

Running head: VOCABULARY LEARNING THROUGH DIDACTIC MATERIALS

VOCABULARY LEARNING THROUGH DIDACTIC MATERIALS IN A  
COOPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT

WILMAR ALEXANDER BELTRÁN GÓMEZ

UNIVERSIDAD PEDAGÓGICA NACIONAL

FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES

DEPARTAMENTO DE LENGUAS

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Note of acceptance

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President of the jury's signature

Nelson Mellizo

Teacher Advisor

*To my parents*

*who gave me all the support and affection necessary*


*to accomplish this project and succeed in my career.*

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*I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional for giving me the invaluable opportunity of studying this magnificent career and becoming a professional with a critical and constructive thinking of our country and society.*

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### 1. Información General

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### 2. Descripción

La investigación está orientada a describir y analizar el impacto de utilizar materiales didácticos junto a un enfoque cooperativo, para facilitar el aprendizaje de vocabulario en un curso de inglés básico 1 en el Centro de Lenguas de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional. La intervención pedagógica considera las edades, necesidades e intereses de los estudiantes para implementar una metodología que promueva el aprendizaje de vocabulario en inglés a través de materiales y actividades que resulten significativas y motivantes. Por lo tanto, se implementa una estrategia que se soporta en la utilización de materiales didácticos y que promueve el trabajo en grupo para construir conocimiento a través de la interacción social entre pares. En conjunto, el uso de los materiales didácticos, la comunicación y la cooperación instauran un entorno adecuado para aprender vocabulario y mejorar en el idioma.

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#### 4. Contenidos

El presente documento está dividido en cinco capítulos: el primer capítulo contiene la contextualización, el diagnóstico y el problema de los estudiantes, además de la justificación, la pregunta y los objetivos de investigación. El segundo capítulo expone el estado del arte que reúne trabajos previos que mantienen cierta relación con el actual y exhibe el marco teórico que sustenta

los constructos de la propuesta y el respectivo análisis de los hallazgos. El tercer capítulo contiene el tipo de investigación, los instrumentos de recolección de datos y el proceso a seguir para llevar a cabo el estudio. El cuarto capítulo presenta el diseño y descripción de la propuesta pedagógica aplicada durante la intervención. El quinto capítulo exhibe los resultados y su respectivo análisis considerando lo expuesto en los capítulos previos. Finalmente, se exponen las conclusiones de la investigación y recomendaciones para su futura aplicación.

### 5. Metodología

El estudio está guiado bajo un modelo de Investigación Acción en el Centro de Lenguas de la UPN con un total de 24 participantes de un curso de inglés básico 1 y con un promedio de edades entre los 9 y los 12 años. La información es recolectada a través de cuatro etapas: planeación, acción, observación y reflexión y mediante instrumentos tales como diarios de campo, cuestionarios, fotos y actividades desarrolladas en clase por los estudiantes. En cuanto a la propuesta metodológica, esta se desarrolla en cada clase con actividades que buscan fomentar el aprendizaje y práctica del vocabulario a través de una secuencia de materiales didácticos y ejercicios que requieren comunicación y cooperación entre pares.

### 6. Conclusiones

La implementación de materiales didácticos fomentó el aprendizaje de vocabulario y produjeron resultados positivos en la comprensión general del idioma. Los estudiantes lograron emplear estos materiales para establecer una relación con el vocabulario y para ponerlo en práctica.

Aprender vocabulario con materiales didácticos y en actividades completamente contextualizadas le otorgó a los estudiantes suficientes oportunidades y razones para estudiar nuevas palabras y ponerlas en acción. El uso de vocabulario logró promover la comunicación entre estudiantes al contar con una organización adecuada y un claro objetivo comunicativo.

El uso de actividades cooperativas en el proceso de aprendizaje de vocabulario, produjo varios efectos positivos en el desempeño académico y habilidades sociales de los estudiantes. La cuidadosa estructuración y buena organización de estas actividades, suprimió el elemento condicionante de las notas y les permitió a los estudiantes enfocarse más en su proceso de aprendizaje y no en los resultados. Esto incrementó la confianza, motivación por el aprendizaje y uso espontáneo del idioma. Por otro lado, el favorecer la cooperación sobre la competición fortaleció la interacción social y las relaciones entre pares.

<b>Elaborado por:</b>	Wilmar Alexander Beltrán Gómez
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**ABSTRACT**

This paper reports an action research carried out with children from 9-12 years old in a Basic English 1 course at the Centro de Lenguas of the UPN. It aimed the implementation of didactic materials along with a cooperative learning approach to foster vocabulary learning. This project comprises the context, reasons that justify the research, theoretical support, methodology, pedagogical implementation and results analyzed through the data collected. The findings suggest that didactic materials contribute to vocabulary learning whenever they are contextualized and designed to meet students' needs and interests. It was concluded that vocabulary promotes communication in the classroom when used in fully contextualized activities and that cooperation has positive effects on students' academic achievement and social skills.

*Key words:* vocabulary learning, didactic materials, cooperative approach, communication, action research.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **1. CONTEXT AND PROBLEM DESCRIPTION**

In this chapter the context, the population and the description of the problem are presented to understand the whole setting and the participants of this research project. The research question, the research objectives and the justification of this study are also exposed in here.

#### **1.1. CONTEXTUALIZATION**

The Centro de Lenguas of the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional is a private educational center that contributes to the development of the country through the performing of educational programs in languages. As part of the mission of the courses it offers, this organization is committed to the construction of academic processes that ensure the increase of the cultural capital of their students, so as to make possible their participation in the world on equal terms regarding the command of foreign languages.

This institution is located in the 79<sup>th</sup> street No. 16-32, in El Lago neighborhood of Chapinero Locality, Bogotá. It counts with 3 additional branches in order to provide enough space for the classes held on Saturdays: the IPN, Valmaría and the main headquarters of the UPN. The current research is carried out in the latest, located in the 72<sup>nd</sup> street No. 12-77, la Porciúncula neighborhood of Chapinero Locality.

#### **COURSES**

The Centro de Lenguas offers courses in six different foreign languages: English, Portuguese, Italian, French, German and Korean. The researched population belongs to an English course. These English courses have three different modalities: intensive, semi-intensive, and regular (semiannual), and are divided in eight levels that correspond to three basic, three intermediate, one advanced and one conversational.

Each one of the levels has a length of 80 hours per level, 72 hours of face-to-face class and 8 hours of virtual class.

Moreover, the *Lineamientos pedagógicos y metodológicos del Centro de Lenguas UPN* (2014), state that English learning is based on the competence notion of the Common European framework, that is, “the outline of knowledge, dexterous proceedings and individual characteristics that allows a person to perform actions” (Council of Europe, 2014, p. 9). Students of the Centro de Lenguas learn English not only to increase their performance in the linguistic theoretical aspects of the language, but also in its cultural and practical aspects. When learning the language, students learn its formal rules (grammar) as well as the social uses of it.

## **SYLLABUS**

The Centro de Lenguas’ syllabuses are designed so as to portray a clear relationship between communicative objectives, language objectives and vocabulary topics (see annex 1: Centro de Lenguas’ syllabus). Each syllabus is based on the textbook of the course called *Live Beat* and it covers a certain quantity of units per each level, e.g. the syllabuses of Basic English 1 and 2 correspond to the first book of the series: *Live Beat 1*. This obliges teachers to use the textbook and follow its structure in order to comply with the program and the class schedule.

## **POPULATION**

The Centro de Lenguas deals with both male and female students belonging to several ages. The groups are divided into children, teenagers, and adults. There is not a social or cultural specific requirement for studying, what allows any person to start an educational process there without having into account their race, gender, sexual orientation, religious conviction, socio-economic background or further issues.

For this project, the researched population is a children's group who are from 9 to 12 years old. They are both boys and girls and are in a Basic English 1 course. (The different data and information described in this chapter was collected by means of a questionnaire -see annex 2: characterization questionnaire).

In regard to the most important demographic aspects, these children come from different localities of Bogotá. The majority belongs to socioeconomic strata 2 and 3 and live with their parents and siblings in their own houses. They do not know each other as they live and study in different places. They tend to be organized in the classroom in small groups of 2, 3 or 4 students and behave in a rather sociable way.

Regarding the students' linguistic and cognitive aspects in relation to English language, the most important are summarized as follows:

- All of them study English in their schools.
- Approximately 20% study English in their houses or in an autonomous way, mostly through the use of applications and internet.
- Approximately 30% consider English as easy to learn and understand.
- Approximately 70% find speaking and listening the most difficult skills to learn.
- Approximately 65% find reading and writing the easiest skills to learn.
- Most of them place grammar and vocabulary in a medium difficulty of learning.

Taking these results into account, students make evident they have difficulties in language skills that are important to accomplish communicative goals. This results into an important consideration since the Centro de Lenguas' goals along with its curriculum and teaching methodology are mainly based on the development of communicative competences in accordance with the CEF (Centro de Lenguas UPN, 2014).

## 1.2. DIAGNOSIS

First of all, it is important to clarify that the students' observation is carried out in the first three classes of the Basic English 1 course and the intervention is implemented throughout the Basic English 1 and 2 courses with the same participants. The identification of the problem is based on two observation moments supported on their respective instruments of data collection:

The first moment is an observation of the first class while students learn basic grammar and vocabulary from the textbook of the course and use it to communicate. Three data collection instruments are used for an appropriate identification of the problem: the textbook, a diagnosis worksheet and fieldnotes.

In the first place, the textbook is used to make an introduction of basic topics such *verb to be*, *subject pronouns*, and *numbers*. Students identify the conjugation of this verb and the meaning of these pronouns in the short readings and listenings presented in the first unit of the book. They solve filling the blanks and matching exercises but they do not understand most of the other words accompanying the grammar. They also show some difficulties when using these words in full sentences or for speaking exercises.

As a result of this, a diagnosis worksheet containing basic vocabulary along with *verb to be* and *subject pronouns* is applied in order to identify if students understand what full sentences say or just conjugate *verb to be* without understanding what the other words mean. This instrument reflects that students have a lot difficulties understanding basic nouns, adjectives or connectors and are unable to solve grammar exercises when words are shown in a different way as they memorize them.

For example, they know they need to use *is* with the pronoun *she*, but do not know what to use with the noun *aunt* or *daughter* as they do not recognize them. They understand the words *man* or *woman* but if they are used with an adjective they do not know, like *tall* or *pretty*, they tend to misunderstand the sentence (see annex 3 & 4: initial fieldnotes & diagnosis test).

In order to have a deeper identification of the problem, a second observation moment occurs using two lesson plans and their respective diagnosis activities and fieldnotes as data collection instruments. These lesson plans are intended to explore how the use of didactic materials such songs, videos and printed materials help students learn vocabulary and how cooperative activities allow them to make use of it in a communicative way.

Initially, the textbook is used in both classes to determine if this material is proper to teach vocabulary and promotes its communicative use. Topics such *days of the week* and *personal information* are presented in a way children do not find interesting or motivating, what makes them reluctant to participate in the class. A further analysis of the textbook also shows an incoherence with their ages or interests since it is designed to teach teenagers from 14 to 17 years old. Namely, this material is a rather inadequate way to approach to vocabulary.

After the use of the textbook, didactic materials and cooperative activities are carried out so as to identify if they are suitable and effective to foster students' vocabulary learning and communication in the classroom. The obtained results show that the students are much more involved in vocabulary learning when materials are presented in an appealing, fun and didactic way. They also feel more motivated to learn new words and confident to use them when they do it in group activities.



For instance, the use of songs encourages them to write in completion tasks, explore new vocabulary and understand full sentences in order to get the meaning of the lyrics. Later, when used in groups to do karaoke, they have the opportunity to repeat specific words many times, what strengthens their pronunciation. Doing it with their group mates, also makes them feel more secure than when they do it individually and are afraid of being judged (see annex 3: initial fieldnotes).

As a conclusion, the diagnosis lessons show that students in general do not have enough vocabulary to fulfill communicative goals in the target language and do not count on a proper material to start obtaining it. The use of didactic materials along with cooperative activities is expected to facilitate their vocabulary learning and increase their communicative performance.

### **1.3. PROBLEM DESCRIPTION**

As previously stated, the main problems students have in this Basic English 1 course is the lack of vocabulary to communicate in the target language and the absence of suitable material to learn it. Regarding the former, Nam (2010) stresses that “not only vocabulary supports the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but also mediates between EFL students and content-area classes in that these students often find that lack of vocabulary is an obstacle to learning”. (p. 127). That is to say, insufficient vocabulary results into insufficient performance in any aspect of the language and prevent students from learning.

On the other hand, McCarthy (1988) states that poor vocabulary domain is one of the major difficulties students have when learning and using a foreign language in a communicative way. He discusses that learning a language cannot be reduced to only learning vocabulary, but at the same time that “no matter how well the student learns

grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without vocabulary to express a wide range of meanings, communication in L2 just cannot happen in a meaningful way". (p. 37).

With respect to the later, Kennedy and Bolitho (1984) argue that in spite of the importance of vocabulary learning, the consideration of materials for this purpose is often the least systematized and the most neglected of all the aspects of learning a foreign language. This lack of systematization usually results in the use of decontextualized, unsuitable and ineffective materials to teach vocabulary, and behaviors such demotivation, distraction, low participation, and bad disposition to learn appear among students. (p. 65).

In addition, more contemporary authors reinsure this idea by saying that this lack of attention is "not only characteristic of older grammatical syllabuses but of more recent communicative approaches... [that] the emphasis is rather placed on structures, functions, notions, ... but hardly ever on vocabulary and materials to learn it". (Oya, Manalo, & Greenwood, 2009, pp. 11-21).

Therefore, vocabulary learning constitutes a key element for language learning in general terms. If learners do not count on appropriate materials and strategies to learn vocabulary, their performance in the different abilities of the language is negatively affected, as well as their perception of it and their attitudes towards the class. Finding an effective way to teach and learn vocabulary promotes a better understanding and use of the target language.

