arose from comparisons made between the three data gathering techniques used in this project. Frequencies of repeated vocabulary and ideas were identified from the instruments by the researcher in order to come up with the two main categories. In addition, the two mentioned categories had an interrelationship which conducted the researcher to concrete into one big and main category. It was defined as "*Impact of short stories in vocabulary learning improvement*"

This core category represents the entire structure of the findings of this project; a more concrete name. The previous chart contains various categories and sub-categories labels that the researcher went through which represented her big efforts to make up her mind. The difficulty to decide final concepts was due to the huge amount of raw data which repeatedly overlapped.

The chart below shows a refined version of the categories and subcategories developed from the data analysis.

Figure 3. Diagram of categories and subcategories
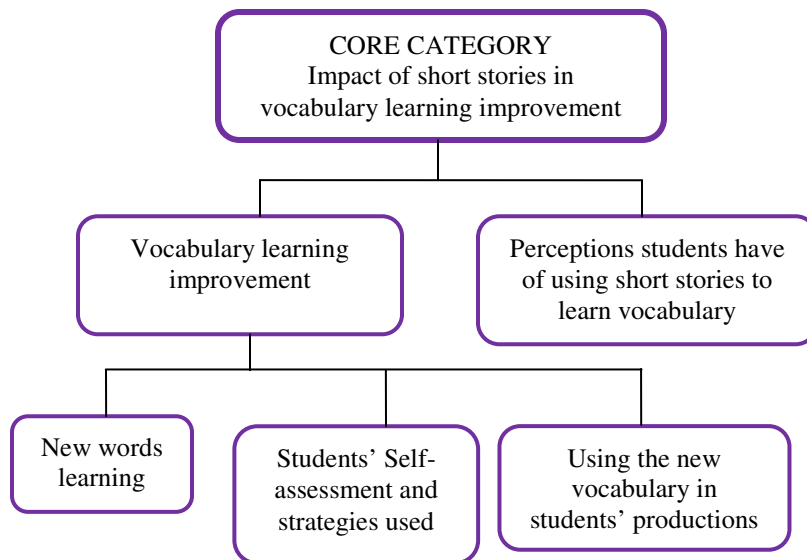
Category No 1: Vocabulary Learning Improvement

This category is supported by the analysis of the pre and post tests, and also by follow up activities applied before, during and after reading each short story. Students studied and practiced the new vocabulary during nine weeks through workshops and three stories in which they had the opportunity to internalize the new words.

From this perspective, this category helped to answer the research question which is related to the extent to which the use of story reading can help students to build their own vocabulary. The use of new vocabulary depends on the understanding of the words and how these words appear in the texts of the students. Considering the information provided above, three subcategories called *New words learning, Students' Self-assessment and strategies used and Using the new vocabulary in students' production* emerged.

Subcategory No 1.1: New words learning

Progress in vocabulary learning process should be understood in terms of form, meaning and use of new words, that is to say, the students' abilities to know the concept, where, when and how they can use the new word, how it is written and pronounced. In this way, the students' progress in vocabulary learning implies to recognize the form and meaning of the new words in the process. The students observed in this research study have acquired new vocabulary in different stages of the research project.

"Si aprendí nuevas palabras como tears, lazy, feed, dried up, etc. Porque la historia hizo que yo me grabara más fácilmente las palabras." sic (S8 –Log)

"Yes, I learned new words such as tears, lazy,feed, dried up, etc. Because the story made me memorize the words easily" sic (S8 –Log)

"Si. Lazy, magician, nap, market and strangeman. porque me parecieron muy interesantes palabras para aprender."sic. (S14 –Log)

"Yes,Lazy, magician, nap, market and strangeman lazy. Because I think they were interesting words to be learned" sic. (S14 –Log)

"The two stories are very good and I learned new words" (S11 - Blog)

These answers taken from the log and the blog evidenced some of the words students affirmed they have learned after reading the first story. During those lessons the students showed a good attitude and participated in the activities proposed, there was constant students' production while activities were carried out, what facilitated vocabulary learning. As most researchers have concluded, student's attitude is an integral part of learning and therefore, it becomes an essential component of second language teaching/learning process. Attitude influences one's behaviors, and learning, so it is clear that there is an interaction

between language learning and the environmental components in which the student grows up. Both negative and positive attitudes have a strong impact on the success of language learning; the attitude of an individual depends heavily upon different stimuli. Stern (1983) claims that the affective component contributes at least as much and often more to language learning than the cognitive skills.

For the intervention, the pre and post-tests had similar designs; hence the comparison for further analysis facilitated the process in order to achieve precise information. The researcher took as a starting point 10 words students were expected to learn in each story. In the following chart, it is shown how students have increased their vocabulary expressed in percentages. It is necessary to clarify that although this is not a quantitative study, quantities can be used to give support to findings.

Table 3. Pre-tests and Post- tests results in percentages

	STORIES 1 AND 2 % of words		STORY 3 % of words	
STUDENT	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST	PRE-TEST	POST –TEST
(S6)	18	100	25	80
(S7)	66	100	25	75
(S8)	54	100	25	75
(S9)	18	25	10	30
(S10)	10	80	20	50
(S11)	6	70	15	40

It is worth mentioning that students' results in the post-test and in their production were outstanding compared to the pre-test. It demonstrates that story reading works for vocabulary learning, at least in the vocabulary acquisition stage. Motivating activities, attractive material and drilling of words are important elements to be considered when teaching vocabulary. As Hatch and Brown (1995)

illustrates, many kinds of vocabulary learning tools such as flashcards, crossword puzzles and matching games are used to strengthen the form-meaning connection.

It is important to emphasize that the researcher saw a noticeable advance in students' use of vocabulary and thus in use of language in spite of the fact that they still present some difficulties with the use of grammar structures. The way students have learned new words was reflected in their productions improvement. The stories were in some aspects very familiar; this aspect allowed the possibility of relating words and preconceptions. According to Blachowicz (2005) when a word is typically used or contextualized, the meaning commonly comes up and it is related to what the student already knows. In the following excerpts we can evidence this student vocabulary improvement after reading the stories. For the first story they had to answer a crossword puzzle and then write sentences, and for the second story students were asked to design a word search puzzle with the words they remember and write sentences with them.

