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**VOCABULARY LISTS VS. CONTEXTUALIZED
TEACHING OF VOCABULARY: THE QUESTION OF
RETRIEVAL, RECALL AND USE IN WRITTEN
PRODUCTIONS AT COLLEGES OF EDUCATION**

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To my beloved family and friends.

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Abstract

During decades, there has been growing interest in the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT) in connection to vocabulary learning and teaching. Some authors have shown that this concern was sometimes related to the influence these processes may have on students' written productions and the learning of another language. The purpose of the present study is to address the following query: To what extent lexical items are taught through vocabulary lists or incidentally derived from context in Colleges of Education in the City of Buenos Aires and what effect do these two vocabulary teaching methods have on future retrieval, recall and instances of actual use in students' written productions. Qualitative research was carried out in order to fully understand this phenomenon. In addition, quantitative techniques were implemented because they contributed to the understanding of the issue. In order to collect the data, a group of English Language teachers at Colleges of Education were interviewed, students attending the same Colleges of Education in which the teachers mentioned above teach English Language I were also surveyed, and samples of written productions by these students collected through a random sampling technique were also analyzed. Research results have shown that teachers agree that vocabulary should be given as part of a context, not in isolation. According to the teachers, this will help students build up the meaning of the items and better understand their collocations, the register in which they should be used, among others, but especially it will help them learn how to use the new vocabulary in their productions.

Key words: vocabulary teaching and learning; foreign language learning; written productions

Abstract

Durante décadas ha habido gran interés en el campo de la enseñanza del inglés en relación a la enseñanza y al aprendizaje de vocabulario. Algunos autores han demostrado que esta preocupación estaba en ocasiones relacionada con la influencia que estos procesos pueden tener en las producciones escritas de los alumnos y en el aprendizaje de otra lengua. Esta investigación trata la siguiente pregunta: ¿Hasta qué punto se enseñan los elementos lexicales a través de listas de palabras o incidentalmente derivados de contextos en los Profesorados de Inglés de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires y qué efecto tienen estos dos métodos de enseñanza de vocabulario en la recuperación del mismo, en recordarlo y en instancias reales de su uso en las producciones escritas que los alumnos realizan? Para lograr entender este fenómeno con mayor claridad, una investigación cualitativa se llevó a cabo. Además, técnicas cuantitativas fueron implementadas porque las mismas contribuyeron al entendimiento del tema en cuestión. Para recolectar la información necesaria, un grupo de docentes que dicta la materia Lengua Inglesa I en Profesorados de Inglés de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires fue entrevistado; alumnos que cursan la misma asignatura en los mismos lugares en los que los docentes antemencionados respondieron una encuesta, y se realizó un análisis de producciones escritas de los alumnos. Los resultados de la investigación arrojaron que los docentes concuerdan en que el vocabulario debería ser presentado como parte de un contexto y no en forma aislada. Los docentes entrevistados consideran que esto ayudará a los alumnos a comprender el significado de esos ítems y a entender mejor las palabras con las que estos usualmente se agrupan, el registro en el que podrían ser usados, entre otros, pero especialmente, eso ayudará a los alumnos a aprender cómo utilizar el vocabulario nuevo en sus producciones escritas.

Palabras clave: enseñanza y aprendizaje de vocabulario; aprendizaje de lengua extranjera; producciones escritas

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Chapter 1

Introduction

During decades, there has been growing interest in the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT) in connection to vocabulary learning and teaching. Some authors have shown that this concern was sometimes related to the influence these processes may have on students' written productions and the learning of another language. Different methods and strategies have been discussed as regards the learning and teaching of vocabulary in a second language (Nation, 1990). From these, there are two distinctive ways in which new vocabulary may usually be presented: in word lists or derived from a context.

Although considerable research has been devoted to this subject matter, rather less attention has been paid to the effects of these teaching techniques on students' written performance at Colleges of Education. Little research has been carried out on how students at Colleges of Education who want to qualify as Teachers of English, work on the learning of new vocabulary and how they make use of this recently learnt vocabulary in their written performance for Language I, i.e. in composition writing. There is scant evidence of research conducted on whether teachers prefer any of these two vocabulary teaching methods when introducing new vocabulary or whether they focus their attention on teaching vocabulary directly or indirectly. Little research related to whether teachers work on receptive vocabulary as well as on productive vocabulary was

found.

Taking into consideration what was mentioned above; it is the purpose of the present study to address the following research query:

To what extent lexical items are taught through vocabulary lists or incidentally derived from context in Colleges of Education in the City of Buenos Aires and what effect do these two vocabulary teaching methods have on future retrieval, recall and instances of actual use in students' written productions.

The following hypotheses derive from this query:

- Vocabulary lists are a favourite approach to teaching vocabulary to students, who want to qualify as teachers of English in Colleges of Education in the City of Buenos Aires.

- Most lexical items which are taught in isolation through vocabulary lists at Colleges of Education in the subject English Language I are easily forgotten after a short period of time (measure approximate: 8 months) and do not consolidate as part of the students' active lexicon for future use in their written productions (i.e. compositions, letters and reviews).

- When writing under normal conditions, students at Colleges of Education will tend not to focus on the semantic fields they have accessed through vocabulary lists in their training. (Note: in this case “writing under normal conditions” means that students write their compositions about a topic suggested by the teacher, either at home or in the classroom, without their teacher telling them to use the lexical items taught)
- Students at Colleges of Education will only focus on lexical items presented to them in vocabulary lists and use them in their written productions only when they feel compelled to do so by external factors other than their own choice.

In order to collect the data, a group of English Language teachers at Colleges of Education will be interviewed, considering they are an important source of information regarding this issue. The condition considered to select them is that they deliver the subject English Language I at Colleges of Education for students who want to qualify as Teachers of English. These institutions are located in the City of Buenos Aires.

Students attending the same Colleges of Education in which the teachers mentioned above teach English Language I will be also surveyed. The characteristics taken into consideration in order to select these students are the following: they could be either male or female, attending the subject English Language I for the first time at Colleges of Education in the City of Buenos Aires

during the year 2010.

Content analysis will be done on samples of written productions (compositions, letters and reviews) by these students collected through a random sampling technique. The following items will be considered for the analysis of the written productions of students who want to qualify as Teachers of English and who are attending English Language I at Colleges of Education in the City of Buenos Aires:

- Percentage of new items students included in their written productions.
- Whether the use of the new vocabulary items was appropriate in relation to it's: use, spelling, collocation, meaning and register.

For the purpose of content analysis, the same material that students are given by their teachers to work on will be consulted.

In the subsequent parts of this paper the issue of vocabulary teaching and learning at Colleges of Education for students attending the subject English Language I to train as Teachers of English will be discussed, literature on this subject matter will be reviewed, and the details and results of the research carried out will be presented.

Chapter 2

Vocabulary and language learning

Learning a second or a foreign language entails learning numerous aspects of that language, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, composition, reading, culture and even body language. Traditionally, vocabulary has received less attention in second language pedagogy than any of these other aspects, particularly grammar. Arguably, vocabulary is perhaps the most important component in second language (L2) ability. For more than 2000 years, the study of a foreign language primarily entailed grammatical analysis, which was practised through translation of written work (Hinkel & Fotos, 2002, in Folse, 2004). As a result, vocabulary has been academically excluded from or at best limited in L2 curricula and classroom teaching (Folse, 2004).

Richards (1976, in Folse, 2004) notes that the “teaching and learning of vocabulary have never aroused the same degree of interest within language teaching as have such issues as grammatical competence, contrastive analysis, reading and writing” (p. 77). This is not so surprising given the fact that vocabulary has not held a high position in second language teaching and research as other language areas have. Thornbury (2002) explains that “for a long time, teaching approaches such as the Direct Method and audiolingualism gave greater priority to the teaching of grammatical structures” (p. 13). For instance, teachers led students through drills of structures, with clear emphasis

on grammatical structures over vocabulary, which served merely to fill the slots in the drills.

Some authors (Richards, 1976, in Folse 2004; Thornbury, 2002) agree that in more recent years, with the introduction of more communicative methods, emphasis was placed on communicating meaning. While grammar was not emphasized as much anymore, vocabulary was still relegated to a secondary position in language study.

Since grammar has been viewed as more important than vocabulary, it follows that a great deal more research on the teaching and learning of grammar exists than does for the teaching and learning of lexicon. In the various debates that have taken place over direct versus indirect approaches of language teaching, or over explicit instruction versus natural acquisition, the focus was almost always on the grammatical structures of L2. According to Folse (2004) “vocabulary was rarely emphasized; in fact, it was hardly ever an issue.” (p. 24)

As more and more research in L2 is available and results provide important insight into the question about vocabulary learning and teaching, the education pendulum is swinging back toward some more “traditional” methods.

In relation to this, Folse (2004) claims that:

research has investigated many areas of second language vocabulary learning and teaching. As a result, the question in L2 vocabulary teaching has shifted from **if** we should teach vocabulary to **when** and **how** we should be teaching vocabulary as well as **how much** and **which** vocabulary we should be working with. (p. 28)

Process for acquiring a language

The subject discussed throughout this dissertation is related to the teaching and learning of vocabulary. In this section the process of acquiring a language will be discussed to shed some light on the way students learn new lexical items in another language. As Weigand (2009) clearly explains “teaching a foreign language needs to make *conscious* what native speakers have learned in language acquisition in large part *unconsciously*.” (p. 126)

Maley (1983) summarizes Krashen’s theory of language acquisition in the following lines:

Krashen posits two quite distinct processes whereby the adult learner achieves competence in a foreign language. These he calls ‘acquisition’ and ‘learning’.

Briefly, learning is characterized by the need for a conscious effort of concentration on what is being learned. It proceeds in a logical, analytical,

step-by-step manner, and involves the learner in the pain of forgetting, regressing, and re-learning. It is subject to a *monitor* mechanism - that is, a kind of psychological censor, which vets all items before they are uttered, and corrects them if it detects error.

Acquisition, by contrast, is a largely subconscious process, in which the human organism abstracts, processes, and organizes relevant information from the linguistic environment and stores it in long-term memory ready for immediate retrieval. In this case the monitor mechanism is by-passed. This is, then, a system not subject to rational or voluntary control. Provided there is an environment sufficiently rich in data, it will take place.
(p. 295)

Other authors also discussed the issue of language acquisition. For instance, Beebe (1988) mentions in her work that “as a result of the work of Corder (1967) and the development of learning theories in cognitive psychology, it is generally agreed that the central learning process for acquiring a language is hypothesis testing.” (p. 22)

She introduces the five different steps that the process includes, which are: first, identifying the characteristics of a particular target concept; second, forming a hypothesis based on that identification; third, testing the hypothesis by producing an utterance or listening for a similar example, fourth, receiving feedback on the hypothesis, and, finally, deciding whether to continue accepting this hypothesis or to reject it on the basis of the feedback.

In this case feedback for the language learner can be in the form of correction, comprehension by the interlocutor, or some other indicator that leads the learner either to keep his or her hypothesis or to reject it and form a new one.

(Beebe, 1988)

Similarly, referring to the process of acquiring a second language, Pavičić Takač (2008) states that:

knowledge of an L2 lexical item consists of several components.

Generally, it is characterised by several dimensions of word knowledge

(i.e. phonological and orthographic, morphological, syntactic and

semantic) and by knowledge of conceptual foundations that determine

the position of the lexical item in our conceptual system. Finally, it

inevitably includes the ability of productive use, i.e. efficient retrieval of

the lexical item for active use. (p. 10)

First language (L1) acquisition and second language (L2) learning of vocabulary

According to Weigand (2009) “in order to understand a foreign language we need to compare it with our mother language.” (p.126) For this reason, some authors in the pedagogy field have tried to explain and imitate the different steps a native speaker undergoes to learn/acquire his or her own language. The purpose of this is helping teachers understand the better ways in which they

can help their students become successful learners of a foreign or a second language.

In his work, Nation (1990) claims that there are four different ways in which vocabulary teaching can be dealt with in a language learning course: vocabulary grading, working with words as they happen to occur, vocabulary and language activities, and finally, vocabulary and no connection with language activities. Generally, most courses make use of all four of these ways, but the amount of time that teachers dedicate to each of these varies according to their judgement in relation to several factors, for instance, time availability, students' age, the amount of English outside school hours, and the teacher's theory of how language is best learned.

The four ways that the author mentions are organised from the most indirect to the most direct. In the first way, the material is prepared with vocabulary learning as a consideration. This includes careful vocabulary grading of the first lessons of learning English. In the second one, words are dealt with as they happen to occur. For instance, if an unknown word appears in a reading passage, the teacher works on it with students at the moment it causes a problem. In the third way, vocabulary is taught in connection with other language activities. For example, the vocabulary of a reading passage is dealt with before the learners read the passage. And finally in the fourth one, time is spent either in class or out of school on the study of vocabulary without an immediate connection with some other language activity. For example, time is

spent on activities like dictionary use, guessing words, the use of word parts, or list learning.

Nation (1990) believes that “the effort given to the learning of new words will be wasted if this is not followed up by later meetings with the words” (p.7). Understanding the concepts behind words and the types of collocations that they have is best done when it builds upon previous experience of the words. Once learners have a basic meaning for a word, they can give attention to what words it collocates with and the patterns it occurs in. Apart from these, it is also important for learners to consider the word order in which the new term occurs, as well as its register and the appropriateness of its use.

Ooi and Kim-Seoh (1996) contribute to this issue asserting that:

Vocabulary instruction should go beyond just helping the learner to internalize dictionary meaning. A central purpose in teaching should be to encourage and help the learner to become more aware of how native speakers and other proficient speakers use the target language, and to be more sensitive to differences in nuances and shades of meaning.
(p.56)

According to Nation (2001) a well-designed language learning programme has an appropriate balance of opportunities to learn from message-focused

activities and from direct study of language items, with direct study of language occupying no more than 25% of the total learning programme.

Inductive and deductive approaches to teaching vocabulary

Before elaborating on this subject, it is worth considering the definition of what is meant by an approach. The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995) defines this term as “a method of doing something or dealing with a problem: *an approach to teaching language.*” (p. 54). Anthony (1963, in Richards & Rogers 2001), an American applied linguist, defines an approach as “a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught.” (p. 19)

Taking these definitions into consideration, from all the different approaches to teaching vocabulary, the inductive and deductive approaches will be enlarged on. For instance, Nation (1990) explains that inductive teaching refers to the examples of particular meanings that are given first and then the concept is described. This process is called inductive because the examples *lead* the learner *in* to the concept. In deductive teaching, on the other hand, the learners are given the concept and they are *led away* from the concept to the examples. The choice between these two approaches to teaching vocabulary depends on which approach will suit a particular word and where the teacher wants to direct

the learners' attention. Some words are difficult to define satisfactorily, so an inductive approach is the most suitable.