#### **1.4. JUSTIFICATION**

Since the Centro de Lenguas stresses the teaching of languages under the principles of the Common European Framework whose axis is the communicative

competence, and its syllabus portrays a clear relationship between vocabulary topics and communicative objectives (see annex 1: Centro de Lenguas' syllabus), vocabulary learning is regarded as fundamental to improve students' language performance in general terms. As a matter of fact, Lewis (1993) claims that learning vocabulary is the core task in second language learning and that any language skills such listening, speaking, reading and writing cannot exist without vocabulary. (p.23).

Moreover, as lack of participation and confidence when speaking has been identified as an additional consequence of poor vocabulary inventory, Oya et al. (2009) say that having rich vocabulary knowledge is one of the essential components to gain fluency in oral performance. They also say it can contribute to boosting the speaker's confidence when speaking influences the overall impression created.

On the other hand, Laufer (1997) underlines the importance of vocabulary knowledge by stating that without words to express a wider range of meaning, communication in a foreign language cannot happen in a meaningful way. (p. 23). Thus, better vocabulary knowledge produces better communicative performance, and learners improve their writing and speaking production if they have a wider vocabulary domain.

Bearing all this in mind, vocabulary learning through the use of didactic materials and a communicative approach (cooperative approach) is the pedagogical strategy chosen to solve the population's identified problem. It is regarded as having the potential to improve students' communicative skills in EFL as well as increasing their overall knowledge of the language.

Moreover, it complies with the main Centro de Lenguas' objective (the development of new and innovative methodological strategies to ensure that the learning processes are accomplished successfully) and with the *Programa Nacional de*

*Bilingüismo* (2004) which seeks “to form citizens capable of communicating in English so they can place the country in the universal communication processes” (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2004). This proposal is expected to fulfill these institutional and national goals.

### **1.5. RESEARCH QUESTION**

How the implementation of didactic materials along with a cooperative approach facilitates vocabulary learning in an EFL Basic 1 course at Centro de Lenguas?

### **1.6. GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

To analyze the impact of using didactic materials along with a cooperative approach to facilitate vocabulary learning in an EFL Basic 1 course at Centro de Lenguas.

### **1.7. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

1. To make use of didactic materials created and/or adapted by the teacher to foster students’ vocabulary learning.
2. To establish how the use of vocabulary promotes communication in the classroom.
3. To identify the effects of using cooperative activities in vocabulary learning.

## CHAPTER II

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. STATE OF THE ART

Several research previously done in local, national and international context was examined so as to create a meaningful and exhaustive overview of the research problem. Knowledge connected to this project was mostly acquired in databases of the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional which contained research carried out in schools in Bogotá and Colombia on behalf of the UPN and other well-known Colombian universities. International research was collected from online papers and journals.

Nine papers were selected as the ones with the greatest potential to contribute to this project. Such potential is regarded in terms of suitable information for the project's major themes –vocabulary learning, didactic materials, communicative competence, cooperative learning– and proximity with the population:

	Research name	Institution	Year	Key words
1	Communicative Activities to Encourage Students to Learn Vocabulary in Order to Express Their Experiences and Interests by Speaking Skill	UPN	2009	Communicative Approach; Communicative Activities; Vocabulary Learning; Oral Performance
2	Development of Communication Skills of Students Through the Teaching of Basic Vocabulary in EFL	UPN	2010	Language Communicative Teaching; Communicative Skills; Vocabulary
3	The Role of Communicative Approach in Students' Oral Performance	UPN	2007	Communicative Approach; Speaking Skills; Communication Skills; Oral Performance
4	Cooperative Learning: a Meaningful Way to Learn English	Universidad de la Salle	2011	Cooperative Learning; Cooperative Environment

5	Improving Eleventh Graders' Oral Production in English Class through Cooperative Learning Strategies	Universidad Nacional de Colombia	2007	Cooperative Learning Strategies, Oral Interaction, Interaction Activities, Collaborative Learning.
6	Using Cooperative Learning to Foster the Development of students' English Writing Skills	Universidad Nacional de Colombia	2015	Cooperative Learning; Foreign Language Acquisition; Process-Oriented Writing.
7	Understanding the Role of Teaching Materials in a Beginners' Level English as a Foreign Language Course: a Case Study	Universidad de Pamplona, Colombia	2015	Alternative Material, Beginners, Course Book, English as a Foreign Language, Teaching Materials.
8	A Didactic Proposal for EFL in a Public School in Cali	Universidad del Valle, Colombia	2016	Didactics, Didactic Materials, English as Foreign Language, Primary School.
9	Materials Development in the Colombian Context: Some Considerations About Its Benefits and Challenges	Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia	2014	Colombian Education, Foreign Language Teaching and Learning, Materials Development.

Table 1. State of the art summary.

The first research named *Communicative Activities to Encourage Students to Learn Vocabulary in Order to Express Their Experiences and Interests by Speaking Skill*, was carried out in order to help and encourage students to acquire vocabulary in English so that they could develop their communicative skill and express their own experiences and interests in the foreign language. After the implementation it was observed that the communicative activities improved students' vocabulary and speaking skill, and the foreign language became more natural for them. This paper is important for the current research as it establishes a connection between students' interests and context and their motivation for learning vocabulary to use it in a communicative way.

The following paper, *Development of Communication Skills of Students Through the Teaching of Basic Vocabulary in EFL* aimed to guide the learning of vocabulary in primary school children in order to promote communicative skills. Through a communicative language teaching approach, the researcher led a process to increase students' vocabulary and concluded that they improved their capability to express themselves in both a written and an oral way. Namely, this paper fulfills one of the specific objectives stated in the current research: the use of vocabulary to promote communication in the classroom.

Likewise, the pedagogical proposal called *The Role of Communicative Approach in Students' Oral Performance* intended to analyze the effectiveness of using a communicative approach to foster speaking skill in students. The researchers came to the conclusion that activities and supportive materials using a communicative approach are likely to make the most of students' context and interests, producing confidence, participation and motivation in the classroom. This research is particularly useful for this project as it also defends the idea that materials and activities should be connected with students' context and interests in order to facilitate their learning.

On the other hand, the research *Cooperative Learning: A Meaningful Way to Learn English* was developed to know and to examine Cooperative Learning and its benefits in three different EFL classrooms. It showed that cooperative learning techniques can promote student learning and academic accomplishment, increase student retention, enhance student motivation with their learning experience, help students develop skills in oral communication, and promote student self-esteem. It contributes to the current research by acknowledging the Cooperative Learning as an approach able to facilitate students' learning in diverse aspects of the language.

In like manner, the paper described as *Improving Eleventh Graders' Oral Production in English Class through Cooperative Learning Strategies*, meant to establish strategies to help students to improve their oral production in English. It concluded that cooperative learning strategies helped students to improve oral production and interaction. It also stated that lack of vocabulary and appropriate activities to motivate students' interaction were the two main causes that kept students' from speaking. This research gives an important support to the current project as it also implements the Cooperative Approach as a way to improve students' communicative skills.

Additionally, in the proposal called *Using Cooperative Learning to Foster the Development of students' English Writing Skills* the researcher wanted to analyze the role of cooperative work in the improvement of students' writing skills. She concluded that cooperative learning and writing skills can be used together to improve communication skills and team work in the classroom. She also noticed that students feel more motivated to write when working together in a single text than when doing it individually to produce various texts. This paper is meaningful for this research as it shows how the Cooperative Approach can be used not only for improving speaking skills but also for writing skills.

Regarding the use of teaching materials, the paper called *Understanding the Role of Teaching Materials in a Beginners' Level English as a Foreign Language Course: A Case Study Research*, searched to analyze the role of teaching materials implemented in an EFL classroom in order to understand how they were used and how students reacted towards them. It found that teaching materials played an essential role in EFL teaching and learning as long as they were used with a clear methodology or approach. It also concluded that course books are insufficient if they are not



complemented with other materials. It contributes with this project as it looks for the implementation of alternative teaching materials in order to improve the learning process in EFL courses.

The following paper: *A Didactic Proposal for EFL in a Public School in Cali* aimed to design, apply and assess a didactic sequence for teaching English in a primary school in Cali. It concluded that, to be effective, didactic materials should be opened to modification and had to be closely linked to the reality of students: their age, context and interests. This research supports this project highlighting the importance of using teaching materials directly related to students' reality.

Finally, the article called *Materials Development in the Colombian Context: Some Considerations About Its Benefits and Challenges*, was carried out in order to provide some general considerations about the benefits teachers, as material developers, obtain and some of the shortcomings which may emerge along that process. It demonstrated that the main reasons for teachers to design materials are related to the necessity of engaging students in language learning through systematic innovations, and their need to become agents of change and work towards a more inclusive education. These ideas justify the first objective of the current research, that is, the need of creating or adapting materials to foster students' [vocabulary] learning.

These papers, enclosed in a local and national context, highly contribute to this research by stressing the importance of using suitable materials and a meaningful approach in order to promote students' learning and improvement in the different aspects of the language. They also support and clarify the relationship between vocabulary and communication and the necessity of finding teaching strategies capable of bringing solutions to students' most common learning problems.

## **2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this subchapter some theoretical notions used in the current proposal are exposed; these are conceptions of what is understood about English as a Foreign Language, Vocabulary Learning, Communicative Competence and Didactic Materials. Theory related to these constructs is presented in order to support and understand the implications of this research.

### **2.2.1. ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

English as a foreign language (EFL) is the use or study of the English language by non-native speakers in a country where English is not a local medium of communication, where it is widely taught in schools and universities, but it does not play an essential role in national or social life.

Regarding the process of learning a foreign language, certain conditions seem to repeat regardless of the context or the type of learners. According to Harmer (2001) someone who is constantly exposed to a foreign language will in normal circumstances learn it. In his opinion, children and adults who successfully acquire a language seem to share certain similarities in their learning experiences: they are usually exposed to language they more or less understand, they are motivated to learn the language for communication purposes, and they have opportunities to use it in different contexts outside the classroom. (p. 24).

However, these features are mostly related to a natural language acquisition and are difficult to replicate in countries where classrooms are the main (or only) learning environment. In this respect, Harmer states that these students can also learn a language if the right conditions apply. "Like language learners outside schools, they will need to be motivated, exposed to language, and given chances to use it". (Harmer, 2001, p. 25).

Accordingly, this author proposes 3 elements that need to be present in the language classroom to help students learn effectively:

**Engage:** the point in a teaching sequence where teachers try to arouse students' interest, thus involving their emotions.

**Study:** activities where the students are asked to focus on language (or information) and how it is constructed.

**Activate:** the exercises and activities which are designed to get students using language as freely and 'communicatively' as they can.

### 2.2.2. VOCABULARY LEARNING

In a pragmatic way vocabulary is defined as the body of words used in a particular language or known to an individual person. It can be passive vocabulary - the one composed by the words we can understand but do not use yet -, or active vocabulary - the one we understand and use to communicate – (Nation, 2001).

In a broader sense, Laufer (1998) explains that the learning of a word usually progresses from receptive (passive) to productive (active) knowledge, that is, from memorization to communication. Mere memorization of a word form in a given context without understanding the word's meaning, cannot be called productive knowledge if the learner can only repeat the memorized word in a test situation and not in a wider range of contexts. Therefore, passive vocabulary size is considered to be larger than the active size, what makes vocabulary learning an incremental process.

This incremental nature of vocabulary learning suggests that words must be encountered and used multiple times to be truly learned. The number of exposures though, cannot be easily known, because of factors like "how salient the word itself is,

how necessary the word is for a learner's present needs, and whether the word is met incidentally while pursuing some other purpose or studied with the explicit goal of learning it". (Schmitt, 2000, p. 83). Word knowledge may require a high number of exposures before permanency is achieved.

On the other hand, Oxford & Scarcella (1994) state that there are three categories for vocabulary learning: decontextualized vocabulary items (items with no context for guiding the students to learn the meaning and function of the new words, e.g. flashcards, wordlists); partially contextualized vocabulary items (planned or intentional items missing a communicative purpose, e.g., word association, word groupings, physical responses); and ultimately, fully contextualized vocabulary activities (providing students with authentic practices for the newly-learned vocabulary items, e.g. exchanging information, participating in conversations, role-playing, writing messages with the purpose of real world or authentic communication). (p. 236).

Bearing in mind social interaction plays an important role in meaningful vocabulary learning, teachers must use different materials and strategies to foster the EFL learners' ability to convey the words they learn in different contexts and settings. According to Nation (2001), if learners do not acquire effective strategies for learning new vocabulary, they become disappointed and lose their self-confidence. (p. 56).

Politzer & McGroarty (1985) also referred to the topic arguing that strategy use depends on the context of use. Context of use mostly refers to the social, cultural and political environment in which learning occurs, and includes aspects like the teacher, the students, the classroom, the classroom culture, the learner's family support, the social and cultural tradition of learning, the syllabus and curriculum, and the learning materials. (pp. 103-123).

As a conclusion, the current research conceptualizes vocabulary learning as a process whose ultimate goal is to know how to use words in a communicative way, that is, in fully contextualized vocabulary activities that promote social interaction and meaningful learning.

In like manner, if students in the Centro de Lenguas learn words and their meaning in an authentic situational context rather than remembering a list of words organized alphabetically or without any relevance for them, they are expected to accomplish such goal. Activities requiring a deeper, more involved manipulation of vocabulary are to be used in this pedagogical proposal.

### **2.2.3. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE**

According to Canale & Swain's paper *Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing* (1980), the Communicative Competence is defined as "the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication". (p. 5). There, they establish a definition adopted and adjusted by the CEF as "the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions" (Council of Europe, 2014, p.9). They also propose a theoretical framework to outline the contents and boundaries of three areas of the Communicative Competence: grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competences –currently known as linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences.

On the subject of these three components, Canale & Swain (1980, p. 29-31) define them as follows:

- 1. Grammatical competence:** knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology [...] knowledge of how to determine and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances.