Pre-test sample (S13 – Short stories 1 and 2):
Ancient civilizations used to build their houses with <u>chin.</u>
Carla and Jenny have got a terrible cold. They <u>straw</u> all time.
Andrew got low marks at school, so his dad is very <u>tired</u>

Post-test sample (S13 – Short stories 1 and 2):
Ancient civilizations used to build their houses with <u>straw</u>
Carla and Jenny have got a terrible cold. They <u>sneeze</u> all time.
Andrew got low marks at school, so his dad is very <u>disappointed</u>

Additionally, the characters and the setting of the second story "The three little pigs: the wolf side of the story" were familiar to the children. This helped them to understand the story, and so the new vocabulary because they already had some previous knowledge about them in their first language.

"THE WOLF ARE INOCENT the wolf only just wanted a little sugar for the cake for his granny" sic (S8–Blog-Short Story, "The Three Little Pigs, the Wolf Side of the Story")

"I want to say to you that the wolf is no guilty tell me why you think that the wolf is guilty and give me the proofs if you dont answer me is that you think that the wolf is guilty for anything so for that the wolf is innocent" sic (S11- Blog - Short Story, "The Three Little Pigs, the Wolf Side of the Story")

The learners' previous knowledge lets them have a better comprehension of the stories and allows them to succeed when learning new words. In this sense it is relevant to say that students made connections from their previous experience with the text and furthermore provides the possibility of self-reflection and the assessment of building up their own vocabulary.

Subcategory No 1.2: Student's self–assessment and strategies used

In this subcategory, the students expressed their own insights about their vocabulary learning process. They also gave concepts and personal thoughts about their performance, facility and difficulties for learning vocabulary by using short stories. The view expressed in these samples is that self-discovery and learning are closely linked.

"Yo creo que mi desempeño fue bueno porque me esforse en hacer las actividades."sic (S3 –Log)

"I think my performance was good because I made an effort in doing the activities" sic (S3 –Log)

"Muy bien porque presté atención, participé en lo del lobo y aporté en la página, blog."sic (S4 –Log)

"Very good because I paid attention, participated in the trial to the Wolf and contributed in the blog." (S4 –Log)

"Bien, no excelente porque no participe casi" sic (S14 – Log)

"Good, not excellent because I hardly participated" sic (S14 – Log)

As shown in the excerpt, the participants express the relevant factors in their performance evaluation such as paying attention, effort and participation. This aspect fostered students' autonomy, in words by Boud (1995) "an autonomous learner is prepared to take some significant responsibility for his/her own learning." Self-assessment was a form to observe how students were able to monitor their own learning. Learners should self-assess their work so that they learn how to conceive their own successes or failures in order to be more efficient learners in the future. At this point, the influence in the use of stories is considered as a tool to improve autonomy, which in turn develops vocabulary learning.

In these samples taken from students' logs after comparing the pre and post-tests, we can see how students reflect and report on their insights and experiences in vocabulary learning. These aspects show how the students construct their own vocabulary and how story reading works as an element that allows the students' learning.

"No tuve dificultades para aprender vocabulario porque leí muchas veces la historia hasta entender la palabra o la frase."(S14- Short Story, "The Wishing Fish")

"I didn't have any difficulty to learn vocabulary because I read the story many times until I understood the word o sentence." (S14- Short Story, "The Wishing Fish")

"Los comics me facilitaron aprender vocabulario de la historia."(S14- Short Story, "The Three Little Pigs, the Wolf Side of the Story")

"The comics helped me to learn vocabulary from the story."(S14- Short Story, "The Three Little Pigs, the Wolf Side of the Story")

Here we can observe that the student wants to express her ideas about the aspects that made her a successful learner. This sample talks about strategies she used like reading the story several times and looking at the images in the story.

These factors proved to contribute to a better comprehension and retention of the text and the new words, partly because they brought about a greater emotional involvement in the children (Nation and Carter, 1989, p. 80).

It was found that students were able to discover two ways to increase their understanding. First, while reading stories translation was an essential method for gaining better understanding of the new words and expressions in the stories. Guessing from context was another helpful technique when learners had already knowledge of the surrounding words. Through observable actions explained by students in the log, it could be said that children read the text carefully and tried to understand the unknown words. The following excerpts were taken from the log:

"Cuando aparecía una palabra que no conocía, usaba el diccionario para saber qué significaba en español, o si no le preguntaba a la profesora." (S1- Short Story, "The Wishing Fish")

"I used dictionary when there was an unknown to know the meaning in Spanish, or I asked m teacher." (S1- Short Story, "The Wishing Fish")

"Así como hice la vez pasada, yo leía la historia y trataba de entender toda la frase y me imaginaba qué quería decir la palabra que no conocía." (S3- Short Story, "Mrs. Wood Comes Back Home")

"As I did last time, I read the story and tried to understand the whole sentence, and I imagined/guess the meaning of the unknown word." (S3- Short Story, "Mrs. Wood Comes Back Home")

As shown in the excerpts, students could decide what best worked for them to learn new words. It is evident that they tried to not only understand the words but also gain more understanding of the whole story. Thus, how learners self-assessed word knowledge shows how well they manipulated learning techniques in order to obtain both a meaning and an understanding of words and sentences.

We can conclude that vocabulary learning is a process developed through time and that it is characterized by the internalization and application of the new words in learners' production.

Subcategory No 1.3: Use the new vocabulary in students' production

From the analysis of students' productions, students completed the tasks in different sessions satisfactorily even though their work (follow up activities, posts in the blog) still presented some problems in grammar and spelling. During the pedagogical intervention, the teacher-researcher followed three stages for reading the stories and teaching vocabulary: pre-reading (warming up), while-reading and post-reading. These stages allowed the teacher to prepare children for reading the story and checking vocabulary learning.

Before reading the stories, participants received appropriate input through teacher's talk and class discussion activities which helped them to become familiar with the new vocabulary.

During the while-reading stage, the teacher constantly stopped and asked children about characters, setting and the pictures in order to verify their general understanding and drilling new vocabulary. In this stage students evidenced an advance in their personal writing process taking into account the grammar, the new vocabulary and the coherence in the sentences they wrote in the activities proposed.

In the post-reading stage, the participants developed a variety of activities related to the story. These activities helped the teacher-researcher to assess students' comprehension through the use of new vocabulary in communicative and practical contexts. It was observed that the group enjoyed the activities proposed, the vocabulary learning process was meaningful, motivating and interesting for them; children evidenced progress in their vocabulary learning while enjoying the process.