The main differences between these two approaches are that an inductive approach allows for repetition of the word and encourages the learners to make an effort to understand the meaning, while a deductive approach communicates the meaning instantly and allows the teacher to arrange controlled practice for collocations of the word.

Direct and indirect vocabulary learning

Nation (1990) indicates the differences between direct and indirect vocabulary learning. According to the author, in direct vocabulary learning the learners do exercises and activities that focus their attention on vocabulary. These exercises may include word-building exercises, guessing words from context when this is done as a class exercise, learning words in a list, and vocabulary games. However, in indirect vocabulary learning the learners' attention is focused on some other feature, usually the message that is conveyed by a speaker or writer. If the amount of unknown vocabulary is low in such messages, considerable vocabulary learning can occur even though the learners' attention is not directed towards vocabulary learning.

The concept of indirect learning of vocabulary is clearly explained in the input hypothesis of second language acquisition in Krashen's work. Krashen's input hypothesis, as explained in Curtain and Pesola (1994), suggests that:

the most important factor in the amount of language acquired by a learner is the amount of *comprehensible input* to which that learner is exposed. *Comprehensible input* is understood to be the amount of language which the learner can fully understand, plus just a little more. (p. 52)

Some details must be considered for such learning to occur. It is important that the learners must be interested in understanding the message. This interest creates a need to understand the unknown words in the message, motivating the students. Then, the message should include some elements that are just outside the learners' present level of achievement, challenging the students to understand the unknown vocabulary. These elements, however, should be understandable from the context in which they occur. Finally, the learners should not feel worried or threatened by their contact with the foreign language.

Intentional and incidental learning

Hustjin (2001, in Nation 2001) argues that the terms "intentional" and "incidental" are not particularly relevant to studies of vocabulary learning. What is more important is the mental processing that takes place during learning. He

explains these two types of learning mentioning that intentional learning means that the learners are aware that they will be tested on particular items that are taught, and incidental learning means that the learners are not aware of a later test on these items.

Although learning vocabulary from context is recommended to be largely incidental learning, a deliberate, intentional focus on developing the skills and strategies needed to carry out such learning is required. Because of the importance of guessing from context, it is worthwhile for both teachers and learners to spend time working on guessing strategies (Nation, 2001).

The author also mentions that it is useful for a teacher to consider the possible depth of processing that a particularly vocabulary activity could give rise to. If the activity does not give rise to deep and thoughtful processing, replacing the activity with one which does is worthwhile, or adapting it in some way to make it appropriate for that purpose. Deep thoughtful processing can result from: relating the new word to previous knowledge; having to create a context for that word; drawing on a range of clues to recall the word; having to appropriately relate the word to a variety of aspects, and using the word in a goal directed activity like solving problems. (Nation, 1994)

Receptive and productive knowledge

Related to the notion of learning vocabulary is the importance of knowing what is involved in knowing a word. Nation (1990) and Thornbury (2002) mention two types of knowledge to be involved in the process of vocabulary teaching and learning: receptive knowledge and productive knowledge.

As far as receptive knowledge is concerned, the authors explain that knowing a word involves being able to recognize it when it is heard or when it is seen. This notion includes the ability to distinguish it from words with a similar form and also being able to evaluate if the word form sounds right or looks right. Anticipating what grammatical pattern the word will occur in is another important element of receptive knowledge.

In relation to this type of knowledge, Nation (1990) states that “much of this receptive knowledge can be gained only from experience and would not be greatly increased as a result of teaching” (p. 30). Knowing a word includes being able to recall its meaning when we meet it. It also includes being able to see which shade of meaning is most suitable for the context that it occurs in. In addition, knowing the meaning of a word includes being able to make various associations with other related words.

On the other hand, productive knowledge of a word includes all the elements that are part of receptive knowledge and expands them. Productive knowledge

involves knowing the pronunciation of the word, how to write and spell it, how to use it in correct grammatical patterns along with the words it usually collocates with. This knowledge also involves using the word a reasonable number of times if it is typically a word with low frequency, and using it in suitable situations. It involves using the word to stand for the meaning it represents and being able to think of suitable synonyms for the word if there are any.

McCarthy and O'Dell (1994) also worked on what knowing a new word means. They assert that:

it is not enough just to know the meaning of a word. The words it is usually associated with, whether it has any particular grammatical characteristics, and how it is pronounced also require consideration. Apart from these, the new words must be learned not in isolation but in phrases. (p. 2)

The authors suggest that it is important to relate the words to the terms they collocate with. For instance, the adjectives have to be written down together with nouns they are often associated with and vice versa, e.g. rich people, law firm; verbs have to be written down with the structure and nouns associated with them, e.g. to add to our knowledge of the subject; to express an opinion; nouns should be written down in phrases, e.g. in connection with; a block of flats; shades of opinion. The grammatical characteristics of the words that are

being studied must be contemplated. For example, note when a verb is irregular and when a noun is uncountable or is only used in the plural.

As Thornbury (2002) affirms:

knowing a word, then, is the sum total of all these connections– semantic, syntactic, phonological, orthographic, morphological, cognitive, cultural and autobiographical. It is unlikely, therefore, that any two speakers will “know” a word in exactly the same way. (p. 17)

Similarly, Richards (1976) mentions some assumptions in relation to what knowing a word means:

- ASSUMPTION 2: Knowing a word means knowing the degree of probability of encountering that word in speech or print. For many words we also “know” the sort of words most likely to be found associated with the word.
- ASSUMPTION 3: Knowing a word implies knowing the limitations imposed on the use of the word according to variations of function and situation.
- ASSUMPTION 4: Knowing a word means knowing the syntactic behavior associated with that word.
- ASSUMPTION 5: Knowing a word entails knowledge of the underlying form of a word and the derivations that can be made from it.

- ASSUMPTION 6: Knowing a word entails knowledge of the network of associations between that word and other words in a language.
- ASSUMPTION 7: Knowing a word means knowing the semantic value of a word.
- ASSUMPTION 8: Knowing a word means knowing many of the different meanings associated with the word. (p. 78)

Chapter 3

Vocabulary lists, contextualized vocabulary and its influence on students' written productions

Learning vocabulary in contexts and in lists of words

For some authors, learning from context is taken to mean the incidental learning of vocabulary from reading or listening to normal language use while the main focus of the learners' attention is on the message of the text. The texts may be short or long. Learning from context thus includes learning from extensive reading, learning from taking part in conversations, and learning from listening to stories, films, television or the radio (Nation, 2001).

Some authors (Nation, 1990 and 2001; Folse, 2004) have discussed the different ways of approaching vocabulary teaching and learning. In the following paragraphs attention will be paid to two of these ways: teaching and learning vocabulary in contexts and/or in lists of words.

The presentation of the new lexical items is of considerable importance for the learning of vocabulary. Nation (1990) explains that:

In direct vocabulary learning, a conscious effort is made to learn vocabulary either in context or in isolation- for example, by learning lists

of word forms and their meanings, by doing vocabulary learning exercises, or by studying affixes and roots.

In indirect vocabulary learning, new words are learned incidentally while reading or listening, usually as the result of information provided by the context. Indirect vocabulary learning can thus be encouraged by exposure to large amounts of reading and listening material. (p 178)

Learning vocabulary in context

The claim that language is most effectively learned in context has become a constant claim throughout the past decades. Regardless of the specific methodology used, language teachers have generally found it desirable to present new items through meaningful context; in fact, “contextualizing” lesson presentations has become a widely accepted rule of good language teaching. (Brinton, 1989)

In addition, Brinton (1989) states that:

classroom experience and second language acquisition theory both include the notion that rich second language input in relevant contexts is the key for language learning, where the attention of the learner is focused mostly on the meaning rather than on the form. The experiential

component appears to be a vital element in the development of functional second language skills, with contextualized analytical activities which focus explicitly on language forms, functions, and patterns playing a complementary role in the development of accuracy and precision in language use. (p. 9)

When learning words from context, the most important of all sources of vocabulary learning is incidental learning by guessing from context. Some authors believe that, as this is particularly true for native speakers learning their first language, it should also be true for students learning a second or a foreign language. However, many do not experience the conditions that are needed for this kind of learning to occur. (Nation, 2001)

Nation (2001) indicates the steps of this process:

First, what needs to be looked at is guessing where learners already know a large proportion of the words in the text. This is necessary for learners to be able to use the clues for guessing the unknown words. It is likely that at least 95% of the running words need to be already familiar to the learners for this to happen (Liu and Nation, 1985). A critical factor in successful guessing is the learners' vocabulary size, because this will affect the density of unknown words in the text.

Second, the estimates of guessing need to be based on the actual words not known by each learner. This means that the choice of words to be

examined needs to take account of actual learner knowledge, and cannot rely on teacher intuition or the systematic choice of words from a text.

Third, learner skill is a critical factor in guessing. Some authors believe that if some learners can guess large numbers of words successfully, then potentially most learners can if they develop the skill.

Fourth, learners must be given credit for guesses that are not 100% correct but which make a small but positive contribution to knowledge of the meaning of the word. As we teachers know, learning by guessing from context is a cumulative procedure by which learners gradually develop their knowledge of words.

Fifth, in discussions of learning from context, it is important to distinguish between guessing from natural contexts and deliberate learning with specially constructed or chosen contexts.

Furthermore, when trying to learn how much vocabulary is learned from context, there are several important factors to bear in mind. First, it is important to make a distinction between working out the meaning of a word from context and remembering the meaning of a word worked out from context. Second, it is important to see learning as involving even small increases in knowledge of a word. As was mentioned above, learning from context is a cumulative process where meaning and knowledge of form are gradually enriched and

strengthened. Third, it is essential to see if the contexts and conditions for learning are typical of habitual reading.

It is important to consider the guessing from context which occurs under realistic and favourable conditions. For instance, Folse (2004) claims that:

to use context clues effectively, a learner has to have a large vocabulary already. Those who know more words are more likely to be able to use those known words successfully to learn even more words from context. The true pedagogical value of guessing may be for reading comprehension and not for vocabulary learning. (p. 82)

Guessing from context is undoubtedly the most important vocabulary learning strategy (Nation, 1990). Its goal is for learners to be capable of making a well-informed guess at the meaning of an unknown word in context without interrupting the reading too much. Developing skill in the strategy involves considerable time and interruption to the reading process, but this is well repaid by the usefulness of the strategy.

Guessing words in context relies on dictionary work. The reason for this is that unless the learners already have a reasonable idea of what a word means, they will be unable to choose the most appropriate meaning from those given in the dictionary.

Nation (2001) argues that there are several options that can take place when an item is met in context:

- It is guessed correctly to some degree and at least partially learned. This may happen for 5% to 10% of the words.
- It is guessed correctly to some degree but nothing about it is learned. This probably happens to many words.
- It is guessed incorrectly.
- It is ignored, possibly because it is not important for the wanted message in the text. (p. 237)

The small, gradual increments of learning a word from context under normal conditions of incidental learning encourage a flexible approach to finally determining the meaning and making it unlikely that an initial, strong but wrong interpretation will be made and maintained. (Nation, 2001)

There are strong reasons to believe that words that are semantically related are stored together in the mental lexicon. Several studies aimed at discovering which words people tend to associate with given key words or topics, have shown that the occurrence of a particular word, whether the original stimulus word or not, tend to bring into learners' minds not only that word but also clusters of other words closely related to it (Meara 1978, in Palmberg 1993).

Palmeberg (1993) enlarges on this issue stating that:

(...) teachers can largely increase learners' receptive and productive word power by making them aware of the possibly available associational links that exist or can be created between individual words and by teaching them how to arrange their associational links into networks of high valiancy (i.e., networks in the mental lexicon where most of the incorporated words are linked up with as many other words as possible). (p197)

Vocabulary lists

Some authors believe that a useful tool for learning vocabulary is a word list. Although it may look just as a group of related words, when preparing a word list for learners, there are some criteria to consider. Richards (1970, in Nation 1990) presents the following as a possible list:

- frequency,
- range,
- language needs,
- availability and familiarity,
- coverage,
- regularity and, finally,
- ease of learning or learning burden. (p. 21)

Some may believe that vocabulary lists are not very popular, but they may be coming back in use nowadays. Perhaps learning words from lists can be considered as an activity that does not generate much interest, but it is effective. As a result, the big challenge in vocabulary teaching and learning is how to make this a pleasant activity given the large number of words to be learned (Hulstijn, 1985 in Folse 2004).

Nation (1990), states that one of the positive characteristics of learning lists of words is that

large numbers of words can be learned in a very short period of time. Without too much effort learners can master well over 30 foreign-word mother-tongue word associations per hour. Moreover, most of this learning is still retained several weeks afterwards. (p. 126)

Perhaps as a result of more communicative approaches to language teaching, lists have fallen out of vogue. Learning from lists of decontextualized words was thought not to be valuable, so lists in textbooks disappeared.

Folse (2004) deals with the issue of evidence on the subject stating that:

While it is sometimes thought that learning words from lists is an ineffective way to learn new vocabulary, empirical evidence supporting this notion is scant. In fact, Clipperton (1994) states that “it would appear

that when new words are first presented, it may be best to do so out of context” (p. 743). Carter (1987) adds that while advanced learners may benefit from learning vocabulary in context, beginners probably benefit the most from words that are presented in lists of translation pairs. (p. 39)

Vocabulary lists may not be the most interesting way to present new vocabulary. However, the point is that there is practically no evidence to suggest that learning new words in lists is in itself detrimental. One potential drawback heard from teachers is that students will gain only superficial knowledge of the new words.

The question of remembering and retrieval

According to Brynildssen (2000), vocabulary development must be an important and ongoing part of classroom learning. He argues that direct instruction of techniques or strategies contributes to the development of a broad and varied vocabulary. The author believes that it is also important that students connect the new vocabulary terms to previous knowledge and experiences. Practice and repetition are important methods by which students can become familiar with new words and understand how they may be used correctly (Laflamme, 1997, in Brynildssen, 2000). Students’ frequent exposure to the same words through practice exercises, classroom use, and testing, will help students to learn the new vocabulary and to remember it.