**2. Sociolinguistic competence:** sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse.

Knowledge of these rules will be crucial in interpreting utterances for social meaning, [...] literal meaning of an utterance and the speaker's intention.

**3. Strategic competence:** verbal and non-verbal strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence.

On the other hand, Hymes (1972) stresses the idea that the Communicative Competence is the main goal of second and foreign language teaching and is only achieved when using a communicative syllabus as well as a communicative approach. He underlines the main characteristics of Communicative Competence in language teaching in the following way:

- Second/Foreign language teaching is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication. This communication results from students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting and engaging.
- Language learning is facilitated by activities that involve inductive or discovery learning of underlying rules of language use and organization, as well as those involving language analysis and reflection.
- Learners develop their own routes to language learning, progress at different rates, and have different needs and motivations for language learning.
- The role of the teacher in the language classroom is that of a facilitator, who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect about it.

Hence, the success of the communicative competence in the EFL classroom is dependent on the teaching approach, the academic program, the organization of the

classes, the activities proposed and the roles the teachers and students have to fulfill. The careful inclusion and execution of these elements is of paramount importance for the accomplishment of the language communicative objectives considered by the Centro de Lenguas.

#### **2.2.4. DIDACTIC MATERIALS**

Didactic materials are defined as a set of objects and tools which support the teaching practice in order to have a more profitable, meaningful and easier learning process. They can have several names such as: didactic resources, didactic aids, didactic means, pedagogical supports, didactic or instructional materials; but all terms are related to the kind of materials used in the teaching-learning process.

To provide quality education, didactic materials must be chosen (or designed) considering students' context, interests and particular needs. Besides, they must fulfill a number of requirements. Tomlinson (1998) suggested didactic materials in general should: be impressionable, self-explanatory, help students feel well, make students well-disposed to learn, use a genuine language, emphasize the linguistic aspects of input, give students the opportunity of using the target language in a communicative way, take into account learners' attitudes and give the opportunity of getting feedback. (p. 1).

Regarding the connection between didactic materials and teaching approach, Richards & Rodgers (1986) viewed materials as a mean to influence positively the quality of classroom interaction and language use. Moreover, they proposed three kinds of materials used to support Communicative Language Teaching:

- **Text-based materials:** These materials support the classes and give a logical and sequential table of contents that are followed by the teacher. These also have

dialogues, drills, pictures, listening activities, texts for pair work, and scripts for role plays and hypothetical situations that promote the use of interactive language.

- **Task-based material:** These materials are simulations, role plays, games, task based communication activities, cards and so on. These sets of materials are usually organized by pairs or small groups of learners, and each one of them have different information in order to have the students communicate and exchange information.
- **Realia:** It refers to authentic materials from real life. Objects that students see, touch and feel to better describe them and talk about them. These materials are magazines, newspapers, pictures, graphs, and so on.

Finally, it is imperative to talk about textbooks as they constitute a common material within institutions, including the institution where this research takes place. According to Rodríguez, Horsley, & Knudsen (2011) many recent studies on materials, highlight the globalizing and centralizing character of textbooks, which often lead students to lose touch with their immediate reality, and impedes a connection with their prior knowledge. There is a need for textbooks that include work proposals adapted to student diversity, but it is also necessary to have supplementary resources to help contextualize and adapt materials to the particularities of each country or community.

In general terms, the development of didactic materials in local contexts has provided a chance to break the unifying character of textbooks and foster a work nearer to the reality of students and teachers. The contextualization of materials in local educational contexts contribute firstly, by complementing textbooks which often do not address the cultural and contextual peculiarities of students; secondly, by encouraging the development of significant learning, through activities contextualized in an environment that motivate both students and teachers; and thirdly, by supporting students with special educational needs whose particularities are often ignored.



## CHAPTER III

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the type of study that frames this research project, stages, analysis categories, population and data collection instruments are presented in order to understand the procedures carried out to analyze the research problem previously stated and the path of action to address it.

#### 3.1. ACTION RESEARCH

In terms of Elliot (2005), action research refers to a wide variety of evaluative, investigative, and analytical research methods designed to diagnose problems or weaknesses and help educators develop practical solutions to address them quickly and efficiently. It is the search to formulate an immediate action to a problem in the classroom and the reflexive process of a teacher who wants to improve his/her behavior in the professional practicum. (p. 15). Its principal goal is to improve the educational practice instead of generating knowledge.

Consequently, the main purpose of this project is not necessarily the improvement of students' vocabulary but the improvement on how to teach them vocabulary and facilitate its learning. It is a reflection on how didactic materials adjusted to students' ages, context, real interests and needs constitute a remarkable alternative to textbooks and their weaknesses. A proposal on how a cooperative learning environment can successfully help students acquire the communicative competence the Centro de Lenguas focuses on.

In regard to its roles, Borg (1981) states that "action research emphasizes the involvement of teachers in problems in their own classrooms and has as its primary goal the in-service training and development of the teacher rather than the acquisition of

general knowledge in the field of education”. (p. 313). That is to say, teachers are mostly focused on improving their own practice and searching for professional growth while addressing a problem they found in their classrooms.

On the other hand, students also have an active role in this type of research as they work together with their teacher participating in the activities proposed, sharing their opinions and experiences, and making part of assessment. They contribute with the data collection process and improvement of the class.

### **3.1.1. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Bearing in mind the previous action research statements, this research project is framed in a qualitative perspective. This perspective aims to understand, analyze and describe students’ learning process in order to find a particular problem and its possible solution based on a theoretical framework that serves as support to the inquiry.

According to Merriam (2002), a qualitative research tries to understand the participant’s interactions in a particular context and the nature of that setting. She explains that the aim of this type of research is to do an exploration and reflection of a determined phenomenon with descriptive outcomes. For that matter, this study searches to observe, understand and describe the students’ behavior in the classroom when they are exposed to a specific English learning environment (vocabulary learning), rather than measuring their knowledge and improvement in quantitative terms.

As a result, the data of this research is mostly collected and analyzed in a descriptive-qualitative way and by means of instruments such fieldnotes, students’ artifacts and questionnaires (these instruments are explained later in this chapter).

Finally, it is highly important to mention that Merriam stresses that the key to understand research lies in the unique situations and repetitive patterns presented in

students' behavior, practices and relationships. These elements allow researchers achieve a deep understanding of that social construction and apply a methodological proposal able to improve that reality.

### **3.1.2. ACTION RESEARCH STAGES**

With respect to its stages, the data of an action research is obtained through different periods. As Burns (2010) illustrates according to Kemmis and McTaggart, action research involves four main stages: planning, action, observation and reflection.

In the first place, *planning* refers to the identification of a problem or issue and the development of an action plan in order to bring improvements in a specific area of the research context. In the planning stage, lack of motivating and contextualized materials to teach vocabulary is identified as the main problem students have to approach to vocabulary and use it in a communicative and meaningful way. As a consequence, a pedagogical strategy consisting on the use of didactic materials along with a cooperative learning approach is proposed in order to solve or bring improvements to the problematic.

In the second place, *action* refers to the design of a plan of action and the development of some deliberate interventions over an agreed period of time. Assumptions about the current situation and plans about new and alternative ways of doing things are done. In this stage lesson plans are designed and carried out during 16 class sessions (4 months), using didactic materials and cooperative activities that promote vocabulary learning. Special attention is payed to how the students react when classes are developed this way and possible changes and adjustments are considered. In this stage students are also expected to improve their vocabulary learning thanks to the didactic materials and start using the vocabulary in a communicative - cooperative way.

In the third place, *observation* refers to the systematical observation of the action effects, and the documentation of the context, actions and opinions of those involved. It is a data collection phase where researcher uses various tools to better understand the extent of happenings in the classroom. In this stage carried out during the same period as the second stage, a systematical observation of the action impacts is made in order to comprehend the scope of happenings in the classroom. Actions and opinions of the students are documented by means of fieldnotes, students' artifacts and questionnaires. Considerations on how the objectives described in the previous stage are or are not being achieved and adjustments to the lesson plans are also made.

Finally, *reflection* refers to the assessment on the effects of the intervention to determine if improvement has occurred. Two questions must be considered in here: if there is improvement, do the data clearly provide the supporting evidence? If not, what changes can be made to the actions to elicit better results? Planning for additional improvements, revisions, and next steps are also done. In this stage, taking place during the last month of the project, data analysis and assessment on the effects of the whole intervention are made to establish if objectives have been reached.

Date	Stage	Description
11 <sup>th</sup> February to 25 <sup>th</sup> February	Planning	Identification of a problem or issue and development of an action plan in order to generate improvements and/or solutions.
4 <sup>th</sup> March to 26 <sup>th</sup> August	Action	Deliberate interventions over an agreed period of time. Assumptions about the current situation and plans about new and alternative ways of doing things.
4 <sup>th</sup> March to 26 <sup>th</sup> August	Observation	Systematical observation of the action effects, and documentation of the context, actions and opinions of those involved.
2 <sup>nd</sup> September to 30 <sup>th</sup> September	Reflection	Assessment on the effects of the intervention to determine if improvement has occurred.

Table 2. Action research stages.

### 3.2. ANALYSIS CATEGORIES

As vocabulary learning is the problem this pedagogical intervention seeks to deal with, three categories corresponding to this issue and their respective achievement indicators are analyzed in order to have a clear understanding of the phenomena found through the data collected. These are presented as follows:

Analysis Unit	Category	Indicators
Vocabulary Learning	Didactic materials to approach to vocabulary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students identify the vocabulary topic exposed in the didactic materials.</li> <li>2. Students use the didactic materials to solve short-writing tasks involving specific vocabulary.</li> <li>3. Students use the didactic materials to solve speaking tasks involving specific vocabulary.</li> </ol>
	Communication through vocabulary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Students ask and answer questions using specific words from a vocabulary topic.</li> <li>5. Students interact with each other in a written way using specific vocabulary.</li> <li>6. Students interact with each other in an oral way using specific vocabulary.</li> </ol>
	Vocabulary use in cooperative activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Students use vocabulary in small-group cooperative activities.</li> <li>8. Students use vocabulary in whole-class cooperative activities.</li> <li>9. Students participate in small group mini-projects involving vocabulary use.</li> </ol>

Table 3. Analysis categories.

### 3.3. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The researched population is a children's group who are from 9 to 12 years old. The group consists on twenty-four students, eighteen girls and six boys. They are in a Basic English 1 course in the Centro de Lenguas of the UPN. They attend classes on

Saturdays morning during a period of 18 weeks per level. The representative sample corresponds to twelve of them, nine girls and three boys, chosen for their performance during the research project. Four of them having a high performance, four of them an average performance, and the remaining four a low performance.

### 3.4. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

In accordance with Godfred (2017), the validity and reliability of any research project depends to a large extent on the appropriateness of the instruments. Whatever procedure is used to collect data, it must be critically examined to check the extent to which it is likely to produce the expected results. The instruments used to collect data for this action research are: fieldnotes, pictures and video recordings, students' artifacts and questionnaires. A brief description of these instruments is given as follows:

- **Fieldnotes:** Emerson (1995) defines fieldnotes as qualitative notes recorded by researchers in the course field of research, during or after their observation of a specific problem they are studying. These notes are intended to be read as evidence that gives meaning and aids in the understanding of the problem. Fieldnotes allow the researcher to access the subject and record what they observe in an unobtrusive manner.

- **Pictures and video recordings:** it is the capture of oral and visual interactions between students exactly as they happen, used to complement observations in the fieldnotes. According to Loizos (2008), pictures and video recording are necessary "whenever any set of human actions is complex and difficult to be comprehensively described by one observer as it unfolds". (p. 149).

- **Students' artifacts:** In words of Kafai (2006), students' artifacts refer to the texts and objects product of students' work during the course of instruction. He says that to be considered an artifact, "an object needs to be lasting, durable, public, and

materially present” (p. 51). The creation of material artifacts is a technique used to allow students to make their knowledge visible (usually in the classroom). The creation and display of these artifacts also allow students opportunities for engagement, revision and feedback.

- **Questionnaires:** a questionnaire is “a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information or opinion from respondents”. (Gillham, 2008, p. 33). A researcher can get three types of information from questionnaires: factual or demographic (who are the interviewees and their background/experiences); behavioral (what they do, or did in the past); and attitudinal (attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests and values).

## CHAPTER IV

### 4. PEDAGOGICAL PROPOSAL

The pedagogical proposal describes the approach the teacher uses to plan, design and apply the intervention. It considers how learning is produced, the students and teacher's roles, classroom activities and their evaluation, the academic program and the objectives students are expected to fulfill.

#### 4.1. PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

This paper proposes the Cooperative Learning Approach as a pedagogical strategy able to facilitate vocabulary learning and communication within the classroom. It seeks to bring solutions to the research problem initially stated and contribute with the accomplishment of the objectives proposed.

In a broad sense, cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals and within cooperative situations in which individuals seek outcomes beneficial to themselves and to group members in general. Cooperative Learning is an approach that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom. Olsen & Kagan (1992) define it as "group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is responsible for their own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others". (p. 8).

Regarding students and teachers' roles, these authors state this approach focuses on a student-student interaction rather than the traditional teacher-student interaction in order to obtain better learning results and strengthen social skills. It emphasizes the development of classrooms that foster cooperation rather than competition in learning.



On the one hand, the primary role of a student is as a member of a group who works cooperatively on tasks with other group members. Students have to learn teamwork skills and be directors of their own learning. They are taught to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning, which is viewed as a compilation of lifelong learning skills. Learning requires students' direct and active involvement and participation.

On the other hand, the role of the teacher in Cooperative Learning differs from the role of teachers in traditional teacher-centered lesson. The teacher has to create a highly structured and well-organized learning environment in the classroom, setting goals, planning and structuring tasks, establishing the physical arrangement of the classroom, assigning students to groups and roles, and selecting materials and time.

Another important role for the teacher is as a facilitator of learning. In this role the teacher must move around the class helping students and groups. During this time the teacher interacts, teaches, questions, clarifies, supports, expands, celebrates, empathizes. Facilitators observe students, redirect the group with questions, extend activity, encourage thinking, manage conflict, supply resources and give feedback.