In this quotation taken from the blog posts, we can observe the new words and expressions this student applied, showing what she has learned in terms of vocabulary:

"*For all the people that think that the wolf is **_guilty_** THE WOLF IS INNOCENT! because the three little pigs was so **_rude to him_** when him only wants a **_cup of sugar_**. The most rude pig was the third pig who respond very bad to the wolf and immediately says **_GET OUT_** WOLF! that sounds very strange. The story of the three little pigs was completely **_jazz up_**, that is no good all the people think that the wolf are bad. The **_judge_** have all the proofs that says all the things that the three little pigs do in the house of the wolf like the robber of all the food that the wolf have to eat all the week in the fridge. **Sic*** (S7 Blog – Short Story, "The Three Little Pigs, the Wolf Side of the Story")

Here we can see the use that this student makes of the new words taken from the story and also her conclusion of the story. Here I adopt words by Sugawara (1992, p.34) "having students use the new words at least once was likely to lead to increased use of the words eventually because of the greater confidence which the students had in their word knowledge." This student demonstrates her understanding of the new words taken from the story and, what it is more important, the use of them in a context, so we can affirm that she has already learned these words.

In the following excerpts, it is demonstrated how students completed the task whose objective was to apply the new vocabulary learned from the stories. For the first story they had to solve a crossword in which they could demonstrate the vocabulary they learned and then they wrote sentences in order to incorporate the new words taken from the story in a particular context. For the second story students were asked to design a word search puzzle with the words they could remember and they had to write sentences using them. The second excerpt taken from a lesson reflects how learners had to write a short story by using the new words they have learned.

Excerpt 1:

Story 1:
Omar was very <u>sad</u> because his father say to him that he didn't can go to the park. (S10)
Omar was sad because the fish <u>died</u>. (S13)
Omar wasn't a good <u>shepherd</u>. (S4)
Omar never used <u>magic fish pole</u> and never make <u>foolish wish</u> again. (S3)

Story 2:
City TV reporters <u>jazzed up</u> news about violence in Bogotá. (S14)
The three little pigs were <u>rude</u> to the wolf. (S2)
Tomorrow I'm going to visit my <u>granny</u>. (S1)
My sister loves to touch her <u>chin</u>. (S5)
In social science I learned that the ancient people built they houses with <u>straw</u>. (S7)

Excerpt 2:

"THE GHOST IN THE WALL

There was one couple that bought a house; they wanted to change some things of the house. They began repairing the wall but they looked that back the wall appear bricks and they think that some case pass in this house. They destroyed the bricks and they looked that were the bones of a boy hanging in the wall and she said: ¡oh this is horrible we have to go to the police! But he said ¡no, one moment we have to check the history of this house and she said ok but we have to do ¡now! Yes, and they found a mystery book, the man was disappointed because she said that she was going to do all to sane this bones, then they did a council and they determined that they were going to search the history of the house…" (S10 – Based on "Mrs. Wood Comes Back Home")

The previous excerpts exemplify two different *while and post reading activities*. They belonged to different sessions as shown in chapter 4 in the pedagogical design table.

In the first excerpt, different learners used new words in a simple way, just by writing short sentences. In the first story they tried to summarize it through simple sentences, while in the second story they tried to use the words in a different context.

In the second excerpt we can observe the way this student is trying to show his new vocabulary application in a more complex way, focusing on a ghost story. In this sense, he is using the words taken from a moral story, a comic and a ghost story to demonstrate her understanding. The short story is a communication, a thought or message conveyed by the writer to the reader. It is not only an act of creation, but an act of sharing. It is therefore, important for the learner to show the uses of words and the way they acquire new meaning.

Turley (1994) affirms that it is important to talk about the text and the references that can be considered as models to follow, not as mandatory issues, but also as cognitive, and motivational aspects of classroom activities. We can see how the student makes of his text a vehicle to adapt environments and to manipulate meanings in order to give an idea about the impressions he wants to convey, in the excerpt the learner is *using* new words, which means, he had already *learned* vocabulary. In this way, the student is trying to express all his thoughts creating a narrative event and handling situations, things, settings and

characters that motivate the expression of ideas by using the vocabulary he had acquired. Here I adopt words by Newton (2001), meaning construction ought to take place in order to promote a communicative competence. This supports the reason why experiences, facts and events that happen in students' lives will allow them to contextualize words well and therefore comprehend language better.

Category No 2: Perceptions of using short stories to learn vocabulary

This category is supported by the impressions students gave in the instruments applied after reading different types of short stories. In these quotations taken from the log, we can observe the thoughts these students exposed about the stories and the activities proposed after each story reading to learn vocabulary:

"Las actividades de esta historia me parecieron excelentes porque era una forma didáctica y divertida de aprender." Sic (S8- Short Story, "The Wishing Fish")

"I think the activities of this story were excellent because I was a didactic and funny way to learn." Sic (S8- Short Story, "The Wishing Fish")

"Las actividades de esta historia me parecieron muy buenas porque para mi eran didácticas y apropiadas." sic (S6 - Short Story, "The Three Little Pigs, the Wolf Side of the Story")

"The activities of this story were very nice because hey were didactic and appropriate." sic (S6 - Short Story, "The Three Little Pigs, the Wolf Side of the Story")

"Me pareció chévere usar historias para aprender nuevas palabras, porque así no tuve que hacer listas de palabras como por ejemplo los verbos."Sic (S9 – Mrs. Wood Comes Back home")

"It was nice to use short stories to learn new words, because in that way I didn't have to write lists of vocabulary, for example verbs." Sic (S9 – Mrs. Wood Comes Back home")

In the sample above we can see the impression that these students have about reading short stories to learn vocabulary and the follow up activities which support this process. Words stated by Carter (1989) were adopted: "Recollections of their own emotions and experiences which the words, the text or the actions of the children had evoked influenced recognition of words." It is relevant to make

learners think they are part of the story, so they can get easily involved in the learning process. In the first story "The Wishing Fish" students had to imagine they had found the magic fish and then they had to decide what to wish and the possible consequences of their wishes. In the second story "The Three Little Pigs, the Wolf Side of the Story" they took part in the trial where the wolf was accused of killing the little pigs. In the following samples, some of the students' perceptions about this strategy are shown:

"Lo que más me llamó la atención fue que teníamos que inventar el final dela historia." Sic (S10 - Log)

"What I like the most was that we have to create the end of the story." Sic (S10 - Log)

"Lo que más me llamó la atención fue el juicio de el lobo si es inocente o culpable" sic (S7- Log)

"What I like the most was the trial of the wolf to know if he was innocent or guilty." Sic (S7 - Log)

In this project, the emotions connected with funny, surprising or exciting illustrations and text had an important influence on recognizing new words. This assertion may be illustrated by these samples:

"Las imágenes me parecieron buenas porque nos reforzaron la historia y aprendimos más. Sic (S12- Short Story, "The Wishing Fish")

"The images were good because they reinforced the story and we learned more." Sic (S12- Short Story, "The Wishing Fish")

"Aprendí las palabras frightened, yell, fear, jump into bed y ghost. porque en los dibujos de la historia se entendían algunas. Lo que más me gusto fue las imágenes del fantasma que asustaba en la historia." sic. (S15 –Log Short Story, "Mrs. Wood Comes Back Home")

"I learned the words frightened, yell, fear, jump into bed y ghost. Because they were understandable in the pictures of the story. What I like the most were the images of the ghost who scares in the story. sic. (S15 –Log Short Story, "Mrs. Wood Comes Back Home")

According to Cameron (2201, p.168) "the role of the pictures in combination with the text to form the story as a whole should be considered." In the stories, the pictures had a vital role to play. They were a stimulus for sequencing, exercising

memory, and of course, learning vocabulary. In the three stories the use of pictures were closely related to the text and were presented in different ways. In regards to the second story, the pictures presented as a comic formed the text.

It was also revealed that when students perceive the value of reading, especially when stories appeal to their likes and interests, they discover that they may be able to learn different language skills (O'Donoghue, 2001).

"Me gusto la historia de Omar porque yo me parezco a el y además aprendí nuevas palabras sólo leyendo la historia varias veces sin tener que hacer listas de palabras, por ejemplo verbos." (S9 – Log - Short Story, "The Wishing Fish")

"I liked Omar's story because I am like him, and moreover I learned new words just by reading the story many times without doing lists of new words such as verbs." (S9 – Log - Short Story, "The Wishing Fish")

The kind of story is a relevant factor that helps learners to remember some difficult words and expressions they had not seen before. For instance the words "take a nap", "jazz up" and "guilty" were remembered even by weak learners because they had very much enjoyed the particular story in which the words occurred. As Nation and Carter (1989) demonstrate, when textual and psychological conditions are favorable, the possibilities of embedding seem, in principle, to be the same for both strong and weak learners. In the following excerpts it is revealed that by using blogs the stories were shown in an attractive way and this helped to share learners' feelings and thoughts about them. It is evident how the students participated in the blog discussion and how unconsciously they practiced the vocabulary from the story.

Through the use of the blog, it is revealed that attractive pictures, real conversations, communicative and meaningful activities provided a relaxed and confident environment which got students familiarized with language tasks, thus they had the opportunity of writing spontaneously using the vocabulary they had learned and built their knowledge all together.

"Lo que más me gusto fue poder usar computadores para escribir, así como en el blog porque pude volver a leer la historia en mi casa y me quedó más fácil responder las preguntas." (S1 – Log - Short Story, "Mrs. Wood Comes Back Home")

"What I like the most was that I could use computer to write, as in the blog because I could read the story again at home, and so it was easy to answer the questions." (S1 – Log - Short Story, "Mrs. Wood Comes Back Home")

"Me pareció divertido participar en el juicio del lobo en el blog porque todos podían leer lo que yo pienso y yo también opinaba lo de ellos." (S4 - Log - Short Story, ""The Three Little Pigs, the Wolf Side of the Story")

"I think it was funny to participate in the trial of the wolf in the blog because everybody was able to read what I think and also what I believed about them." (S4 - Log - Short Story, ""The Three Little Pigs, the Wolf Side of the Story")

To sum up, the findings explained in this chapter are the result of a conscious tough work done by the researcher in order to triangulate data collected in the three instruments used to demonstrate that vocabulary learning through short stories worked satisfactorily for these students. Also, a conclusion could be drawn from these students' advances in vocabulary learning. Students discovered that short stories are important not only in language learning, but also in vocabulary development; for example, adjectives, nouns and verbs.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings of this research study and the implications for the educational community. The main purpose of this study was to show the importance of developing vocabulary learning by using short stories as a vehicle of interpretation. When we talk about short stories as a vehicle to interpret the world and the importance of reading and vocabulary learning, we have to think about the role played by students' preconceptions at the school setting as well as their interests in terms of motivating issues. In many cases, the reading practice is conceived by students as a hard, and usually as a boring activity. This happens mainly due to teaching methods that focus primarily on accuracy in comprehension questions. Thus, students usually prefer "more interesting activities" such as playing videogames, chatting through Internet, watching videos, etc., than reading activities.

Regarding the previous ideas and considering the first research question, to what extent can the use of story reading help fourth grade students to build up their own vocabulary, it can be asserted that students recognized and learned new words from the stories. They followed an individual process that conceives vocabulary learning as a constant process of not only getting and consolidating word forms and meaning construction but also using the words. In the students' vocabulary learning process, different factors were relevant. First, the use of attractive images to describe the stories played the role of symbols richly endowed with conceptual content. Another factor was the way the teacher-researcher lead this process, especially by questioning meanwhile the story was being read and

the activities were carried out. As Owocki (2003) exposes, questioning is an important strategy because it helps children move deeply into a text, think more about what they read, organize their thinking and frame the pursuit of new understandings, among others.

By means of reading short stories, the participants of this study acquired new words which later were used in their productions; so it was evident that short stories can be used as a tool to learn vocabulary instead of designing and memorizing decontextualized lists of words. Reading increased learners' vocabulary knowledge, stories introduced them to new words and in some cases, students could infer word meaning from the written context. The use of short stories promoted vocabulary learning and increased students' motivation that would be important for the students as language learners.

In regards to the second question, what is revealed about vocabulary learning when using short stories, it can be concluded that in general students liked the experience of using short stories to learn vocabulary. The success of using short stories was due to the fact that they were selected taking into account learners' likes and interests identified through my teaching experience and contact with the target group . This allowed the appropriate selection of texts and activities to perform a logical sequential process (pre, while and post activities) that made them feel part of the story, giving as a result improvement in their productions. Therefore, the kind of story played a vital role to introduce difficult words and expressions students had not seen before. In addition, the use of technological tools such as blogs contributed to make the stories more attractive and, thus, enhanced students' new words usage.

It is evident that affective characteristics in vocabulary learning are important because they determine the learner's capacity to participate effectively in the learning process and help students to enjoy and interest in the subject and make students be successful.