Thornbury (2002) clearly explains that “the learner needs not only to learn a lot of words, but to remember them. In fact, learning is remembering.” (p. 23). For the author, the learning process is tightly related to the memory and how it works in the process of retrieving the vocabulary that has been learnt.

Thornbury mentions three systems that can be distinguished when speaking about memory and their relation to remembering vocabulary: short-term store, working memory and long-term memory. In his book *How to teach vocabulary* (2002) he explains that:

The **short-term store (STS)** is the brain’s capacity to hold a limited number or items of information for periods of time up to a few seconds. [...] But successful vocabulary learning clearly involves more than simply holding words in your mind for a few seconds. For words to be integrated into long-term memory they need to be subjected to different kinds of operations.

Focusing on words long enough to perform operations on them is the function of **working memory**. Many cognitive tasks such as reasoning, learning and understanding depend on working memory. [...] The information that is being manipulated can come from external sources via the senses, or it can be “downloaded” from the long-term memory. [...] Material remains in working memory for about twenty seconds.

Long-term memory can be thought of as a kind of filing system. Unlike working memory, which has a limited capacity and no permanent content,

long-term memory has an enormous capacity, and its contents are durable over time. (p. 23)

However, the author expands on the topic explaining that, generally, the new vocabulary that is stored in the long-term memory does not last as long as one may wish. Instead, “it occupies a continuum from ‘the quickly forgotten’ to ‘the never forgotten’. The great challenge for language learners is to transform the material from the quickly forgotten to the never forgotten.” (p. 24)

Considering current research, Nation (2001) introduces some processes that establish vocabulary knowledge: noticing, retrieval and generating. He describes noticing as a process that involves seeing the word as an item to be learned. The strategies implemented at this level include, for instance, writing the word in a vocabulary list, putting the word on a word card, repeating the word orally and/or visually, According to the author, these strategies tend to be largely recording strategies, but they are a very useful first step towards deeper processing of words.

When defining retrieval, Nation (2001) states that:

It involves recall of a previously met item. Each retrieval strengthens the connection between the cue and the retrieved knowledge. Receptively, the cue may be the written or spoken form of the word and the retrieved information may be its meaning or use. Productively, the cue is the

meaning or use and the retrieved information is the word form. There are thus many kinds of retrieval: receptive/productive, oral/visual, overt/covert, in context/decontextualised. Retrieval can occur across the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing; it involves recalling knowledge in the same form in which it was originally stored. (p. 221)

Retrieval strategies that learners apply as, for instance, retrieving information previously met with the aid of a cue and then recalling the rest of the information without any help, are superior to noticing strategies as studying words in lists where all its details (form, meaning and use of the word) are all on display and need not be retrieved.

As it was stated for retrieving, generating strategies to establish vocabulary knowledge include many kinds of generation: receptive/productive, oral/visual, overt/covert, in context/decontextualised. Nation (2001) indicates that:

from an instructional viewpoint, generating involves “rich instruction”. Generation strategies include: word analysis, semantic mapping, and using scales and grids. It also includes rule-based generation by creating contexts, collocations and sentences containing the word, mnemonic strategies such as the keyword technique, and meeting and using the word in new contexts across the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. (p. 221)

Vocabulary learning and students' written productions

Once the vocabulary is learned, either by working with it in a context or in a word list, it is assumed by teachers that that vocabulary will somehow appear on students' written productions. In some ways, the ability to write effectively hinges upon having an adequate vocabulary even more than does the ability to read. During the writing process, however, a student does not have the luxury of examining the context in which a word is used; he or she is creating the context (Brynildssen, 2000). Therefore, the writer must be able to spontaneously recall words that are known not only by sight, but that are understood well enough to use correctly.

According to Brynildssen (2000) "the breadth and depth of a student's vocabulary will have a direct influence upon the descriptiveness, accuracy, and quality of his or her writing." (p. 2). However, Brynildssen continues to explain that even though improved vocabulary can help develop students' writing skills, there is no guarantee that it will do so automatically.

Some authors consider that an improvement in vocabulary will result in improved writing skills only if the teacher is able to create a class that takes writing seriously. Some techniques teachers use to create a writing-centered class range from sharing vocabulary-rich literature to helping students become aware of and look for interesting words. They also offer students a variety of

writing opportunities and provide ample time for students to fully experience the writing process. (Brynildssen, 2000)

In relation to writing and vocabulary, Yonek (2008) argues that:

written language, because it is decontextualized, usually contains richer vocabulary than oral language (Hayes & Ahrens, 1988) so comprehension is heavily reliant upon word knowledge. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge is equally important to the writer as it is to the reader. (p. 1)

Interestingly, Fletcher (1993, in Yonek, 2008) contends that “a rich vocabulary allows a writer to get a richness of thought onto paper. However, the writer’s real pleasure comes not from using an exotic word but from using the right word”. (p. 23)

Word selection during the writing process

Once students have worked with the new vocabulary, educators expect them to use it in their productions. In some cases, this is not an easy task since it involves some kind of mastery of the vocabulary on the part of the students. In addition, when compelled to use the new vocabulary students may find it difficult to clearly organise everything they have learned in the correct way.

Flower and Hayes (1994, in Yonek, 2008) explain that word selection is significant during all three phases of the writing process: planning, translating and reviewing. They include this notion in their cognitive process theory of writing model, which states that the act of writing involves three major elements: task environment, which are all things outside the writer, starting with the rhetorical problem and including the text itself; the writer's long-term memory, which refers to the writer's knowledge of the topic, audience, and various writing plans; and the writing processes, which are the ones mentioned above, specifically planning, translating, and reviewing.

Yonek (2008) also adds that:

According to Flower and Hayes, during text production, writers produce text in sentence parts, pause, evaluate text based on syntax and semantics and then reject or accept the text. When a sentence part is accepted, writers search for an appropriate meaning for the next part of their sentence. During pausing, working memory demands are high. Flower and Hayes hypothesize that writers who have more language produce sentence parts at a quicker rate, are more cohesive, and longer in length than those with less language. Experience with language reduces the amount of memory necessary for sentence construction. Long term memory is equally as important as working memory as this is where writers store their knowledge of vocabulary as well as grammar, topic, genre, audience and other important elements in the writing process (Hays, 1996). (p. 23)

As mentioned at the beginning of this study, there is scant evidence of studies related to vocabulary teaching and learning and how they affect second and foreign language learners' written performance. For this reason, studies of this kind are needed to further investigate on these issues. The present research will take on this subject matter.

Chapter 4

Research details

The purpose of this study was to learn to what extent lexical items are taught through vocabulary lists or incidentally derived from context in Colleges of Education for students who want to qualify as Teachers of English in the City of Buenos Aires and also what effect these two vocabulary teaching methods have on future retrieval, recall and instances of actual use in the students' written productions.

The following hypotheses derive from this query:

- Vocabulary lists are a favourite approach to teaching vocabulary to students, who want to qualify as Teachers of English in Colleges of Education in the City of Buenos Aires.
- Most lexical items which are taught in isolation through vocabulary lists at Colleges of Education in the subject English Language I are easily forgotten after a short period of time (measure approximate: 8 months) and do not consolidate as part of the student's active lexicon for future use in their written productions (i.e. compositions, letters and reviews).

- When writing under normal conditions, students at Colleges of Education will tend not to focus on the semantic fields they have accessed through vocabulary lists in their training. (Note: in this case “writing under normal conditions” means that students write their compositions about a topic suggested by the teacher, either at home or in the classroom, without their teacher telling them to use the lexical items taught)
- Students at Colleges of Education will only focus on lexical items presented to them in vocabulary lists and use them in their written productions only when they feel compelled to do so by external factors other than their own choice.

To collect useful information about the educative process, educational research provides us with different tools to accomplish that goal. The aim of educational research is to identify general principles or interpretations of behaviour that can be used to explain, predict, and control events in educational situations (Ary et. al. 1996).

According to Ary et. al. (1996), there are two basic categories of educational research: quantitative and qualitative research. The authors describe that

“Quantitative research uses objective measurements and numerical analysis of data to try to explain the causes of changes in social phenomena. This

type of research usually begins with hypotheses that will be supported or not supported by the data. Qualitative research, on the other hand, seeks a complete understanding of a social phenomenon through the researcher's total immersion in the situation. Qualitative research does not usually begin with hypotheses, although the research may generate them as events occur. It may be said that quantitative research seeks explanation, while qualitative research is more concerned with understanding." (p.20)

Qualitative research was carried out in order to fully understand the phenomenon of interest of this study. In addition, quantitative techniques were implemented because they contributed to the understanding of the issue.

Qualitative research seeks to understand a situation by focusing on the total picture rather by breaking it down into variables. The goal is a holistic picture and depth of understanding rather than a numerical analysis of the data. (Ary et. al., 1996) The type of qualitative research selected in this study was content analysis, which focuses on an analysis of the content of a written document. The sampling technique used to collect the written productions of the students was simple random sampling.

The form of quantitative research selected for the present study was survey research, which uses instruments such as questionnaires and interviews to gather information from groups of subjects. The self-administered

questionnaires distributed among the students allowed the researcher to measure their opinions about the issue that the present paper deals with. Interviews were conducted with teachers who teach the subject Language I for the same purpose.

Ary et. al. (1996) clearly state that “both the quantitative and the qualitative methodologies are valuable to the educational researcher. Which method they choose depends on the nature of the question they are asking.” (p. 21)

The following instruments were used in order to collect data to verify the hypotheses that derive from the research question mentioned above:

1.- Self-administered questionnaires were distributed among 10 different groups of students attending Language I at different Colleges of Education in the City of Buenos Aires.

2.- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 teachers who teach the subject Language I on the same Colleges of Education selected for (1).

3.- Content analysis of samples of written productions (i.e. compositions, letters and reviews) of students attending Language I on the same Colleges of Education selected for (1).

The questionnaires, the interviews and the content analysis of students' written productions made possible the triangulation of the data gathered and the results derived from them. According to Cohen and Manion (1994)

“triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. [...] Triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data.” (p. 233)

From the different types of triangulation the one applied in this study was methodological triangulation, given that different methods were used on the same object of study. (Cohen and Manion, 1994)

The data collection techniques used in the present study are explained in the following pages.

Questionnaire

Question 1

The aim of this question was to learn in what ways the new vocabulary was introduced to the students in the subject Language I. Several options were given for students to choose from: whether vocabulary was presented in a list of new words in isolation, in a list of new words plus their translation into the students mother tongue, in a list of new words plus their definition in English; in a text in which the new vocabulary was highlighted, in games, in a mind map, or in semantic sets. Students could also choose to share other types of presentation of new vocabulary that their teacher may use but that was not mentioned in the options above.

- 1- Durante la clase de Lengua Inglesa I, cuando se realizan actividades relacionadas con el abordaje de vocabulario, ¿en qué forma es éste presentado?
- A- En listas de palabras nuevas solamente
 - B- En listas de palabras nuevas más su traducción
 - C- En listas de palabras nuevas más su definición
 - D- En un texto en el que el nuevo vocabulario es resaltado
 - E- En juegos
 - F- En un mapa o red conceptual
 - G- En un grupo semántico
 - H- Otro (Indique cuál _____)

Question 2

The second question focused on students' perception about the beneficial effects the different ways in which new vocabulary was introduced had on

learning lexical items.

Students were expected to rank from 1 to 3 the list of the different ways of vocabulary presentation, bearing in mind that 1 represented the most beneficial for vocabulary learning and 3 the least beneficial for vocabulary learning.

2- Califique de 1 a 3 las actividades de presentación de vocabulario según lo beneficiosas que sean para el aprendizaje de vocabulario.
(1 Muy beneficiosa, 2 Beneficiosa, 3 No tan beneficiosa)

- A- Listas de palabras nuevas solamente
- B- Listas de palabras nuevas más su traducción
- C- Listas de palabras nuevas más su definición
- D- Texto en el que el nuevo vocabulario es resaltado
- E- Juegos
- F- Mapa o red conceptual
- G- Grupo semántico

Question 3

This question was aimed at determining whether the way in which the vocabulary was presented helped students to remember the new words easily, so they could use the new vocabulary later on in the written productions they were requested to perform in the subject.

Students were supposed to signal whether the way in which the lexical items were presented always helped them to remember the new vocabulary easily and whether they used them in their written productions, whether it usually

helped them, whether it sometimes helped them to remember and whether they used the words, whether it seldom helped them, or whether it never helped them to remember the words easily and use them in their written productions.

3- ¿Considera usted que la forma en la que es presentado el nuevo vocabulario le ayuda a recordarlo fácilmente para luego utilizarlo en las producciones escritas realizadas en la materia?

- A- Siempre
- B- Casi siempre
- C- A veces
- D- Pocas veces
- E- Nunca

Question 4

This question sought to collect information about what kind of activities students do once the new vocabulary has been introduced. The list of suggested activities that was offered for them to select was the following:

- Word association.
- Sentence paraphrasing.
- Writing contexts or situations related to the new vocabulary.
- Completing sentences with the new vocabulary.
- Writing sentences with the new vocabulary.
- Working with the new vocabulary through the use of a dictionary.
- Matching the new vocabulary to their synonyms and antonyms.

4- ¿Qué actividades realizan en la clase una vez que el vocabulario ha sido presentado?

- A- Actividades de asociación de palabras
- B- Se realiza parafraseo de oraciones
- C- Se generan contextos o situaciones relacionadas a las palabras a aprender
- D- Se completan oraciones con las palabras a aprender
- E- Se escriben oraciones con las palabras a aprender
- F- Se trabaja con las palabras nuevas a través del diccionario
- G- Se realizan actividades como unir con sinónimos y antónimos

Question 5

The aim of this question was to learn whether the use of the new vocabulary items presented in Language I lessons was compulsory in the written productions students are requested to perform in the subject.

5- El uso del nuevo vocabulario presentado en la clase, ¿es obligatorio en las producciones escritas realizadas en la materia?

- A- Sí
- B- No

Question 6

This question sought to elicit students' perceptions about ease to remember the new vocabulary learned during the course of Language I. Students were expected to indicate whether they always remembered the vocabulary easily, whether they usually remembered it, whether they sometimes remembered it, whether they seldom remembered it, or whether they never remembered the words easily.

- 6- ¿Recuerda con facilidad el vocabulario aprendido durante Lengua Inglesa I?
- _____ A- Siempre
 - _____ B- Casi siempre
 - _____ C- A veces
 - _____ D- Pocas veces
 - _____ E- Nunca

Questions 1 through 6 will help in the triangulation of data with the information gathered by interviewing the teachers.

Question 7

The focus of this question was to learn about students' perceptions about remembering and using the new vocabulary learned since the beginning the year in the written productions done in Language I during the period of June-July 2010.

Students were supposed to signal whether they always remembered and used the new lexical items in their written productions, whether they usually remembered and used them, whether they sometimes remembered and used the words, whether they seldom remembered and used those items, or whether they never remembered and used them in their written productions.

7- ¿Recuerda y usa el vocabulario aprendido desde principio de año en las producciones escritas de Lengua Inglesa I realizadas en los últimos dos meses (junio, julio 2010)?

- A- Siempre
- B- Casi siempre
- C- A veces
- D- Pocas veces
- E- Nunca

Question 8

This question was aimed at determining whether students remembered and used the new vocabulary learned since the beginning of the year in their written productions done in Language I during the period of June-July 2010, even though their use was not requested by the teacher.

Students were supposed to indicate whether they always remembered and used the lexical items in their written productions, whether they usually remembered and used them, whether they sometimes remembered and used the words, whether they seldom remembered and used them, or whether they never remembered and used the words in their written productions.

8- ¿Recuerda y usa el vocabulario aprendido desde principio de año en las producciones escritas de Lengua Inglesa I realizadas en los últimos dos meses (junio, julio 2010) aunque su uso no sea solicitado por el/la docente?

- A- Siempre
- B- Casi siempre
- C- A veces
- D- Pocas veces
- E- Nunca

Questions 5, 7 and 8 will be triangulated with the data gathered by the analysis of the written productions samples collected.

Interview

The Language I teachers who were interviewed answered some questions related to the methods or activities they applied when introducing new vocabulary to their class, especially the methodology they used and the reasons why they presented the new items in that particular way (Question 1).

In question number two, teachers were also asked to explain whether they took under consideration any of the following when introducing new lexical items:

- Meaning
- Collocations
- Patterns
- Word order
- Register
- Appropriateness

Apart from these, in question number three teachers were requested to define what it meant for them to teach vocabulary as part of a context. The purpose of this question was to learn whether teachers taught vocabulary derived from a context and why they selected that technique to teach vocabulary.

The following question was aimed at learning whether teachers considered the way in which the new vocabulary was introduced helpful for students to recall it with more ease when they needed to write compositions. Teachers were asked to justify their answer. The answer to this question, as well as that from question number three, will be correlated with the information gathered in the surveys completed by students so as to triangulate the information provided by the participants of the study.

Question number five referred to the issue of teachers' concentration on receptive vocabulary learning or productive vocabulary learning. The objective of this query was to learn whether teachers focused more on one than on the other when introducing a new lexical item and how this decision reflected teachers' interests.

Finally, the last set of questions include learning whether the use of new vocabulary in students' written productions was compulsory and whether students were given specific instructions which mentioned that the use of the new vocabulary was compulsory before starting their composition writing process.

Content analysis

Samples of students' writings from Language I were collected using the simple random sampling technique in different Colleges of Education from April through October 2010. These eleven samples will be analyzed considering the following elements:

- percentage of new items students included in their written productions,
- appropriate use of new vocabulary as regards use, collocation, spelling, register and meaning.

The same material that teachers gave their students to use as models, inspiration or as a trigger for their own writing will be consulted as reference to check whether learners include new vocabulary from that material in their written productions.

It is worth mentioning that a great amount of students from the colleges of education visited were reluctant to participate in this research, that is the reason why the number of samples collected was just eleven.

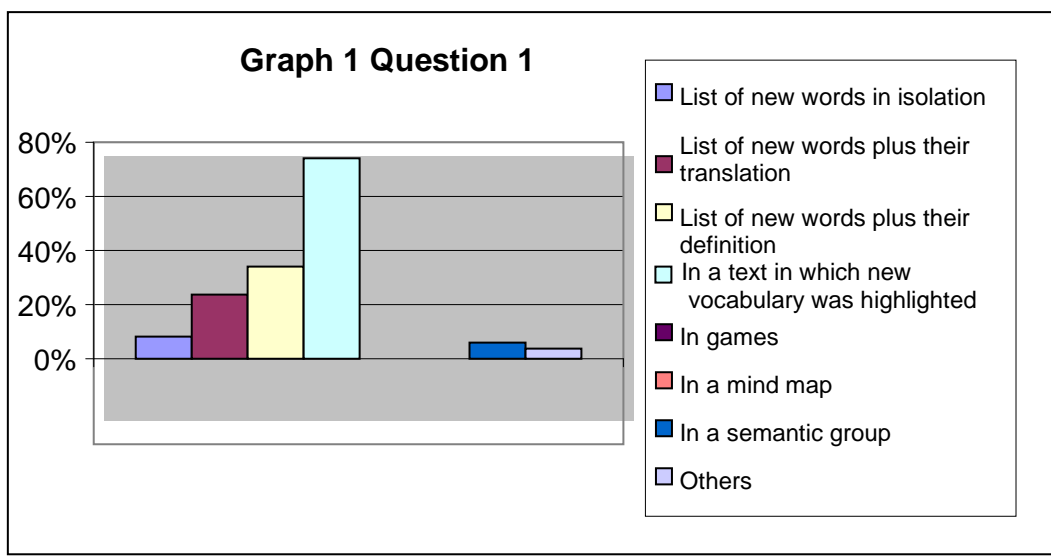
Chapter 5

Results

The following are the results of the questionnaires delivered to students, who want to qualify as Teachers of English, attending Colleges of Education in the City of Buenos Aires.

Question 1

The aim of this question was to learn in what ways the new vocabulary was introduced to the students. Several options were given for students to choose from: whether vocabulary was presented in a list of new words in isolation, in a list of new words plus their translation into the students mother tongue, in a list of new words plus their definition in English; in a text in which the new vocabulary was highlighted, in games, in a mind map, or in semantic sets. Students could also choose to share other types of presentation of new vocabulary that their teacher may use but that was not mentioned in the options above.



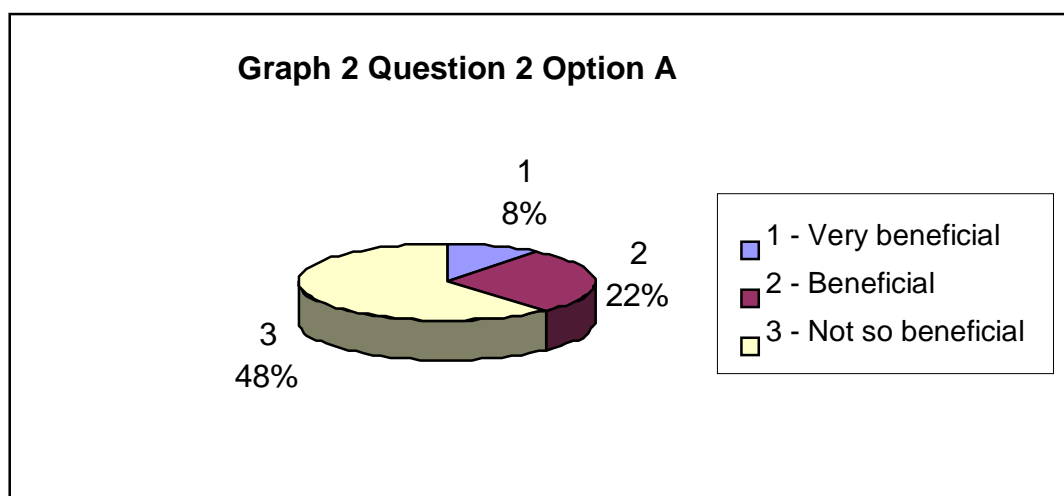
As regards the presentation of vocabulary, 8% of the students who were surveyed answered that new vocabulary was introduced in lists of words in isolation. 24% of the students stated that it was presented in lists of words plus their translation. 34% agreed that it was introduced in lists of words plus their definitions. 74% of the respondents stated that the new lexical items were introduced in a text in which the new items were highlighted. 6% of the respondents answered that the new vocabulary was presented in a semantic group and 4% of the respondents indicated other forms in which the new vocabulary was presented: in texts or books and the definition is given in class; and as part of spontaneous discussions of a topic in the class, not derived from a text. None of the students selected the options E and F, in games or in a mind map respectively.

Question 2

The second question focused on students' perception about the beneficial effects the different ways in which new vocabulary was introduced had on learning lexical items.

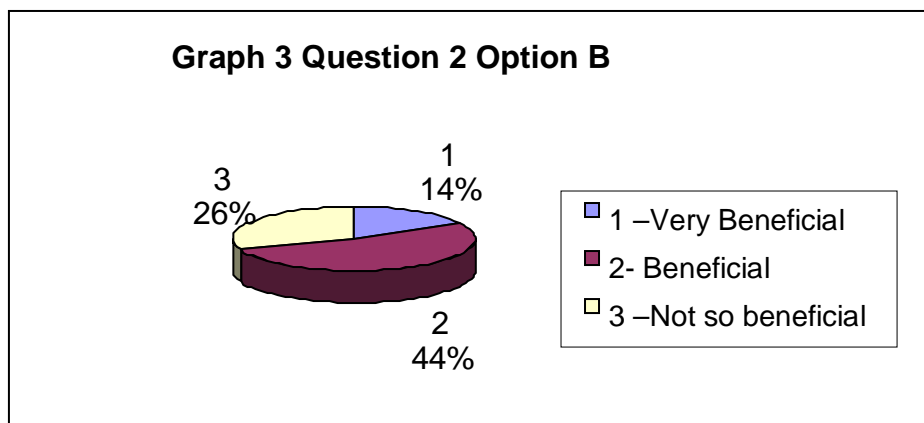
This question had a variety of responses, as students had to rank from 1 to 3 the form in which new lexical items were introduced from the most beneficial for vocabulary learning, being that number 1, to the least beneficial, being that number 3.

Question 2, Option A: Lists of new words in isolation.



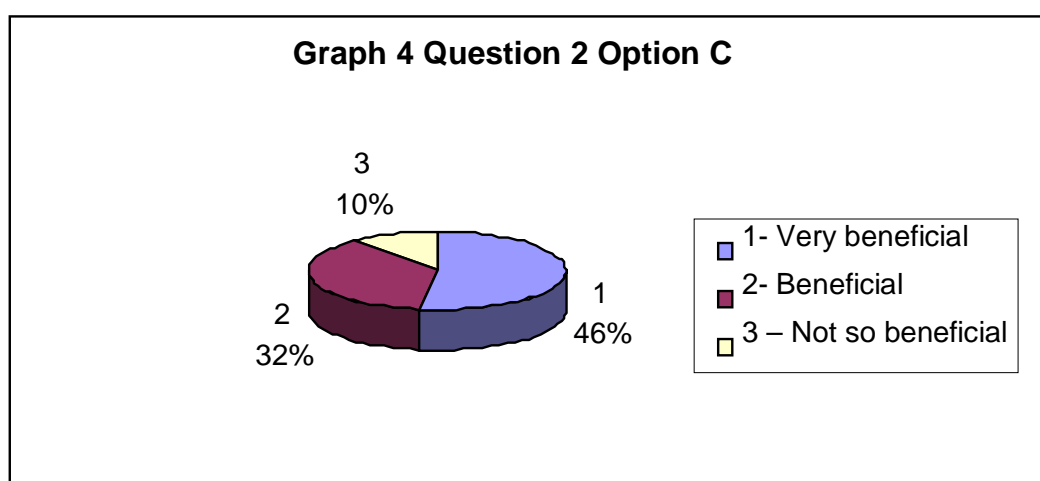
8% of the respondents considered the option **Lists of new words in isolation** as a very beneficial form of introducing new vocabulary, 22% believed this option is somehow beneficial and 48% thought this option is not so beneficial.

Question 2, Option B: Lists of new words plus their translation.



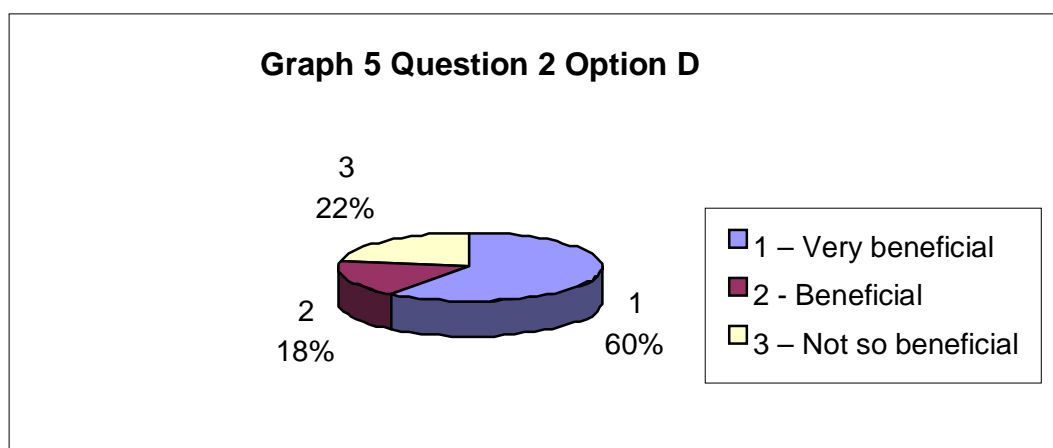
From the students who were surveyed, 14% believed that the option **Lists of new words plus their translation** as a form of presentation of vocabulary was very beneficial for learning it, 44% considered that this option was somehow beneficial and 26% stated that this option is not so beneficial.

Question 2, Option C: Lists of new words plus their definition.



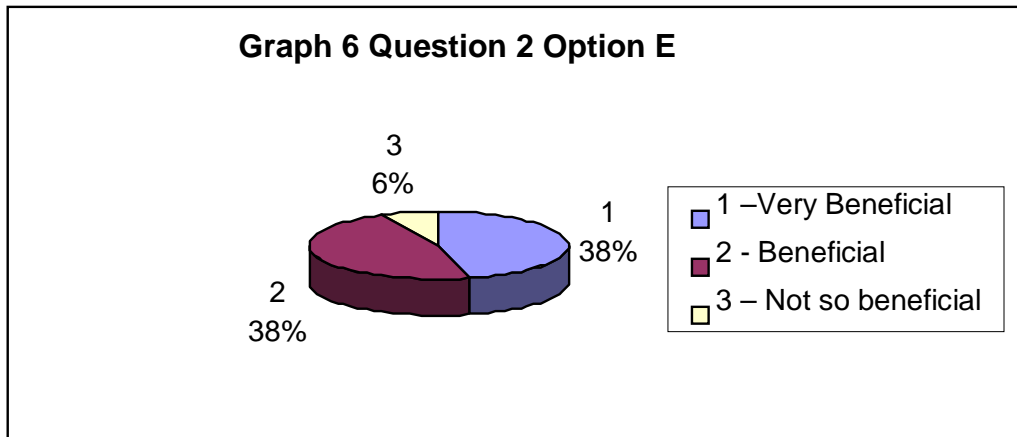
A large amount of students (46%) ranked this option as being very beneficial for learning new lexical items. Then, 32% believed that this option was somehow beneficial, and 10% of the surveyed students considered this option to be not so beneficial for that purpose.

Question 2, Option D: Text in which new vocabulary is highlighted.



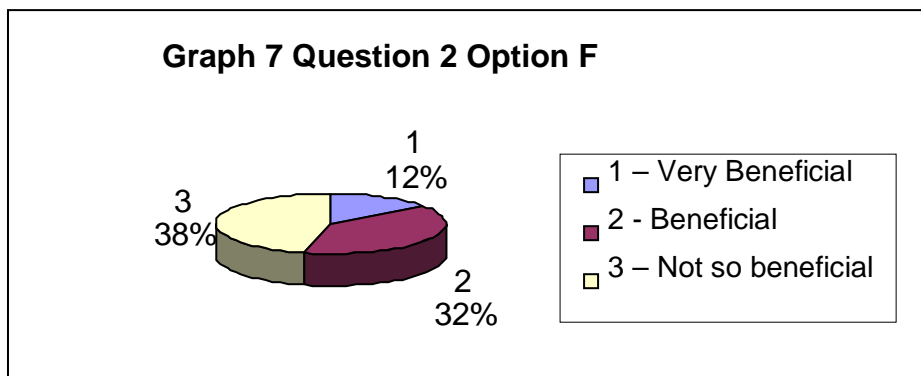
More than half of the respondents (60%) thought that this option, **Text in which new vocabulary is highlighted**, was very beneficial for learning new vocabulary. 18% of the students considered this option to be somehow beneficial and 22% thought this option was not so beneficial for vocabulary learning.

Question 2, Option E: Games.



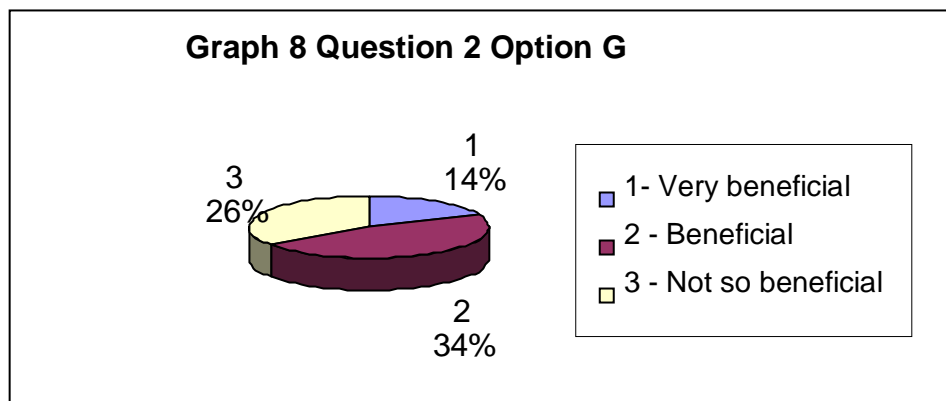
This option showed the same percentage (38%) when students were asked to rank it “very beneficial for vocabulary learning” or “somehow beneficial for vocabulary learning”. 6% of the respondents considered this option as not so beneficial for that purpose.

Question 2, Option F: Mind map.



12% of the respondents considered the option **Mind map** as a very beneficial form of introducing new vocabulary, 32% believed this option is somehow beneficial and 38% thought this option is not so beneficial.

Question 2, Option G: Semantic group.

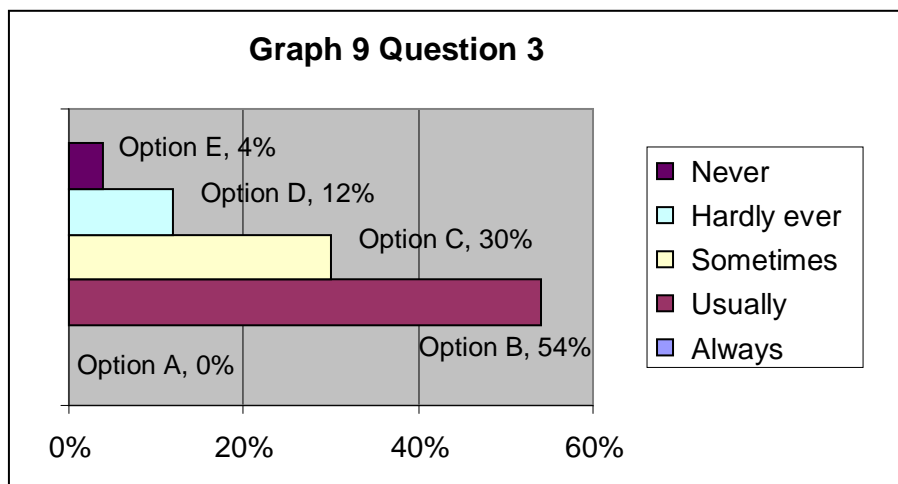


From the students who were surveyed, 14% believed that using a **Semantic group** as a form of presentation of vocabulary was very beneficial for learning it, 34% considered that this option was somehow beneficial and 26% stated that this option is not so beneficial.

Question 3

Students were supposed to signal whether the way in which the lexical items were presented always helped them to remember the new vocabulary easily and whether they used those items in their written productions, whether it usually helped them, whether it sometimes helped them to remember and whether they used the words, whether it seldom helped them, or whether it

never helped them to remember the words easily and use them in their written productions.



When asked whether the manner in which new vocabulary was presented was helpful to easily recall and use those items in their written productions, 54% of the students surveyed chose “usually” (option B), 30% thought that the presentation was sometimes helpful, 12% of the students considered that it was hardly ever helpful. 4% of the students considered it was never helpful. None of the students chose option A, always helpful.

Question 4

This question sought to collect information about what kind of activities students do once the new vocabulary has been introduced. The list of suggested activities that was offered for them to select was the following:

A - Word association.

B - Sentence paraphrasing.

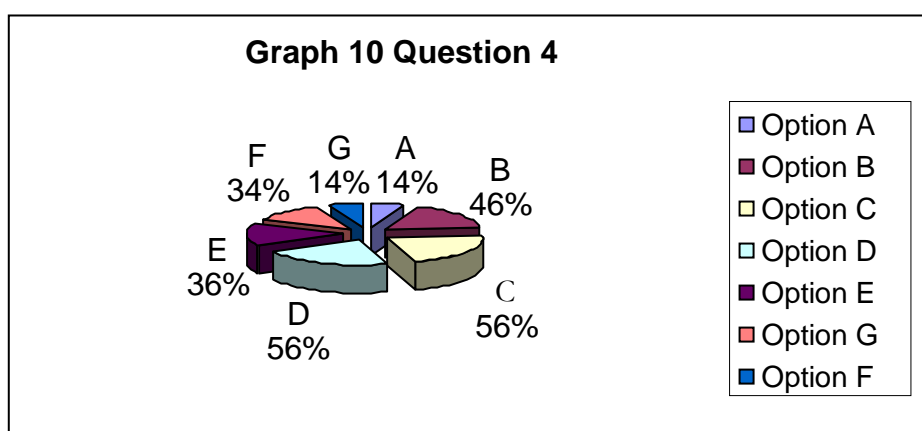
C - Writing contexts or situations related to the new vocabulary.

D - Completing sentences with the new vocabulary.

E - Writing sentences with the new vocabulary.

F - Working with the new vocabulary through the use of a dictionary.

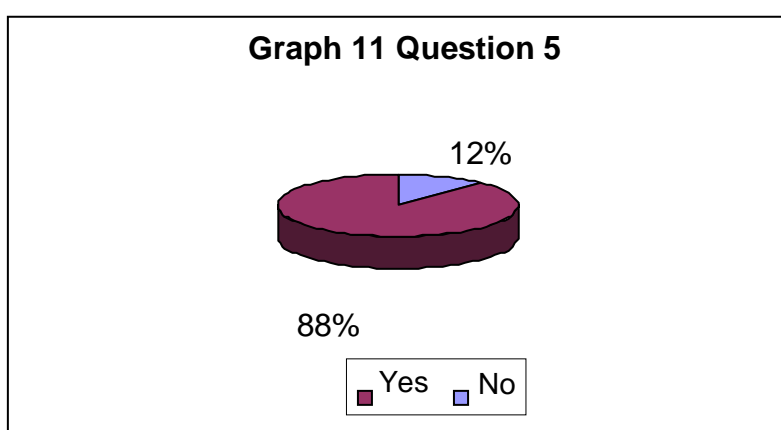
G - Matching the new vocabulary to their synonyms and antonyms.



When respondents were asked about the different activities they do in class once the new lexical items have been introduced, 56% indicated that they produced contexts or situations related to those new items and that they completed sentences using those words (options C and D). 46% of the students concluded that they do paraphrasing exercises, 36% answered that they wrote sentences with that vocabulary, 34% answered that they worked with those words using the dictionary, and 14% agreed that they did word association activities and matching synonyms and antonyms.

Question 5

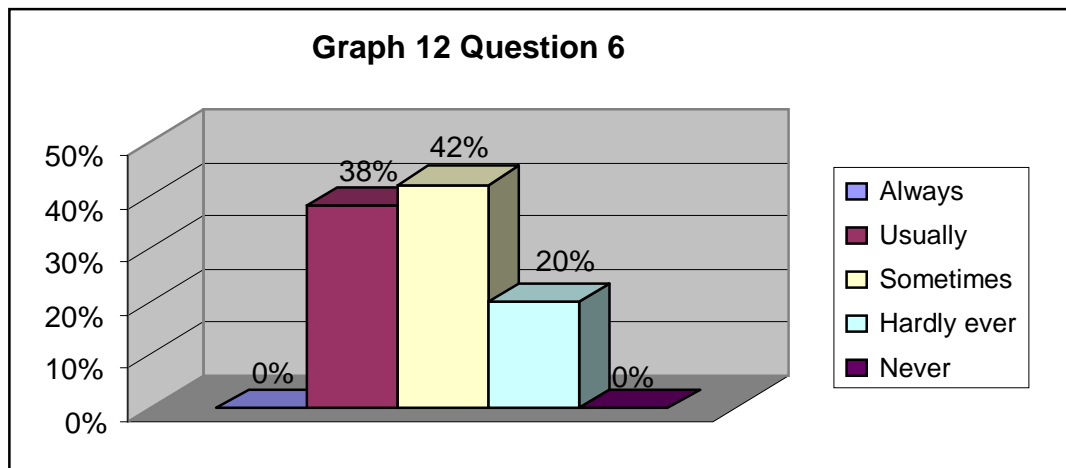
The aim of this question was to learn whether the use of the new vocabulary items presented in Language I lessons was compulsory in the written productions students are requested to perform in the subject.



A large amount of the students surveyed (88%) answered that the use of new lexical items was not compulsory in the written productions done in Language I assignments. 12% of the students considered its use was compulsory.

Question 6

This question sought to elicit students' perceptions about ease to remember the new vocabulary learned during the course of Language I. Students were expected to indicate whether they always remembered the vocabulary easily, whether they usually remembered it, whether they sometimes remembered it, whether they seldom remembered it, or whether they never remembered the words easily.



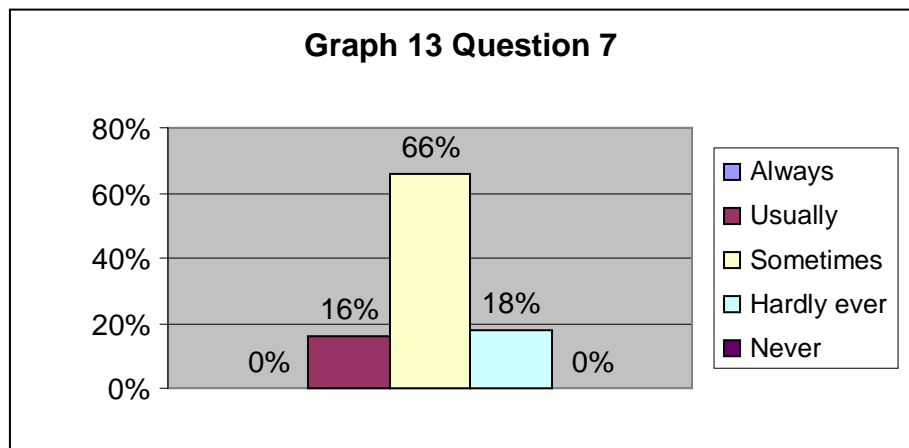
In connection to the fact of students easily recalling the new items introduced in the subject, 42% concluded that they sometimes remembered the new vocabulary, 38% answered that they usually remembered it and 20% that they hardly ever remembered it. None of the students selected options A or D, always or never, respectively.

Question 7

The focus of this question was to learn about students' perceptions about remembering and using the new vocabulary learned since the beginning the year in the written productions done in Language I during the period of June-July 2010.

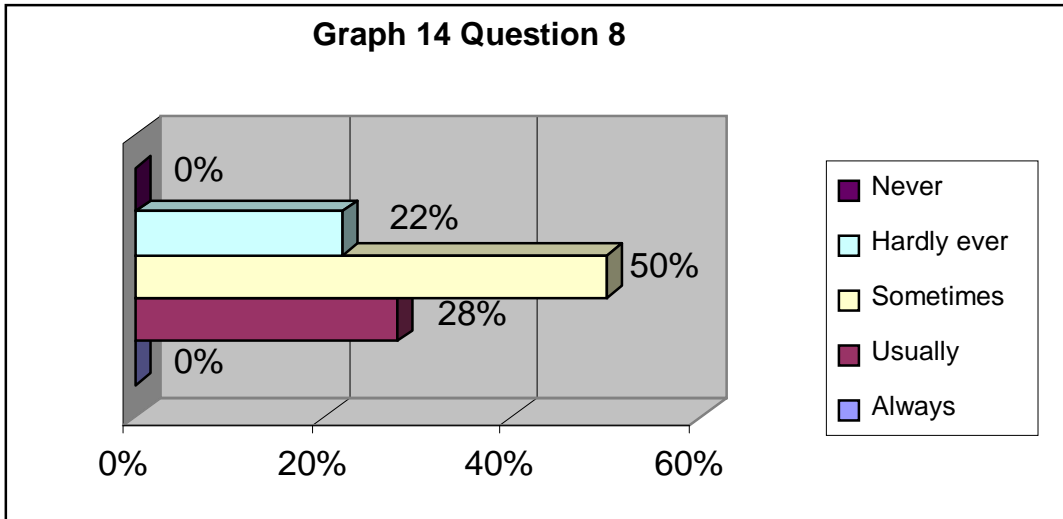
When asked whether students recalled and used the new vocabulary that was presented in the subject during the year in their written productions done in the previous months before answering the survey for the present study (i.e. June-

July 2010), 66% of the students surveyed chose option C (sometimes), 18% answered that they hardly ever used the vocabulary, and 16% of the students answered that they usually used it. None of the students selected options A or D, always or never, respectively.



Question 8

Students were supposed to indicate whether they always remembered and used the lexical items in their written productions, whether they usually remembered and used them, whether they sometimes remembered and used the words, whether they seldom remembered and used them, or whether they never remembered and used the words in their written productions.



When asked whether students recalled and used the new vocabulary that was presented in the subject during the year in their written productions done in the previous months before answering the survey for the present study (June-July 2010) even when its use was not explicitly requested by the teacher, 50% of the students indicated that they sometimes used it, 28% answered that they usually used it, and 22% of the students answered that they hardly ever used it. None of the students selected options A or D.

Interviews

When dealing with the presentation of new vocabulary, three of the teachers who were interviewed expressed that they did so through a context, usually using a text, a film or through different activities. The reason one of the teachers gave was that “through contexts, vocabulary appears with its meaning.” However, another teacher explained that “there were different manners in which new vocabulary could be introduced because there are different areas of vocabulary and each of them has its own specific way of introducing that vocabulary.”

The second question of the interview had the same response from all the teachers. All the interviewed teachers agreed that they took into consideration the following items:

- Meaning
- Collocations
- Patterns
- Word order
- Register
- Appropriateness

Nevertheless, some of them specified that they paid special attention to register, this item was followed by appropriateness, and this in turn was followed by meaning. The rest of the items (collocations, patterns and word order) was worked on only if the vocabulary presented required it.

These items are exercised in class through different activities, namely examples, situations, translation, functions, matching activities, finding differences, categorizing, paraphrasing, dictionary work, games, investigating and sharing, discussing and analyzing, and creating situations.

The teachers were asked to define what they understood by teaching vocabulary in a context. One teacher explained that

“teaching vocabulary in context is not giving the students just one sentence, it is giving them a situation in which the student can see the register, which is the relationship of the people talking, a story, a short story, the predominant vocabulary in a play, in a novel, who talk like that and why.”

Another interviewed teacher asserted that

“a context is a piece of discourse... We can work with reading comprehension, listening comprehension, and the text itself will

provide us with a context, whether it is a conversation, an article... It is through these texts that we teach vocabulary.”

Finally, another teacher stated that

“the word context has two meanings: situational context, i.e. in which situations of everyday life or in which situations in general one uses that word, and linguistic context, i.e. the words that are taught along with this item. For me teaching vocabulary in a context means both: a linguistic context larger than a sentence and inside a situational context.”

The interviewees considered that the manner in which the vocabulary is presented helps students recall it with more ease because when vocabulary is presented alone or in a list, that technique seems to be not useful for students to recall the lexical items. One of the teachers explained that “we remember in a global form, in a context where words have a meaning depending on that context and because we associate one thing with another.” Another teacher expressed that “vocabulary has to be related to a situation, if I remember that situation, I think that the vocabulary will come out naturally.” In addition, another teacher stated that “all the activities we do have as a purpose to help students remember the new vocabulary. For this reason, we have a segment of the lesson in which we recycle vocabulary.”

Almost all of the teachers interviewed answered that they were interested in both receptive and productive vocabulary learning. Receptive vocabulary learning was considered fundamental by these teachers, whether it was useful for a literary purpose (i.e. to know what a word means when they read it) or just for the sake of comprehension and to be related to a context. However, some of them specified that they did not focus strictly on production due to the fact that they were teaching Language I and they knew that students had to master grammatical structures in order to use that vocabulary. What they do expect is that students put into practice what they learn, according to their capacity of production.

The final set of questions referred to the compulsory use of vocabulary in the written productions students were requested to write for the subject Language I. The teachers concluded that they expected the students to use the new lexical items in their written productions but that they did not usually give them explicit instructions in which this was specified. One of the teachers stated that the use of the new vocabulary “is not compulsory but necessary.” Almost all of teachers interviewed expressed that they encourage students to use the new vocabulary in their productions in order to check if students understand that vocabulary. However, teachers know that a text loaded with phrasal verbs, modals, “ways of” and idioms is not natural.

Content Analysis

Sample 1

“Telling a story” is the title of this piece of writing. The student included in this production several lexical items from different stories read in class. From the 508 words of this composition, 12% of them were new items.

When considering the appropriate use of this new vocabulary, 90% of the items were correctly used according to their meaning, 94% of the items were correctly spelled and 100% of those items were used in the correct register.

Sample 2

The title of this composition reads “I spy”, in reference to Grahams Greene’s short story of a boy who “spies” into his father’s business. The student included in this production some of the lexical items present in that story. From the 235 words of this composition, 5% of them were new items.

When considering the appropriate use of this new vocabulary, 53% of the items were correctly used according to their meaning, 98% of the items were correctly spelled and 100% of those items were used in the correct register.

Sample 3

This untitled piece of writing narrates what the main character does in a railway station. The student included in this production several lexical items from different stories read in class. From the 251 words of this composition, 17% of them were new items.

When considering the appropriate use of this new vocabulary, 63% of the items were correctly used according to their meaning, 100% of the items were correctly spelled and 100% of those items were used in the correct register.

Sample 4

This piece of writing also deals with the topic of Grahams Greene's story "I spy". From the 225 words of this composition, 20% of them were new items.

When considering the appropriate use of this new vocabulary, 63% of the items were correctly used according to their meaning, 98% of the items were correctly spelled and 100% of those items were used in the correct register.

Sample 5

This piece of writing is a review about the film "The last song", based on Nicholas Sparks' novel. From the 378 words of this composition, 17% of them

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were new items.

When considering the appropriate use of this new vocabulary, 85% of the items were correctly used according to their meaning, 100% of the items were correctly spelled and 100% of those items were used in the correct register.

Sample 6

This sample corresponds to a letter format. In this letter to the editor the student included some of the lexical items present in different letters read in class. From the 202 words of this composition, 22% of them were new items.

When considering the appropriate use of this new vocabulary, 77% of the items were correctly used according to their meaning, 99% of the items were correctly spelled and 100% of those items were used in the correct register.

Sample 7

In this narrative the student included lexical items from different stories read in class. From the 647 words of this composition, 21% of them were new items.

When considering the appropriate use of this new vocabulary, 87% of the items were correctly used according to their meaning, 99% of the items were correctly spelled and 100 percent of those items were used in the correct register.

Sample 8

In this review of Frank Wedekind's "Spring awakening" the student included several lexical items from different stories read in class. From the 814 words of this composition, 22% of them were new items.

When considering the appropriate use of this new vocabulary, 99% of the items were correctly used according to their meaning, 100% of the items were correctly spelled and 100% of those items were used in the correct register.

Sample 9

In this review of Walt Disney Pictures' "Toy Story 3" the student included several lexical items from different stories read in class. From the 281 words of this composition, 17% of them were new items.

When considering the appropriate use of this new vocabulary, 94% of the items were correctly used according to their meaning, 100% of the items were correctly spelled and 100% of those items were used in the correct register.

Sample 10

This sample corresponds to a letter of recommendation. Some of the lexical items the student included in this production were taken from different letters

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read and worked on in class. From the 238 words of this composition, 53% of them were new items.

When considering the appropriate use of this new vocabulary, 98% of the items were correctly used according to their meaning, 100% of the items were correctly spelled and 99% of those items were used in the correct register.

Sample 11

This piece of writing is another letter of recommendation. From the 307 words of this composition, 36% of them were new items.

When considering the appropriate use of this new vocabulary, 100% of the items were correctly used according to their meaning, 100% of the items were correctly spelled and 100% of those items were used in the correct register.

In 75% of the written pieces gathered the use of new vocabulary was not explicitly requested by the teacher. However, students made use of a great amount of the lexical items taught during the Language I course.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to learn to what extent lexical items are taught through vocabulary lists or incidentally derived from context in Colleges of Education in the City of Buenos Aires and what effect these two vocabulary teaching methods have on future retrieval, recall and instances of actual use in students' written productions.

On the basis of this research question, it had been hypothesized that:

- 1- Vocabulary lists are a favourite approach to teaching vocabulary to students who want to qualify as Teachers of English in Colleges of Education in the City of Buenos Aires.
- 2- Most lexical items which are taught in isolation through vocabulary lists at Colleges of Education in the subject English Language I are easily forgotten after a short period of time (measure approximate: 8 months) and do not consolidate as part of the student's active lexicon for future use in their written productions (i.e. composition writing).
- 3- When writing under normal conditions, students at Colleges of Education will tend not to focus on the semantic fields they have accessed through vocabulary lists in their training. (Note: in this case "writing under normal

conditions” means that students write their compositions about a topic suggested by the teacher, either at home or in the classroom, without their teacher telling them to use the lexical items taught)

- 4- Students at Colleges of Education will only focus on lexical items presented to them in vocabulary lists and use them in their written productions only when they feel compelled to do so by external factors other than their own choice.

The first hypothesis was proved wrong since the evidence collected suggests that teachers use different approaches to introduce and work with new lexical items other than lists of words. The majority of the teachers who were interviewed agreed on the fact that vocabulary is best learned if it is part of a context, and for this purpose they usually introduced new items through a text. Students supported this as well, since 74% of them answered in the self-administered surveys that the introduction of new vocabulary was done using texts.

Teachers also mentioned that they used different activities to work with the vocabulary that was taught, namely giving examples or different situations in which those words appear in a context, translating, matching activities, finding differences, categorizing, paraphrasing, using the dictionary, playing games, investigating and sharing with the class, discussing and analyzing, and also asking students to create situations individually or in groups. From what

students answered in the survey in relation to this matter, it can be stated that: 56% indicated that they produce contexts or situations related to those new items and that they complete sentences using those words. 46% of the students also concluded that they do paraphrasing, 36% that they write sentences with that vocabulary, 34% that they work with those words using the dictionary, and 14% agreed that they did word association activities and matching synonyms and antonyms.

The second hypothesis was proved wrong since none of the teachers actually taught vocabulary using lists of words. Nevertheless, from what students answered in the survey, we learnt that 34% of them answered that vocabulary was introduced in a list of words plus their definition and another 24% of the students stated that vocabulary was presented in lists of words plus their translation.

Surprisingly, 60% of the respondents thought that new lexical items introduced in a text in which that vocabulary was highlighted is the most beneficial option for learning new vocabulary. Students also expressed that the manner in which vocabulary is presented is usually helpful to easily recall and use in their written productions. 42% of the respondents concluded that they sometimes remembered the new vocabulary, and 66% of the students sometimes recalled and used the vocabulary that had been introduced since the beginning of the year in their written productions collected for the research during the year 2010.

The third hypothesis was also proved wrong since students do focus on the items taught and they actually use them in their written productions. However, it is worth mentioning that the items taught are part of a context and not given in a list of words. In the samples collected for content analysis what could be noticed was that an average of 33% of the items used in the written productions corresponded to new vocabulary introduced during the year, according to the material consulted.

The fourth hypothesis was also proved wrong since students do not generally have an external factor (i.e. instructions given by the teacher) that indicates that they have to use the vocabulary that has been introduced in their written productions. Teachers expressed in their interviews that they expected students to use the new vocabulary but that they did not give them explicit instructions to do so. As mentioned above, an average of 33% of the items used in the written productions corresponded to new vocabulary.

To conclude, teaching vocabulary in context is the option the majority of the teachers choose. They consider that vocabulary should be given as part of a context, not in isolation. According to the teachers, this will help students build up the meaning of the items and better understand their collocations, the register in which they should be used, among others, but especially it will help them learn how to use the new vocabulary in their productions.

Limitations of the present study and suggestions for further research

It should be noted that further research on the area of study will be necessary due to the fact that the results of the present paper are based on the response and written productions of a small number of participants. If the same study was carried out using quantitative techniques, then the results could be generalized to the whole of the population.

It is worth mentioning that most of the students who were attending the subject Language I at Colleges of Education to qualify as Teachers of English were reluctant to participate in the study. For this reason, there was a reduced number of samples collected for content analysis. In reference to the teachers who were interviewed, one of them did not allow the meeting to be recorded.

Suggestions for further research may include a longitudinal study which would study one cohort of First Year students at Colleges of Education attending the subject Language I during 2012, until they graduate as Teachers of English. The focus of this research would be to learn whether students retrieve, recall and use in their written productions the vocabulary learnt during the subject Language I.

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Appendix I

Tapescript Interview 1

Cuando trabaja con el abordaje de nuevo vocabulario, ¿cómo lo presenta? ¿Por qué lo presenta de esa manera?

En general, el vocabulario se presenta en un contexto, en un texto que tiene que ver con... con un contenido que se trabaja a lo largo del año. Es decir, nosotros tenemos tres áreas de vocabulario en primer año que tienen que ver con la comunicación a todos los niveles, relaciones "*relationships*", a todo nivel, desde el trabajo, familiares, interpersonales, con amigos. Eh, emmm... Sería su segundo gran tema. Y el tercer tema, es el tema de sociedad. El vocabulario está siempre prendido a los textos que nosotros trabajamos y lo que leemos, tanto en la parte de literatura, también tratamos de elegir los textos de acuerdo a estos tres temas para que nada quede descolgado. Un poco porque en primer año le damos muchísima más importancia a todo lo que es estructura, lo que es gramatical versus lo no gramatical, si bien el vocabulario para nosotros es muy importante y tratamos de lograr un cierto *degree of accuracy*. Lo que trabajamos es básicamente todo el tejido de la estructura.

¿Tiene Ud. en cuenta alguno de los siguientes ítems cuando introduce el nuevo vocabulario?

- **Meaning**
- **Collocations**
- **Patterns**
- **Word order**
- **Register**
- **Appropriateness**

Se tiene todo en cuenta, absolutamente, absolutamente. Se hace mucho hincapié en el *register*, que es un tema muy difícil para primer año, pero constantemente hay que traerlo, y mencionarlo con respecto a todo, tanto a la estructura como al lexis.

¿De qué manera lo trabaja?

Bueno, con ejemplos, con situaciones, con relaciones interpersonales, cuándo se diría esto, a quién, en qué momento, en qué situaciones... Tiene que ver con el *appropriateness* también, que es muy importante. Tratamos de que sea lo mas ajustado posible.

¿Podría definir lo que sería enseñar vocabulario en un contexto?

Enseñar vocabulario en contexto no es darle una oración a una palabra, es dar una situación más grande en donde el chico pueda ver a través de ese

contexto el registro, cuál es la relación interpersonal de las personas que están hablando, eh, una historia, un cuento corto, el vocabulario que predomina en una obra de teatro, en un tipo de novela, quiénes hablan así, por qué. Es decir, el contexto para mí, ese es el contexto, es un contexto mucho más grande. Después se hila fino y por ahí para que los chicos puedan producir y usar ese vocabulario, se les pide por favor que redacten, que produzcan contextos pequeños para la siguiente clase o para momentos que hay que trabajar todo esto y haberlo estudiado. Pero la presentación es una presentación no basada en un párrafo, está basada básicamente en cuentos cortos o en textos más largos en los que el significado está más claro.

¿Considera Ud. que la manera en que el vocabulario es presentado ayuda a los alumnos a recordarlo con mayor facilidad? ¿Por qué?

Si, creo que sí. Que el vocabulario cuando está suelto no sirve. El vocabulario tiene que estar relacionado con una situación, si yo recuerdo esa situación creo que el vocabulario me va a ir saliendo más naturalmente. En primer año el vocabulario no sale tan naturalmente, les cuesta mucho, por eso cuánto más atado esté a una historia, a una situación en particular, a un relato, a un personaje, creo que el vocabulario se va recordando mejor.

Con respecto al aprendizaje de vocabulario, ¿se concentra usted en que este sea el aprendizaje de vocabulario receptivo o productivo?

Emmm, a ver... las dos cosas. Por supuesto que nosotros cuando hablamos de un registro muy formal no pretendemos que sea absolutamente productivo en primer año, pero sí que sea absolutamente comprendido y que lo puedan relacionar con un contexto de este tipo. Emmmm, hay alumnos que, bueno, que pueden avanzar más y que lo producen además de entenderlo, y hay alumnos que se quedan por mitad de camino. Eso depende mucho de las capacidades lingüísticas de cada uno, el esfuerzo que le ponen, el estudio previo y las ganas de incorporar eso en un texto. Eso en la escritura de texto cuesta bastante.

¿Deben los alumnos utilizar obligatoriamente ese nuevo vocabulario en las producciones escritas?

Sí, en muchos casos, sí, en muchos casos, sí. Sobretudo cuando se hacen textos, se redactan textos basados en cuentos, obras de teatro que nosotros trabajamos, en un pequeño análisis literario que se pueda hacer de los personajes, ahí sí el alumno usa el vocabulario trabajado en general. No se le da un número de palabras que tiene que usar, pero sí nosotros hacemos hincapié en que, por lo menos, tiene que haber refer... eh.... tiene que reflejarse en el texto algo de lo que se trabajó, y que lo subrayen, que lo marquen, se hace ese tipo de cosas.

Entonces ellos saben de forma explicita que deben utilizarlo. ¿Hay una consigna que así lo dice?

Sí, tienen consignas que así lo dicen, no en todas las producciones escritas, en algunas. Porque en general nosotros estamos trabajando los que es lo narrativo, a veces trabajamos lo narrativo con respecto a otra gente, a veces trabajamos lo que es una narrativa más personal, de ellos. A veces el vocabulario está adaptado a eso y en muchos casos se usa, sobretodo todo el vocabulario de nuestro segundo módulo y el tercero, que tienen que ver con la sociedad y las relaciones. Ahí se ve reflejado totalmente en los textos. Y está es una síntesis que los chicos la van logrando después de mitad de año, no te podría decir que en la primera mitad del año eso se logra en las producciones.

Profesora, muchas gracias.

Tapescript Interview 2

Cuando trabaja con el abordaje de nuevo vocabulario, ¿cómo lo presenta? ¿Por qué lo presenta de esa manera?

Depende del tipo de vocabulario, porque lo ideal es que el vocabulario esté en contexto, entonces, eh, vos, eh.... También podemos ver qué se entiende por vocabulario. Normalmente, uno entiende por vocabulario palabritas. Yo sigo un poco el *lexical approach*, entonces para mí vocabulario puede ser incluso una frase. La idea es que los alumnos encuentren estructuras que son generativas, o sea, estructuras que pueden usar muchas veces, entonces la idea es que ellos puedan tener una serie de frases que puedan usar varias veces porque en

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la lengua normal, coloquial de todos los días esas frases son necesarias. Por ejemplo, *would you like*. O sea, *would you like* no es una palabra, porque la idea de esas tres palabras puestas juntas, completas esta frase, entonces automáticamente lo que hay es una unidad de sentido, donde para mí hablar de vocabulario, para empezar, no es solamente hablar de una palabra en particular. Además, lo que se le pide a los alumnos es que cuando ellos aprenden este vocabulario nuevo, por ejemplo, mirando películas. Yo los incentivo a que vean mucho, o sea, con pretexto de que están estudiando ponerse a ver series de televisión, porque es cierto que el objeto de estudio es el idioma como tal, con lo cual es necesario que ellos se pongan en contacto con ese idioma, sobretodo en el caso de los alumnos argentinos que no tienen la posibilidad de viajar al exterior, o sea que tenemos poco contacto con los nativos. Entonces, la idea es que ellos nunca anoten la palabra flotando sola, porque son muy pocas las palabras que se pueden utilizar en individual. No, sí, gracias y ya está. El resto todas tienen que estar en un contexto, en una frase. Entonces, cuando encuentran una palabra que no conocen o que les resulta interesante, se anota la frase entera y lo ideal es, a través de todo lo... la visual, que está probado por neurolingüística que la mayoría de las personas somos visuales. Entonces, conjuntamente entre lo visual y lo auditivo, que es lo máximo que podemos tener nosotros como... como... en cuanto a adquisición, esteee, como seres humanos, se junta lo auditivo, con lo visual, con la nueva palabra, y el alumno está en condiciones de armar una situación en la cual esta nueva palabra se puede utilizar. Y después tenemos lo que se llama la transferencia, que es una vez que conseguiste entender el significado básico

de esa palabra en contexto, cómo puedo yo ampliar el significado en otras situaciones. Que es lo que hacemos con la lengua materna, ¿sí? Así que listados de palabras, no. Yo listas de palabras, en principio, siempre dentro de un contexto, que podría ser, eh, bueno, los *semantic fields*, ¿no? O sea, una casa, entonces, con los dibujitos que les ponen, el cuarto, el dormitorio, la cocina, el baño, etc. Entonces eso puede entenderse como un listado de palabras. Pero si por listado de palabras se entienden palabras que no tienen relación entre sí, o que aparecen, no. Eh, tampoco toma mucho tiempo el estudio de vocabulario en un texto, porque en realidad lo que a mí me interesa no es tanto de ese texto que sepan todas las palabras, si no un poco de qué se trata el texto en general. Emmm... Así que son pocos los casos en los que se analiza todo el vocabulario de un texto. En todo caso los chicos, si les interesa, es parte de su entrenamiento como alumnos, ellos lo hacen por su cuenta en su casa. No, no, no, no analizamos todas las palabras nuevas de un texto, tanto como en un cuento corto, no, no, eso no se hace. Y después, como estamos en un primer año que es de profesorado, pero que también puede funcionar como primer año como traductorado, bueno, yo he dado en las dos cátedras, entonces también considero que si estoy dando clases en el traductorado, me gusta darles algo de profesorado, de cómo se enseña el tema de vocabulario sobretodo, y además, si estoy en el profesorado me gusta darles parte de traducción para que tengan entrenamiento en ambos, porque esto me ha pasado que se pasan para el otro bando. Entonces que le sea útil realmente Lengua I, eh, la idea es que entren con un sólido primer año a segundo, eh, simplemente, bueno, el vocabulario es lo más interesante, por

más de una vez vienen y te dicen “Ah, esas palabras que vimos”. No, claro, parece que están todas lloviendo del cielo, verlas en contexto, y ver que efectivamente uno, que efectivamente están en uso, emmmm, te da mucho más incentivo para seguir aprendiendo. Después está el tema de los registros, porque lo que convierte a un alumno de alumno básico, elemental o intermedio a avanzado es que pueda utilizar cualquier tipo de vocabulario. Entonces, tienen que empezar a distinguir entre una palabra que se puede usar familiarmente, coloquialmente, el dichoso *slang*, el *taboo*, de lo súper formal. Entonces, eh, también eso es un trabajo bastante arduo, de hecho es lo que más cuesta. Eh, qué más te puedo decir...

¿Tiene Ud. en cuenta alguno de los siguientes ítems cuando introduce el nuevo vocabulario?

- **Meaning**
- **Collocations**
- **Patterns**
- **Word order**
- **Register**
- **Appropriateness**

Eh... sí, a todos. Especialmente *register*, como te digo, tienen que saber distinguir cuándo, en qué contexto usar las palabras.

¿Qué actividades realizan con el vocabulario presentado?

A ver... vocabulario tenemos, de lo que es traducción directamente lo que les doy es un listado de las palabras que normalmente están mal traducidas. Te doy ejemplos, eh, *formidable*, por formidable, entendido “bárbaro, espectacular”, emm, que más, tenés *assist* por “asistir a un lugar”, emmm, como para que no cometan errores grosos, esteem, de... de traducción, sea del español al inglés o del inglés al español. Después tenemos, eh, vocabulario en contexto, pero eso tenemos un libro especial donde aparecen por ejemplo, de educación, de deportes, de cocina, de lo que fuere, y ellos van agregando porque en segundo año, como te digo, acá se da bastante expansión de vocabulario. La idea es en un montón de cosas que no están en los diccionarios, porque son expresiones que por ahí no se usan o porque hay algo que... ningún diccionario o conjunto de diccionarios te puede sustituir la vida de todos los días. Siempre vas a encontrar algo que no está en ningún lado. Entonces que ellos tengan su “propio diccionario” ya armado, entonces van armando sus carpetas, eh, según los temas y eso les sirve tanto para el profesorado como para el traductorado.

¿Considera Ud. que la manera en que el vocabulario es presentado ayuda a los alumnos a recordarlo con mayor facilidad? ¿Por qué?

Emmm, según los estudios para que vos puedas recordar una palabra, tenés que verla ocho veces, entre siete y ocho veces. Te digo, depende de la

psicología, de la necesidad que tiene la persona de aprender las palabras. Porque si yo te digo que dentro de un mes tenés que viajar a Inglaterra y no hablás una palabra inglés, te puedo asegurar que vas a aprender las palabras, no sé, te van a quedar impregnadas en la mente porque está la desesperación que te puede dar decir “me voy a ir a un lugar que no conozco a nadie, no tengo como comunicarme”. Emmm, que les interese o no es muy de parte del alumno, ya no es más parte del profesor, digamos. En todo caso, podés, si hay temas que sabes que, no sé, por ejemplo, con adolescentes sabés muy bien que hay temas que les interesan, hay temas que son de interés en común en la clase, no, no, tampoco le vas a dar cosas, no sé, sobre términos económicos, viste, a chicos que te das cuenta que evidentemente no trabajan en la bolsa, no están en una parte comercial ni en nada que se le parezca, entonces, bueno, no. Normalmente, tiene que ver también con perfilar al alumno a principio de año. ¿No? Ves en qué está trabajando, ves si tenés alguno que trabaja en turismo, bueno, ¿a quién no le gusta viajar? Entonces, ya que estás, incluís turismo y le das un poco de cosas técnicas a ellos. Pero, digamos, no... si... el *catering for your students needs*, eso siempre está.

Con respecto al aprendizaje de vocabulario, ¿se concentra usted en que este sea el aprendizaje de vocabulario receptivo o productivo?

En ambos, pero sabemos que primer año es un año en el que se trabajan más que nada las estructuras, como te dije antes, pero de todas formas esperamos de los alumnos, que pongan en práctica lo que aprendieron.

¿Deben los alumnos utilizar obligatoriamente ese nuevo vocabulario en las producciones escritas?

Obligatorio, no. Es sentido común básico, digo. Que sentido tiene que aprendas una cosa si después no la vas a utilizar.

Entonces ellos saben de forma explícita que deben utilizarlo. ¿Hay una consigna que así lo dice?

La idea es... incluso se llega a un extremo de que se usan demasiadas cosas. O sea, no es un inglés tan natural, pero, bueno, porque uno los incentiva diciendo "bueno, si esto es un examen, tenés que demostrarme lo más que puedas, lo que puedes manejar el idioma". O sea, hasta que punto podés manejar el idioma, pero no es un estilo que a mi me guste, los estilos recargados demasiado. Pero bueno, el punto está en que el chico está en condiciones de pasar y puede tener una muy buena nota porque evidentemente te pone todo, todas las frases verbales, te pone los modales, te pone las expresiones, y uno dice "bueno, no exageres", pero si que aprendan a usar lo que ellos quieren.

Además está toda la parte psicológica, que qué es lo que te queda a vos de lo que yo te doy. Porque yo tengo treinta alumnos a principio de año y a fin de año cada persona absorbió cosas distintas porque tienen intereses diferentes, edades diferentes, sexos diferentes, entonces... qué es lo que te va a quedar a vos va a depender de hasta qué punto ese vocabulario que yo te doy como

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profesora a vos te va a servir. O vos creés que te va a servir. Entonces, va a haber contextos, cosas que vas a leer una sola vez y te van a quedar y cosas que por enésima vez vas a ir al diccionario, de hecho una de las técnicas que tienen es que el diccionario tiene que tener un lápiz adentro y vos marcás cada vez que buscas una palabra, haces una marquita. ¿Por qué? Porque si llegás a marcar tres veces la misma palabra eso te está indicando dos cosas. Una, que tenés una memoria espantosa y dos, que esa palabra la necesitás evidentemente. Entonces son muchas, muchas cosas...

Muchas gracias, Profesora.

Tapescript interview 3

Cuando trabaja con el abordaje de nuevo vocabulario, ¿cómo lo presenta? ¿Por qué lo presenta de esa manera?

Bueno, eh, con contextos, em, que es la única forma en donde el vocabulario aparece con su significado. Y... esto sería para la presentación. También los alumnos hacen, yo les hago hacer trabajos en equipo, de investigación donde también les pido contextos, pero a su vez con ejercitaciones, es decir, cosas que le permitan a los alumnos activamente incorporar el vocabulario, no de memoria.

Yo creo que hay distintas etapas en como uno puede tratar de que los alumnos adquieran el vocabulario, con distintos tipos de actividades. Algunas van a ser receptivas, y otras van a ser de semi producción y otras de producción directamente. Hay que darle cabida a distintos tipos de actividades, entiendo yo, porque una cosa es entender lo que significa una palabra, un *phrasal verb*, lo que fuere, y otra cosa es verlas en contextos donde, a través de esto, poder usarlos. Entonces pueden haber actividades de descubrimiento del vocabulario, por ejemplo, buscar qué frases significan tales cosas, o frases asociadas a distintas *topics*, haciendo *categorizations*, *matching activities*, o de categorizaciones, que cognitivamente son muy importantes justamente para chequear que uno entendió las *categorizations*, por ejemplo, si tiene que ver con *feelings*, o con *mental states*, con *relationships*, or *whatever*, o cosas que aparezcan en un texto, particularmente. Entonces, *they have to spot those phrases*, nuevas o conocidas. Pero la idea es agrupar y construir, construir porque así los alumnos se dan cuenta que pueden ir construyendo sus conocimientos englobando lo nuevo y lo ya conocido. Eso es para el descubrimiento.

Después oportunidades de actividades donde haya *further exposure* a algunos contextitos, de esas expresiones o lo que fuere, en otros pequeños contextos, para que tengan *input* de esas expresiones en otros contextos similares. Se va ampliando el panorama de exposición.

Después de producción, actividades, juegos, cosas, en donde se los “fuerza” a usarlo. Puede ser *tic tac toes*, puede ser cualquier tipo de juegos, que aún a los alumnos adultos les encanta jugar. Actividades de fluidez, estee, hay muchas

actividades que apuntan a la fluidez y a incorporar el nuevo vocabulario, más allá de que los alumnos saben que con todo lo nuevo que vemos ellos tienen que escribir, hacer situaciones, y hacemos después actividades de chequeo de sus situaciones. O sea, siempre con la posibilidad de producir, y aparte repasando, porque para el *long term memory* lo que se necesita es rever, volver, la repetición, traerlo de vuelta a la mente. Así que con una vez que se ve, no alcanza nunca. Siempre hay que volver atrás, y en otra ocasión volver atrás, y así.

¿Tiene Ud. en cuenta alguno de los siguientes ítems cuando introduce el nuevo vocabulario?

- **Meaning**
- **Collocations**
- **Patterns**
- **Word order**
- **Register**
- **Appropriateness**

Todo se tiene en cuenta. En realidad tengo en cuenta todo, pero no es que en todos los casos se van a aplicar todos estos criterios. Porque si estamos viendo *vocabulary on feelings*, bueno, obviamente, capaz que lo de *word order* lo va a aplicar, el *register* sí, *appropriateness* también, depende de tema. Por lo general, están organizados topicalmente. Entonces es *vocabulary on feelings*,

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vocabulary on health, o los *ways* famosos, y cómo se usan, las diferencias, pero siempre con contextos. *Meaning*, desde ya. *Patterns*, si hace falta, si estamos hablando de *vocabulary*, ¿no? Algunas cosas van a aparecer en ciertos *patterns* y otras no, lo mismo aplicaría al *word order*, y *register* y *appropriateness* si tienen que ver con la selección que uno pueda hacer y el conducirlos a, bueno, esto sí es apropiado en esta ocasión, pero en tal otra no lo es.

¿De qué manera los trabaja?

Bueno, por ejemplo, en lo que respecta a *appropriateness* trabajamos en el área de funciones, en donde aparecen *set phrases*, o sea *communicative functions*, entonces ahí aparecen un montón de cosas nuevas, pero dentro del área de funciones, *how to offer something*, *requesting*, *suggesting*, *saying sorry*, lo que fuere, entonces, aparecen muchas cosas de vocabulario, pero dentro del marco de lo que sería apropiado para tal función y en qué estilo, si es *neutral*, *formal* or *informal*.

Con respecto a *meaning*, la idea es que ellos vayan descubriendo, haciendo *discovery tasks*, *matching* or *finding differences*, siempre con el texto. Depende de las actividades, algunas pueden ser de descubrimiento, del significado justamente, otras contextualizaciones, puede ser algún *matching* o *categorizations*, esto con respecto a *meaning*. Los de *categorizations* también pueden ser para *collocations*.

Hacemos *paraphrasing*, depende del área que estamos trabajando. Hacemos un poco de todo. *Dictionary work*, también. *Dictionary work* hacen los alumnos más que nada en casa, porque es *time consuming*. También actividades con diccionarios. A mí lo que me gusta hacer es desarrollo de *tasks*, donde hay un propósito. Un juego o algo, pero a veces no se puede hacer eso todo el tiempo, no se puede. Pero por eso yo cuento con que los alumnos investiguen bastante y después hacemos un *sharing* en clase, como para compartir, discutir o analizar en caso de que sea necesario, y siempre con situaciones. Que ellos provean las situaciones, porque si no hay un uso, yo cómo sé que lo sé usar o no. Lo puedo entender, pero no sé si lo puedo usar, necesita un *development*.

¿Podría definir lo que sería enseñar vocabulario en un contexto?

Un contexto es un *piece of discourse*, eso es lo que es un contexto, y un texto. Podemos trabajar con *reading comprehension*, *listening comprehension*, y ya el texto nos va a proveer de un contexto, ya sea una conversación, o un artículo, es decir la base en donde emergen algunas cosas. Sería a través de esos textos que se enseña el vocabulario. O a través de algunas actividades en las que se provea un mini texto, por ejemplo a través de un *matching task*, si estamos hablando de *feelings*, o *health*, pero a través del *matching task*, con pequeños contextos sacados de buenas fuentes, de diccionarios, etc., pero en lugar de darlos así, hacer que los alumnos lo hagan. Entonces transformarlo en una acción de parte de los alumnos. No es solamente un *fill in the blanks* que

no está relacionado. A mí me gusta que los alumnos estén como haciendo algo, más que leyendo, haciendo algo.

¿Considera Ud. que la manera en que el vocabulario es presentado ayuda a los alumnos a recordarlo con mayor facilidad? ¿Por qué?

Decididamente. Si fuera vocabulario en el vacío, en una lista... las listas por listas, simplemente así no, no... nosotros recordamos en forma global, es la forma de recordar, en un contexto, más grande o más chico, donde las cosas tienen su significado dependiendo del contexto y porque asociamos una cosa con otra.

Aún en los proyectos que ellos preparan, les pido un *glossary*, una parte del proyecto es un *glossary* para que ellos tengan de referencia, de donde estudiar. En esos *glossaries* hay contextos, hay ejemplos, hay ejercitaciones, constantemente no sólo el contexto del *reading comprehension*, del *listening comprehension*, si no pequeños contextos en donde se ve que están usados esos ítems. Sin un contexto, pequeño o más largos, no se sabe como usar tales o cuales cosas.

Con respecto al aprendizaje de vocabulario, ¿se concentra usted en que este sea el aprendizaje de vocabulario receptivo o productivo?

En ambos. Obviamente lo receptivo es como fundamental, no se puede empezar a producir si no lo recibió, pero no me gusta quedarme sólo con eso.

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Justamente que pueda pasar a producción, ver que ellos lo pueden usar en situaciones. Los alumnos escriben situaciones, en clase, en casa. Siempre tienen que escribir situaciones en donde utilizan el vocabulario. También hacemos *roleplays*, juegos. También *dramatizations*, donde ellos tienen que trabajar en algún área en particular, hacemos *boardgames*, en donde ahí tienen que saber el vocabulario, se los obliga a usar, si no no pueden avanzar de casillero. Ahí todo esto es de producción. Para ganarse ese lugarcito ahí tienen que utilizar la palabra o frase en un pequeño contexto y ahí ganan el punto.

¿Deben los alumnos utilizar obligatoriamente ese nuevo vocabulario en las producciones escritas? ¿Hay una consigna que así lo dice?

Sí, no se si es obligatorio, pero sí es necesario. Yo no les pongo un listado de usar tal y tal palabra, si obviamente los títulos van a estar relacionados con algunas de las cosas que hemos visto, para que el *writing* sea un *follow up*. Siempre los estoy alentando como para que usen el vocabulario, que ellos en sus casas se sienten con todo el material, que tienen bastante, que tengan la oportunidad de volver a verlo y usarlo de forma escrita, y que en el *writing* incluyan vocabulario, no con la obligación de que incluyan estos 10 *items* o estos 5 *items*. Pero normalmente la temática va a hacer que usen ese vocabulario.

Muchas gracias por su participación.

Tapescript interview 4

Cuando trabaja con el abordaje de nuevo vocabulario, ¿cómo lo presenta? ¿Por qué lo presenta de esa manera?

En realidad hay muchas maneras diferentes porque se trabaja con muchas áreas distintas de vocabulario y cada área tiene su manera específica de presentarse. Puede ser que se trabaje con vocabulario planificado, preparado, entonces los alumnos tienen ejercicios distintos de elegir la opción correcta o de completar con una palabra, o de conectar palabras con diferentes categorías, bueno, hay una variedad de ejercicios que no podría nombrar ahora a todos. Habría que ver el material y sacar de ahí la cantidad de ejercicios, eso cuando el vocabulario esta planificado por áreas, según la temática de la unidad. También hay mucho vocabulario que es incidental, que sale en el transcurso de la clase, se presenta el vocabulario, depende de la estrategia: si es una palabra abstracta quizá lo más probable es que dé un ejemplo, cuente una anécdota, pueda dar un sinónimos, si es un objeto real puede ser que lo dibuje, o lo actúe, bueno, millones de maneras. Después chequear la comprensión y hacer que el alumno lo pueda utilizar, si es que estoy interesado en que el vocabulario se productivo y no receptivo nada mas. Pero hay tantas maneras de presentar como palabras hay.

¿Tiene Ud. en cuenta alguno de los siguientes ítems cuando introduce el nuevo vocabulario?

- **Meaning**
- **Collocations**
- **Patterns**
- **Word order**
- **Register**
- **Appropriateness**

Todos. En realidad, lo que yo siempre le digo a mis alumnos, y ellos lo tienen como marco teórico, que cuando tienen una palabra tienen que considerar tanto *form, meaning and use*. En el caso de *form* tienen que saber cómo se deletrea la palabra, qué pronunciación tiene. En cuanto al *meaning* tienen que saber la connotación y la denotación de la palabra, qué significa esa palabra, tienen que buscar ejemplos, ver cómo se usa esa palabra, en qué contexto, en qué tipo de discurso se usaría, en qué orden, con qué otras palabras se usaría, o sea cuál sería el contexto que acompañaría a esa palabra. Esos serían los tres elementos.

¿Podría definir lo que sería enseñar vocabulario en un contexto?

Bueno, la palabra contexto tiene dos significados: contexto de situación, es decir, en qué situaciones de la vida cotidiana o en qué situaciones en general uno utiliza esa palabra y un contexto lingüístico, que sería con qué otras palabras se enseña. Para mí enseñar vocabulario en contexto significa ambas

cosas. Un contexto lingüístico mayor que la oración, que el nivel oracional y dentro de un contexto de situación. Es decir, por ejemplo, voy a comprar algo, ¿qué tipos de palabras puedo usar? Estoy dando una charla académica de qué tipo de palabras puedo usar y qué no voy a usar. Eso para mí significa enseñar vocabulario en contexto.

¿Considera Ud. que la manera en que el vocabulario es presentado ayuda a los alumnos a recordarlo con mayor facilidad? ¿Por qué?

Eso intento. Todos los ejercicios que hacemos, todas las actividades que están propuestas en el curso tienen que ver con eso. Buscar actividades que reciclen el vocabulario, volver sobre ello. Nosotros tenemos un segmento de la clase todas las semanas en que hacemos *recycling*, o sea, hacemos una actividad breve de quince minutos que recicla el vocabulario de la semana anterior, con un juego con una actividad corta.

Con respecto al aprendizaje de vocabulario, ¿se concentra usted en que este sea el aprendizaje de vocabulario receptivo o productivo?

Depende de la palabra. Yo tengo un primer año, hay vocabulario que yo simplemente quiero que sea receptivo porque me interesa que lo tengan para una literatura, si van a leer que comprendan que esa palabra significa eso y otro vocabulario que quiero que lo usen activamente, porque lo van a necesitar,

porque les va a servir en su vida profesional, porque van a tener que escribir sobre eso.

¿Deben los alumnos utilizar obligatoriamente ese nuevo vocabulario en las producciones escritas? ¿Hay una consigna que así lo dice?

Lo usan bastante, bastante, en realidad, no todo obviamente, no todo lo que yo a veces querría que lo usen. Pero en realidad, si. Si el vocabulario es practicado, o reciclado lo suficiente y que los alumnos perciben que uno espera que eso sea llevado a nivel productivo, lo utilizan. Después obviamente hay muchas palabras que al alumno le interesan y que uno no había pensado que el alumno lo iba a utilizar productivamente. Eso no se puede predecir. Tampoco me parece una buena idea forzar al alumno a utilizar vocabulario, porque por ejemplo después te escriben composiciones con cincuenta *ways of* y nadie escribe así. Yo prefiero que sean naturales y que lo que usen lo usen en forma funcional. Detesto las consignas que digan que es obligatorio el uso del vocabulario trabajado.

Muchas gracias por su participación.