Concerning cooperative activities, these are commonly small-group activities through which students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Some of the most common cooperation activities used for vocabulary learning are: interviews, charades, group presentations, role-plays and games. These activities are mostly evaluated by means of classroom assessment as they emphasize on cooperation rather than competition. They look for the observation of students in the process of learning and the collection of frequent feedback that provide information on how students learn together and how they respond to these kinds of activities.

In regard to the benefits or expected results of Cooperative Learning, Slavin & Sharan (1992) argue that cooperative learning tasks in small groups improve students' academic achievement, self-esteem, relationships among students and positive attitudes toward school. Student – student interaction, if structured and managed appropriately, can play an important role in students' cognitive development, educational achievement and development of social and communicative competences.

On the whole, the success of Cooperative Learning is crucially dependent on the nature and organization of group work. This requires a structured program of learning, carefully designed so that learners interact with each other and are motivated to increase each other's learning. Olsen & Kagan (1992) propose the following key elements of successful group-based learning in Cooperative Learning Approach:

- **Positive interdependence:** a spirit of mutual support within the group, members feel that what helps one member helps all and what hurts one member hurts all.
- **Group formation:** deciding on the size of the group, assigning students to groups, student roles in groups.
- **Individual accountability:** individual performance to achieve collective goals.
- **Social skills:** decision on the way students interact with each other as teammates.
- **Structuring and structures:** ways of organizing student interaction and different ways students can interact.

Lastly, it is important to mention that even when the Centro de Lenguas does not propose a specific approach in order to accomplish its educational purposes, it defines its students as active, autonomous and protagonist of their own learning, as having a constant communication and interaction with their peers (student-student), and as being able to recognize themselves as the central part of the class. Its guidelines propose

instructions, activities and even ways of organizing the physical space in the classroom in order to encourage teamwork (Centro de Lenguas UPN, 2014). Therefore, the Cooperative Learning Approach has all the necessary elements to fulfill these requirements.

#### **4.2. STAGES**

In order to follow the Cooperative Learning Approach notions previously defined and the conceptualization described in the former chapters, this pedagogical proposal presents a 3 – stage organization of the classes. Each class session, lasting approximately three hours and half, focuses on specific vocabulary topics and is divided in 3 stages corresponding to the 3 analysis categories and specific objectives of this proposal. Thereby, each class is arranged as follows:

**1. Didactic materials to approach to vocabulary:** in this stage students receive the vocabulary input by means of didactic materials. It pretends to fulfill the three indicators corresponding to the first analysis category and the first specific objective.

Thus, the input begins with a warm-up activity intended to introduce the topic or topics of the class. The teacher shows pictures, asks questions and encourages students' participation so they can deduce the subject of the class and show their previous knowledge. After that, he explains the topic(s) of the class using the board, pictures, videos and/or short listening exercises focused on vocabulary input. He also uses mini games, flashcards, songs and worksheets to check understanding of the topic and for students to start using the vocabulary individually, both in a written and oral way. It is important to remark that they make use of the different didactic materials throughout the class (not only in the first stage) in order to solve communicative and cooperative tasks.

**2. Communication through vocabulary:** in this stage students start using the vocabulary to interact with each other. This stage is focused on vocabulary output and seeks to achieve the three indicators corresponding to the second analysis category and the second specific objective.

In the first place, the teacher encourages students to ask and answer questions each other while the rest of the class listens. He pays special attention to this exercise, firstly, because they start using the new words to exchange information, secondly, because they also practice the grammar topics, and thirdly, because building questions is the ability that results more difficult for them. Here he does corrections, gives additional examples and clarifies any doubt regarding the new topics.

In the second place, the teacher proposes a pair-work consisting on the creation of short dialogues in which students exchange as much information as possible. Each couple has to write the dialogues in their notebooks or in special formats given by the teacher. They have to work together focusing on the correct use of the new vocabulary topic (spelling and pronunciation). When they finish writing, the teacher chooses some of the couples to go in front of the class and act out their dialogues.

**3. Vocabulary use in cooperative activities:** in this stage students use the vocabulary in small-group activities, whole-class activities or small-group mini projects. This stage only takes place after students have received the vocabulary input and show a clear understanding of the topic. It is focused on cooperative work and production, and tries to accomplish the three indicators corresponding to the third analysis category and the third specific objective.

Regarding small-group activities, students are organized in groups of three, four or five students in order to solve a task with a higher difficulty. These tasks are designed

by the teacher bearing in mind some conditions: students have to work together to reach the goal; time limit and difficulty prevent individual work from being successful; they need to use the didactic materials provided by the teacher; they have to use both in a written and oral way the vocabulary learnt in the previous stages; they need to take roles within the group to be more efficient (a student draws while another one colors, another one creates the sentences, another one looks for unknown words on the dictionary, another one prepares the presentation or speaking part, and so on).

With respect to whole-class activities, students are commonly organized in a round table and have to interact randomly with their classmates to reach the goal of the activity. These activities start with a writing part in which students need to write sentences or specific words in pieces of paper or printed materials given by the teacher. Then they have to use these materials to communicate with their classmates, commonly by asking questions, giving answers, spelling words, playing charades and so on. It is important to clarify that some of these activities also start with a small-group activity.

Finally, small-group mini projects refer to small-group activities that require more than one class preparation due to their difficulty and extension. These projects start with a writing and design part and conclude with an oral presentation.

### **4.3. ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

The following academic program is designed with the main purpose of encouraging students to learn vocabulary and use it in a communicative way. It is carried out with a structured program of learning intended to have the key elements of Cooperative Learning Approach proposed by Olsen & Kagan (1992): positive interdependence, group formation, individual accountability, social skills and structuring and structures.

<b>ACADEMIC PROGRAM</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Achievement(s) Vocabulary Learning</b>	<b>Main activity</b>	<b>Indicators (see table 3)</b>
11 <sup>th</sup> Feb.  to  25 <sup>th</sup> Feb.	*Diagnosis and planning lessons  - Verb to be - Subject pronouns - Numbers - The alphabet - Personal Information	- To introduce yourself and others using verb to be and personal information vocabulary. -To learn the pronunciation of numbers 1 – 100. -To use the alphabet for spelling. -To use vocabulary related to personal information.	- Fill in the blanks of the “verb to be song”, karaoke of the song and group singing. - Asking personal information through “students’ rotation” group activity. - Role play receptionist-client for asking and giving personal information.	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				7, 8
4 <sup>th</sup> March	- Days of the week - The alphabet and numbers review	-To learn the pronunciation and spelling from the days of the week.	- Karaoke with days of the week.	1, 3
				4, 6
				7, 8
11 <sup>th</sup> March	- Countries and nationalities	-To ask and answer questions about countries and nationalities.	- Round table to say and ask countries and nationalities.	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				8
25 <sup>th</sup> March	-Demonstratives - Indefinite article a/an -Regular noun plurals	-To talk about everyday objects using this, that, these and those and a/an.	- Conversation in couples using demonstrative pronouns and everyday objects.	1, 3
				4, 6
				7

8 <sup>th</sup> April	- Clothes - Colors	-To talk about clothes using demonstrative pronouns and colors.	- Talk about your own clothes and your classmates' clothes.	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				7
22 <sup>nd</sup> April	-Fast food, drinks and British money -Can and how much	-To order food and drinks using can and how much.	-Role play about a fast food restaurant: students order and give food.	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				7, 9
29 <sup>th</sup> April	- Prepositions of place -There is and there are -Rooms in a house	-Describe the position of objects in a house. -To talk about the rooms in a house.	-Group activity to design and present a bedroom.	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				7, 9
13 <sup>th</sup> May	- Family - Have got	-To talk about family	-Family tree construction	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				7
20 <sup>th</sup> May	-Physical appearance - Has got	- To describe people's look/appearance	- Group activity to draw and describe celebrities.	1, 2, 3
				4, 6
				7
27 <sup>th</sup> May	- Jobs - Present Simple 1	-To identify common jobs	- Charades game with flashcards	1, 3
				4, 6
				7
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup> June	- Routines - Present Simple 2	- To talk about your own routine	- Design of a comic strip showing a daily routine	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				7, 9
29 <sup>th</sup> July	- Telling the time - Preposition of time: at	- To ask and answer questions about times	- Conversation about your day using times	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				7

5 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup> Aug.	- Daily routines - Present Simple with fixed times	- To describe daily routines using present simple and times	- Invention and presentation of a superhero's daily routine	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				7, 9
19 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> Aug.	- Adverbs of frequency - Adverbial phrases of frequency	- To describe a common day and experiences using frequency words	- Group activity: "chatting without chat"	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				7, 8
9 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	- Present continuous - The weather	- To talk about what people are doing and the weather	- Charades game using actions	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				7, 8
16 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	- Like + -ing - Can (ability) - Sports	- To name their own and their friends' abilities	-Bingo using flashcards	1, 2, 3
				4, 6
				7
23 <sup>rd</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	- Past simple of verb to be - Past simple of regular verbs	- To talk about past activities - To ask and answer questions about past activities	- Storytelling	1, 2, 3
				4, 5, 6
				7, 9

Table 4. Academic program.



#### 4.4. LESSON PLANS

Lesson plans are designed so as to comply with the three principal objectives of this proposal. Firstly, there is a table summarizing the information, contents and goals of the class. Secondly, there is a brief description of a warm-up activity meant to introduce the main topic(s) of the class and make students aware of what they are going to learn. Thirdly, there is a detailed description of the class development divided in three principal parts corresponding to the analysis categories mentioned in the previous chapter. Such categories include the achievement indicators students are expected to fulfill throughout the class.

#### LESSON PLAN SAMPLE

INSTITUTION: Centro de Lenguas UPN	LEVEL: Basic 2
TEACHER'S NAME: Wilmar Alexander Beltrán Gómez	
DATE: 29 / Jul / 2017 & 5 / Aug / 2017	
TOPIC: Telling the time and daily routines	
TIME: 8:00 am-12:00 pm	
GOAL: To ask and answer questions about times / To describe daily routines	
GRAMMAR FOCUS: To build sentences using present simple with fixed times.	
MATERIALS: Textbook, worksheets, pictures, videos, cutouts.	

Table 5. Lesson plan summary.

**WARM-UP (20 minutes):** The teacher starts talking about his daily activities emphasizing the time he does these activities. Ex: I wake up **at five o'clock**. I have breakfast **at half past five**. He accompanies the activities with mimics for students to understand. Then he shows the class a picture of a superhero and asks them to help him invent this superhero's routine and the time he does every activity. Ex: Iron Man wakes up **at eight o'clock (8:00)**. He invents robots **at half past eleven (11:30)**.

**CLASS DEVELOPMENT - ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS (180 minutes)**

**1. Didactic materials to approach to vocabulary:** after the warm-up the teacher writes on the board the questions: *what time is it?* And *what's the time?* Then he uses a picture of a clock (or draws it on the board) to explain both ways of telling the time. He constantly asks questions in order to check understanding. When he considers students understand the topic, he shows a video and a PowerPoint game with some exercises for everyone to participate and then he hands them a worksheet to be solved individually. This worksheet contains telling the time and daily activities exercises.

**2. Communication through vocabulary:** the teacher shows a video in which some children ask questions each other about the time and their routine. *Ex: what time is it? = it's time for lunch / what time do you go to bed? = at 9 pm.* Then he encourages students to ask him similar questions about the time he does certain activities. He replies and adds the question *what about you?* in order to have them talk about themselves. After that, he asks students to get in couples and ask questions about each other's routine. He also asks them to write 5 sentences with their classmate's replies. *Ex: Karol goes to school at six am, she takes a break at half past ten.* Finally, he encourages some of these couples to go in front of the class and do that little conversation in front of everybody.

**3. Cooperation to use vocabulary:** the teacher asks his students to get in groups of 4, then he shows them pictures of well-known superheroes and hands them out randomly. Every group has to invent that superhero's routine with at least 10 activities and their times. They also have to present their invention to their classmates using drawings (this cooperative activity is meant for 2 classes).

## CHAPTER V

### 5. DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter the processes of data collection and analysis of results are described so as to determine the scope of the pedagogical implementation. It is a detailed and comprehensive report on the level of success of the analysis categories and their respective indicators.

#### 5.1. DATA MANAGEMENT

The analysis of results is accomplished after a data collection process with students at a Basic English 1 and 2 course was carried out. Instruments as fieldnotes reflected the teacher's experiences and perceptions regarding the effects of the pedagogical intervention. Students' artifacts, pictures and video recordings gave support to the fieldnotes and allowed to gather important data about the different phenomena observed in the class. A final questionnaire collected the students' opinions concerning the most important aspects of the class. These instruments produced enough data to make sense of what happened along the research.

Moreover, the setting and design of the intervention allowed a successful development and analysis of the categories and achievement indicators. The duration of each class session (3 hours and half) and the amount of students (no more than 25) facilitated the planning and organization of the lessons so that data on the three analysis categories was constantly collected. The richly descriptive nature of the qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 2002) produced notes, pictures and artifacts rather than numbers to constitute the research support and to register the findings about the predetermined phenomena. These products are described as follows:

## 5.2. ANALYSIS OF CATEGORIES

In this section, the analysis of the developed categories and their corresponding indicators is presented. It is carried out through the data collected along the pedagogical implementation and supported on the theoretical framework portrayed in chapter II. The most relevant findings are exposed here and further evidences can be found in the annexes.

### 5.2.1. DIDACTIC MATERIALS TO APPROACH TO VOCABULARY

As the syllabus of the Centro de Lenguas includes the teaching of different vocabulary topics every class, the teacher designed didactic materials so as to help his students to learn these topics. To provide quality education, these materials were chosen or designed considering students' context, interests and particular needs. This category intends to provide data on how the utilization of different didactic materials fostered students' vocabulary learning in the classroom. It is based on the descriptions, findings and results obtained in the three following achievement indicators:

**1. Students identify the vocabulary topic exposed in the didactic materials:** these materials were carefully designed so that students easily recognized the vocabulary topic they were meant to expose. They hardly ever had a title referring literally or explicitly to the topic as they showed pictures or figures that encouraged inference. Students usually deduced the subject and the purpose of these materials without the necessity of the teacher telling them what they were for.