In summary, stories were a useful resource to be used in foreign language vocabulary learning. Short stories made children's language learning more interesting and meaningful; well-designed, attractive and fun activities involved and encouraged students in their learning process. To conclude, it is relevant to mention that the data that was collected and the activities that were developed addressed important elements in order to answer my research questions. The analysis of the data from the vocabulary tests, students' logs and the use of the blog clearly shows that the use of short stories to develop vocabulary among primary was effective and was perceived positively by both the students and the teacher. To conclude, all the students involved in this study scored higher marks in the post-test (See table 3), which indicated that the stories may have had a positive influence.

The process of data gathering also helped to apply the Grounded theory to examine the findings of this project. Thus the post tests and some students' productions showed how they learned and used new vocabulary to express their ideas in English as a foreign language.

Based on the conclusions reached that show the use of short stories effect in the improvement of fourth grade students' vocabulary learning, the following section addresses some pedagogical implications of this study taking into account the importance of teaching vocabulary in English as a foreign language.

Pedagogical Implications

Most of the time students make connections between short stories and their own reality. Thus, literature and the learning processes in the classrooms combine the way to read their world with the sociocultural environment.

From this point of view, the fourth grade students that participated in this study do not like to read because maybe their lives are not connected to the stories, and they do not perceive stories as an enjoyable tool for learning. Furthermore, some teachers do not see story reading as a material to teach different aspects of language. The difficulty lies rather in the creation of a new attitude.

Regarding learners' attitude, teachers should encourage students to reflect on how they can use the texts they read to empower themselves as constructors of their own concepts and process of thinking and reflect using language. Nieto (2002) argues that "teachers should believe and act according to the belief that all students are smart and deserve a chance to dream." (p.170). So, from this perspective, stories have the ability to add new meaning to language as well as reveal its inherently polysemic nature.

It is worth mentioning the importance of Autonomy in language learning to improve learners' competence in the foreign language on their own. A nice way to do this could be by introducing students to free voluntary reading, an enjoyable activity that students can certainly do on their own. Learners need to be encouraged and have the opportunity of use vocabulary in speaking and writing where their major focus is on communicating messages. They need to have the chance to use known vocabulary both receptively and productively under

conditions that help them to increase the fluency with which they can access and use that vocabulary.

When students read about assorted aspects of their lives such as fashion, the relationships at home, the problems or the life in the school, the confusion about the future, friendship, and love, among others, they recognize the strong influences reading has in their attitude and role as learners. All of these aspects are relevant topics for students and a big source for teachers in the field of research. In other words, the environment where students grow up influences the way in which they construct meaning. This supports the reason why experiences, facts and events that happen in students' lives will allow them to contextualize words -and therefore comprehend language better.

Experience, information, knowledge and understanding that coherently connected and integrated in the research process provide the real meaning-making in student's acting as agents of their own development. Meek (1991) affirms: "Teachers are the ones who do, are the ones who know about it. It is worth getting teachers to build on what they know, to build on what questions they have, because that is what matters (what teachers know and the questions they have)" (p. 34). From this perspective we can affirm that research in the classroom setting must provide us, as teachers with a global point of view about the skills of the students, facing the use and application of the language, in this particular case the use of new vocabulary, following the appreciations of short stories.

Pennycook (1989) reminded us that teachers are "transformative intellectuals" who must see ourselves "as professionals who are able and willing to connect pedagogical theory and practice to wider social issues, and who work

together to share ideas, exercise power of the conditions of our labor, and embody in our teaching a vision of a better and more human life" (p. 613). I consider teaching as a very special act in which we, as teachers, must motivate our students to express their thoughts and feelings. Literature, in this case short stories, is a vehicle to understand and to discover the world when one reads, and a way to express thoughts and critical opinions when one writes. From this point of view the development of the abilities is important in the analysis and interpretation (reading process), as well as the expression of ideas in written form (writing production), all of them supported by vocabulary learning, a vital aspect in language which appears in every skill (listening, reading, writing and speaking).

In conclusion, the challenge that teachers have is the necessity to show the importance of vocabulary in language learning and skills development. Taking into account this point, short stories foster these particular process, and in the case of this study, short story reading is a special element used in order to help students become efficient readers. The new role of the teacher must follow the motivation of students presenting models and real problems from real environments, taking into account cultural aspects and personal thoughts in learning process without a grammar instruction center. The main and functional objective of the language should be effective communication. For these reasons education requests for people specially called to offer their lives and professional development to the raising of intelligence and freedom.

The next section shows both the limitations that happened during the research process and the aspects for further research in the field of reading and vocabulary learning.

Limitations of the Study

The topic of story reading is fascinating because it helps in the development of creativity and interpretation of the reality by using new vocabulary. It can be affirmed that by means of stories it is possible to read the world.

During the research process certain difficulties were faced in relation to the organization of some activities such as workshops and the use of blogs; the researcher took for granted that the participants had sufficient knowledge about the use of this technological tool. However, during the implementation she realized that they did not have any previous information and training; as a result this instrument was underused. Time was a big limitation because there were few classes to follow, observe and analyze the particular advances in students' vocabulary learning; the schedule in the school did not allow this specific work, so the researcher had to use extra time in order to listen to the participants' impressions and comments in their process for collecting specific data. There were also extracurricular activities which interfered with the schedule.

The English program at school (PIA: Integrated Area Program) had several modifications and became inflexible, that is to say, there were not enough spaces to implement the activities planned. In the school, teachers had to follow a specific sequence of topics and time for having the grades ready for each academic term, which hindered constant work with all students in order to analyze their advances in vocabulary; even though the researcher had some lessons with the group in

which she could get important information. Regardless these limitations, she was able to implement this project and achieve certain outcomes. It is relevant to mention that most of the students were always ready and showed a good attitude to collaborate and follow the process of learning new vocabulary.

Suggestions for Further Research

During the development of the project, certain aspects which deserve further research emerged, for instance, how literature helps in learning vocabulary in ELF students. I observed that when students read real models (short stories written by specific authors) the use of language is easier for them. They are not focused on grammar structures; their main interest is the understanding of the story and the way they interpret different situations in the narrative sequence.

Another aspect that conveys a further research process is how the dynamics of working with short stories within the classroom setting develops the writing skill in relation to the development of students' critical thinking. We, teachers expect to have competent students in a foreign language, and we have to expose our students to situations where they can interact in specific contexts and understand situations that affect their lives. From this point writing could be considered as a vehicle of expressions and creation of thought, and literature as a representation of personal reality.

Considering the reasons exposed above it is worth proposing for further research "story reading to foster learners' autonomy." This process could be enriched by the use of blogs; a technological tool that affords students the opportunity to work independently while free topics give them more control on their own learning.

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Appendix A

STUDENT'S LOG Nº _____   **Date:** _____

_____

A continuación encontrarás algunas preguntas para que respondas individualmente. Tus respuestas son muy importantes para mí y no tendrán ninguna incidencia en tu rendimiento académico.

1. Lo que más me llamó la atención fue…
    _____
    _____
    _____

2. ¿Aprendí nuevas palabras? ☐   ☐
Si la respuesta es Si ¿Cuáles? ¿Por qué?
_____
_____
Si la respuesta es No ¿Por qué?
_____

3. De las palabras nuevas tomadas de las historias leídas he usado en mis producciones orales o escritas:
a. Casi todas ☐   c. Pocas ☐

b. La mitad ☐   d. Ninguna ☐

4. Las actividades para aprender el vocabulario de esta historia me parecieron….
_____
Porque…_____
    _____
    _____

5. ¿Cómo fue mi desempeño hoy?
_____
¿Por qué?_____

6. ¿Tuve dificultades para aprender vocabulario?

SI ☐   NO ☐

Si la respuesta es SI, ¿cuáles fueron esas dificultades y por qué se presentaron?
Si la repuesta es NO, ¿qué me facilitó aprender vocabulario de la historia?
_____
_____
_____

7. ¿Qué tan útil me ha parecido leer historias para aprender vocabulario?

a. Muy útil ☐   c. No muy útil ☐

b. Útil ☐   d. Completamente inútil ☐

Appendix B

VOCABULARY TEST

NAME:_____ DATE: _____

Weather vocabulary Quiz

Go to the website: http://www.anglomaniacy.pl/weatherQuiz.htm. Test your English

vocabulary! Read each question carefully, and then choose the right answer

from four options. Good luck!

Prepositions of place

Look at the pictures and complete the sentences about it. Use the appropriate

words to describe the animals' position.
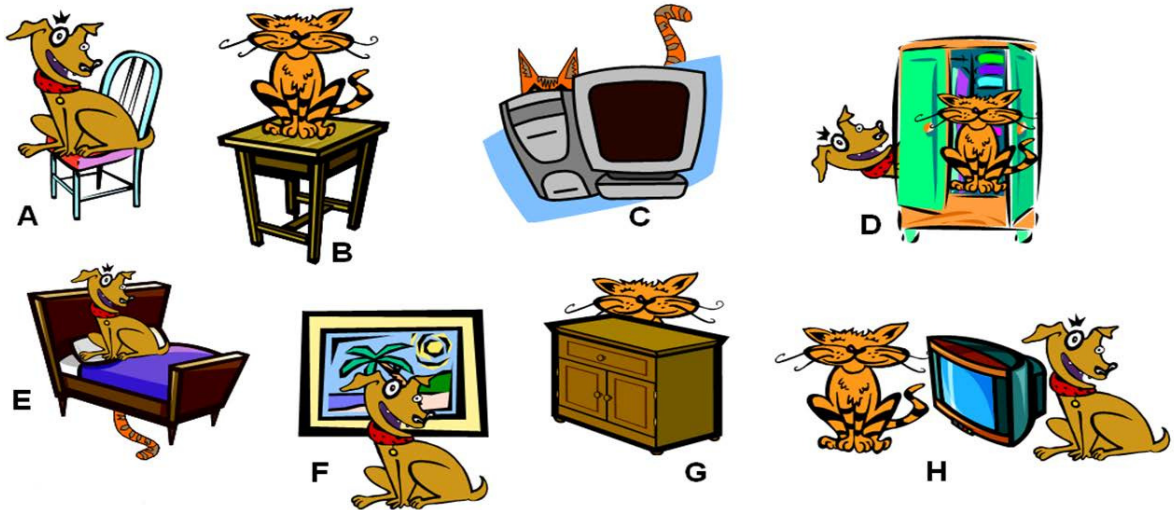
A. The dog is _____ the chair.

B. The cat is _____the table.

C. The cat is _____ the computer.

D. The cat is _____.

E. The dog is _____ and the cat is _____ the bed.

F. The dog is _____ the picture.

G. The cat is _____ the wardrobe.

H. The TV set is _____ the cat and the dog.

Animals

The picture shows different animals. Follow the instruction to circle with the

      corresponding color according to the animals' name.

1.	Red circle: COLT	5.	Purple circle: KITTEN
2.	Green circle: PIGLET	6.	Brown circle: CHICKEN
3.	Yellow circle: DUCKLING	7.	Orange circle: CALF
4.	Blue circle: SHEEP	8.	Black circle: PUPPY
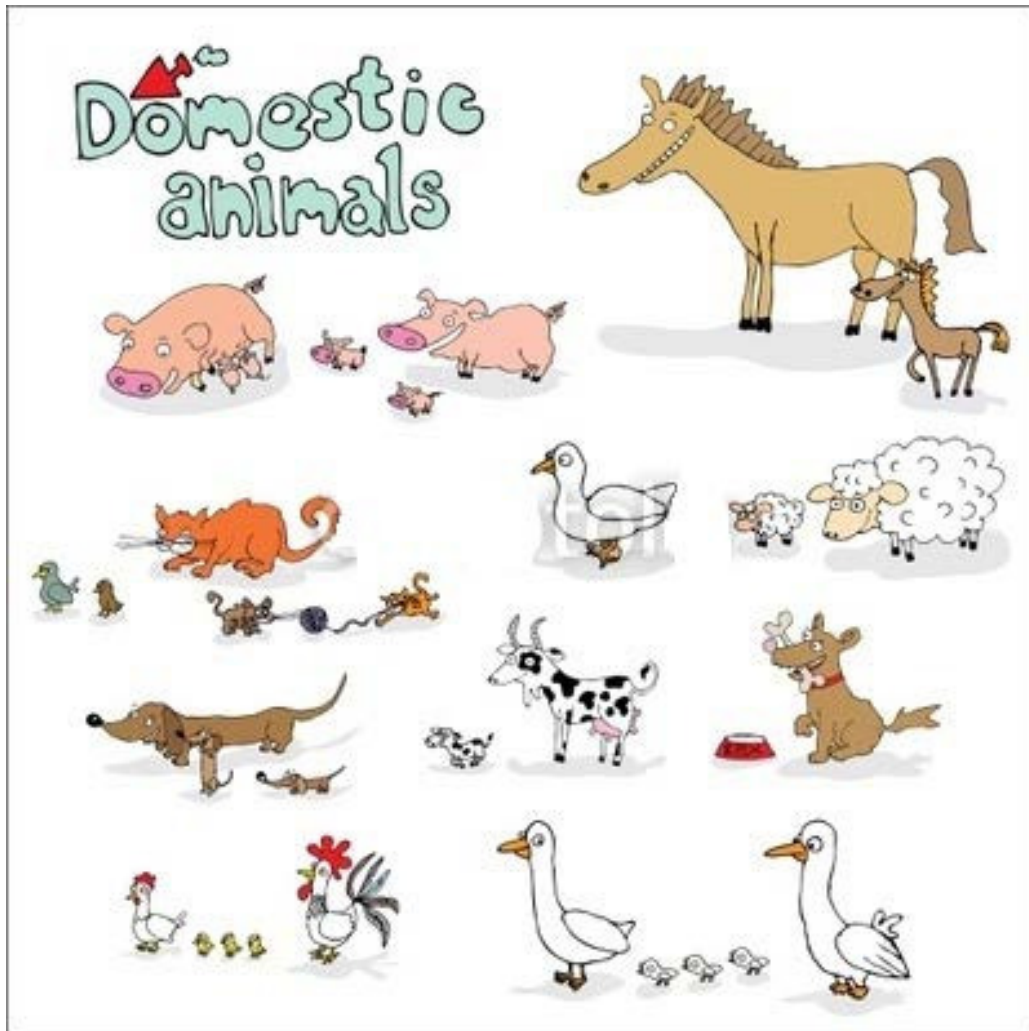
Appendix C