For example, in the class held on 11<sup>th</sup> March: *countries and nationalities*, the teacher introduced the class showing a piece of paper with the flag of a country and some blank spaces to complete with a name and the spelling of that name. It also had the sentences: *I'm from*



(Didactic material)



(Teacher's example)

*(country)*, *I am (nationality)* and the question: *And... where are you from?* The teacher made an example with the flag of Colombia and although he never mentioned the topic of the class, students immediately deduced the topic was *countries and nationalities*.

As the activity consisted on a speaking chain, every student had the opportunity to speak and interact with their own didactic material. They followed the teacher's example in a round table activity using their own papers and without the necessity of further explanation. They successfully used the didactic material and practiced the vocabulary topic of the class in an easy and fun way while the teacher corrected or congratulated their work (See annex 5 & 6: fieldnotes & students' artifacts).

Taking this into account, Tomlinson (1998) suggests didactic materials should: be impressionable, be self-explanatory, make students well-disposed to learn, use a genuine language, emphasize the linguistic aspects of input, give the opportunity of using the target language in a communicative way and allow feedback. (p. 65). All of these elements were present in the previously described didactic material.

Thus, the didactic materials used in this research were designed with a clear objective (vocabulary learning and communication). They caught students' attention with colors, pictures and figures and guided them throughout the activities. This helped them to easily identify the vocabulary topics depicted in such materials, understand their purpose and feel motivated to use them.

## **2. Students use the didactic materials to solve short-writing tasks involving specific**

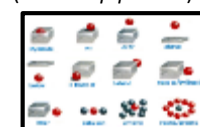
**vocabulary:** all of the didactic materials were designed with the purpose of encouraging students to learn vocabulary and use it to communicate with each other. Some of these materials had a focus on writing or speaking, but most of them were prepared to foster both skills at different moments of the class. A sequence of text-based

and task-based materials allowed the students to use the previously learnt vocabulary and solve the short-writing tasks in a successful way.

For example, in the class held on 29<sup>th</sup> April: *there is/there are*, *prepositions of place and common objects in a house/bedroom*, the teacher did a warm-up activity in which he showed a picture of a bedroom and described it using the vocabulary topics of the class; he used other pictures and objects in the classroom (realia) for explanation and vocabulary input. To check understanding, he used a PowerPoint mini game and 2 worksheets to be solved individually (text-based materials).



(Warm-up picture)



(Vocabulary input)



(Worksheet Sample)



(PowerPoint game)



(Bedroom format)



(Students' artifact)

After that, he proposed a group writing task where students had to use a format (task-based material) to draw a bedroom with at least 10 objects, sort the objects on the right part of the format and write on the back of the paper a full description of their invented bedrooms using the topics of the class. At the end of this activity all of the groups were able to solve the writing task using the topics of the lesson. They employed the material to learn vocabulary and practice their writing (See annex 5: fieldnotes).

Regarding this sequence, Richards & Rodgers (1986) state that on the one hand, text-based materials support the classes and give them a logical and sequential table of contents, and on the other hand, task-based materials provide practical exercises in order to have the students communicate and exchange information.

With this in mind, the short-writing tasks were similarly applied throughout the implementation and although there were some inaccuracies concerning grammar or spelling, their level of success was remarkable. Students relied on the didactic materials, used the vocabulary they exposed and fulfilled the writing tasks with their help.

### 3. Students use the didactic materials to solve speaking tasks involving specific

**vocabulary:** as it was mentioned in the previous indicator, the didactic materials were used in a sequence that searched for the use of vocabulary in a written and oral way.

This sequence of materials did not conclude on the short-writing tasks, but it continued with speaking tasks that helped students communicate with their classmates. It also contributed to the construction of fully contextualized vocabulary activities. For instance, the aforementioned class held on 29<sup>th</sup> April continued as follows:

After students finished their short-writings with the description of their invented bedroom, they had to pass in front of the class and do a brief exposition of their work pointing out the objects on it and describing their positions with *there is/there are* and *prepositions of place*. They used this didactic material to explain their classmates how their bedroom was and answered questions related to it (See annex 5: fieldnotes)



(Students' artifact)



(Students presenting their work)

Bearing this in mind, Oxford & Scarcella (1994) stress that vocabulary learning should occur in fully contextualized vocabulary activities, that is, activities having a communicative purpose and providing students with authentic practices for the newly-learned vocabulary items, e.g. exchanging information, participating in conversations, role-playing, writing messages with the purpose of real or authentic communication, and so on.

As a result, the students used the didactic materials to solve the speaking tasks in a satisfactory way. The succession of materials allowed them to approach to vocabulary, contextualize it and use it to interact with their classmates in an oral way. Although minor pronunciation and grammar mistakes occurred, students were able to use these materials to fulfill this communicative goal.

To conclude, the implementation of didactic materials to foster students' vocabulary learning was successful as children had the opportunity of using materials carefully designed to meet this particular need. Students' disposition for learning vocabulary was much better this way than with the indistinct use of the textbook (see annex 9). The use of materials in an organized sequence and communication-oriented classes also allowed the achievement of fully contextualized vocabulary activities, what Oxford & Scarcella (1994) proposed as the ultimate goal of vocabulary learning.

### **5.2.2. COMMUNICATION THROUGH VOCABULARY**

Bearing in mind the Centro de Lenguas' syllabus portrays a clear relationship between vocabulary topics and communicative objectives, this category seeks to provide enough data to determine how the use of vocabulary promotes communication in the classroom. It is based on the descriptions, findings and results obtained in the three following achievement indicators:

#### **4. Students ask and answer questions using specific words from a vocabulary**

**topic:** taking into account that communication can be defined as “the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviors to exchange information or to express ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc., to someone else” (Ferguson & Terrion, 2014, p. 16), this pedagogical intervention proposed that an useful strategy for communication to happen was to have students use the new words they were learning to exchange information.

In addition, since Wilson (2011) stresses that “deficits in the ability to ask and answer questions have a serious impact on students' development of communication, classroom performance, and development of overall language comprehension” (p.2), this research considered that an initial step to achieve such exchange of information among students was to promote the use of questions in the classroom.



Therefore, every class students were encouraged to ask and answer questions using the vocabulary topic(s) they were learning. For example, in the class which took place on 25<sup>th</sup> February: *verb to be and personal information*, the teacher explained this verb and used two videos and a worksheet he designed to give the vocabulary input. Students had to watch the videos and complete the worksheet using information from the characters as if in a listening comprehension.

After students completed the missing information of the characters, the teacher asked them to ask and answer questions to their classmates about their personal information following the examples of the videos (*What is your name? What's your occupation? How old are you? Where are you from?*) and using the vocabulary from the worksheet (name, last name, city, country, nationality, age, occupation). (See annex 5 & 6: fieldnotes & students' artifacts).

As a result of these kind of exercises, students were able to start using the new vocabulary to ask and answer questions to each other. Most of them had difficulties building questions as their grammar notions were very scarce. However, they managed to use the vocabulary to communicate even when the grammatical structure of the sentences was incorrect. As Krashen (2003) states, it is necessary to give emphasis to the meaning that activities have rather than the correctness of language structure. (p.19).

#### **5. Students interact with each other in a written way using specific vocabulary:**

after students exchanged information asking and answering questions in a free way, the teacher proposed a more rigorous exercise of interaction consisting on the writing of dialogues in couples or small groups. Students had more time, counted with the didactic materials and the dictionary for vocabulary support, and worked cooperatively to

achieve this goal. This resulted into a more organized and more accurate use of the target vocabulary, as well as better communication and written production.

That is to say, the class held on 25<sup>th</sup> February: *verb to be and personal information*, continued with the writing of a dialogue consisting on a role play receptionist-client for asking and giving personal information (as in the videos). Students were organized in small groups and had to organize the dialogue pretending that one or two of them were receptionists and the other two were clients. Here they had the opportunity of being more careful with the spelling of new words and the construction of questions, besides having a clear communicative purpose (exchanging information to fulfill their roles). (See annex 5: fieldnotes).

On this subject, Hymes (1972) states that language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication. That is, communication that results from processing content that is relevant, interesting, purposeful and promotes interpersonal exchange. He adds that the role of the teacher in the language classroom is that of a facilitator, who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect about it.

Thanks to these activities, students managed to use the vocabulary of a determined topic to produce better writings and to better interact with each other. When working in couples or small groups they did not only have the assessment of the teacher but also of their classmates, what helped reducing spelling or grammar mistakes. The chance of creating dialogues to exchange information in interesting, motivating and real-life situations also contributed to the improvement of communication. This kind of activities resulted into a meaningful and communicative use of vocabulary.

**6. Students interact with each other in an oral way using specific vocabulary:** as the Centro de Lenguas prioritizes the practice of the production skills (writing and speaking) in the communicative approach of the language (*Lineamientos pedagógicos y metodológicos del Centro de Lenguas UPN*, 2014, p. 7), the communicative activities of this proposal were planned to have a writing and a speaking practice. The latter was encouraged after students had finished their writings and the respective corrections had been made. This oral practice fostered a more meaningful communication and the use of vocabulary in fully contextualized activities.

One such example is the concluding part of the previously cited class (*verb to be and personal information*): after students finished writing their dialogues for the role-play, they had to pass in front of the class and act them out. Since this was one of the first times they had to speak in front of their classmates, some students were a little nervous or afraid of committing mistakes. In fact, there were some pronunciation or spelling inaccuracies, but as they had the support of their writings and the previous practice with the vocabulary input, they were able to complete the conversation and use the target words correctly. Again, group work helped them to feel more confident and in a non-threatening environment (See annex 5: fieldnotes).

Regarding this, Laufer (1997) underlines that better vocabulary knowledge produces better communicative performance. Learners improve their writing and speaking production if they have a wider vocabulary domain. This knowledge also contributes to the speaker's confidence when oral production influences the overall impression created.

To conclude, students were able to interact with each other in an oral way using the previously studied vocabulary. The exchange of information in speaking activities

was easier for them when they had a previous practice of the vocabulary they needed to use in the conversations. Prior corrections and group work reinforced their confidence and allowed them to speak more freely.

As for the category in general, it is possible to state that the systematic and sequential use of vocabulary along the classes promoted the communication in the classroom. The emphasis on the use of questions to exchange information with classmates gave the students the chance of putting the new words in context. Vocabulary input through didactic materials and group work facilitated the interaction in a written and oral way and strengthened students' confidence when using specific words for the first time. Altogether, vocabulary knowledge in the class improved along with communication.

### **5.2.3. VOCABULARY USE IN COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES**

Taking into account this pedagogical research is centered on vocabulary learning and the Centro de Lenguas highlights various aspects of a cooperative approach in its pedagogical and methodological guidelines (it defines its students as active, autonomous and protagonist of their own learning, it suggests a constant student-student communication and interaction, it encourages teamwork...), this category tries to provide data on the effects of using cooperative activities in vocabulary learning. It is based on the descriptions, findings and results obtained in the three following achievement indicators:

**7. Students use vocabulary in small-group cooperative activities:** the classes throughout the pedagogical intervention were focused on a student-student interaction where pupils spent the majority of each class (2 hours approximately) working together in cooperative activities whose difficulty and conditions required teamwork and careful

organization. Students used the vocabulary they had studied in the previous stages of the classes both in a written and oral way, and increasingly strengthened their social and communicative skills. Most of these activities were organized in small groups of 3, 4 or 5 students, took place after vocabulary input and questions practice, and encouraged cooperation rather than competition.

One instance of this was observed in the class held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April: *fast food and British money; can and how much*. Here the cooperative activity consisted on the preparation of a fast food restaurant role-play in groups of 5 students (2 salespeople and 3 customers). Each group counted with 20 didactic bills and a menu the teacher designed for them to buy fast food and drinks. The teacher used his desk as a food counter to place cutouts of such food and drinks.



(Menu)



(students playing a waitress / customer)

As a result, students wrote the dialogues they needed for the role-play and practiced the pronunciation of the vocabulary they were going to use, while the teacher made corrections, clarified, and supported teamwork. Although academic performance and language level were notoriously different in some of them, he let the students



(Food counter)



(Students roleplaying)

decide on their roles and distribute their work to promote teamwork skills. After practice and preparation, they acted out their role-play. As expected, minor grammar and pronunciation mistakes were present but the communicative goal was achieved: they ordered *fast food and drinks* using *British money* (See annex 5: fieldnotes).

As the success of Cooperative Learning is crucially dependent on the nature and organization of group work (Olsen & Kagan, 1992), the teacher set goals, planned and structured tasks, established the physical arrangement of the classroom, helped students

to be assigned in groups and roles, selected materials and time, and watched individual and collective performance.

Consequently, the use of these highly structured and well-organized learning environments promoted cooperation and vocabulary use in the classroom. The absence of grades, scores or any other competitive elements in these kind of activities helped the students to focus on the learning of the topics and use the language more naturally. It made them feel comfortable and confident in the practice, as if being in a game.

**8. Students use vocabulary in whole-class cooperative activities:** some of the vocabulary topics were planned so as to be practiced in activities requiring the participation of all the members of the class. In these activities the students demonstrated a good disposition to work and interact with any of their classmates. They used the vocabulary topics as the focus of interaction and the non-threatening, grade-absent conditions of these exercises allowed them to practice freely.

For example, in the class carried out on 26<sup>th</sup> August: *adverbs and adverbial phrases of frequency*, the activity proposed: “chatting without chat”, was set on a round table and aimed to have the students ask and answer questions using the 2 topics of the class. They wrote each other messages in pieces of paper designed to emulate a chat box, and sent them using *the internet* (2 students running around the classroom to receive and deliver the written messages). Students wrote a question in each paper, sent it, and replied the ones they received. Minor grammar mistakes appeared occasionally but the accuracy on the use of vocabulary to ask and reply was remarkable. The activity in general resulted easy and fun for students and although they were studying specific words, for them it was more like a game (See annex 5: fieldnotes).



(Didactic material)



(Students' artifacts)

According to Nation (2001), social interaction plays an important role in meaningful vocabulary learning. Teachers must use different materials and strategies to foster students' ability to convey the words they learn in different contexts and settings. If learners do not acquire effective strategies for learning new vocabulary, they become disappointed and lose their self-confidence. (p. 56).

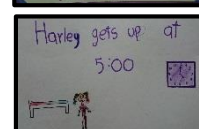
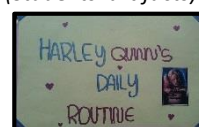
Therefore, these kind of activities resulted very useful not only to put the new vocabulary in context and in practice, but also to improve students' confidence, relationship with others and attitudes toward the class and the studied language. Student-student interaction played an important role in students' cognitive development, educational achievement and development of social and communicative competences.

### 9. Students participate in small-group mini-projects involving vocabulary use:

these mini-projects consisted on small-group activities whose extension, difficulty or quantity of topics to be used required more than one class preparation. They allowed students to extend the practice of vocabulary topics, strength grammar concepts, improve pronunciation and develop teamwork skills.

An example of this was the mini-project presented on 12<sup>th</sup> August about the topics: *telling the time, at, daily routines and present simple with fixed times*. In this project students had to invent a superhero's daily routine, write it, design it and present it to their classmates as an exposition. They depicted occasional errors regarding the conjugation of verbs in present simple but the rest of the topics was satisfactorily used. The repeated pronunciation of daily routine verbs and times in the oral presentations helped to improve the pronunciation of these words. Besides, the amount of work to fulfill this assignment

(Students' artifacts)



(Students' presentation)



demanded teamwork skills to assign roles and divide the tasks within the groups (some students were writing the sentences while others were drawing the pictures, others coloring, others looking for unknown words in the dictionary, others checking pronunciation and so on) (See annex 5 & 6: fieldnotes & students' artifacts).

With this in mind, these activities were planned so they could have what Olsen & Kagan (1992) proposed as successful group-based learning key elements: positive interdependence (mutual support within the group); group formation (size of the group, student roles in groups); individual accountability (individual performance to achieve collective goals); social skills (the way students interact with each other as teammates); structuring and structures (ways of organizing student interaction and different ways students can interact).

Thus, these mini-projects provided students a different way to interact with each other. They required a deeper commitment of each member of the group, a mutual support and responsibility in the individual roles to accomplish the collective goals. The improvement of these teamwork skills contributed to the improvement of vocabulary learning as well.

In general terms, the utilization of a cooperative approach influenced positively the quality of classroom interaction and overall language use. Students felt more confident working with their classmates and in groups than individually or in pairs (see annex 9: questionnaire of results) and were more committed with their own learning and language use as they knew their individual performance also affected the performance of others. Vocabulary learning was the focus of attention in these activities but there were also notorious improvements in the speaking, writing, communicative and social skills.



## 6. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

This section aims to describe some generalizations of the former chapter in order to have a better understanding of the findings obtained from the data analysis. It is organized in three major ideas corresponding to the previously discussed categories (didactic materials to approach to vocabulary, communication through vocabulary, vocabulary use in cooperative activities) and their respective results.

Firstly, the implementation of didactic materials in this English course was extremely valuable for the development and execution of the pedagogical intervention. These materials served as the backbone of this project supporting the whole structure of the lessons and contributing to the accomplishment of the three objectives stated. The exhaustive and meticulous design of these pedagogical tools connected the processes of vocabulary learning, communication and cooperation in the classroom.

Besides, their appealing appearance, contextualized nature and easy-to-follow instructions increased students' motivation for learning and improved their general attitude towards the class. Students felt more confident to participate when the materials they used to learn, addressed their interests and were connected to their contexts. The sequence of materials and the fully contextualized vocabulary activities it promoted, allowed students to fulfill writing and speaking tasks and to have an active role in their own learning process. Students showed a better disposition for learning whenever they felt supported by the didactic materials.

Secondly, communication in the target language was positively influenced by the use of vocabulary. The gradual utilization of vocabulary in different activities and moments of the class gave the students several opportunities to practice the new words they were learning. The constant use of these words and the connection with previous

vocabulary topics strengthened their confidence and motivated them to speak. This facilitated the exchange of information and promoted a constant interaction among peers.

On the other hand, the role of the teacher in the classroom was that of a facilitator of communication. He constantly encouraged students to be the protagonists of the classes through activities which required their active participation and commitment. He created a learning environment in which individual work was almost absent and academic achievement was mostly dependent on group work. This engaged students in interaction and meaningful communication.

Thirdly, the employment of cooperative activities supported students' vocabulary learning. These activities gave them valuable opportunities to use the different vocabulary topics in an active and productive way, that is, to have an authentic communication with their classmates. They also received a constant feedback not only from the teacher but also from their teammates on how to use the newly-learned vocabulary items. The fact of working with others to accomplish a single goal made feel more responsible and engaged with the adequate use of words. This fostered vocabulary learning in a meaningful way.

On top of that, cooperative activities also promoted the acquisition of social and communicative skills. Students had to talk to each other, avoid conflict and decide on the division of work and the roles they had to fulfill in order to succeed. They also recognized their strengths and weaknesses to better work within the groups. They felt as part of a team and gave their best to get a mutual benefit.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

In this section, the answers to the specific objectives proposed at the beginning of the project are stated. The learning acquired in terms of the discipline, the pedagogical intervention and the research experience is also described.

To start with, the implementation of didactic materials created and/or adapted by the teacher fostered vocabulary learning and produced positive results in students' cognitive aspects. These materials gave students the opportunity to approach to vocabulary in a motivating and entertained way. They depicted colors, pictures and simple exercises to introduce the new words so students watched them more as games or tools meant to have fun than teaching or evaluating materials. This fomented curiosity and willingness to use them rather than obligation. Students managed to employ the materials not only to establish a relationship with the vocabulary items but also to put them into practice (exchanging information, solving writing and speaking tasks).

By virtue of that, the correct use of vocabulary promoted communication in the classroom. It was observed that, most of the times students were reluctant or afraid of using new words was not because they wanted to avoid committing mistakes or lacked the speaking skills to do it but because they needed the context and the motivation to do it. Learning vocabulary with didactic materials and in fully contextualized activities gave students the chances and the reasons to study new words every class and to put them into action. The use of vocabulary promoted communication in the students as long as it had the right setting and a clear communicative objective, that is, enough motivation to do it.

In addition to that, the use of cooperative activities in the process of vocabulary learning produced several positive effects concerning academic achievement and social skills. The carefully structured and well-organized nature of these activities suppressed the conditioning element of the grades and allowed students to focus more on their learning process and not on the results. This increased confidence, motivation for learning, more spontaneous use of the language and willingness to participate. Vocabulary learning was the core of the activities and thanks to it, improvement occurred in the general aspects of the language.

On the other hand, favoring cooperation over competition strengthened social interaction and relationships among peers. The challenging aspect of these activities led children to recognize their classmates as a fundamental part of their academic success and to be more involved with their own performance. The considerable amount of time spent with peers in the fulfilment of collective tasks, reduced conflict and reinforced the idea of the others seen as teammates rather than rivals. The promotion of this cooperative environment was beneficial for the class coexistence in general terms.

To sum up, the impact of using didactic materials along with a cooperative approach to facilitate vocabulary learning in an EFL Basic 1 course at Centro de Lenguas was very positive. Students were more engaged to learn vocabulary when it was exposed in a manner they could easily understand and use. The contextualization of these materials considering their interests, ages and needs as well as the inclusion of clear communicative objectives and cooperative activities in the classes, gave students enough practice and motivation to learn the new words. Altogether didactic materials, communication and cooperation set up a suitable environment to learn vocabulary and to improve the English language.

Apart from the results obtained in terms of the language, the research experience and the pedagogical intervention were very enriching too:

On the one hand, the unprecedented exercise of rigorous observation and data collection for specific purposes favored the acquisition of investigative skills. It created a conducive framework for the teacher researcher to improve his ability for identifying, addressing and solving problems in the class. This situation gave way to a more analytical and critical education.

On the other hand, planning the classes not as individual encounters but as part of a whole project rendered a unique pedagogical experience. It broadened the scope of the teaching process and allowed the teacher to develop a better analysis and assessment of the researched population and of his own practice as an educator. The demanding conditions of this endeavor also generated a deeper engagement and a stronger bond among the actors of the project. This conducted to a meaningful improvement of teaching and learning in the classroom.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and the experiences gathered in this pedagogical intervention, it is possible to state certain recommendations and suggestions for the institution where this project took place and for the UPN.

First of all, it is suggested that the design and implementation of materials considers students' ages, culture, interests, previous knowledge, strengths and weaknesses, among other factors. The activities carried out along the research and the questionnaire of results applied at the end of the project (see annex 9), showed that the great majority of students prefer to work with materials adjusted to their context and designed to meet their particular needs, rather than with a textbook or any other standardized material that disregards these important issues. This consideration may contribute to the achievement of better results in the teaching of English as a foreign language in the Centro de Lenguas.

Apart from this, the utilization of a learning strategy such cooperative learning approach is advised to comply with the communicative goals and student-centered classes the Centro de Lenguas proposes. Having students working together in the fulfillment of different tasks is an efficient way to promote communication in the target language and to give students the protagonism of their own learning. This also causes positive effects in student-student and student-teacher relationships.

In addition to this, it is recommended that the design of the institutional syllabus is not based entirely on the units and topics contained in the textbook as this may represent an inconvenience. Due to the time and effort students require to learn a topic and use it in a communicative and significant way, the quantity of topics to be covered in each cut and in accordance with the syllabus may be excessive. To have a deeper

understanding, an appropriate practice and an effective linking of the different grammar and vocabulary topics, students need to spend more time studying every topic.

On the other hand, it is suggested to the UPN and the coordination of practice to support the teachers-researchers in a stronger way so they can reduce the difficulties the professional practice entails. It is necessary to count on economic and material resources for the development of certain teaching materials and the planning of lessons. It is also imperative to have a closer monitoring of the classes they teach in order to give regular advice and produce constant improvements in the practice. The inclusion of these elements may facilitate and yield better results in the pedagogical intervention.

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ANNEXES

**Annex 1. Centro de Lenguas’ Syllabus:** this syllabus is annexed in order to show the relationship between communicative objectives, language objectives and vocabulary topics the Centro de Lenguas proposes.

**CENTRO DE LENGUAS  
ENGLISH BASIC 1 – KIDS 10 - 12 YEARS OLD  
(LIVE BEAT ELEMENTARY UNITS 1 TO 4)**

**GENERAL OBJECTIVES:** By the end of this level, students will be able to introduce themselves and others. They will be able to ask for personal information and talk about their family and home. They will talk about food and drink preferences, and other personal interests. They will make simple requests. They will write short and simple paragraphs related to the previous topics.

TERM	UNIT AND TOPIC	COMMUNICATIVE OBJECTIVES	LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES	VOCABULARY
<b>FIRST TERM</b>	<u>1. Hi!</u> 1a. I'm OK. 1b. What's your name? 1c. We're from Poland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To introduce yourself and others.</li> <li>To learn how to say hello and good bye.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verb to be: singular.</li> <li>Subject pronouns: I, you, he, she, it</li> <li>Possessives adjectives: my, your, his, her, its.</li> <li>Verb to be: plural.</li> <li>Subject pronouns: we, you, they.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numbers 1 -100</li> <li>The alphabet</li> <li>Days of the week</li> <li>Countries and nationalities</li> <li>Compass points</li> </ul>
	1.d They're British	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>READING: ACROSS CULTURES</b> Suggested Strategy: scanning for information.</li> </ul>		
	1e. My name's Antonio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>WRITING: WRITING A PERSONAL PROFILE</b> Suggested Strategy: using punctuation (1).</li> </ul>		
<b>FIRST EXAM</b>				
<b>SECOND TERM</b>	<u>2. Important things</u> 2a. What's that? 2b. What's your best friend's name? 2c. How much is that?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To talk about your favorite band/singer or sport.</li> <li>To talk about objects.</li> <li>To order food and drinks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indefinite article: a/an.</li> <li>Regular noun plurals.</li> <li>Demonstrative pronouns: this, that, these and those.</li> <li>Genitive 's and s'.</li> <li>Possessive adjectives: our, your, their.</li> <li>Can (request).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every day things</li> <li>Clothes</li> <li>Colors</li> <li>Fast food and drink</li> <li>British money</li> </ul>
	2d. School life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>LISTENING: Suggested Strategy:</b> learn how to listen for the first time.</li> <li><b>SPEAKING: Suggested Strategy:</b> keep talking (do not worry about making mistakes).</li> </ul>		
	<u>3. My home</u> 3a. There's a garden! 3b. It's in the bin. 3c. Is there any food?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make and respond to requests.</li> <li>To learn how to describe your home.</li> <li>To talk about favorite food.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is, there are: affirmative, negative, questions.</li> <li>Definite article: The.</li> <li>Prepositions of place: in, on, under, behind, in front of, next to.</li> <li>Countable and uncountable nouns with some and any.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rooms, parts of the house and fittings.</li> <li>Furniture</li> <li>Food</li> </ul>
	3d. British homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>READING: ACROSS CULTURES</b> Suggested Strategy: guessing new words.</li> </ul>		
	3e. My house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>WRITING: WRITING A DESCRIPTION</b> Suggested Strategy: using punctuation (2).</li> </ul>		
<b>SECOND EXAM</b>				

**Annex 2. Characterization questionnaire:****CUESTIONARIO CARACTERIZACIÓN ESTUDIANTES**

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Nivel: \_\_\_\_\_

Edad: \_\_\_\_\_

Sexo: Masculino  Femenino 

A continuación encontrarás algunas preguntas tanto abiertas como cerradas, en las preguntas cerradas (opción múltiple) marca la opción escogida con una X.

1. ¿Dónde vives?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. ¿En qué tipo de vivienda vives?

3. ¿En qué estrato social te encuentras?

a. Propia 1 2 3 b. Arrendada 4 5 6 c. Familiar 

4. ¿Con quién vives? \_\_\_\_\_

5. ¿Cuál es la ocupación de tus padres o dos de tus acudientes? Especifica quien a un lado:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Indica cuál es el nivel educativo de tus padres o acudientes y especifica quien a un lado:

Primaria  Secundaria  Técnico  Tecnológico  Universitario Primaria  Secundaria  Técnico  Tecnológico  Universitario 

7. ¿Qué actividades realizas en tu tiempo libre y aproximadamente cuánto tiempo a la semana dedicas a ellas?

a.  Estudiar \_\_\_\_\_ horas semanalesb.  Leer \_\_\_\_\_ horas semanalesc.  Ver TV \_\_\_\_\_ horas semanalesd.  Escuchar música \_\_\_\_\_ horas semanalese.  Chatear \_\_\_\_\_ horas semanalesf.  Navegar en internet \_\_\_\_\_ horas semanalesg.  Jugar videojuegos \_\_\_\_\_ horas semanalesh.  Practicar algún deporte \_\_\_\_\_ horas semanalesi.  Asistir a alguna actividad extracurricular. \_\_\_\_\_ horas semanalesj.  Asistir a algún tipo de grupo cultural o religioso \_\_\_\_\_ horas semanalesk.  Otra(s) ¿Cuál(es)? \_\_\_\_\_ horas semanales

8. En general el inglés te parece: a. Fácil  b. Difícil

¿Por qué? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. A la hora de aprender inglés se te facilita más (es posible seleccionar varias opciones):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. Leer (reading) <input type="checkbox"/>     | d. Escuchar (listening) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Escribir (writing) <input type="checkbox"/> | e. Aprender vocabulario <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Hablar (speaking) <input type="checkbox"/>  | f. Aprender gramática <input type="checkbox"/>   |

¿Por qué? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. A la hora de aprender inglés se te dificulta más (es posible seleccionar varias opciones):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. Leer (reading) <input type="checkbox"/>     | d. Escuchar (listening) <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Escribir (writing) <input type="checkbox"/> | e. Aprender vocabulario <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Hablar (speaking) <input type="checkbox"/>  | f. Aprender gramática <input type="checkbox"/>   |

¿Por qué? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. ¿Con que materiales te gusta más aprender vocabulario? Por medio de:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a. El libro guía <input type="checkbox"/> | d. Imágenes <input type="checkbox"/>      |
| b. Talleres <input type="checkbox"/>      | e. Juegos <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| c. Videos <input type="checkbox"/>        | f. La plataforma <input type="checkbox"/> |

12. ¿De qué forma te gusta más trabajar en la clase de inglés?

- a. Individualmente  b. En parejas  c. Grupalmente

13. ¿Estudias inglés en otro centro educativo distinto al Centro de Lenguas? a. Si  b. No

De ser Si la respuesta, especifica donde: \_\_\_\_\_

14. ¿Estudias o prácticas el inglés en casa y/o de manera autónoma? a. Si  b. No

Si tu respuesta es afirmativa, ¿cómo estudias o practicas inglés? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Annex 3. Initial fieldnotes:** this annex intends to complement and give support to the evidences found to state the diagnosis and the problem description. It exhibits the description and analysis of the first two fieldnotes.

<b>FIELDNOTES No. 1</b>	
<p>Group: Basic 1</p> <p>Date: 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2017</p> <p>Teacher researcher: Wilmar Alexander Beltrán Gómez</p> <p>Topic: Verb to be &amp; Subject Pronouns</p>	
DESCRIPTION	ANALYSIS
<p>Ss use the textbook to solve filling the blanks and matching exercises of verb to be and subject pronouns. Most of them know the conjugation of this verb and the meaning of the pronouns because when the teacher asks them for the answers they try to participate voluntarily. Ss have a previous knowledge of these topics but when being asked for the meaning of the full sentences, they do not understand most of the other words accompanying the grammar.</p> <p>After that the teacher asks them to write full sentences on their notebooks using the pronouns and verb to be. He writes an example for them on the board using words that replace the subject pronouns. Then they have to pass to the board and do the same. This time ss do not feel confident enough to pass and write the full sentences or to read them in a loud voice. When he checks their work just a few of them use words to replace a subject such mom, uncle, my dog, my parents. Most of them keep using the literal subjects (she, he, it, they).</p> <p>Then, the teacher gives them a worksheet with basic vocabulary exercises along with verb to be and subject pronouns. Most of ss do not understand the words accompanying the grammar nor the words that replace the pronouns such daughter, my best friend, the people, ... They also tend to misunderstand the sentences when adjectives accompany the pronouns such in a beautiful girl, a tall man, ... They avoid to share their answers as they do not understand most of the words in the exercises.</p>	<p>Ss solve exercises with the grammar concepts they know by heart but do not have enough vocabulary to understand the real meaning of full sentences. They do not have a real understanding of the topics.</p> <p>Ss lack vocabulary to understand and use full sentences or to exchange information and communicate with their classmates.</p> <p>They feel insecure and refrain from participating due to the lack of words to do it.</p>

<b>FIELDNOTES No. 2</b>	
<p>Group: Basic 1</p> <p>Date: 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2017</p> <p>Teacher researcher: Wilmar Alexander Beltrán Gómez</p> <p>Topic: Verb to be (plural and contractions), numbers &amp; the alphabet</p>	
DESCRIPTION	ANALYSIS
<p>In the first moment of the class, ss use the textbook to learn the vocabulary topic of the class. As the words are shown in lists and repeated in audios as if in a dictation, children seem bored and do not feel motivated to repeat them or use them. The teacher encourages ss to read and solve the exercises in the textbook but the lack of connection between the characters displayed there and their interests makes them hesitant to participate.</p> <p>Afterwards, the teacher gives the ss a piece of paper with the incomplete lyrics of a song they have to complete with vocabulary related to the topics of the class. He plays the song and ss feel encouraged to complete it. They ask the teacher to play it more times, they ask questions and try to participate whenever they feel they have heard the correct word. After the song has been played enough times the teacher completes the lyrics on the board with the help of the ss. He asks the meaning of new words and full sentences and ss try to deduce it. They feel more confident to participate and guess the meaning of the lyrics as they liked the song.</p> <p>Then, the teacher tells them the next activity is using the song to do karaoke. He shows the video of the song with lyrics and ss sing the song altogether. After that, he divides the ss in 4 groups and asks each group to prepare one of the 4 stanzas of the song. Ss constantly ask questions each other and to the teacher about the pronunciation of the words and work together to have coordination with the rhythm. After 10 to 15 minutes' preparation, the ss sing the song divided in stanzas and show a good pronunciation of the words in general.</p> <p>Finally, the teacher gives ss a worksheet with vocabulary and grammar exercises connected with the topics displayed in the song. Most of ss show a better understanding, feel more confident to ask questions and reduce mistakes.</p>	<p>The textbook seems ineffective to learn vocabulary or to give a meaningful vocabulary input as the activities and exercises it proposes are little didactic and are addressed to an older population. As a result, ss do not feel motivated to learn new words.</p> <p>The use of this material makes ss more active and curious to understand the meaning and use of new words. Instead of being quiet about the unknown vocabulary items they are inquisitive about them.</p> <p>The use of this group activity makes ss feel more confident about their pronunciation as they repeat words many times and are less afraid of being judged within a group.</p> <p>More importantly, even when ss commit mistakes they show a better disposition toward learning.</p>

**Annex 4. Diagnosis test:** this annex shows the instrument used to determine the lack of vocabulary as the problem of the population.

## VERB TO BE

**1** Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb **to be**.

**✓**

I **am**  
 You **are**  
 He } **is**  
 She }  
 It }  
 We } **are**  
 You }  
 They }

**✗**

I **am not**  
 You **are not**  
 He } **is not**  
 She }  
 It }  
 We } **are not**  
 You }  
 They }

**?**

**Am** I ?  
**Are** you ?  
**Is** he ?  
 she ?  
 it ?  
**Are** we ?  
 you ?  
 they ?

**2** Answer the questions.

- Where are you at the moment? \_\_\_\_\_
- How old is your mum? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is your bedroom big or small? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are your parents at home now? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is your favourite toy right now? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many rooms are there in your house? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you hungry? \_\_\_\_\_

**3** Correct mistakes.

- There is five lamps in the classroom. \_\_\_\_\_
- My dad and I am both tall. \_\_\_\_\_
- The postcard are from Greece. \_\_\_\_\_
- Where is the ~~Morgan~~ Morgans? \_\_\_\_\_

**4** Rewrite using the short forms.

- The dogs are not very tired. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am optimistic and outgoing. \_\_\_\_\_
- He is never moody. \_\_\_\_\_
- My mum is not a dentist. \_\_\_\_\_
- We are often at work till late. \_\_\_\_\_

**5** Choose the correct answer.

- Sally \_\_\_\_\_ in her room now, she \_\_\_\_\_ in the bathroom.  
 a) is / isn't    b) isn't / is    c) isn't / are
- Luke and Helen \_\_\_\_\_ cousins.  
 a) isn't    b) am    c) aren't
- Pam and I \_\_\_\_\_ best friends.  
 a) are    b) am not    c) am
- Jack \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Lawson's grandson.  
 a) is    b) are    c) am
- We \_\_\_\_\_ friendly and helpful. Everybody likes us.  
 a) is    b) aren't    c) are



**Annex 5. Fieldnotes:** this annex gives support and provides further evidence to the results exposed in chapter v. These fieldnotes correspond to some examples of the activities and data described in the analysis of indicators and categories. The findings related to each of the categories are displayed with different colors to have an easier identification of them:

Didactic materials to approach to vocabulary

Communication through vocabulary

Vocabulary use in cooperative activities

<b>FIELDNOTES No. 5</b>	
Group: Basic 1 Date: 11 <sup>th</sup> March, 2017 Teacher researcher: Wilmar Alexander Beltrán Gómez Topic: Countries and nationalities	
DESCRIPTION	ANALYSIS
<p>The teacher shows a piece of paper with the flag of a country and some blank spaces to complete with a name and the spelling of that name. Ss deduce the topic of the class is countries and nationalities. Then he writes on the board the following sentences: <i>Hello! - I am Alexander - A L E X A N D E R - I'm from Colombia! - I am Colombian! - And where are you from?</i></p> <p>He organizes ss in a round table and asks each one of them to grab one paper from a set of papers he has on his hands. These papers are posters showing the following sentences: <i>I am _____, _____ am _____. I'm from (Country) - I am (Nationality) - And where are you from?</i></p>	<p><u>The careful design of the material allows ss to deduce the topic it wants to explain and the way they need to use it without instructions. Besides its colorful and appealing appearance is inviting for the children to employ them more as a game and not as an assignment.</u></p>

along with the flag of a country in its center. Every single student has a different country and they follow the teacher's example to complete their materials.

When they finish he goes to the front of the class with a poster in his hands showing the flag of Colombia and the sentences he wrote on the board. He says these sentences aloud including the spelling of his name and explains everybody is going to do the same with the country they picked. So once more he says: *Hello, I am Alexander*, he spells his name, he says the country he has in his poster *I'm from Colombia!* He shows the flag of the country in the poster, then he says *I am Colombian!* Finally he says *And where are you from? Where are you from?* while he approaches to a specific student who has to stand up and do the same he just did but with their own country.

The ss easily understand the activity and encourage their classmates to continue until all the chain has been completed, until all of them have spelled their names, said one country, one nationality, showed its flag and invited the next one to continue with the activity.

The easy-to-follow instructions of the material make ss motivated to participate in the activity and make others participate.

This material provides a writing and a speaking practice of the vocabulary while it encourages group work at the same time.

<b>FIELDNOTES No. 9</b>	
<p>Group: Basic 1</p> <p>Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2017</p> <p>Teacher researcher: Wilmar Alexander Beltrán Gómez</p> <p>Topic: Fast food, drinks and British money.</p>	
DESCRIPTION	ANALYSIS
<p>The teacher introduces the main topic of the class showing some pictures of fast food and drinks. He asks questions about food ordering using <i>can I have</i>, <i>how much is</i> or <i>how much are</i>, and then he says the price using <i>it's</i> or <i>they're</i> ___ pounds, e.g. Can I have a burger? How much is it? = It's 3 pounds. Can I have 2 cokes? How much are they? = they're 2 pounds fifty. Then he encourages ss to do the same with other pictures of fast food and drinks in order to check previous knowledge of this vocabulary. Ss know how to say certain words related to fast food but they are not able to do similar sentences as they do not understand the use of <i>can</i> or <i>how much</i>. Nevertheless, they show interest to talk and learn about fast food and drinks.</p> <p>Then the teacher uses a couple of videos to give vocabulary input of the topics. The first video shows a couple of children buying toys, while they do it, they use <i>how much is it?</i> and <i>how much are they?</i> Then the teacher asks the ss to ask similar questions using some of the classroom objects and their personal belongings. Some ss participate using the words they know and although they have some grammar inaccuracies they manage to ask simple questions.</p>	<p><u>Ss expose a good disposition for learning a new topic whenever it is introduced in an interactive and interesting way and when it is connected to situations they experiment in their everyday lives.</u></p> <p><u>Videos with pictures of the words they are learning and everyday conversations give context and help ss to familiarize with the vocabulary. Audios and transcription in the videos also make topics look easier to learn so ss tend to participate more with them.</u></p>

The second video also shows a couple of children, but this time they ask for food and drinks in a fast food restaurant. Vocabulary about fast food is shown so the teacher asks them to repeat the pronunciation and then to draw that food on their notebooks.