PARENTS AND CHILDREN'S CONSENT FORM

Bogotá, D.C. 19 de septiembre de 2011

DE:_____

PARA: Padres y madres de familia estudiantes del grado 4B

ASUNTO: Proyecto de aprendizaje de vocabulario en Inglés.

Es muy grato para mi comunicarles que atendiendo las necesidades académicas de los(as) estudiantes en la clase de inglés, solicito su consentimiento para que su hijo(a) del grupo 4B, participe en un proyecto de investigación titulado "Vocabulary Learning through story reading" Con esta propuesta busco diseñar e implementar actividades encaminadas al aprendizaje de vocabulario. Para este propósito se llevarán a cabo talleres de lectura y de adquisición de vocabulario en las horas de clase durante el segundo semestre académico donde los estudiantes participarán voluntariamente y guiados por la profesora del área. Para hacer el seguimiento del desarrollo de este proyecto se realizarán algunas pruebas escritas y cuestionarios las cuales servirán de soporte para analizar el avance en el aprendizaje de vocabulario a través de historias cortas. Cabe aclarar que estas actividades no tendrán ninguna incidencia en su concepto del período.

Por tanto, es para mí indispensable contar con su aprobación para que su hijo(a) participe en este proyecto. Para ello, garantizo confidencialidad, anonimato y la oportunidad para que ustedes accedan a los trabajos de los(as) niños(as), así como al análisis posterior ya que este proyecto será presentado como trabajo de grado en la Maestría en didácticas del Inglés de la Universidad de la Sabana, la cual actualmente estoy cursando. Es importante agregar que este proyecto ha sido inicialmente aprobado por la directora académica Juanita Afanador y por la subdirectora académica de la sección primaria Martha Lucía Gamba.

Agradezco la colaboración prestada,

 Martha Lucía Gamba.   _____.
Subdirectora de Primaria   Profesora de inglés
_____
COLEGIO SAN BARTOLOMÉ LA MERCED

SECCIÓN PRIMARIA

Recibimos circular con fecha de 24 de octubre de 2011, sobre el proyecto de aprendizaje de

vocabulario en inglés. "Vocabulary Learning through story reading"

Autorizamos a nuestro(a) hijo(a)_____ del grupo 4B para participar

en el proyecto

SI _____ NO _____

_____   _____
                          _____
Firma de la madre   Firma del padre   Firma del (la)

estudiante

Appendix D

INSTITUTION'S CONSENT FORM

Bogotá, D.C. 19 de septiembre de 2011

Señora:

JUANITA AFANADOR

Directora Académica

Colegio San Bartolomé La Merced "

Respetada Señora:

Con el deseo de contribuir al mejoramiento académico en el área de Inglés, se pretende desarrollar un proyecto educativo llamado "Vocabulary Learning through story reading", que hace parte del trabajo de grado de la maestría en didáctica del Inglés de la Universidad de la Sabana. Este proyecto está dirigido al grado cuarto B con el objeto de diseñar e implementar actividades encaminadas al aprendizaje de vocabulario.

Para este propósito se llevaran a cabo talleres de lectura y de adquisición de vocabulario en las horas de clase durante el segundo semestre académico donde los estudiantes participarán voluntariamente y guiados por la profesora del área. Para hacer el seguimiento del desarrollo de este proyecto se realizarán algunas pruebas escritas y cuestionarios las cuales servirán de soporte para analizar el avance en el aprendizaje de vocabulario a través de historias cortas.

A los participantes se les garantizará estricta confidencialidad con la información que se obtenga y este proyecto no tendrá incidencia alguna en las notas correspondientes al curso. Para que quede constancia de que conocen esta información y la aprueban para que sea desarrollada en su institución solicito firmar el presente consentimiento.

De antemano agradezco su valioso aporte para llevar a un buen término mi investigación.

Cordialmente,

_____

Appendix E

ACTION PLAN: _____
Research Project Timeline (Action Plan)

Activity/Date	Month June-August 2011				Month September - December 2011				Month February-May 2012				Month August - November 2012			
	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week	Week
Step 1: Initiation	█	█	█	█												
Step 2: Preliminary Investigation	█	█	█	█	█											
Step 3: Literature review	█	█	█	█												
Step 4: Design of action plan					█	█	█									
Step 5: Implementation									█	█	█	█				
Step 6: Monitoring data collection									█	█	█	█				
Step 7: Data analysis									█	█	█	█				
Step 9: Findings and reflection									█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

Timeline of Data Collection and Implementation

STAGE	MONTH	WEEK(DATES)	ACTIVITY	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT(S)	COMMENTS
Pre-stage	September	September 19 Consent Letters	1. To ask the principal, parents, and students' permission for the development of the research project. 2. To ask fourth grade students their interest on participating of a vocabulary research project. 3. Showing to students the process they will follow in order to learn vocabulary through story reading.		Class observations in order to identify the causes of the problem.
		Sept 26 - Oct 1 1. Plan the stories and Intervention. 2. Piloting the initial questionnaire and log with classmates.	1. To get information about vocabulary students know. 2. To choose the stories the teacher will use for the research project.	1. Pre-test	The pre-test will help the teacher to establish the kind of stories and strategies in order to develop the research project.
While-stage	February to May	Feb.13 –March 2 1. 1. Application of the first story: 'The Three Little Pigs: The Wolf's Side of the Story' 2. Analyzing data collection.	1. To validate the instruments. 2. To think about changes in the methodology strategy.	1. Story reading: The Wishing Fish 2. Follow-up activities 3. Blog: Log, Post – Reading, Post-test and Evaluation.	Time to validate possible new strategies and ways of application.