Once the teacher considers the ss recognize the vocabulary of fast food and drinks and they understand the use of how much and can, he asks them to get in groups of 5 and prepare the next role-play: 2 of them are going to be salespeople and the other 3 are going to be customers in a fast food restaurant. Each group is going to have approximately 20 didactic bills and a little menu to buy some food and drinks. The teacher is going to use his desk as a food counter so there he will place some cutouts of fast food and drinks. Each group has to pass with their bills and their menu and spend all their “money” in order to complete the activity.

This activity takes a great amount of time but ss feel comfortable working in groups. They ask assistance of the teacher to help them with unknown vocabulary or connectors to create their conversation, but in general terms they manage to help each other in the fulfillment of this task. As the materials are full of pictures it is easier for ss to remember the words without the necessity of reading in their role plays. The fact that every group passes at a time while the rest listens and the teacher gives a general feedback for all the class, reduces pronunciation and word order mistakes in the next groups.

Cooperative activities with fully contextualized activities provide ss a real communicative experience and a meaningful practice of vocabulary.

Activities requiring a long preparation give ss the chance to spend more time with their classmates and to improve their teamwork skills and their relationships with others.

The sequential and repetitive use of words promotes memorization, reinforces pronunciation, clarifies concepts and facilitates communication.

<b>FIELDNOTES No. 10</b>	
<p>Group: Basic 1</p> <p>Date: 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2017</p> <p>Teacher researcher: Wilmar Alexander Beltrán Gómez</p> <p>Topic: Prepositions of place, there is and there are, objects in a house and bedroom.</p>	
DESCRIPTION	ANALYSIS
<p>The teacher introduces the main topic of the class showing a map of a bedroom with some common objects and furniture. He draws ss' attention to these objects and furniture and describes them using <i>there is</i> and <i>there are</i> e.g. In my bedroom there is a bed, there is a TV, there are 2 night tables, there are curtains, there is a football and so on. Ss listen attentively and after additional examples they start understanding the meaning of <i>there is</i> and <i>there are</i>. Then, the teacher starts describing the position of these objects in his bedroom using prepositions of place, e.g. my bed is next to the window, the TV is in front of my bed, under my bed there are some shoes, there is a night table next to my bed, and so on. He asks ss what topics he is using and after some guesses they get to the answer.</p> <p>After the warm-up activity the teacher hands his ss a worksheet they have to complete using prepositions of place. In the worksheet they can see a dog interacting with a box. The teacher explains one by one these prepositions with the help of another picture and objects from the classroom so ss can relate them to the dog in the worksheet. After that, he encourages them to make more examples using the objects in the classroom. He asks the question: where is the _____? and they reply with a preposition. Thanks to this practice ss start using the preposition of place to build simple sentences.</p> <p>Next, the teacher hands them a second worksheet, there they can see a bedroom full of objects and some blank spaces to describe them using there is and there are. He explains the affirmative, negative and interrogative form of these verbs and asks them to complete the worksheet as he explains. Again, the teacher encourages them to make further examples using the objects in the classroom and to start combining there is and there are with the prepositions of place. Ss have some difficulties to build these sentences but with the help of the materials they can give some examples.</p>	<p><u>The inclusion of didactic materials in warm-up activities encourages ss' curiosity for knowing what they are going to learn in the class and establishes a first approach with the new concepts. It also helps the teacher to know about their previous knowledge.</u></p> <p><u>Text-based materials and realia help ss to approach to vocabulary in a way they can easily understand. The utilization of challenging materials and games motivate them to keep practicing with the words and to strengthen the vocabulary input.</u></p>

Afterwards, the teacher shows a PowerPoint game in which ss have to use the vocabulary they are learning to beat the game. Ss participate voluntarily and although they commit mistakes they continue trying.

Once the teacher considers the ss recognize the vocabulary of prepositions of place and parts of the house, and the use of there is and there are, he tells them they are going to work in groups of 4 people in order to draw a bedroom and explain it in front of their classmates:

For the activity the teacher organizes the groups using ss' individual qualities. He asks who are the best at drawing and places one of them in each group. Then, who are the best at coloring, the best at writing and the best at speaking. When the groups are arranged, the teacher gives each group an empty map of a bedroom. He explains, one of them (the best at drawing) is going to be in charge of drawing a bedroom, other one is going to color the bedroom, other one is going to write sentences in order to explain the bedroom (using prepositions of place and there is and there are) and the last one is going to go in front of the class and explain this bedroom. Although everybody can help with any of the 4 different tasks, the teacher encourages each member of the group to pay special attention and be responsible for his/her role.

All of the ss show a very good disposition to work in groups. At first they take some time to decide who is going to fulfill each role but then they are able to organize themselves within the group. Ss tend to use Spanish when working in groups so the teacher constantly insists on the use of English. He also clarifies and corrects mistakes in their writings. With the support of the previous exercises ss commit less spelling or grammar mistakes in their artifacts. It is also possible to observe that ss with a better or faster understanding of English help their classmates within the groups.

Although the teacher explained the member of the group with the best pronunciation was going to do the presentation of the bedroom, ss decide to help each other in this final task. Pronunciation mistakes appear but the explanation and the use of the topics is very satisfactory.

The sequence of didactic materials reinforces the use of vocabulary and allows its practice in more complex tasks. It gives a suitable vocabulary input; an opportunity for contextualizing the words and establishing a relationship with them; an individual practice; and lastly a more complex utilization of the topics in cooperative tasks.

The utilization of vocabulary in writing and speaking tasks strengthens the understanding of words and promotes their use in a communicative way.

On the other hand, teamwork facilitates the use of vocabulary and increases ss' confidence to speak and practice what they are learning.



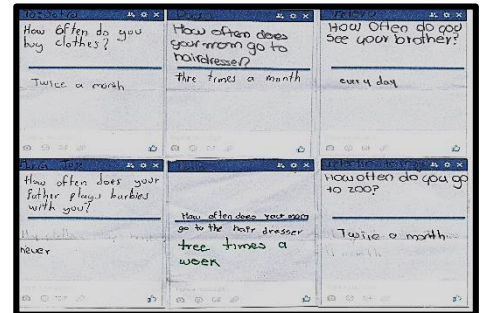
**Annex 6. Students' artifacts:** this annex represents the products and visual evidences of students' work during the implementation of the pedagogical proposal. Some of the examples with more relevance for the project are exhibit here.



Diagnosis test  
18<sup>th</sup> February, 2017



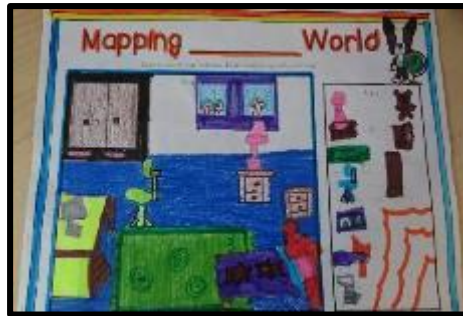
Personal Information Worksheet  
25<sup>th</sup> February, 2017



Adverbs of frequency coop. activity  
26<sup>th</sup> August, 2017



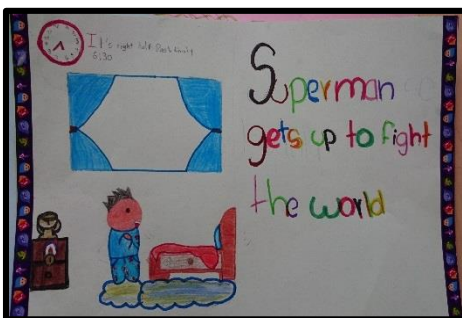
Design of a bedroom coop. activity  
29<sup>th</sup> April, 2017



Design of a bedroom coop. activity  
29<sup>th</sup> April, 2017



Design of a bedroom coop. activity  
29<sup>th</sup> April, 2017



Daily routine of a superhero  
12<sup>th</sup> August, 2017



Daily routine of a superhero  
12<sup>th</sup> August, 2017



Daily routine of a superhero  
12<sup>th</sup> August, 2017



Daily routine of a superhero  
12<sup>th</sup> August, 2017

**Annex 7. Cooperative activities:** this annex shows students working together in the fulfilment of cooperative activities.



ROLE PLAY: "IN THE FAST FOOD RESTAURANT"



PRESENTING THE DAILY ROUTINE OF A SUPERHERO





**Annex 8. Didactic materials:** this annex portrays some of the didactic materials designed by the teacher to be used in communicative and cooperative activities. They are not retrieved from the internet but of his own invention.



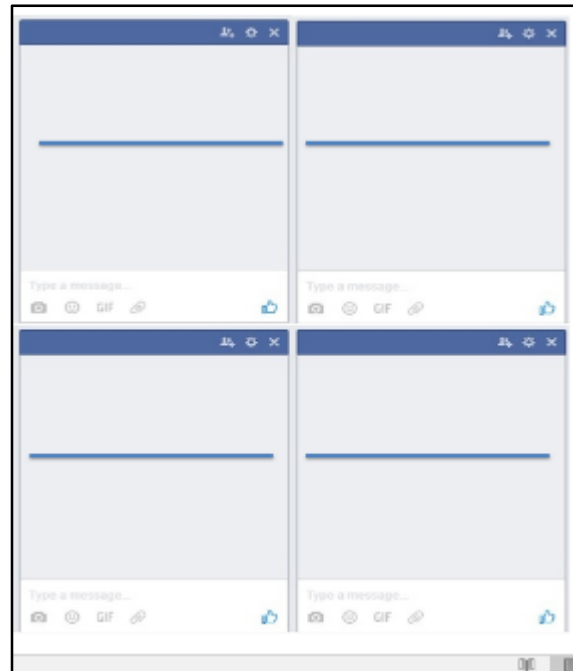
Material used on 11<sup>th</sup> March for the topic: Countries and nationalities



Material used on 22<sup>nd</sup> April for the topic: Fast food, drinks & British money



Material used on 25<sup>th</sup> February for the topic: Personal information



Material used on 26<sup>th</sup> August for the topic: Adverbs of frequency

**Annex 9. Questionnaire of results.**

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

A continuación, encontrarás algunas preguntas acerca de la clase de inglés. Marca las opciones que prefieras con una X y justifica tu respuesta.

1. ¿Con que materiales te ha gustado más aprender vocabulario? (es posible seleccionar varias opciones):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a. El libro guía <input type="checkbox"/> | d. Imágenes <input type="checkbox"/>      |
| b. Talleres <input type="checkbox"/>      | e. Juegos <input type="checkbox"/>        |
| c. Videos <input type="checkbox"/>        | f. La plataforma <input type="checkbox"/> |

¿Por qué? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. ¿De qué forma te ha gustado más trabajar en la clase de inglés?

- a. Individualmente       b. En parejas       c. Grupalmente

¿Por qué? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. ¿Qué te ha parecido más fácil en la clase de inglés? (es posible seleccionar varias opciones):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. Aprender vocabulario <input type="checkbox"/> | d. Escribir (writing) <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| b. Aprender gramática <input type="checkbox"/>   | e. Hablar (speaking) <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| c. Leer (reading) <input type="checkbox"/>       | f. Escuchar (listening) <input type="checkbox"/> |

¿Por qué? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

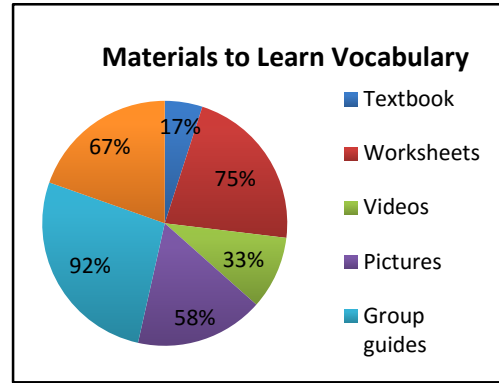
4. ¿Qué te ha parecido más difícil en la clase de inglés? (es posible seleccionar varias opciones):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. Aprender vocabulario <input type="checkbox"/> | d. Escribir (writing) <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| b. Aprender gramática <input type="checkbox"/>   | e. Hablar (speaking) <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| c. Leer (reading) <input type="checkbox"/>       | f. Escuchar (listening) <input type="checkbox"/> |

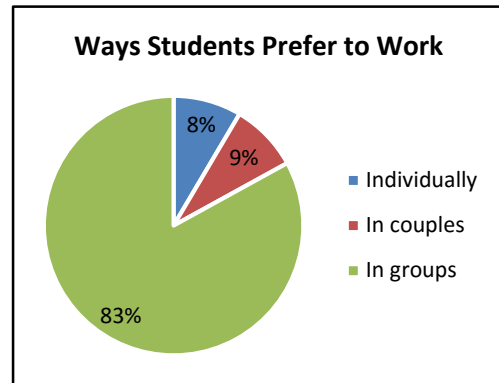
¿Por qué? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Questionnaire’s analysis.**

**Question 1:** Students show a clear acceptance of the didactic materials designed by the teacher with a clear tendency for group materials. This evidences the importance and interest of students for learning with materials adjusted to their context and needs.



**Question 2:** Students make clear their fondness for learning with their classmates instead of doing it individually. These results show the influence of the cooperative activities and the improvement of teamwork skills. Some of the reasons students give for this answer are:



<p>2. ¿De qué forma te ha gustado más trabajar en la clase de inglés?</p> <p>a. Individualmente <input type="checkbox"/>      b. En parejas <input type="checkbox"/>      c. Grupalmente <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>¿Por qué? <u>Por que nos podemos ayudar entre si</u></p>
<p>2. ¿De qué forma te ha gustado más trabajar en la clase de inglés?</p> <p>a. Individualmente <input type="checkbox"/>      b. En parejas <input type="checkbox"/>      c. Grupalmente <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>¿Por qué? <u>Por que puedo aprender mas cosas y enseñales a mis compañeros cosas que ellos no sabien.</u></p>
<p>2. ¿De qué forma te ha gustado más trabajar en la clase de inglés?</p> <p>a. Individualmente <input type="checkbox"/>      b. En parejas <input type="checkbox"/>      c. Grupalmente <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>¿Por qué? <u>hacemos las cosas mejor y mas rapido</u></p>