		March 5 – March 23 1. Application of the second story: 'The Three Little Pigs: The Wolf's Side of the Story' 2. Analyzing data collection.	1. To identify if the aims were achieved or not. 2. To analyze the results.	1. Story reading: 'The Three Little Pigs: The Wolf's Side of the Story' 2. Follow-up activities 3. Blog: Log, Post – Reading, Post-test and Evaluation.	Children will have the chance of share their thoughts, vocabulary learning and feelings in the blog.
		April 9 – April 27 1. Application of the third story: 'The Three Little Pigs: The Wolf's Side of the Story' 2. Analyzing data collection Validating data	To analyze students' progress in their vocabulary learning process.	1. Story reading: 'Coffins' 2. Follow-up activities 3. Blog: Log, Post – Reading, Post-test and Evaluation.	To improve the activities and story reading strategies for future stories.
		May 7 – May 25 1. Application of the fourth story: 'The Three Little Pigs: The Wolf's Side of the Story' 2. Analyzing data collection	1. To analyze the final results.	1. Story reading: 'The Music man' 2. Follow-up activities 3. Blog: Log, Post – Reading, Post-test and Evaluation.	To check students' self-assessment.
Post-stage	August to November	August 13 – October 26 1. Analyzing data. 2. Triangulation process.	To analyze the final product and progress by means of the data collection.	Triangulation	Grounded Theory
		Nov 5 - Nov 19 To write the final paper	To write a formal final paper with the first Action Research Cycle		New constructs APA STYLE

Appendix F

LESSON PLAN

Main Aim(s):

By the end of the lesson students will be better able to expand their range of vocabulary about feelings and some jobs and occupations.

Subsidiary Aims:
- The students will identify new vocabulary.
- The students will use new words in context.
  - The students will deduce meaning by context.

Stage	Aim	Procedure Teacher and student activity	Time and interaction
Pre-test	To identify the vocabulary about feelings, jobs and occupations students know.	The teacher will ask students to answer a vocabulary test about feelings, jobs and occupations.	15 minutes
Warming up	To introduce the topic related to the story.	The teacher will bring a magic lamp to the class. Then she will ask students to touch the lamp and to make a wish. Next, she will ask them about the possible positive and negative consequences of their wishes.	20 minutes.
Pre-reading	To predict what the story will be about.	The teacher will show the cover of the story. While reading the title the teacher will ask students to think what the story will be about, and write some of their predictions on the board. The teacher will point at the pictures and show children how looking at the pictures helps them to identify the characters and to infer what is happening.	25 minutes

While-reading	To identify the main idea of a short story. To recognize new words and expressions in a short story. To answer some questions about vocabulary, situations and events in a short story.	The teacher will ask children about things that are happening in the story; meanwhile she is highlighting new vocabulary. After reading the story the first time, the teacher will go back to check children's predictions. The teacher will ask students to say the main idea of the story.	45 minutes
Follow up activities	To internalize new vocabulary. To make a feedback for checking understanding of new vocabulary.	The teacher will provide follow up activities. Then the teacher will make a review what happened in the story. Finally, the teacher will organize a whole class discussion to compare the students' answers and clarify some doubts they could have. The teacher will emphasize the new vocabulary.	90 minutes
Post-reading	To use the new vocabulary in a written production.	The teacher will ask students to write a very short story in the webpage story bird using the vocabulary from the story they have learned.	60 minutes

Evaluation	To check students' self-assessment.	The teacher will provide a questionnaire and a log to students for evaluating the vocabulary learning through a short story reading.	30 minutes
Post-test	To identify the vocabulary about feelings, jobs and occupations students have learned after reading the story.	The teacher will ask students to answer a vocabulary test about feelings, jobs and occupations.	15 minutes

Appendix G

Timeline

STORY	WEEK AND DATE	ACTIVITY
Story #1: 'The Wishing Fish'	Week #1: February 20th -24th	Pre- test, Warming up, Pre-reading, While-reading the story.
	Week #2: February 28th –March2nd	Follow up activities Feedback
	Week #3: March 5th - 9th	Post –Reading, Post-test
Story #2:'The Three Little Pigs: The Wolf's Side of the Story'	Week #1: March 12th -16th	Pre- test, Warming up, Pre-reading, While-reading the story.
	Week #2: March 20th - 23rd	Follow up activities
	Week #3: April 9th -13th	Post –Reading, Post-test and Evaluation
Story #3: 'Mrs. Wood Comes Back Home'	Week #1: April 16th -20th	Pre- test, Warming up, Pre-reading, While-reading the story.
	Week #2: April 23rd -27th	Follow up activities
	Week #3: May 7th -11th	Post –Reading, Post-test

Appendix H

STUDENT'S LOG COMMENTS - STORY 1: THE WISHING FISH

Pregunta 3. De las palabras nuevas tomadas de la historia leída he usado en mis producciones orales o
escritas:

S1	La mitad
S2	Pocas.
S3	Pocas.
S4	Casi todas.
S5	Pocas.
S6	Ninguna.
S7	Casi todas.
S8	Casi todas.
S9	La mitad.
S10	Casi todas.
S11	Pocas.
S12	Pocas.
S13	Casi todas.
S14	Pocas.
S15	Ninguna.

**MONITORING CHART: STORY 2 – THE THREE LITTLE PIGS: THE WOLF SIDE OF THE
STORY**

NAME	PRE-TEST	FOLLOW UP	POST-TEST	LOG	BLOG
JUAN DIEGO (S1)	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
ANA SOFIA C (S2)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
LUISA (S3)	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
SAMUEL (S4)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
SERGIO (S5)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
ALEJANDRO (S6)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
TATIANA (S7)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
ANA SOFIA H (S8)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
SANTIAGO (S9)	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
DIEGO (S10)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
ANDRÉS (S11)	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
JAVIER (S12)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
ANA MARÍA (S13)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
PAULA (S14)	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
EDUARDO (S15)	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO