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TITLE:

THE USE OF CROSSWORD PUZZLES AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE VOCABULARY OF FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION PARALLEL "A" AT "ZOILA ALVARADO DE JARAMILLO" PUBLIC SCHOOL, ACADEMIC PERIOD 2013-2014

Thesis required for obtaining the Bachelor's Degree in Sciences of Education, English Language Major

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THESIS ADVISOR: Lic. Mg. Sc. María Patricia Rodríguez Ludeña.

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2015

CERTIFICATION

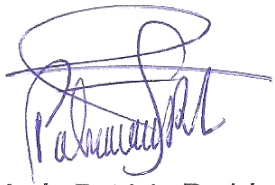
Lic. Mg. Sc. María Patricia Rodríguez Ludeña

PROFESSOR OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

CERTIFIES:

That the research work entitled: **THE USE OF CROSSWORD PUZZLES AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE VOCABULARY OF FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION PARALELL "A" AT "ZOILA ALVARADO DE JARAMILLO" PUBLIC SCHOOL, ACADEMIC PERIOD 2013-2014**, developed by the undergraduate **Luis Eduardo Malla Medina**, has been thoroughly revised in all its parts, with pertinence and scientific rigor. Moreover, the research reports have been progressively reviewed and returned to the researcher with the corresponding observations and suggestions, in order to guarantee the research work quality. Therefore, it is authorized its presentation for further submission, grading and both private and public defense.

July, 2015



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THE AUTHOR

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Rosa Medina and Maximo Malla for encouraging me and convincing me to believe in myself and for always believing in me even when I did not; my sister, Maria Fernanda, for supporting me in all of my endeavors; and most especially to God, who with his infinite goodness and love, allowed me to achieve this goal.

Luis Eduardo

MATRIX GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

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GEOGRAPHIC MAP AND SKETCHES

Fuente: Google Maps

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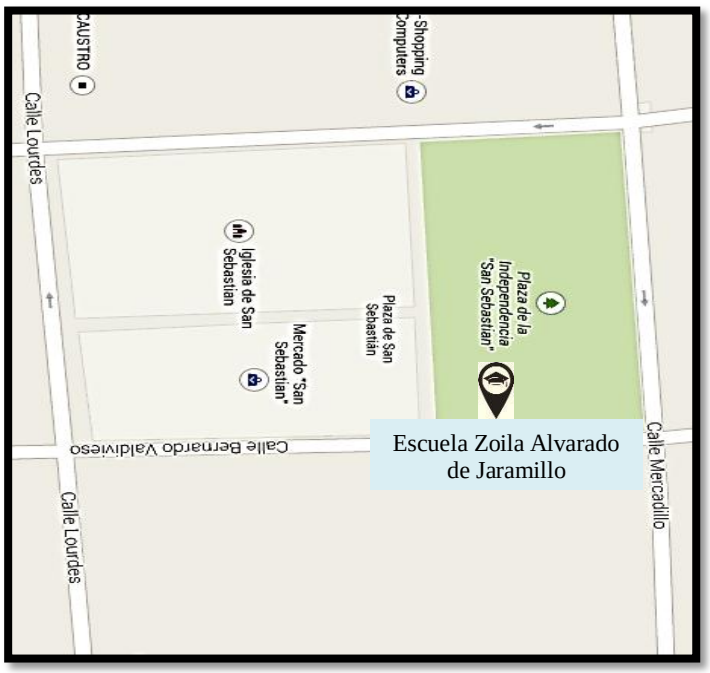

Fuente: Adaptado de Google Maps por Luis Malla

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a. TITLE

THE USE OF CROSSWORD PUZZLES AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE VOCABULARY OF FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION PARALLEL "A" AT "ZOILA ALVARADO DE JARAMILLO" PUBLIC SCHOOL, ACADEMIC PERIOD 2013-2014.

b. RESUMEN

Este estudio de investigación acción tuvo el objetivo de mejorar el vocabulario usando los crucigramas como estrategia con los estudiantes de quinto año paralelo “A” en la escuela "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo". Cinco sesiones se llevaron a cabo para mejorar la habilidad usando los crucigramas. Pruebas y cuestionarios fueron diseñados para medir el progreso y la percepción de los estudiantes sobre el uso de los crucigramas. Instrumentos adicionales, como un diario de campo también se utilizó en cada sesión para registrar el avance de los estudiantes. Los resultados indicaron que el uso de los crucigramas ayudó de manera significativa en el mejoramiento del vocabulario de los estudiantes que se vio reflejado en el notable aumento de las puntuaciones post-test y el progreso de los estudiantes durante la intervención. Las respuestas recibidas de los cuestionarios confirmaron también el entusiasmo y la actitud positiva hacia el trabajo con el vocabulario. Sería justo concluir que este estudio ayudó a los estudiantes a mejorar su vocabulario, y al investigador a perfeccionar sus habilidades de enseñanza.

ABSTRACT

This action research study aimed to improve the vocabulary using crossword puzzles as a strategy with 5th-A year students at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school. Five sessions were carried out to improve the skill using crossword puzzles. Tests and questionnaires were used to measure the students’ progress and perception of the usage of crossword puzzles. An additional instrument like a field diary was also used every session to record the students’ growth. The results indicated that the use of crossword puzzles facilitated meaningfully the improvement of the students’ vocabulary which was reflected in the noticeable increase of the post test scores and students’ progress during the intervention. The answers received from the questionnaires also confirmed the enthusiasm and the positive attitude toward working with vocabulary. It would be fair to conclude that this study helped the students to improve their vocabulary, and the researcher to sharpen his teaching skills.

c. INTRODUCTION

This descriptive study was focused on the use of crossword puzzles to improve the vocabulary learning with children from eight to nine years old in a public school. These students received English classes once a week without the support of resources and activities that motivate and facilitate its learning. The current study investigated the strategy to facilitate the improvement of vocabulary learning.

Due to the limited amount of studies done on this field to carry out this research work was relevant. This research has not been done before in the English Language Department of the Universidad Nacional de Loja. Thus it should be mentioned that this work was pretty important because it permitted the practitioner to get involved into the educative context and the reality. For fifth-A students it helped them to improve their vocabulary as well as for the teachers, because this investigation demonstrates how useful crossword puzzles can be as a strategy to improve the English vocabulary.

Vocabulary is an important aspect in the English learning process; especially when teaching it to elementary school students. Elementary school students still like to play and do some fun activities. Teaching vocabulary to them by using a traditional way (using dictionary to find the meaning of words) makes them get bored easily. Therefore, teacher should be creative and innovative in teaching so that students can have fun in learning vocabulary. This action research has the purpose of using crossword puzzles to increase fifth grade students'

vocabulary. And the reasons that motivate the researcher are: to expand the vocabulary of the fifth grade students, to gain practice during the intervention, and to obtain the Bachelor's degree English Language Specialization.

The aim of this study was to improve the fifth-A year students' vocabulary at "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" public school. To accomplish this goal the researcher investigated the theoretical references about vocabulary and crossword puzzles. Then, the researcher diagnosed the issues that limited the vocabulary learning with fifth-A year students. After that, the researcher designed an intervention plan with the use of crossword puzzles to improve the students' vocabulary, applying them as part of the classroom activities in order to overcome limitations in the learning of vocabulary. Finally, the researcher reflected upon the effect that the crossword puzzles had on the vocabulary learning of the fifth-A year students of basic education.

The current research worked with a sample of 25 fifth-A year students in an urban school. The action research work involved pre and post tests, pre and post questionnaires and a research field diary during the intervention. This intervention was planned based on the students' cognitive process to build up their knowledge. The lessons were reinforced with activities that enable students to master new words, remembering and at the same time understanding them in context.

This study was done with the fifth-A year. It was a great group that was cooperative, enthusiastic, interested and respectful. Another strength was the

classroom teacher and the school director who let me carry out the intervention. They were friendly, communicative and collaborative too. However, in the intervention there were some limitations such as: the classroom size which made the study harder because there were 25 students in the class. One period of class weekly of 45 minutes was not enough for students and the researcher to develop more activities that help both parts. Another weakness was the environment which was inappropriate for students because they do not have a specific classroom for the English class.

The usage of crossword puzzles assured the improvement of students' vocabulary that they gained from the activities provided. The pre-test showed that most of the students obtained scores (6/10) below the average expected. However in the post test, after the intervention, the results indicated that students reached good progress.

This action research was a great practice not only for doing this study but also for gaining experience for the future as English teacher. During the intervention was experienced how the crossword puzzles can help students to improve English vocabulary but also the weaknesses of applying it in teaching vocabulary. This action research work made reflect the researcher on the importance of practice as teacher using a specific strategy. Questionnaires and the tests were the tools of data collection used in the intervention. They were essential for getting the quantitative and qualitative data. Making action research is a necessary work that should be done for gaining experience as a

teacher and prove the effectiveness and weaknesses of certain strategies used in teaching-leaning process.

This work is organized in five parts: literature review, Materials and methods (methodology), results, discussion and conclusions and recommendations. The literature review section describes the variables Vocabulary and Crossword Puzzles. Most of the vocabulary literature is based on information given by Philips, S. (1993), Wilkins (1972), Hornby (1995), and Holden (1999), while most of the Crossword puzzles literature is based on information given by Wahyuningsih (2009), Harmer (2005), Jones (2008),and contributions of works of similar researches. The materials and methods section details the design of the investigation, action research, the methods that help this study and the key points that were considered in the study.

In the results part, the findings of the research are described and analyzed; these findings are presented in tables and figures with the corresponding analysis. Another part is the discussion that shows the major findings of the research, the importance of them and why the information obtained is relevant to this study. The last part about the conclusions and recommendations describes what was found in the study and what can be done in the future to improve this situation.

d. LITERATURE REVIEW

VOCABULARY

THE DEFINITION OF VOCABULARY

Hornby (1995) explained that “Vocabulary is the total number of words in a language”. Hence vocabulary is an important part to mastery English well. According to Pigeat’s theory, a child at the age of 7 – 10 years is always interesting in recognizing and knowing new words, he stands to repeat new words repeatedly so that he will memorize them.

Harmer (1993) stated that “If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh.” Vocabulary functions as a cornerstone without which any language could not exist. Indeed speaking would be meaningless and perhaps impossible having only structure without vocabulary. The word “vocabulary” generally represents a summary of words or their combinations in a particular language. However, we should bear in mind, as Ur (2000) remarked that one item of vocabulary can consist of more than one word. For example: post-office’ consists of two words and still expresses one idea.

Graves (2000, as cited in Taylor, 1990) defines vocabulary as the entire stock of words belonging to a branch of knowledge or known by an individual. He also states that the lexicon of a language is its vocabulary, which includes

words and expressions. Krashen (1998, as cited in Herrel, 2004) extends Graves ‘definition further by stating that lexicon organizes the mental vocabulary in a speaker‘s mind. In this connection An individual‘s mental lexicon is that person‘s knowledge of vocabulary (Krashen, 1998, as cited in Herrel, 2004). Miller (1999, as cited in Zimmerman, 2007) states that vocabulary is a set of words that are the basic building blocks used in the generation and understanding of sentences.

According to Gardener (2009, as cited in Adger, 2002) vocabulary is not only confined to the meaning of words but also includes how vocabulary in a language is structured: how people use and store words and how they learn words and the relationship between words, phrases, categories of words and phrases (Graves, 2000, as cited in Taylor, 1990).

THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCABULARY

Foreign language learners are always in need to learn and enlarge their vocabulary. This is supported by Thornbury (2002) who states that without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed; Wilkins (1972) stands that without grammar very little can be conveyed. Beginners often manage to communicate in English using individual words, and they can most of the time covey meaning without necessarily having acquired grammar. This is the evidence that in learning a language, grammar is not sufficient and, thus, more importance has to be given to vocabulary.

Wilkins (1972) in his advice also states that “if you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much, you will see most improvement if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words”. A view that meets Krashen’s view (1993) who postulates that vocabulary is so crucial because usually when learners go abroad, they face some problems to communicate with the native speakers of the host country to convey their messages. This can be done through using only a word rather than grammar rules. “When students travel, they don’t carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries”. Therefore, an ability to use grammatical structure does not have any potential for expressing meaning unless words are used.

TEACHING VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is very important for second language learners; since only with just sufficient vocabulary learners can effectively express their ideas both in oral and written form. Thus they should have a good idea of how to expand their vocabulary so that they can improve their interest in learning the language (Finocchiaro, 1973).

The author stands that Language teachers, therefore, should possess considerable knowledge on how to manage an interesting classroom so that the learners can gain a great success in their vocabulary learning. Teaching vocabulary plays an important role in language acquisition because the mastery of vocabulary will help students to master all the language skills; speaking;

listening; writing; and reading. The vocabulary will make the students practice life and will strengthen belief that English can be used to express the same ideas or feeling they express in their native language.

Furthermore, in teaching vocabulary the teacher can introduce the list of vocabulary that is taken from the book. The teacher uses and adds other vocabulary which is relevant to the students. Teacher needs a good knowledge on their teaching materials. When they have to teach the students about vocabulary, teachers should know the general knowledge of vocabulary, words and also the meaning. The words or vocabulary can be spoken and written.

Wallace (1982) explains that teaching vocabulary should consider these following factors:

1) Aims

The aim of teaching vocabulary is to make the teacher easy to formulate the materials, which will be taught to the students.

2) Quantity

The teacher has to decide the number of vocabulary items to be learned. The learners will get confuse or discouraged if they get many new words.

Therefore, the teacher should select new words, which can easy to understand by the learners.

3) Need

In teaching vocabulary, the teacher has to choose the words really needed by the students in communication.

4) Frequent exposure and repetition

Frequent exposure and repetition here means that the teacher should give much practice on repetition so that the students master the target words well. They also give opportunity to the students to use words in writing or speaking.

5) Meaningful presentation

In teaching vocabulary the teacher should present target words in such a way that the meaning of the target words are perfectly clear and unambiguous.

6) Situation and presentation

The teachers tell the students that they have to use the words appropriately. The use of words depends on the situation in which they are used and depends on the person to whom they are speaking.

From the explanation above I conclude that the teachers must know the different kinds of vocabulary. In addition, understanding the above factors is very important for the teacher before teaching vocabulary to elementary school.

VOCABULARY LEARNING

Nation (2001) identified three general processes involved in vocabulary learning. They are noticing, retrieval, and generative use. He also explores the distinction between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. If learners can understand the meaning of the words through reading or listening they have receptive knowledge but if the learners can use the words meaningfully in writing or speaking and can spell words it will be productive knowledge.

As the author points out, receptive vocabulary involves perceiving the form of the word through listening or reading and retrieving its meaning. Productive vocabulary involves expressing meaning through speaking or writing and producing appropriate forms. Holden (1999) found out a variety of ways to help learners remember new words and to choose strategies that suit their own learning styles. She recommends “repeated exposure to new lexical items using a variety of means” and also suggests that integrative strategies for vocabulary learning have a positive effect on the retention of vocabulary in the learners’ minds because words seem to be stored in word association networks and collocation networks. She also suggested a number of memory and mnemonic strategies but I am more interested here in word association or word elaboration strategies in which learners have to relate new words to other words in a way that helps the learners to remember the new vocabulary.

This study focuses on young learners. Harmer (2001) points out that young learners up to nine or ten years old tend to learn differently from older learners

because they have a limited attention span. Thus, unless activities are engaging, they can easily get bored and lose interest. The author also points out other ways in which young learners learn differently: they learn indirectly rather than directly; they understand from what they see and interact with around them as well as from teachers' explanations; and they are focused on themselves as individuals (me, here, now) and need individual attention. For the above reasons, games are especially appropriate for young learners. Philips (1993) also discusses types of activities which are suitable for young learners, such as using vocabulary networks simple enough for children to understand. She suggests that new vocabulary items should always be taught in context and says that learners always need plenty of opportunities to practice and apply the target vocabulary items that they have learned.

TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

TECHNIQUES IN PRESENTING VOCABULARY

Proposed by Thornbury (2002) and Nation (2001) a variety of techniques can be used or combined in introducing vocabulary. If the latter listed a set of choices related to presenting the meaning through:

- **Translation**
- **Real things**
- **Pictures**
- **Actions/ Gestures**

- **Definitions**
- **Situations**

With a choice whether to present the word in its:

- **Spoken form, or**
- **Written form**

The former grouped those techniques into four categories. As cited by (Nguyen, 2009), those four groups are as below:

Showing the meaning of words visually. This was, as indicated by Doff was the most common way in the very first stage to present meaning of a new word. This group involves using pictures (mostly for concrete words); using realia (the real object to bring to classroom); or using mime (demonstrate meaning of the word by actions or facial expressions).

Showing the meaning of words in context .This technique is performed by using examples, situation or explanation. This is most commonly used for abstract words, which appear to be inexplicable by using visual aids.

TECHNIQUES IN PRACTICING VOCABULARY

For practicing vocabulary stage, as mentioned in How to teach vocabulary by Thornbury (2002), there can be a variety of tasks which can be used in order to help move words into long-term memory. Those tasks, clarified by him, require

learners to make decisions about words and they can be divided into five types in order of least cognitively demanding to most demanding:

- **Identifying**
- **Selecting**
- **Matching**
- **Sorting**
- **Ranking and sequencing**

Identifying tasks involving tasks of finding words in texts. “Listen then tick the words you hear” can be one obvious example of this type. Identification is the first step in recognizing words and requires learners do easy task as counting, ticking or a bit difficult is to unscramble words as in anagram.

Selecting tasks, as clearly stated by the linguist is “cognitively more complex than identification tasks”. For selecting tasks, learners will have to do recognizing words and making choices amongst them at the same time. Finding and odd one out is a common task that teachers may often use in class for checking comprehension. Apart from recognizing and making choice amongst words, learners are also requested to do.

Matching tasks: In this kind of task, learners may need to pair a set of given words to a “visual representation, for example, or to a translation, a synonym/antonym, a definition or acollocate.” By grouping words into different categories, learners are being asked to do.

Sorting task: It should be noted that the categories can be given in advance or learners have or guess what the categories are.

In addition, the author said that the most cognitively complex and demanding tasks in this stage are ranking and sequencing activities. Different form sorting when learners merely putting words into categories, in ranking tasks, they may have to put words into unfixed order, often created by learners 'preferences themselves. One clear example can be "what to buy first for an empty flat?" (Thornbury, 2002).

TECHNIQUES IN CONSOLIDATING AND REVISING VOCABULARY

There are no fixed techniques proposed by group writers of lecturers at English Department, specific tasks were listed instead. They are as follow:

- **Ordering**
- **Rub out and remember**
- **Networks**
- **Bingo**
- **Word storm**
- **Slap the board**
- **Guess the picture**
- **Matching**
- **Noughts and Crosses**
- **What & where**
- **Word square**
- **Jumbled words**

As for Thornbury (2002), those listed activities above are some common games which assist teachers in implementing a productive vocabulary lesson with learners. The final stage, as further recommended by him, highly involves production tasks in which learners, after having made decisions will actually

produce something as a product of their own. In this way, learners will turn words from receptive to productive and put them into long-term memory.

For production tasks, there are two major types that teachers may have used them very often namely: completion and creation (both are of sentence and texts).

Sentence and text completion tasks are generally known as gap-fills. In gap-fills, the distinction between open and close gap-fills is necessarily noticeable. In close gap-fill, words are provided in advance whilst in open gap-fill; learners have to fill in basing on their amount of lexical items. Multiple choices, as suggested by the author also fit in well with this completion task category. For completion tasks, there varies a number of instruction such as: complete the text by writing an appropriate word in each space; choose the best word from the list to complete each sentence. Use each word once; or choose words from the text you have just read to complete these sentences, etc.

If text and sentence are often provided in completion tasks, they are often created by learners in creation tasks. The tasks sound difficult; however, this is a typical feature of those tasks. Besides, learners may not have to produce all on their own, they are sometimes provided with a set of words from which they would choose to use in their sentences or texts. For creation tasks, such typical instructions are used: choose six words from the list and write a sentence using each one; or write a short narrative (dialogue) which includes at least five words from the list, etc.

STEPS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING VOCABULARY

STEPS OF TEACHING VOCABULARY

In designing a vocabulary course, Coady & Huchin (1997) proposed that the teachers must take into consideration not only the situation in which the course occurs but also how vocabulary should be selected for teaching. They also considered how it should be sequenced and how it should be presented.

SELECTION

Early researchers looked for the best vocabulary that can result to a best learning. They provided lists of the most widely used words in early stages of learning (they estimated 2000 words). In addition, they took as a second variable of vocabulary selection the range of words used in spoken language. However, frequency and range are not the only two factors; there are also other factors such as combination, definition and substitution of words. Some of these factors were used by West (1953) as frequency, range and replace ability in his book General Service List of English Words that consists of 2000 words. The most appropriate learning strategy here is “selective attention” i.e. the teacher should draw the learners‟ attention to the target word and he should ensure that he notices it. The teacher can do this through underlining, bold-facing and circling (Coady & Huchin, 1997).

SEQUENCING

There are two main sequences in which teaching vocabulary is based on. The first one is levels of vocabulary; the second one is grouping and ordering of words. The table below is adapted from Nation (2001) shows the division of levels of vocabulary.

Levels	Number of Words	Text Coverage %
High frequency words	2 000	87
Academic vocabulary	800	08
Technical vocabulary	2 000	03
Low frequency words	123.200	02
Total	128 000	100

Table 1: Levels of Acquiring Vocabulary (Coady & Huchin, 1997)

The use of English is based on 2000 high frequent words. When the learner acquires these words, he moves to the next level which is academic vocabulary. In other words, if the learner wants to continue his studies, she/he must learn some academic words. However, low-frequency words cannot be read neither in academic texts nor in novels. They are learnt for the use of English for social purposes. Technical vocabulary has a very narrow range because each field has its own technical words. For instance, law, medicine, chemistry and mathematics have different vocabularies and terminologies.

Grouping items within a lesson is not established through learning items together that are synonyms, opposites, etc. It is easier to learn unrelated words than learning items that are near synonyms or opposites. For example, the learners mixed the forms and meanings of words such as “hot” with the word

“cold” if they have been taught at the same time. After the lesson, learners cannot be sure if “hot” means “hot” or “cold”.

Ordering is very important in teaching a foreign language. Different items should not be taught separately. In other words, there must be a kind of combination between these words for the sake of producing meaningful sentences (To follow a specific order).

PRESENTATION

Vocabulary lists can be used to make it easier for the teacher and learner. High-frequency vocabulary is taught through vocabulary exercise or individual learning because this type of vocabulary includes few numbers of frequent words. However, low-frequency words are many in number. There are words that do not deserve the teachers’ attention. They are rather guessed from the context. As Kelly (1990) has pointed out, guessing is not a substitute for systematic learning of lexis (Hutch & Brown, 1995). On the one hand, the teachers‟ main concern will be the effective development of some strategies. On the other hand, the learners will be mainly concerned with the particular piece of learning with the help of the strategies. There are several ways or general principles for dealing with high and low frequency vocabulary. They can be put into practice directly or indirectly. Both of these approaches require reflection and planning on the part of the teacher.

In a direct approach to vocabulary teaching there will certainly be explicit vocabulary exercises, which may include word-building ones such as crossword puzzles activities –of interest in the present research-, matching words with various types of definition, studying vocabulary in context, split information activities focusing on vocabulary. In an indirect approach to vocabulary teaching, the teachers‟ concern for vocabulary learning will not be so explicit. Vocabulary learning goes hand in hand with communicative activities like listening to stories, information gap activities, although vocabulary will not be the main goal of the activities.

STEPS OF LEARNING VOCABULARY

Since “without grammar very little can be conveyed and without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” Thornbury (2002), language teachers must be more interested in how learners should acquire new vocabulary. Consequently, learners should be provided with a large range of vocabulary which enables them to discuss any topic.

This can be done through five steps that seem essential for learners in their vocabulary learning. These five steps are suggested by Brown and Payne, as it is shown in figure 1. (Hutch & Brown, 1995).

ENCOUNTERING NEW WORDS

The first main step for vocabulary learning is encountering new words; which means finding sources forwards. The learners‟ task is thus to read books,

magazines, newspapers, stories, or to practice crossword puzzles –of interest in the present research- to listen to radio and television, or even to songs. There are some factors which control the learners‟ acquisition of words. Interests and motivation lead learners to focus on learning some words rather than others.

For instance, boys‟ interests are more directed to learn names of vehicles, wild animals; girls are much more interested in learning items which are related to fashion and jewellery, etc. In addition to interest, learners‟ needs may take a difference in learning new words. They always desire to acquire words which satisfy their needs. Another important factor is the work with interactive video materials. These words seem to be learnt more quickly than others in written form or exercises. Frequent words used by the teacher many times may increase the learners‟ acquisition.

Similarly, single words are learnt easily in their appropriate context. This way of learning is called -accidental learning- where the vocabulary can be learnt unintentionally. It is the result of unplanned activities such as dialogues, reading passages and other materials without direct inclusion of memorization, that is to say, learning some vocabulary items incidentally. The learner tries to guess the meaning of new words through the clues available in the text. According to Schmidt (2002), incidental vocabulary learning is learning through exposure when one’s attention is focused on the use of language rather than on learning itself.

However, learning vocabulary through crossword puzzles is an intentional learning in which the attention of the learner is directly focused on learning new words.

GETTING THE WORD FORM

The second essential step for vocabulary learning is getting a clear image of the word form-spelling, pronunciation or both. According to Hutch & Brown (1995) this can be done through many sub-steps: (1) associating new words that sound similar in my native language, (2) writing the sounds of words using sound symbols from my native language, (3) associating words that are similar to words in other language I have studied, (4) associating a word with similar sounding English word I know, and (5) seeing a word that looks like another word I already know. Getting the form of a word is considered very important, especially, when learners are asked to define words.

GETTING THE WORD MEANING

The third main step for vocabulary learning is getting the word meaning. It is based on some strategies such as asking the native speakers or people who know the learners‟ native language about the meaning of the word, relating new words with already made pictures in mind, and finally stating the meaning to someone in order to enable them to give the exact word.

Word definition varies according to the requirements of the situation and the level of the learner. Advanced learners often need more specific definitions for the sake of differentiating between near synonyms. However, those learners assume that dictionaries are the main source of a word definition (meaning). Another way of getting definition is having a bilingual friend or teacher who will help the learner to get the word meaning through their clarification.

Finally, one very popular way of learning word meaning is through contextualization or putting words in situation. The learner then will guess the meaning of new words easily. Although the depth of definition needed may vary and the sources from which the meaning can be extracted may be quite different. All learners must get the meaning of words in some manners, or the word can never be considered truly learnt. As it is stated in our study, the word meaning is dictated by the context of a given the clue

CONSOLIDATING WORD FORM AND MEANING IN MEMORY

The fourth necessary step is to emphasize the consolidation of form and meaning in memory. This method calls for learning word through their appropriate context in which learners can acquire the word meaning and form at the same time. The most useful drills in this step are matching exercises, and practicing crossword puzzles. Through practicing crossword puzzles, the learner can decode the words‟ meaning from the context of the clue, and consolidate the words form that fit the squares of the puzzle.

USING THE WORD

The final step in learning vocabulary is using the words. Some see that this step is not necessary especially if the knowledge of the acquired is only a receptive one. However, if the learners‟ aim from knowing a word is not receptive but productive, word use is essential to test the learners‟ knowledge of collocations, syntactic restriction and register appropriateness.

Conclusively, the learners need all these five steps in order to enrich their vocabulary and learn full knowledge of the words they want to learn. This can be done through a variety of activities, strategies, or techniques that the learners apply in each step such as crossword puzzles.

Brown and Payne’s essential steps in learning vocabulary can be applied in our study. We believe that in doing numerous crossword puzzles, -the focus of our study, it will be detailed out in the coming chapter-, learners can encounter new words and phrases, they never knew before (Hutch & Brown, 1995). Thus, with practice, they become familiar with them, get a clear image of the word form, meaning, spelling, and even pronunciation. Consolidate them in memory. Then, the learners may even find themselves using them in conversation or writing assignments and impress their listeners or readers (teachers) with brilliant words. This strategy can offer for students so many chances to learn vocabulary since both entertainment and enjoyment are present. A relaxed atmosphere is also available and, hence, we can gain fruitful achievements.

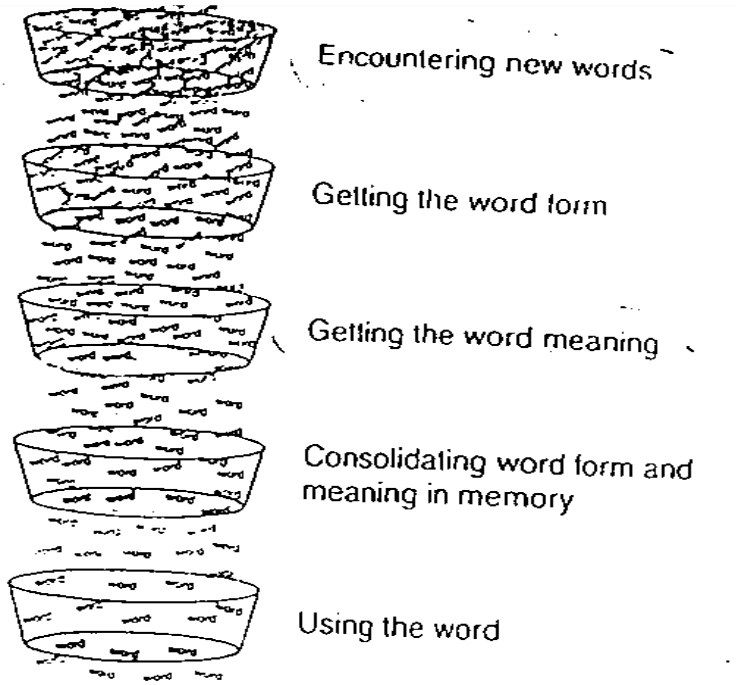


Figure 1: Five Essential Steps to Learn New Words (Hutch & Brown, 1995)

CROSSWORDS PUZZLES

THE HISTORY OF CROSSWORD PUZZLES

The first “word-cross” in the United States was published in the New York World in 1913, although similar puzzles have been around in different forms since Egyptian times. In 19th century England, they were aimed mostly at a juvenile audience, and did not become a craze for adults until Simon and Schuster printed the first book of them in the US in the 1920’s, when they then took on the familiar name “crosswords.” The puzzle’s popularity continued to build throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Today, most daily newspapers include a crossword puzzle as well as many magazines. In fact,

magazine racks usually include a number of magazines and books containing only crossword puzzles.

CROSSWORDS PUZZLE

A crossword puzzle, according to Wahyuningsih (2009) is a game in which words guessed from their definitions are fitted into a diagram of white and black squares. The crossword has words written horizontally (across clues) and words written vertically (down clues). The pattern of black squares usually serves to separate each word from adjacent words (Wahyuningsih, 2009). Correctly deciphering a crossword requires correct spelling, which for students means practicing dictionary skills. Making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing conclusions are important skills required for completing crossword puzzles (Wahyuningsih, 2009). Bressan (1970) and Wolfe (1972) have attempted to classify the kinds of crossword puzzles according to the clues used. Bressan (1970) discusses two main categories: direct-definition clues and cryptic clues.

Direct-definition clues include generic, synonymic, antonymic, definitory, and descriptive clues. Cryptic clues include anagrams, word inversions, double meanings and so on. Most second language puzzles use clues from the direct-definition clues, although cryptic clues in the form of anagrams occasionally appear. Bressan (1970) argues that crossword puzzles, among other things, enhance vocabulary building, orthography and develop and test the student's

knowledge of morphology, hence the need to focus on the effectiveness of crossword puzzles in the research that informed our paper.

TERMINOLOGY

Crossword puzzle has a specific terminology:

- **Entries or Answers:** are the horizontal and vertical lines of white squares into which answers are written.

- **The Definitions:** are the lists of numbered clues. “the clues”

- **The White Cells:** are sometimes called lights.

- **The Shaded Cells:** are sometimes called Darks, Blanks, Blocks, Blacks or Shaded Squares. Shaded Squares make the constructor’s job much easier. In some types of crossword puzzle, they are specified; the number of the answers‟ letters which limit the blanks before and after each answer’s letters.

- **The Crossed Cell:** is a white cell which is part of two entries (both cross and down). It is also called checked or keyed.

- **The Unchecked Cell:** is a white cell which is part of only one entry. It is called Unkeyed, or Uncrossed.

- **Cruciverbalism:** the creativity or designing of crosswords including its practitioners.

- **Cruciverbalists:** are the creators or the originators of crossword puzzles. They are called creators, compilers, settlers in Britain (Wikipedia, 2012).

TYPES OF GRID

Usually, crossword puzzles take the form of square grid of white and black squares.

According to Wikipedia, there are four types of grid; American, British, Japanese and the Swedish style grid. Hence, creators should make a decision upon which type of grid he going to use for his puzzle.

AMERICAN STYLE GRID

The most obvious feature of the North American style crosswords is the fact that every letter in the puzzle is “an interlinking letter”. In other words; every letter in the puzzle is a letter in an across word, and also in a down word. This style facilitates the solver’s job because difficulty can be removed through some assistance of those previously used letters, in addition to the words which

intersect with each other's. Shaded squares are limited, whereas white squares are mainly used in such type of the North American style. It is also characterized with rotational symmetry which means that, if the crossword puzzle i.e. the graph is turned up or down, the grid remains the same. In other words; if it is turned 90° or 180 degree, the patterns of the blocks is exactly the same (Wikipedia, 2012), as the figure 3 below shows.

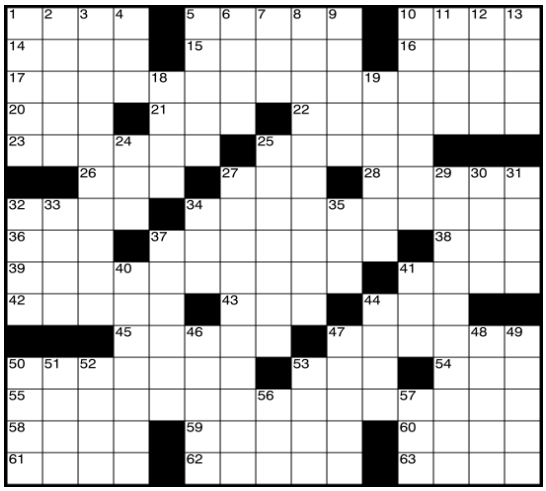


Figure 3: American Style Grid (Wikipedia, 2012)

BRITISH STYLE GRID

A British crossword puzzle has also 180° rotational symmetry; if the puzzle is turned Upside down, its pattern of blocks remains the same. However, in some ways, the British style and the American one are completely different. Typically, shaded squares are used with higher percentage and unchecked (uncrossed) cells are mainly involved. For example, if the first row of the crossword puzzle is in an across way, then, there will be no across in the second row, as shown on figure 4 (Wikipedia, 2012).

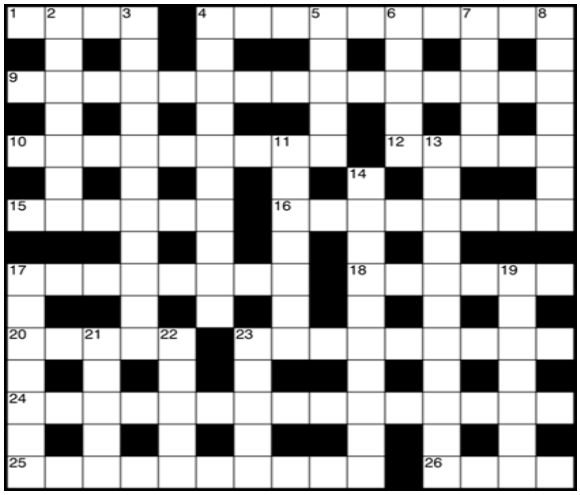


Figure 4: British Style Grid (Wikipedia, 2012)

JAPANESE STYLE GRID

There are two additional rules involved in the design of the Japanese crossword grid:

1. The corner square must be white.

2. The shades square are diagonal; they are not beside each other, as shown in figure 5 (Wikipedia, 2012).

The difference between the three grids is that the British grid uses the vertical and horizontal blanks; the Japanese grid uses only the diagonal blanks, while the American grid uses a combination of them.

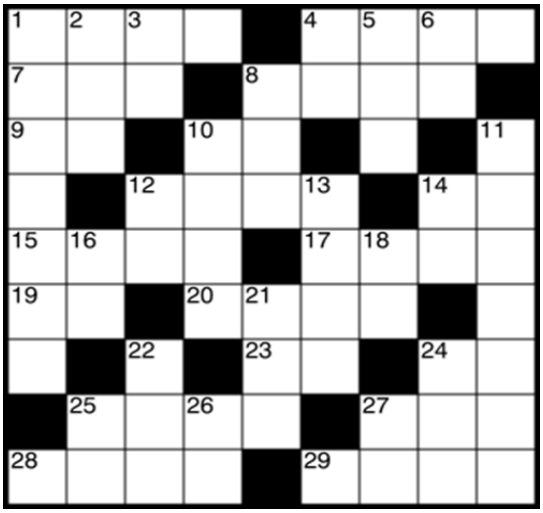


Figure 5: Japanese Style Grid (Wikipedia, 2012)

SWEDISH STYLE GRID

The Swedish style grid is different from the previous grids. In this type of grid, the clue numbers are not used; they are included inside the squares which would normally be blackened in other countries. Thus, those clues are followed by arrows. This latter indicates in which direction the clues have to be answered (across or down). The shaded squares can be also replaced by a photo or a movie star and it serves as a clue to an answer. This type of grid does not have a rotational symmetry. It is the most popular type grid in Algeria and it is used in most countries other than Sweden, as shown in figure below (Wikipedia, 2012).

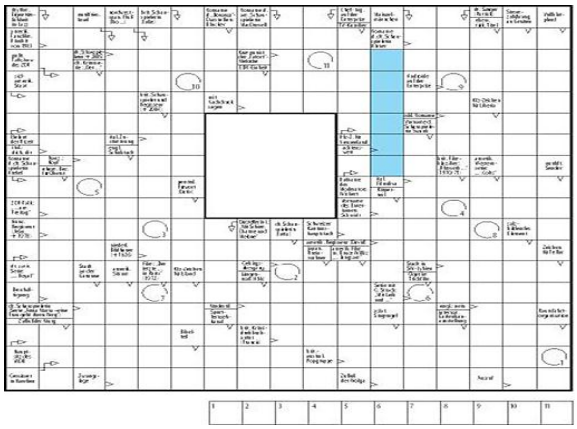


Figure 6: Swedish Style Grid (Wikipedia, 2012)

In addition to these types of grids, there are other common forms:

- Barred crosswords in which bold line are used between squares to separate answers.
- Free Form Crosswords are not symmetric and it is characterized with simple design.

Although the above stated types differ in shape, they are alike in principle. That is to say, the constructor has to fill in the blanks with regard to certain clues.

Generally, puzzles themes are general ones i.e. they include terminology from different fields: political, cultural, health, etc. We assume that if certain puzzles are designed with accordance with writing terminology-needs (polysemy, synonymy, hyponymy and so on), we would help learners to benefit from them a great deal. We would call this type instrumental, as opposed to pleasurable ones.

TYPES OF CLUES

To answer crossword puzzles, of course, the solver deeply relies on the clues. There are different kinds of the clues:

STRAIGHT OR QUICK

The clues which contain usually simple definitions for the answers are straight or quick. The crosswords‟ clues and their solutions should be related to

each other in terms of tense and number. If a clue is in the past tense, for example “travelled on a horse back”, the answer would be in the past tense “rode” and not “ride”. If a clue is in the plural, for example “family members”, the answer would be in the plural “aunts” or “uncles” and not “aunt” or “uncle”. As it is clearly stated in our empirical touch concerning the word “vaccinations”. The equivalent answer would be in the plural form as “shots”, and not in singular one as “shot”.

- Some answers are determined through the previously use of one letter.
- Some clues are represented through the distribution of letters of another word

  (Anagrams). For example, “Worth” is anagram of “throw”.

  □□□□□□□□□□□Fill-in-the blank clues are the most easiest in a puzzle, for example

  “…….Johnson, explorer” = Osa
- Sometimes, some clues are ended with a question mark which usually indicates that some sort of related “pun”, “wordplay”, or “metaphor” is involved in the clue and the answer combination.
- There are also straight clues which require colloquial answers; colloquial language would be involved in the entries of the puzzles‟ grid. Phrases like“what‟s up”, “as”, or “whaddya” are included in such a crossword puzzle.
- The use of abbreviation in the clue indicates that the answer is to be abbreviated.

- Hence, a crossword's constructor must be aware of the answers‟ abbreviation. For example, "SEN" is the abbreviation of "senator". Thus, the solver might choose the abbreviation of the equivalent of "senator"; i.e. "member of congress" abbreviated.
- Variant Spelling: The use of "Var." signals that the answer is a variant spelling. For example: "EMEER", "EMIR".
- The use of foreign language or a foreign place within the clues indicates that the answer is also in a foreign language. For example: Printemps "French for spring" might be clued as "spring in the Sorbonne".
- The abbreviations of common three-letter answers are also used as answers; it is generally indicated in the clue. When asking for a PC key, there are also three letter keys like ESE for (East-Southeast), NNW for (North-Northwest) etc. Three letter answers can also be used when the clues are asking for directions or compass points (Wikipedia, 2012). Thus, learners must be aware of these instructions to follow a specific order to solve their crossword puzzle.

CROSSWORD THEMES

Some crossword puzzles have themes. When the theme is identified, then the other words would have some degree of relationship, pun or somehow related with the theme words. The theme is the general category or class where all the answers of the puzzle belong to that general class. For example; stubble, grass, grain, chaff, cows, bees, jar, are answers which belong to one category theme which is "country life".

Sometimes the most important aspects of a subject are not immediately obvious. Hence, it is the job of the students to keep reading to get the complete picture about the theme. Some crosswords would have the theme as the title as it is stated in our study. For example; the main theme, or the title is “Stages of Life”, and words such as, “baby, child, kindergarten, teen, old, grave”, etc; have a great relationship with the category theme. i.e. they belong to the same class. Sometimes the theme is not written as the title, it can be the longest word in the puzzle.

FIRST ENTRIES

This kind of clues combines a few words into a phrase. For example “You, ill, never, walk, alone” would become “You’ll never walk alone”. It is popular in the British newspapers.

CLUES FOR CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS

The clues of the cryptic crossword puzzle are different from other type of clues. The clue itself is a puzzle. This kind of clue has a definition at the beginning or the end of the clue. Most of the times, the length of the answers are stated in parentheses after the clue. Cryptic would also use homophobes and different kinds of wordplays. It would also include anagram clues. These kinds of clues are more common in United Kingdom.

The cryptic crossword puzzle differs from any other kind of crosswords in the fact that the clues themselves contain little puzzles. So, unlike the usual crossword where all what is needed to do is to read the clue and try to figure out the answer. However, in a cryptic puzzle, the solver will need to decipher what the clue is all about before he starts thinking of the possible answers (Wikipedia, 2012).

We assume that, despite the fact that this type of puzzles is difficult for learners to decipher the meaning of a given clue. However, it is to the learners‟ advantages to be exposed to a variety of types to measure or develop their abilities in understanding a given utterance, as well as in practicing their skills in making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing up possible conclusions.

DOUBLE CLUE LISTS

Some crossword grids can have two sets or lists of clues, one is straight and the other one is cryptic. The solution can be different or the same. When the solution is the same, the straight clue sometimes serves as reinforcement for the cryptic clue. This type of clues enables both beginners and experts to work the same puzzle.

INDIRECT CLUES

The answer is not in their literal meaning, in this type of clues. Thus, the constructor would end the clue with a question mark to indicate that it is a metaphor.

The last four types of clues of crossword puzzle are very difficult for our students to decipher/decode/ or figure out the meaning of the clue (the answer). Thus, in our study, the level of the students is taken into consideration. Hence, a themed crossword with a title is provided (Stages of Life). Furthermore, simple clues are used, to facilitate the students‟ job.

TYPE OF CROSSWORD PUZZLES

Mainly, there are five crossword variants. Those five types of crossword variants may be different from a regular shape grid puzzle; they need different clues and different solving skills.

CIPHER CROSSWORDS

Cipher crosswords contain numbers in the clues, and the solver must break the cipher code to read the clues and solve the puzzle. A cipher crossword replaces the clues for each entry with clues for each white cell of the grid – “an integer from 1 to 26 inclusive” is printed in the corner of each. Cells with matching numbers will also have matching letters/answers, and no two numbers will stand for the same letter throughout the entire puzzle.

FILL-IN CROSSWORDS

Fill-in crosswords may often have longer word length than regular crosswords, because the more characters the solver start working from, the

easier the puzzle will be to solve. The constructor is required to enter a full list of words to the grid, but there are no explicit clues for where each word goes. So, he has to figure out how to integrate the list of words together with exact spelling within the grid, so that all intersections of words are valid, because a misused word or even phoneme may distort the whole puzzle.

CROSSNUMBERS

In this type of crossword puzzles, the clues of the puzzle are numbers instead of words. They are typically mathematical expressions or formulas, but could also be verbal clues to reference specific numbers, such as dates or populations.

ACROSTIC PUZZLE

Acrostic puzzles are usually composed of two sections: first is a set of lettered clues and the second part is a long series of numbered blanks and spaces.

DIAGRAMLESS CROSSWORDS

Diagramless crossword often called a" skeleton" or "carte blanche" Originated from the UK, they offer overall dimensions, and the locations of most of the clue numbers and shaded squares are unspecified. Not only does the solver have to come up with the correct answers to the given clues, but he must

figure out how to arrange answers into larger arrays, using properly spaced black squares, as shown in figure 7.

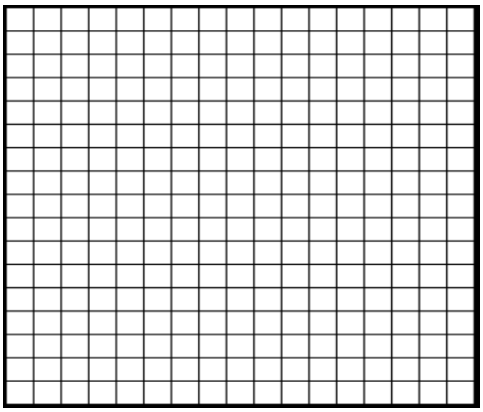


Figure 7: Diagramless Crossword Puzzle Style Grid

Diagramless crossword puzzles cannot be solved until students can decode the two secrets “the clue numbers and the symmetry”. Thus, as far as our students‟ level is concerned, it is too difficult for them to decode the clue numbers and the symmetry. Hence, in our study, a diagramless crossword puzzle is used. It contains a set of horizontally located letters and a set of vertically located numbers. The clues are directed by them, for example; C2. The number of the answer’s letters is specified at the end of each clue. Moreover, simple clues are used and the difficult words are explained at the bottom of the paper, and the square before and after each answer must be blackened. Thus, there is no symmetry. It is worth mentioning, here, that certain types of crossword puzzle are very difficult, so the use of them in educational setting might not have the desired results. In this respect, in this study, we use diagramless type that can be modified in order to achieve our purpose (facilitating the learning process).

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF CROSSWORD PUZZLES

According to Jones, Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, (2007), there are many benefits of crossword puzzles in EFL classrooms:

MOTIVATION

Most language teachers agree that learners‟ motivation is one of the most important factors that influence their success or failure in learning English as a foreign language. In other terms; it drives forwards learning operation for success. Slavin (2003) considered motivation as “one of the most ingredients of effective instruction”. It is also considered as “a component of metacognition in so far as it plays a self-regulatory role in learning”. O‟Malley & Chamot (1999) found out that motivation has great effect on enhancing students‟ performance in the target language (Woolfolk, 2004). In fact, “the will to learn appears to be essential for developing the skill to the learner” (O‟Malley & Chamot, 1999).So, it is generally agreed that if some learners do well and others poorly in language learning, this fact is much related to motivation than to intelligence. In this connection, the role of the teacher is to vary his materials to avoid boredom. Slavin (2003) claimed that “it is the educator’s job to sustain students‟ motivation and to engage them in activities that lead to learning”. Thus, to acquire new vocabulary items, crossword puzzles can serve this goal. Corder (1967) states that “in language teaching, given motivation, a human being will inevitably learn a language if he is exposed to the data of that language”.

Therefore, crossword puzzles can provide the necessary stimulus to invite the learners to make more efforts to learn a language (Fadel, 2005).

VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE

After doing numerous crossword puzzles, the learners will become familiar with a number of words and phrases that they never knew about before. This often yields to acquiring new vocabulary items. They may even find themselves using them in conversation or writing assignments and impress their teachers with brilliant words. In this respect, self-confidence can be created. i.e. the student can use a word and he/she is aware and sure about the word's form (spelling), meaning, class, and even pronunciation. Harmer (2005) raises the issue of self-confidence and considers it a very important factor for good writing.

EXACT SPELLING

A student trying to solve a crossword puzzle must first understand the clues that lead to the answers. If the student is unable to answer a particular puzzle question, he can then consult the dictionary to get the right answer and use the exact spelling. Obviously, this will lead to huge results in improving the students‟ large skill or proficiency. This is so because the student will be able to practice spelling, word identification and even pronunciation.

LESS THREATENING

Another benefit of using crossword puzzles in the classroom is that they are associated with recreation, and can be less intimidating for students as review

tools. Students who might normally balk at practice tests, flashcards, or review sessions with the teacher find puzzle solving to be much less threatening and more like game play. Puzzle solving is a much more active type of learning, and will engage students with the material more than passive types of review techniques do.

MEMORY AND RECALL

According to Brown when solving themed crossword puzzles, Memory and recall also come into play. “A science teacher may create a puzzle that uses scientific terms to coordinate with lessons, while a history related puzzle might have terms from one particular time period, with historical figures, key place names, and other relevant historical facts” (Discovery education).

PRACTICING SKILLS

Practicing crossword puzzles, students will be able to practice their skills in making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing up possible conclusions.

DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLE

Crossword puzzles also have the advantage of appearing to different learning styles such as:

VISUAL LEARNERS

They often have a great desire to solve a crossword and feel great satisfaction when they complete one.

AUDITORY LEARNERS

They enjoy step by step reasoning, so they are actively involved in the sequential steps of completing a crossword puzzle.

ADVANTAGES OF USING CROSSWORD PUZZLE IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

There are number of teaching technique in order to maximize the absorption and increase the understanding of what the teacher taught. One of them is using crossword puzzle game. As explained before, crossword puzzle has an important role in teaching learning process, especially in teaching vocabulary.

First, the advantages of using crossword puzzle in teaching English vocabulary is clearly stated by (Jones, 2008), a home educator and writer on educational games. He states that crossword solving involves several useful skills including vocabulary; reasoning, spelling, and word attract skills. To solve any crossword puzzle, students must be able to identify and understand the term being used. Correctly deciphering crossword also requires exact spelling, which for students may mean practicing their dictionary skill.

Second, due to the characteristic that vocabulary games commonly have, crossword puzzle is also reported to be able to increase students' vocabulary mastery because it motivates student to participate and engage actively with the learning material, especially learning vocabulary. Additionally, these Crossword puzzles are often perceived as being a recreational activity, therefore making them more enjoyable and less threatening than traditional teaching techniques (Crossman & Crossman, 1983; Childers, 1996).

Third, encouraging memorizing strategies is important in learning vocabulary. Just like in solving the crossword, students need to memorize the words that they previously learn then link it to new information (clues) to finally find the possible answer for crossword puzzle.

Fourth, crossword puzzle is also a good tool to review vocabulary. Reviewing, revising and recycle vocabulary that have been learnt are important strategies to help students, especially children. The use of crossword puzzle to review vocabulary has been recognized.

It has come into conclusion that crossword puzzle maybe used as an alternative technique in teaching learning vocabulary, especially as a review tool.

e. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this section by methods and materials it is meant the methodology of this research work. The section is developed considering: design, context, participants, methods, techniques and instruments, materials and procedure.

DESIGN

The spiral model of action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) was followed in this study. Action research is a general name for research done by undergraduate and postgraduate students. Action research has the potential to make a substantial impact on the process of teaching and learning. Thus, it is a methodological technique that connects research to practice. It involves a self-reflective cycle of identifying a situation or problem, planning a change, acting and observing the processes and consequences, and then re-planning, and so forth; that is why action research was applied to this study. It has assisted the researcher of this thesis to follow the first cycle of the Kemmis and McTaggart's spiral. This process facilitated his reflections of his teaching and improved his students' situation.

CONTEXT

The Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo public school was selected as the place for the present research work, and it is the school where the researcher is currently teaching and observing as a part of his teaching practicum; therefore, he has

insight into the spectrum of English teaching within the school. Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo School is located in the parish of San Sebastian and it is organized according to Ecuadorian School System requirements for a basic education school. Students attending this urban public school live in a social environment that characterizes developing communities in Latin American countries such as Ecuador.

Having English as a subject within the curriculum in Ecuadorian public elementary schools is compulsory as it is for middle and high schools. In the case of Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo public school, the treatment of English as a subject within the curriculum of the school is obligatory but the periods devoted to teach it are limited to one class weekly. It has an English teacher as part of its teaching staff.

PARTICIPANTS

The fifth-A grade of basic education at Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo public school has 25 students (girls). They are among 8 to 9 years old. They receive one period of English class per week with a certified teacher; each period is about 40 minutes. The students have an English book called “Enterprise”. The English classes are developed without any other didactic material than a course book.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the principal through written format, and from the teacher through oral authorization. Confidentiality was maintained through password-protected data banks, with only the researcher having access to the data.

METHODS, TECHNIQUES, AND INSTRUMENTS

This general denomination includes description of research design, methods and techniques used along the research stages as well as the data collection instruments and resources. The procedure followed in conducting the study is also described in this section.

METHODS

Action Research was adopted as the research design of the study and was integrated within the development of the academic course. This study aimed to describe the data resulting from the application of an intervention plan. The following general methods were applied along the descriptive research:

The Scientific method assisted the study of the crossword puzzles applied in the development of the English vocabulary. It helped in the observations done before and during the intervention, and it also assisted during the anticipation of the possible solution. This particular method helped support data collection in order to make relevant predictions and further analysis.

The Descriptive method enabled the researcher to describe the stages of pre-observations, planning a change, acting and observing the processes and consequences of the study and the kind of resources used in each step. It served to explain and analyze the object of the investigation.

The analytic-synthetic method was used to analyze the obtained results through two questionnaires of six questions each, two tests of 17 items and teacher's field diary. It was adopted also to interpret the data, develop the logical analysis and draw conclusions.

The statistic method made possible the quantitative statistical analysis of data derived from the pre and post tests and pre and post questionnaires as well as the qualitative text analysis of the data received from the observation, and teacher's diary.

TECHNIQUES

Specific techniques were adopted along each stage of the research process, from the formation of the theoretical framework to the discussion of results. In forming the Theoretical Framework and Literature Review, extensive reading was conducted and the use of outlines and index cards helped facilitate learning and focus the information. Technology offered valuable help in the process of creating bibliographical sources and citations. APA style was assumed as the formal system for format organization and citation.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The instruments used to collect the information were the following:

• Two Questionnaires, (Annex, pag156), were designed to apply at the beginning and at the end of the intervention. Both of questionnaires contained six multiple choice questions that were focused on how vocabulary is taught and which strategies were used to learn it.

• The Field diary (Annex, pag165), collected qualitative data. It recorded the students' progress in each class. It contains relevant information and questions for knowing about the students' development in the intervention process.

• Two researcher's-made tests (Annex, pag160), the pre-test and post-test, also were applied one at the beginning and the other at the end of the intervention. These contained three questions about vocabulary words taught in order to know student`s knowledge in the identification and usage of them.

MATERIALS

This research work was accomplished with the help of three main resources. The Human resources that participated during the different stages were the target population, the cooperating English school teacher, the thesis advisor and the researcher. In this research the target population was fifth- A year students of basic education of the Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo School. The

cooperating teacher helped provide general information about that target students and the thesis advisor supervised the development of the stages of the study. The researcher worked actively in order to learn from the various human resources and also played an active role in this research work.

A personal computer, internet, pen drive, and multimedia were some of the technological resources used. Office supplies such as handouts, flashcards, videos, textbooks and bibliography were important material components as well.

PROCEDURE

The study started with the observations of the English classes of the fifth-A year students in order to identify the issues the students were facing.

An intervention plan, (Annex, pag147) organized in five lessons, was designed with the help of the literature framework. Then, the intervention plan was applied from March to June. During this stage quantitative and qualitative data was collected using the instruments mentioned above. The questions of the test were grouped according to the Blooms cognitive approach to assessments. It means that it was considered what students need to perform in order to answer the questions correctly.

After collecting the data it was tabulated and translated into tables. Means for each test section were calculated to have a better overall view of performance of the class in each test.

The Pearson Correlation coefficient $r = \frac{n(\Sigma xy) - (\Sigma x)(\Sigma y)}{\sqrt{[n(\Sigma x^2) - (\Sigma x)^2][n(\Sigma y^2) - (\Sigma y)^2]}}$ was used to find out the relationship between the learning outcomes before and after the intervention plan. It is one of the best means for evaluating the strength of a relationship between pre and posttests (x and y). Both variables were expressed in terms of quantitative scores and the statistical analysis was used to determine whether there was a significant change in achievement from the base line data to the posttest results.

Observation data was also obtained by periodical monitoring of the evaluation of the language skill by means of a researcher field diary.

The discussion of the outcomes was completed with the triangulation of the findings and the literature that supports this study. The conclusions were drawn considering the initial inquiries. Finally, the thesis was written and disseminated.

f. RESULTS

In this section the data received from questionnaires and tests is presented in tables and figures. An analysis is done after each table or figure.

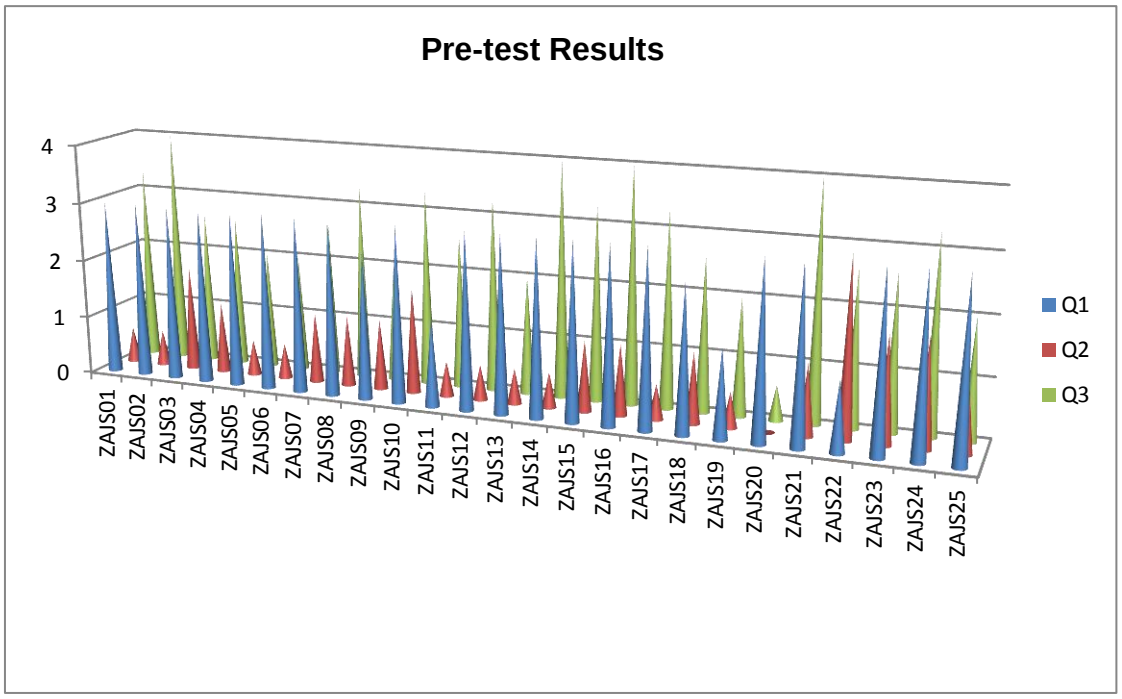
Table 1

Pre-test Results

Students' code	R			TOTAL
	Q1	Q2	Q3	
ZAJS01	3	0,6	3,3	6,9
ZAJS02	3	0,6	4	7,6
ZAJS03	3	1,8	2,6	7,4
ZAJS04	3	1,2	2,6	6,8
ZAJS05	3	0,6	2	5,6
ZAJS06	3	0,6	2	5,6
ZAJS07	3	1,2	2,6	6,8
ZAJS08	3	1,2	3,3	7,5
ZAJS09	2,5	1,2	2	5,7
ZAJS10	3	1,8	3,3	8,1
ZAJS11	1,5	0,6	2,6	4,7
ZAJS12	3	0,6	3,3	6.9
ZAJS13	3	0,6	2	5,6
ZAJS14	3	0,6	4	7,6
ZAJS15	3	1,2	3,3	7,5
ZAJS16	3	1,2	4	8,2
ZAJS17	3	0,6	3,3	6.9
ZAJS18	2,5	1,2	2,6	6,3
ZAJS19	1,5	0,6	2	4,1
ZAJS20	3	0	0,6	3,6
ZAJS21	3	1,2	4	8,2
ZAJS22	1,2	3	2,6	6,8
ZAJS23	3	1,8	2,6	7,4
ZAJS24	3	1,8	3,3	8,1
ZAJS25	3	1,2	2	6,2
MEAN	**2,7**	**1**	**2,7**	**6**

Note. Q= question; R= remembering; questions are grouped according to the cognitive process, the ability to apply knowledge (Bloom's cognitive behavior theory); ZAJS01= Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo No. 1(school name)

Figure 1



According to the results of table one most of the students (fifteen), got a score less than seven points over ten. Few students (ten), got a score higher than seven. It means that most of students (fifteen), had difficulties with the vocabulary. Question two which is related to remember the spelling form of the vocabulary words, is one where most of the students (twenty four), had more difficulty to answer. This implies that students need to be more exposed to do activities that help them to master the vocabulary and use it.

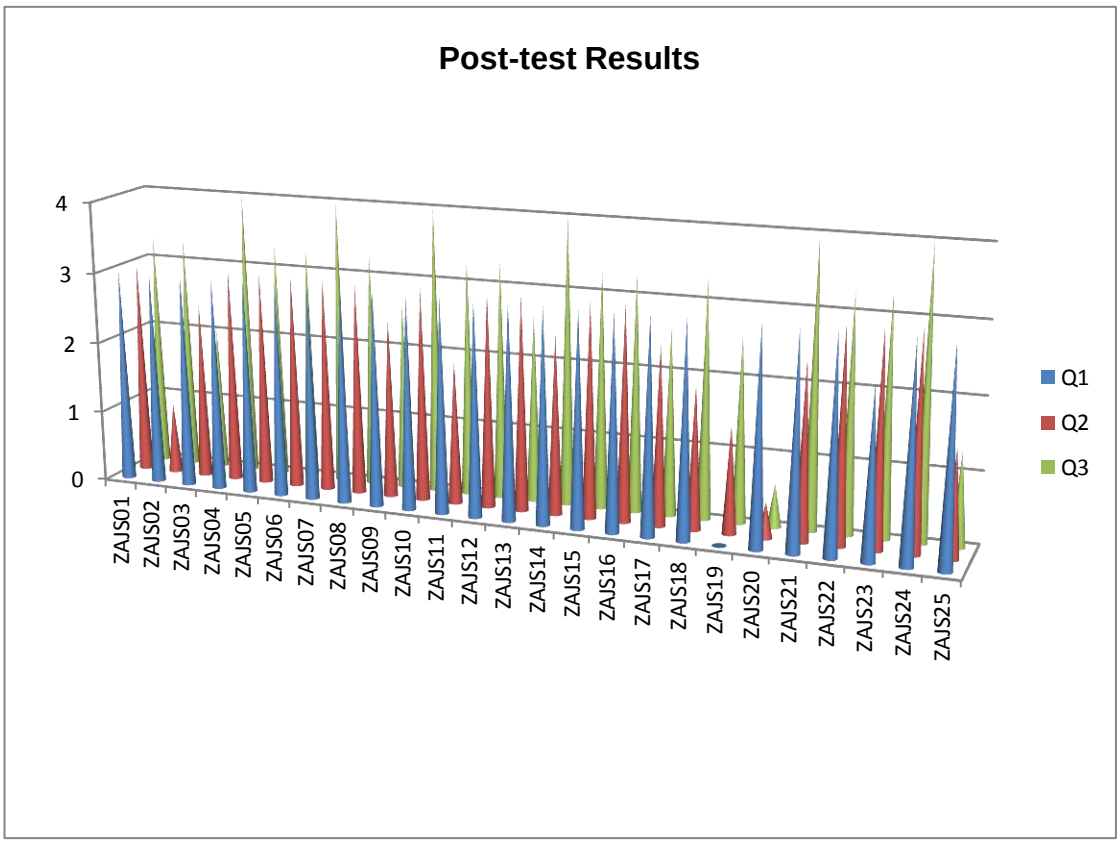
Table 2

Post-test Results

Students' code	R			TOTAL
	Q1	Q2	Q3	
ZAJS01	3	3	3,3	9,3
ZAJS02	3	1	3,3	7,3
ZAJS03	3	2,5	2	7,5
ZAJS04	3	3	4	10
ZAJS05	3	3	3,3	9,3
ZAJS06	3	3	3,3	9,3
ZAJS07	3	3	4	10
ZAJS08	3	3	3,3	9,3
ZAJS09	3	2,5	2,6	8,1
ZAJS10	3	3	4	10
ZAJS11	3	2	3,3	8,3
ZAJS12	3	3	3,3	9,3
ZAJS13	3	3	2,6	8,6
ZAJS14	3	2,5	4	9,5
ZAJS15	3	3	3,3	9,3
ZAJS16	3	3	3,3	9,3
ZAJS17	3	2,5	2,6	8,1
ZAJS18	3	2	3,3	8,3
ZAJS19	0	1,5	2,6	4,1
ZAJS20	3	0,5	0,6	4,1
ZAJS21	3	2,5	4	9,5
ZAJS22	3	3	3,3	9,3
ZAJS23	2,4	3	3,3	8,7
ZAJS24	3	3	4	10
ZAJS25	3	1,5	1,3	5,8
MEAN	**2,8**	**2,5**	**3,1**	**8,4**

Note. Q= question; R= remembering; questions are grouped according to the cognitive process, the ability to apply knowledge (Bloom's cognitive behavior theory); ZAJS01= Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo No. 1(school name)

Figure 2



In table two, data reveals that there has been a significant change in the performance of students about vocabulary, in the post test; almost all students (twenty two), got good scores higher than seven. Only a few students (three) got a slight progress with scores less than six. It is evident, the intervention plan helped students to master the vocabulary taught and use it. It also means that using crossword puzzles as a strategy to improve the English vocabulary facilitates students to memorize, recall, and most important get exact spelling of the English words.

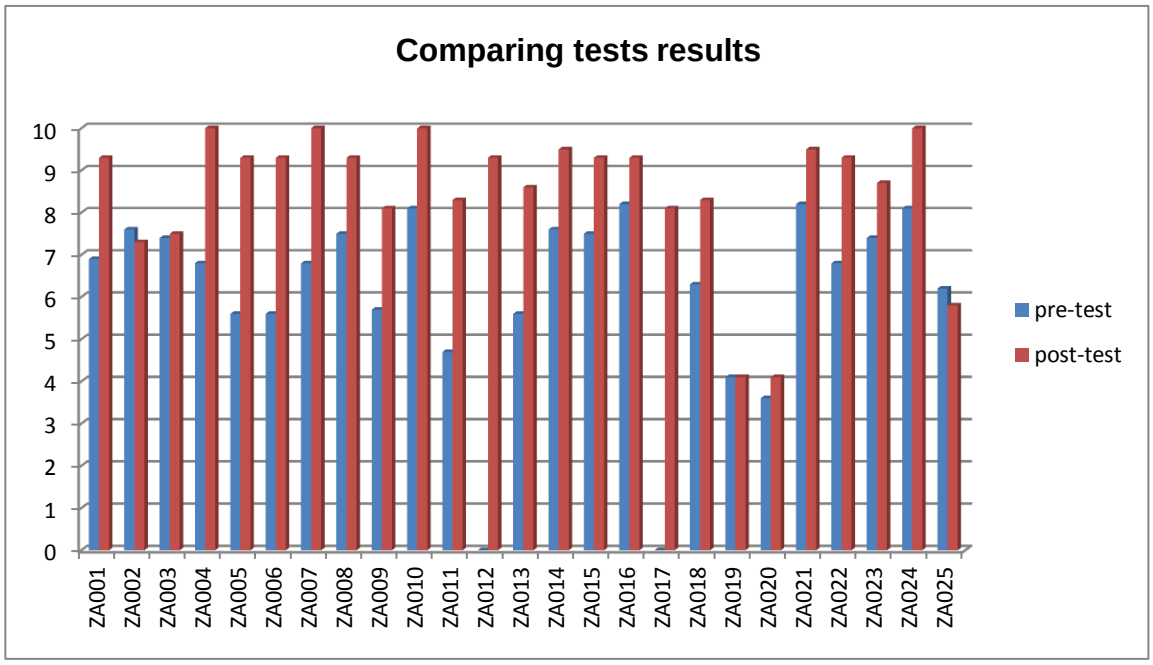
Table 3

Comparing tests results

Students' code	Pre-test	Post-test			
	X	Y	XY	X^2	Y^2
ZAJS01	6,9	9,3	64,17	47,61	86,49
ZAJS02	7,6	7,3	55,48	57,76	53,29
ZAJS03	7,4	7,5	55.5	54,76	56,25
ZAJS04	6,8	10	68	46,24	100
ZAJS05	5,6	9,3	52.08	31,36	86,49
ZAJS06	5,6	9,3	52.08	31,36	86,49
ZAJS07	6,8	10	68	46,24	100
ZAJS08	7,5	9,3	69.75	56,25	86,49
ZAJS09	5,7	8,1	46.17	32,49	65,61
ZAJS10	8,1	10	81	65,61	100
ZAJS11	4,7	8,3	39.01	22,09	68,89
ZAJS12	6.9	9,3	64.17	47,61	86,49
ZAJS13	5,6	8,6	48.16	31,36	73,96
ZAJS14	7,6	9,5	72.2	57,76	90,25
ZAJS15	7,5	9,3	69.75	56,25	86,49
ZAJS16	8,2	9,3	76.26	67,24	86,49
ZAJS17	6.9	8,1	55.89	47,61	65,61
ZAJS18	6,3	8,3	52.29	39,69	68,89
ZAJS19	4,1	4,1	16.81	16,81	16,81
ZAJS20	3,6	4,1	14.76	12,96	16,81
ZAJS21	8,2	9,5	77.9	67,24	90,25
ZAJS22	6,8	9,3	63.24	46,24	86,49
ZAJS23	7,4	8,7	64.38	54,76	75,69
ZAJS24	8,1	10	81	65,61	100
ZAJS25	6,2	5,8	35.96	38,44	33,64
Σ	**166,1**	**212,3**	**1444,01**	**1141,35**	**1867,87**

Note. Q= question; R= remembering; questions are grouped according to the cognitive process, the ability to apply knowledge (Bloom's cognitive behavior theory); ZAJS01= Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo No. 1(school name)

Figure 3



$$r = \frac{\mathrm{n}(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2][n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{25(1444{,}01) - (166.1)(212{,}3)}{\sqrt{[25(1141.35) - (166.1)^2][25(1867{,}87) - (212{,}3)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{(36100.25) - (35263.03)}{\sqrt{[(28533.75) - (27589.21)][(46696.75) - (45071.29)]}}$$

$$r = \frac{837.22}{\sqrt{(944.54)(1625.46)}}$$

$$r = \frac{837.22}{\sqrt{1535311{,}988}}$$

$$r = \frac{837.22}{1239.077071}$$

$$r = 0.67$$

The results strikingly change from the first test to the second one. In effect, in the first test most of the students (twenty four), failed mostly in the second question. It means that students were not used to do those activities and did not know how to write the vocabulary words evaluated. However, most of them

(twenty two), in the second test rightly answered all the three questions, even the second question where they failed more in the pretest. It is undoubtedly that crossword puzzles have helped fifth-A year students in the learning of new words mainly with exact spelling.

COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE PRE AND POST QUESTIONNAIRES

- **QUESTION 1:**

  Do you like the way your teacher explains the English vocabulary?

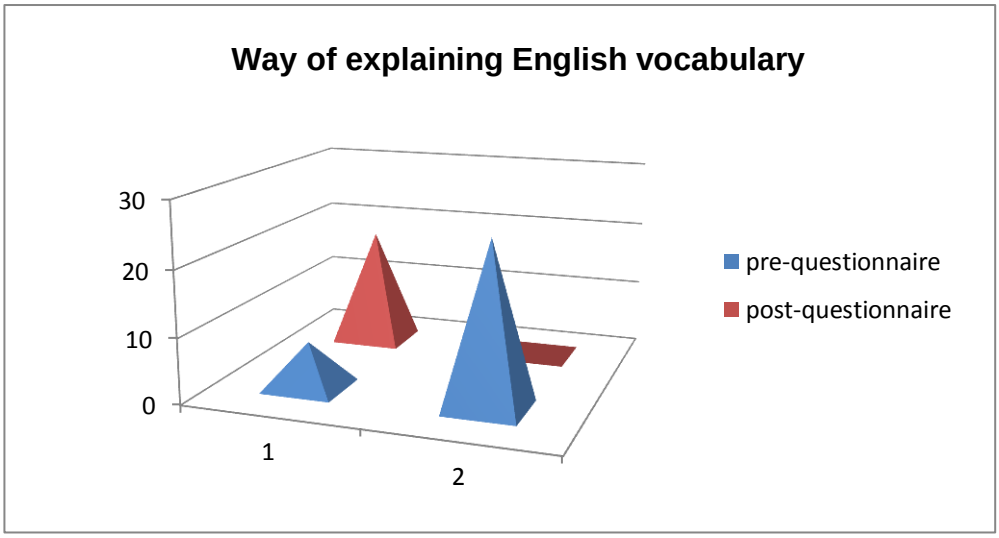
Table 4

Way of explaining English vocabulary

Pre-q			Post-q		
Options	f	%	Options	f	%
Yes	7	28%	Yes	25	100%
No	18	72%	No	0	0%
Total	25	100%	Total	25	100%

Source: Fifth-A year students of "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" School.
Researcher: Luis Eduardo Malla Medina.

Figure 4



The results show in the pre questionnaire that the majority of students (72%), did not like how the teacher explained the English vocabulary. However, in the post questionnaire after using crossword puzzles as strategy, there is a significant difference since all students (100%), stated that they all like how the vocabulary is explained. It means that after having used a different strategy like crossword puzzles, it really motivated students to work with this strategy. Since the results show that the students´ attitude toward learning with it changed.

According to Coady & Huchin (1997) the teaching of vocabulary should be done through exposure of learners to various vocabulary enhancing activities. Therefore the use of crossword puzzles is one of the best strategies that a teacher can employ to teach effectively vocabulary.

- **QUESTION 2:**

  Do you have difficulties in the learning of English vocabulary?

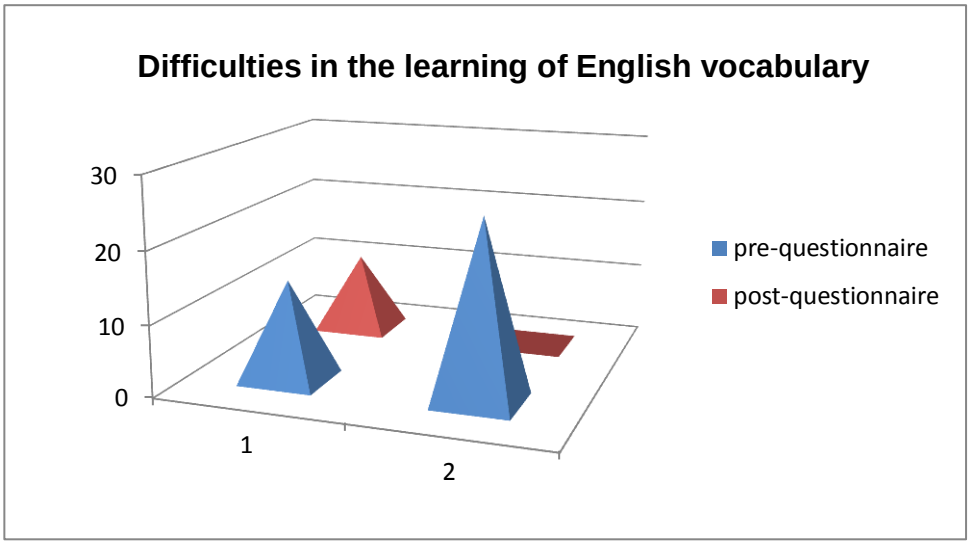
Table 5

Difficulties in the learning of English vocabulary

Pre-q			**Post-q**		
Options	f	%	Options	f	%
Yes	13	52%	Yes	5	20%
No	12	48%	No	20	80%
Total	25	100%	Total	25	100%

Source: Fifth-A year students of "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" School.
Researcher: Luis Eduardo Malla Medina.

Figure 5



As it is shown in table five, before the intervention, more than half of the students (52%), pointed out they had difficulties in the learning of English vocabulary. However, in the post questionnaire notably the results have changed; since the majority of students (80%), stated they overcame all these difficulties in learning vocabulary. It means that crossword puzzles are so effective for learning new vocabulary as well as improve students' familiarity with them through a lot of practice.

According to Davis (2009) Students' difficulties in learning English vocabulary are mostly solved through the use of crossword puzzles; since it is an effective strategy in students' acquisition of vocabulary that helps them construct and improve their vocabulary enlargement.

- **QUESTION 3:**

  Which strategies are used to learn English vocabulary in your class?

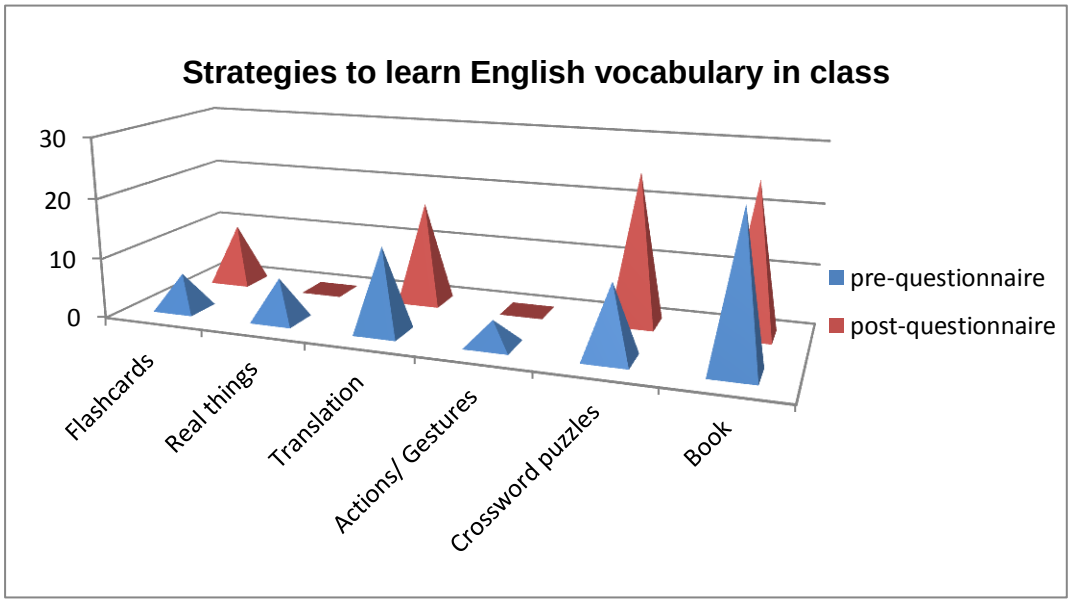
Table 6

Strategies to learn English vocabulary in class

Strategies	Pre-q		Post-q	
	f	%	f	%
Flashcards	6	24%	10	40%
Real things	7	28%	0	0%
Translation	14	56%	17	68%
Actions/ Gestures	4	16%	0	0%
Crossword puzzles	12	48%	25	100%
Book	25	100%	25	100%

Source: Fifth-A year students of "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" School.
Researcher: Luis Eduardo Malla Medina.

Figure 6



As it is indicated in table six, all students (100%), pointed out that the strategy most used in the English classes before the intervention was the book. Though in the results of the post-questionnaire the strategies most used were crossword puzzles and the book. It means that these two strategies provided significant contribution in the improvement of the students' vocabulary, making

the learners memorize new words easily and helping recalling them at any moment. It is evident now that the strategies most used are crossword puzzles and the book.

The lack of use of strategies in vocabulary affects students´ success in the learning of it (Laufer, 2003). To avoid this problem teachers need to find out strategies in order to make the learning of vocabulary more effective. The use of vocabulary strategies to teach students make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, and more effective (Oxford, 2003).

- **QUESTION 4:**

  How often are these strategies used in the English classes to practice vocabulary?

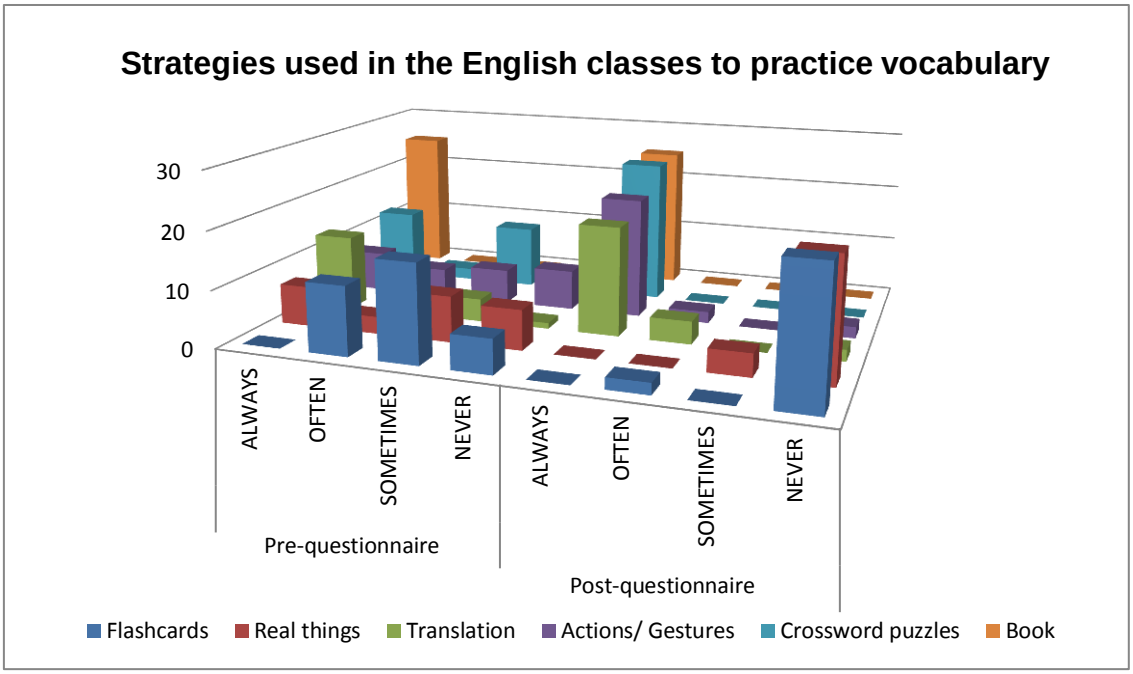
Table 7

Strategies used in the English classes to practice vocabulary

Strategies	**Pre-questionnaire**								**Post-questionnaire**							
	Always		Often		Somet.		Never		Always		Often		Somet.		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Flashcards	0	0%	12	48%	17	68%	6	24%	0	0%	2	8%	0	0%	23	92%
Real things	7	28%	3	12%	8	32%	7	28%	0	0%	0	0%	4	16%	21	84%
Translation	13	52%	7	28%	4	16%	1	4%	19	76%	4	16%	0	0%	2	8%
Actions/ Gestures	7	28%	5	20%	6	24%	7	28%	21	84%	2	8%	0	0%	2	8%
Crossword puzzles	12	48%	2	8%	11	44%	0	0%	25	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Book	25	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	25	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Source: Fifth-A year students of "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" School.
Researcher: Luis Eduardo Malla Medina.

Figure 7



It appears from table seven that the resource the teacher always uses is the book according to what all students (100%) indicated. More than half of the students (68%), also mention that the teacher sometimes uses flashcards. Nevertheless after having used a different strategy to teach English vocabulary such as crossword puzzles during the intervention, we can see in the results of the post-questionnaire that the strategies the teacher always uses are: the crossword puzzles and the book too. This was indicated by all students (100%). It implies that crossword puzzles have an important role in the teaching learning process, especially in teaching vocabulary.

As Hurwitz (1969) says one of the most helpful strategies for practicing English vocabulary is through crossword puzzles. Crossword puzzles can increase the students' vocabulary acquisition because with this strategy, the students are learning by doing. Learning by doing is more meaningful and motivating.

- **QUESTION 5:**

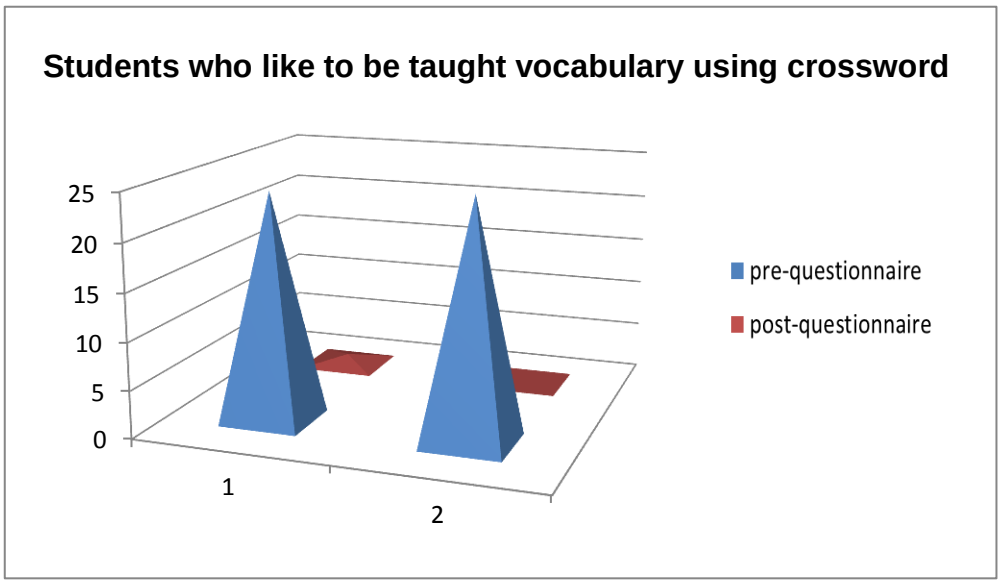
  Do you like to be taught vocabulary using crossword puzzles?

Table 8
Students who like to be taught vocabulary using crossword puzzles

Pre-q			Post- q		
Options	f	%	Options	f	%
Yes	24	96%	Yes	25	100%
No	1	4%	No	0	0%
Total	25	100%	Total	25	100%

Source: Fifth-A year students of "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" School.
Researcher: Luis Eduardo Malla Medina.

Figure 8



According to the information showed above, it can be seen that in the pre-questionnaire almost all students (96%), answered they like to be taught vocabulary using crossword puzzles; while only one student (4%), stated that she does not like it. Nonetheless, in the post-questionnaire all students (100%), agree that they all like to be taught vocabulary using crossword puzzles. It means that students really like filling the crossword puzzles and learning while having fun is so effective.

Crossword puzzles are often perceived as being a recreational activity, therefore making them more enjoyable and less threatening than traditional teaching strategies (Crossman & Crossman, 1983; Childers, 1996).

- **QUESTION 6:**

  Using crossword puzzles to improve English vocabulary is:

Table 9

Crossword puzzles to improve English vocabulary

Pre-q			Post-q		
Options	f	%	Options	f	%
Fun	10	40%	Fun	17	68%
Boring	7	28%	Boring	0	0%
Complicated	0	0%	Complicated	0	0%
Easy	8	32%	Easy	8	32%
Total	25	100%	Total	25	100%

Source: Fifth-A year students of "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" School.
Researcher: Luis Eduardo Malla Medina.

Figure 9

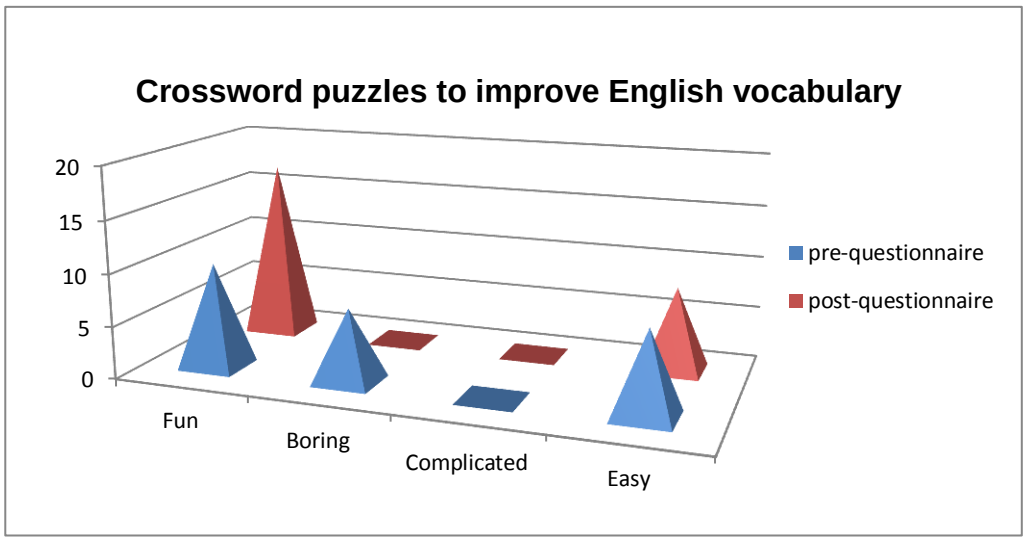


Table nine indicates that in the pre questionnaire almost half of the students (40%), stated that using crossword puzzles to improve English vocabulary is

fun; while in the post questionnaire this quantity notably changed, since, more than half of the students (68%), agree that using crossword puzzles to improve their vocabulary is fun. On the other hand in the pre questionnaire a few students (28%), indicated that the use of crossword puzzles is boring; but in the post questionnaire students' perception toward working with this strategy changed, since nobody pointed out that crossword puzzles to improve the English vocabulary is boring. Both in the pre questionnaire and in the post questionnaire a small number of students (32%), indicated that the use of this strategy to improve the English vocabulary is easy. It is evident that the majority of students (68%), felt comfortable, happy, encouraged, animated and relaxed learning English using crossword puzzles.

Crossword puzzles are a strategy that makes the teaching-learning process attractive. Not only does the crossword puzzle offer a challenge that will motivate the students to try to solve the puzzle by making learning fun and relaxed, it also makes the classroom more enjoyable and productive place for both students and the teacher (Bressan, 1970).

g. DISCUSSION

The use of crossword puzzles to teach and learn vocabulary was the strategy proposed in this research work, which helped fifth-A year students to improve their vocabulary. The outcomes gathered from the posttests showed the students' progress with the vocabulary. The findings from the questionnaires revealed that students` attitude toward learning vocabulary through crossword puzzles changed significantly. The results were consistent with what Jones (2007) affirms that after doing numerous crossword puzzles, the learners become familiar with a number of words and phrases that they never knew about before.

The findings of the research carried out revealed an important change in the increment of the students' vocabulary. This change can be seen in the great increment of the students' scores from the pre-test (6/10) and the post-test (8.4/10). Thus, it is demonstrated that the students' vocabulary knowledge was improved with the use of crossword puzzles as Wiesskirch (2006) explains that students could gain more vocabulary knowledge through an enjoyable strategy like crossword puzzles.

The Students' interest toward learning vocabulary through crossword puzzles changed as the intervention past. At the beginning the students did not show much interest toward the use of crossword puzzles to learn vocabulary. These findings were recorded in the field diaries done by the researcher. In the first class some students did not understand how to solve the crossword puzzle. Since it was the first time students worked with that kind of activity. As this

strategy was applied along the classes, students start to get used to working and enjoy learning vocabulary with it.

The efficiency of crossword puzzles is also shown in the change of the student's perception toward learning with the use of crossword puzzles. The pre-questionnaire revealed that half of the students (52%), had difficulties in the learning of English vocabulary. However, in the post-questionnaire after applying crossword puzzles as a strategy, the results indicated that most of them overcame all those difficulties with vocabulary acquisition. The pre-questionnaire also revealed that most of students (72%), did not like how the teacher explained them the vocabulary. Yet in the post-questionnaire the students' attitude toward learning vocabulary through crossword puzzles changed. The effectiveness of crossword puzzles has been shown in many studies, both as a strategy to enhance students' vocabulary growth and to increase motivation and students' interest in the topic (Franklin et al. 2003).

This study was also even more precise by the students of fifth year "A". It was a great group because they were cooperative, enthusiastic, interested and respectful. Another strength was the classroom teacher and the school director who let me carry out the intervention. They were friendly, communicative and collaborative. However during the intervention also emerged some limitations such as: the classroom size which made the study harder because there were twenty five students in the class. One period of class weekly of forty five minutes was not enough for students and the researcher to develop more activities that help both parts. Another weakness was the environment which

was inappropriate for students because they do not have a specific classroom for the english class.

Lastly, this action research was a great practice not only for doing this study but also for gaining experience for the future as teacher. During the intervention was experienced how the crossword puzzles can help students to improve English vocabulary but also the weaknesses of applying it in teaching vocabulary. This work made reflect to me and others toward the importance of making practice as teacher using a specific strategy before starting as a professional. Questionnaires and the tests were the methods of data collection used in the intervention. They were essential for getting the quantitative and qualitative data. Making action research is a necessary work that should be done for gaining experience as a teacher and prove the effectiveness and weaknesses of certain strategies used in the teaching-learning process.

h. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings derived from the results of this study, the following conclusions were reached:

The issues that limited the vocabulary learning of fifth-A year students was the lack of exposure to learn it with a strategy that facilitates the learning. The results received in the pre questionnaire according to the students, showed that the vocabulary was taught using the textbook and translation. The students also mentioned that they had difficulties in understanding the meaning of English vocabulary. The pre-test revealed that they had more difficulties on remembering spelling.

The five sessions designed in the intervention plan were addressed to face the issues the students had in learning vocabulary. They were planned based on the students' cognitive process to build up their knowledge. Each lesson was prepared considering this approach. The five lessons were reinforced with activities that enabled students to identify and master new words.

The fill-in crossword puzzle was implemented to improve the vocabulary learned of fifth-A year students. The fill-in crossword puzzle offered a positive effect in improving the students' vocabulary helping them in the acquisition and practicing of new words as well as increased students' familiarity with them. In addition, it increased the students' motivation in learning vocabulary; since crossword puzzles are often perceived as being a recreational activity.

Applying crossword puzzles as part of the classroom activities improved the students' vocabulary achievement meaningfully. It was demonstrated in the students' collaboration to participate in each lesson and the progress they reached performing their tasks. The change of the scores from the pretest (6) and posttests (8, 4) is relevant evidence that demonstrates the positive impact that the Crossword puzzles had in this intervention.

To put it briefly, the use of crossword puzzles was an effective strategy that enabled fifth-A students to improve the English vocabulary. Student's motivation to learn vocabulary can be always better if the teacher provides enjoyable learning activities using strategies that facilitate the understanding of the meaning of the vocabulary.

i. RECOMENDATIONS

- Researcher suggests applying strategies to teach English vocabulary and understand how important and useful they are to improve it. Teachers should teach using crossword puzzles in order to raise students' motivation, foster their self-confidence, and lower their anxiety.

- In applying crossword puzzles, researchers need to select the right number of lessons in the intervention plan design. The correct number of lessons leads to the success of the intervention. Researcher suggests assigning more than five lessons for the intervention plan.

- Researcher suggests applying different types of crossword puzzles such as the fill-in crossword puzzle. It increases students' vocabulary, motivation and interest in the learning of new vocabulary.

- Crossword puzzles should be used as an alternative strategy in teaching vocabulary, especially as a review tool. The students find it fun, feel relaxed and enjoy participating in the learning process; they memorize the vocabulary in different ways. Crossword puzzles are associated with recreation, and can be less intimidating for students as review tools. Crossword puzzles can, therefore, be given at any point of time during the lesson, as a warmer, filler, or even end-of-lesson assessment.

- Crossword puzzles should be used in the English classes so that students can enjoy the teaching learning process and also they can memorize words easily.

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k. ANNEX

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAREER

PROJECT

THEME

THE USE OF CROSSWORD PUZZLES AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE VOCABULARY OF FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION PARALLEL "A" AT "ZOILA ALVARADO DE JARAMILLO" PUBLIC SCHOOL, ACADEMICPERIOD 2013-2014

Project of Thesis required for obtaining the Bachelor's Degree in Sciences of Education, English Language Major

AUTOR:

Luis Eduardo Malla Medina

LOJA – ECUADOR

2014

a. THEME

THE USE OF CROSSWORD PUZZLES AS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE THE VOCABULARY OF FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION PARALLEL “A” AT “ZOILA ALVARADO DE JARAMILLO” PUBLIC SCHOOL, ACADEMIC PERIOD 2013-2014

b. PROBLEM

2.1. BACKGROUND

This action research project will be carried out at Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo public School. It is located on the Bernardo Valdivieso Street in front of the San Sebastian Park or independence square of the city of Loja. This institution was created on September 15th in 1969. It started with the first and second grades but some years later, the authorities of the school complemented it with the rest of the grades from 1st to 7th grade.

This school has a staff of thirty professionals of the education, including the special teachers of science, computing, English language, aesthetic culture, and physical culture. There are 634 students enrolled that are normally attending to this school. The institution has seven grades of basic education, divided in 23 parallels.

Since it is a public institution its budget is financed by the government. The students that attend to the school come from different social and economic conditions. This educational center is one of the most important institutions in our city and it has a good status into the educational activity.

2.2. CURRENT SITUATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The fifth grade of basic education parallel “A” at Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo public school has 25 students (girls). They are among 8 to 9 years old. They receive one period of English class per week with a certified teacher; each period is about 40 minutes.

After several observations done, it has been evidenced that the English classes are developed in a traditional way. Every class the teacher starts without using a warm-up before to introduce any topic in order to motivate students. Also the

teacher reviews the students' homework with a check but there isn't any feedback. In addition, when the teacher presents a topic, she writes the new vocabulary or explains the new topic on the board and students have to memorize it in a mechanic way.

After that students work on their books by developing some activities such as: repeating written words, painting, completing sentences, in this way the students do not have the opportunity to participate in order to use the new knowledge that they have learnt. During the class, teacher supports students work by checking if students have completed the activities of their books.

Considering the lack of use of activities to teach English vocabulary, the researcher proposes the use of fun activities such as the use of crosswords puzzles to teach vocabulary as part of the process of the teaching and learning inside of this class. Crossword puzzles are not only games but also a teaching technique which can provide the best exercise for confirming the meaning of words in the students' mind.

2.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

How does the use of crossword puzzles improve the vocabulary of fifth year students of basic education parallel "A" at "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" public school, academic period 2013-2014?

2.4. DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

a. Temporal: The present research project will be developed during the academic year 2013-2014.

b. Spatial: the research will be carried out at the Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo School in the city of Loja.

c. Observation units

The researcher Luis Malla

Students of fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school.

d. Sub problems

- ♣ What kind of theoretical references about vocabulary and crossword puzzles are effective to the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014?

- ♣ What are the issues that limit the vocabulary learning with the use of crossword puzzles with the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014?

- ♣ What are the important phases of the intervention plan that address the current issues of the vocabulary learning with the students of fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014?

- ♣ Which crossword puzzles are implemented to improve the vocabulary learning of the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014?

- ♣ How do crossword puzzles as part of the classroom activities reduce the limitation of the vocabulary learning of the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014?

c. JUSTIFICATION

Vocabulary is an important aspect in the English learning process; especially when teaching vocabulary to elementary school students is challenging. Elementary school students still like to play and do some fun activities. Teaching vocabulary to them by using a traditional way (using dictionary to find the meaning of words) can make them bored easily. Therefore, teacher should be creative and innovative in teaching so that students can be fun in learning vocabulary. This action research has the purpose of using crossword puzzles to increase the students' vocabulary of fifth grade students. And the reasons that motivate the researcher are: expand the vocabulary of the fifth grade students, gain practice during the intervention, and to obtain the bachelor's degree English language specialization.

Teaching students with crossword puzzles is a method of vocabulary teaching through solving a crossword. In the English worksheet a crossword usually consists of the words concerning the topic of the lesson. For example, if a lesson topic is 'Food and Drink' the words used in the crossword would include: 'potato', 'borsch', 'pizza', 'melon' etc. Teaching students with crossword puzzles enables the teacher to give students a task that can be used as a test of their instant vocabulary. Additionally, these crossword puzzles are often perceived as being a recreational activity, therefore making them more enjoyable and less threatening than traditional teaching techniques (Crossman & Crossman, 1983).

The purpose of any action research is to let practitioners learn from the experience in teaching. At this time, since the researcher is an undergraduate student the development of this research work will let him experience the challenges he will face in the future as professional, since applying the strategy to the problem he wants to improve, it will let him know if what he is going to do is effective or not.

Finally, this action research is a previous requirement for an English Career undergraduate in order to receive the Bachelors of Arts Degree in Sciences of the Education, English language specialization. Also, it will enable the researcher to get the accreditation of the social research design course.

In conclusion, an alternative that seems to be good in teaching vocabulary is the application of crossword puzzle games, since it is a good strategy to help students construct and improve their vocabulary enlargement, making the classroom a more enjoyable and productive place for both students and the teacher. Crossword puzzles often involve acquiring new vocabulary and bring students to intentionally interest in attending the meaning behind new vocabulary.

d. OBJECTIVES

4.1 GENERAL

- To improve the vocabulary of fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school through the use of crossword puzzles, academic period 2013-2014.

4.2 SPECIFIC

- To investigate the theoretical references about vocabulary and crossword puzzles as a strategy to improve the vocabulary of the students of the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014.

- To diagnose the issues that limit the vocabulary learning with fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014.

- To design an intervention plan with the use of crossword puzzles to improve the vocabulary of the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014.

- To apply the intervention plan as part of the classroom activities in order to solve the limitations in the learning of vocabulary of the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014.

- To reflect upon the effect that the crossword puzzles had on the vocabulary of the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014.

e. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

5.1. VOCABULARY

5.1.1. THE DEFINITION OF VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is the total number of words in a language (Hornby, 1995).Vocabulary is an important part to mastery English well. According to Pigeat's theory, a child at the age of 7 – 10 years is always interesting in recognizing and knowing new words, he stands to repeat new words repeatedly so that he will memorize them.

There are essential steps of learning vocabulary (Brown, 1995; 373) which has recited by Cameron:

• Having source for encountering new words.
•Getting a clear image for the form of new words.
•Learning the meaning of new words
•Making a strong memory connection between the form and the meaning of the words.
•Using the words.

In teaching to children, teacher has to use performance to teach vocabulary to them, because the children in literacy level are performing it, it means children learn language with accompanying action / scaffolding. In this level, teacher can use media, according to (Nation, 2001)in recited by Cameron is listed basic technique of explaining the meaning of new words.

By demonstration picture:
•Using an object
•Using a cut-out picture
•Using gesture
• Performance action
• Photographs

•Drawing and or diagram on the board
• Picture from books, TV, Video or Computer

By verbal explanation:
•Analytical definition
• Putting in a context
•Translating

5.1.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCABULARY

Foreign language learners are always in need to learn and enlarge their vocabulary.

This is supported by Wilkins (1972) who states that “without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (Thornbury2002). Beginners often manage to communicate in English using individual words, and they can most of the time covey meaning without necessarily having acquired grammar. This is the evidence that in learning a language, grammar is not sufficient and, thus, more importance has to be given to vocabulary.

Wilkins (1972) in his advice also states that “if you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much, you will see most improvement if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words”. A view that meets Krashen’s view (1993) who postulates that vocabulary is so crucial because usually when learners go abroad, they face some problems to communicate with the native speakers of the host country to convey their messages. This can be done through using only a word rather than grammar rules. “When students travel, they don’t carry grammar books, they carry dictionaries”. Therefore, an ability to use grammatical structure does not have any potential for expressing meaning unless words are used.

5.1.3. TEACHING VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is very important for second language learners; only with sufficient vocabulary learners can effectively express their ideas both in oral and written form. Thus they should have a good idea of how to expand their vocabulary so that they can improve their interest in learning the language.

Language teachers, therefore, should possess considerable knowledge on how to manage an interesting classroom so that the learners can gain a great success in their vocabulary learning.

Teaching vocabulary plays an important role in language acquisition because the mastery of vocabulary will help students to master all the language skills; speaking; listening; writing; and reading. The vocabulary will make the students practice life and will strengthen belief that English can be used to express the same ideas or feeling they express in their native language (Finocchiaro, 1973).Furthermore, in teaching vocabulary the teacher can introduce the list of vocabulary that is taken from the book. The teacher uses and adds other vocabulary which is relevant to the students. Teacher needs a good knowledge on their teaching materials. When they have to teach the students about vocabulary, teachers should know the general knowledge of vocabulary, words and also the meaning. The words or vocabulary can be spoken and written. Wallace(1982) explains that teaching vocabulary should consider these following factors:

1) Aims

The aim of teaching vocabulary is to make the teacher easy to formulate the materials, which will be taught to the students.

2) Quantity

The teacher has to decide the number of vocabulary items to be learned. The learners will get confuse or discouraged if they get many new words.

Therefore, the teacher should select new words, which can easy to understand by the learners

3) Need

In teaching vocabulary, the teacher has to choose the words really needed by the students in communication.

4) Frequent exposure and repetition

Frequent exposure and repetition here means that the teacher should give much practice on repetition so that the students master the target words well. They also give opportunity to the students to use words in writing or speaking.

5) Meaningful presentation

In teaching vocabulary the teacher should present target words in such a way that the meaning of the target words are perfectly clear and unambiguous.

6) Situation and presentation

The teachers tell the students that they have to use the words appropriately.
The use of words depends on the situation in which they are used and depends on the person to whom they are speaking.

From the explanation above I conclude that the teachers must know the different kinds of vocabulary. In addition, understanding the above factors is very important for the teacher before teaching vocabulary to elementary school.

5.1.4. VOCABULARY LEARNING

Nation (2001) identified three general processes involved in vocabulary learning. They are noticing, retrieval, and generative use. He also explores the distinction between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. If learners

can understand the meaning of the words through reading or listening they have receptive knowledge but if the learners can use the words meaningfully in writing or speaking and can spell words it will be productive knowledge.

As Nation (2001) points out, receptive vocabulary involves perceiving the form of the word through listening or reading and retrieving its meaning. Productive vocabulary involves expressing meaning through speaking or writing and producing appropriate forms. Holden (1999) describes a variety of ways to help learners remember new words and to choose strategies that suit their own learning styles. She recommends “repeated exposure to new lexical items using a variety of means” and also suggests that integrative strategies for vocabulary learning have a positive effect on the retention of vocabulary in the learners’ minds because words seem to be stored in word association networks and collocation networks. She suggested a number of memory and mnemonic strategies but I am more interested here in word association or word elaboration strategies in which learners have to relate new words to other words in a way that helps the learners to remember the new vocabulary.

This study focuses on young learners. Harmer (2001) points out that young learners up to nine or ten years old tend to learn differently from older learners because they have a limited attention span. Thus, unless activities are engaging, they can easily get bored and lose interest. Harmer (2001) points out other ways in which young learners learn differently: they learn indirectly rather than directly; they understand from what they see and interact with around them as well as from teachers’ explanations; and they are focused on themselves as individuals (me, here, now) and need individual attention. For the above reasons, games are especially appropriate for young learners. Philips (1993) also discusses the types of activities which are suitable for young learners, such as using vocabulary networks simple enough for children to understand. She suggests that new vocabulary items should always be taught in context and says that learners always need plenty of opportunities to practice and apply the target vocabulary items that they have learned.

Philips (1993) mentions that “games in the language classroom help children to see learning English as enjoyable and rewarding.” I thus added some pictures to the games I used in this study because, as Philips (1999) states “the best way to learn vocabulary is when the meaning of the word is illustrated for example by a picture or real objects.

5.1.5. TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

5.1.5.1 TECHNIQUES IN PRESENTING VOCABULARY

Proposed by Thornbury (2002) and Nation (2001) a variety of techniques can be used or combined in introducing vocabulary. If the latter listed a set of choices related to presenting the meaning through:

- **Translation**
- **Real things**
- **Pictures**
- **Actions/ Gestures**
- **Definitions**
- **Situations**

With a choice whether to present the word in its:

- **Spoken form, or**
- **Written form**

The former grouped those techniques into four categories. As cited by (Nguyen H., 2009), those four groups are as below:

Showing the meaning of words visually. This was, as indicated by Doff was the most common way in the very first stage to present meaning of a new word. This group involves using pictures (mostly for concrete words); using realia (the

real object to bring to classroom); or using mime (demonstrate meaning of the word by actions or facial expressions).

Showing the meaning of words in context .This technique is performed by using examples, situation or explanation. This is most commonly used for abstract words, which appear to be inexplicable by using visual aids.

Using synonyms and/or antonyms. This depends on the familiarity of the word that teacher is going to present in class.

Translation. This is sometimes considered to be a traditional way but turns out to be an effective use within classroom context. Showing meaning of a new word by using translation can be quicker and easier for teacher so that time for other activities can be saved ultimately.

Normally, as also suggested by Doff, a combination of the techniques mentioned in four groups above should be implemented when it comes to the effectiveness of presenting meaning of new words. This is because of the reason that each technique when combined will reinforce and support the others; thus, making the presentation of new words clearer and more efficient.

5.1.5.2. TECHNIQUES IN PRACTICING VOCABULARY

For practicing vocabulary stage, as mentioned in How to teach vocabulary by Thornbury (2002), there can be a variety of tasks which can be used in order to help move words into long-term memory. Those tasks, clarified by him, require learners to make decisions about words and they can be divided into five types in order of least cognitively demanding to most demanding:

- **Identifying**
- **Selecting**
- **Matching**
- **Sorting**

- **Ranking and sequencing**

Identifying tasks involving tasks of finding words in texts. “Listen then tick the words you hear” can be one obvious example of this type. Identification is the first step in recognizing words and requires learners do easy task as counting, ticking or a bit difficult is to unscramble words as in anagram.
Selecting tasks, as clearly stated by the linguist is “cognitively more complex than identification tasks”. For selecting tasks, learners will have to do recognizing words and making choices amongst them at the same time. Finding and odd one out is a common task that teachers may often use in class for checking comprehension. Apart from recognizing and making choice amongst words, learners are also requested to do.

Matching tasks. In this kind of task, learners may need to pair a set of given words to a “visual representation, for example, or to a translation, a synonym/antonym, a definition or acollocate.” By grouping words into different categories, learners are being asked to do.

Sorting task. It should be noted that the categories can be given in advance or learners have o guess what the categories are.

The most cognitively complex and demanding tasks in this stage are ranking and sequencing activities. Different form sorting when learners merely putting words into categories, in ranking tasks, they may have to put words into unfixed order, often created by learners ‘preferences themselves. One clear example can be “what to buy first for an empty flat?” (Thornbury, 2002).

5.1.5.3. TECHNIQUES IN CONSOLIDATING AND REVISING VOCABULARY

There are no fixed techniques proposed by group writers of lecturers at English Department, specific tasks were listed instead. They are as follow:

- **Ordering**
- **Rub out and remember**
- **Networks**
- **Bingo**
- **Word storm**
- **Slap the board**
- **Guess the picture**
- **Matching**
- **Noughts and Crosses**
- **What & where**
- **Word square**
- **Jumbled words**

As for Thornbury (2002), those listed activities above are some common games which assist teachers in implementing a productive vocabulary lesson with learners. The final stage, as further recommended by him, highly involves production tasks in which learners, after having made decisions will actually produce something as a product of their own. In this way, learners will turn words from receptive to productive and put them into long-term memory.

For production tasks, there are two major types that teachers may have used them very often namely: completion and creation (both are of sentence and texts).

Sentence and text completion tasks are generally known as gap-fills. In gap-fills, the distinction between open and close gap-fills is necessarily noticeable. In close gap-fill, words are provided in advance whilst in open gap-fill; learners have to fill in basing on their amount of lexical items. Multiple choices, as suggested by Thornbury (2002) also fit in well with this completion task category. For completion tasks, there varies a number of instruction such as: complete the text by writing an appropriate word in each space; choose the best word from the list to complete each sentence. Use each word once; or choose words from the text you have just read to complete these sentences, etc.

If text and sentence are often provided in completion tasks, they are often created by learners in creation tasks. The tasks sound difficult; however, this is a typical feature of those tasks. Besides, learners may not have to produce all

on their own, they are sometimes provided with a set of words from which they would choose to use in their sentences or texts.

For creation tasks, such typical instructions are used: choose six words from the list and write a sentence using each one; or write a short narrative (dialogue) which includes at least five words from the list, etc.

5.1.6. STEPS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING VOCABULARY

5.1.6.1. STEPS OF TEACHING VOCABULARY

In designing a vocabulary course, Coady & Huchin (1997) proposed that the teachers must take into consideration not only the situation in which the course occurs but also how vocabulary should be selected for teaching. They also considered how it should be sequenced and how it should be presented.

5.1.6.1.1. SELECTION

Early researchers looked for the best vocabulary that can result to a best learning. They provided lists of the most widely used words in early stages of learning (they estimated 2000 words). In addition, they took as a second variable of vocabulary selection the range of words used in spoken language. However, frequency and range are not the only two factors; there are also other factors such as combination, definition and substitution of words. Some of these factors were used by West (1953) as frequency, range and replace ability in his book General Service List of English Words that consists of 2000 words. The most appropriate learning strategy here is “selective attention” i.e. the teacher should draw the learners‟ attention to the target word and he should ensure that he notices it. The teacher can do this through underlining, bold-facing and circling (Coady & Huchin, 1997).

5.1.6.1.2. SEQUENCING

There are two main sequences in which teaching vocabulary is based on. The first one is levels of vocabulary; the second one is grouping and ordering of words. The table below is adapted from Nation (2001) shows the division of levels of vocabulary.

Levels	Number of Words	Text Coverage %
High frequency words	2 000	87
Academic vocabulary	800	08
Technical vocabulary	2 000	03
Low frequency words	123.200	02
Total	128 000	100

Table 1: Levels of Acquiring Vocabulary (Coady & Huchin, 1997)

The use of English is based on 2000 high frequent words. When the learner acquires these words, he moves to the next level which is academic vocabulary. In other words, if the learner wants to continue his studies, she/he must learn some academic words. However, low-frequency words cannot be read neither in academic texts nor in novels. They are learnt for the use of English for social purposes. Technical vocabulary has a very narrow range because each field has its own technical words. For instance, law, medicine, chemistry and mathematics have different vocabularies and terminologies.

Grouping items within a lesson is not established through learning items together that are synonyms, opposites, etc. It is easier to learn unrelated words than learning items that are near synonyms or opposites. For example, the learners mixed the forms and meanings of words such as “hot” with the word “cold” if they have been taught at the same time. After the lesson, learners cannot be sure if “hot” means “hot” or “cold”.

Ordering is very important in teaching a foreign language. Different items should not be taught separately. In other words, there must be a kind of combination between these words for the sake of producing meaningful sentences (To follow a specific order).

5.1.6.1.3. PRESENTATION

Vocabulary lists can be used to make it easier for the teacher and learner. High-frequency vocabulary is taught through vocabulary exercise or individual learning because this type of vocabulary includes few numbers of frequent words. However, low-frequency words are many in number. There are words that do not deserve the teachers‟ attention. They are rather guessed from the context. As Kelly (1990) has pointed out, guessing is not a substitute for systematic learning of lexis (Hutch & Brown, 1995). On the one hand, the teachers‟ main concern will be the effective development of some strategies. On the other hand, the learners will be mainly concerned with the particular piece of learning with the help of the strategies. There are several ways or general principles for dealing with high and low frequency vocabulary. They can be put into practice directly or indirectly. Both of these approaches require reflection and planning on the part of the teacher.

In a direct approach to vocabulary teaching there will certainly be explicit vocabulary exercises, which may include word-building ones such as crossword puzzles activities –of interest in the present research-, matching words with various types of definition, studying vocabulary in context, split information activities focusing on vocabulary. In an indirect approach to vocabulary teaching, the teachers‟ concern for vocabulary learning will not be so explicit. Vocabulary learning goes hand in hand with communicative activities like listening to stories, information gap activities, although vocabulary will not be the main goal of the activities.

5.1.7. STEPS OF LEARNING VOCABULARY

Since “without grammar very little can be conveyed and without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” Thornbury (2002), language teachers must be more interested in how learners should acquire new vocabulary. Consequently, learners should be provided with a large range of vocabulary which enables them to discuss any topic.

This can be done through five steps that seem essential for learners in their vocabulary learning. These five steps are suggested by Brown and Payne, as it is shown in figure 1. (Hutch & Brown, 1995).

5.1.7.1. ENCOUNTERING NEW WORDS

The first main step for vocabulary learning is encountering new words; which means finding sources forwards. The learners‟ task is thus to read books, magazines, newspapers, stories, or to practice crossword puzzles –of interest in the present research- to listen to radio and television, or even to songs. There are some factors which control the learners‟ acquisition of words. Interests and motivation lead learners to focus on learning some words rather than others.

For instance, boys‟ interests are more directed to learn names of vehicles, wild animals; girls are much more interested in learning items which are related to fashion and jewellery, etc. In addition to interest, learners‟ needs may take a difference in learning new words. They always desire to acquire words which satisfy their needs. Another important factor is the work with interactive video materials. These words seem to be learnt more quickly than others in written form or exercises. Frequent words used by the teacher many times may increase the learners‟ acquisition.

Similarly, single words are learnt easily in their appropriate context. This way of learning is called -accidental learning- where the vocabulary can be learnt unintentionally. It is the result of unplanned activities such as dialogues, reading

passages and other materials without direct inclusion of memorization, that is to say, learning some vocabulary items incidentally. The learner tries to guess the meaning of new words through the clues available in the text. According to Schmidt (2002), incidental vocabulary learning is learning through exposure when one's attention is focused on the use of language rather than on learning itself. However, learning vocabulary through crossword puzzles is an intentional learning in which the attention of the learner is directly focused on learning new words.

5.1.7.2. GETTING THE WORD FORM

The second essential step for vocabulary learning is getting a clear image of the word form-spelling, pronunciation or both. According to Hutch & Brown (1995) this can be done through many sub-steps: (1) associating new words that sound similar in my native language, (2) writing the sounds of words using sound symbols from my native language, (3) associating words that are similar to words in other language I have studied, (4) associating a word with similar sounding English word I know, and (5) seeing a word that looks like another word I already know. Getting the form of a word is considered very important, especially, when learners are asked to define words.

5.1.7.3. GETTING THE WORD MEANING

The third main step for vocabulary learning is getting the word meaning. It is based on some strategies such as asking the native speakers or people who know the learners‟ native language about the meaning of the word, relating new words with already made pictures in mind, and finally stating the meaning to someone in order to enable them to give the exact word.

Word definition varies according to the requirements of the situation and the level of the learner. Advanced learners often need more specific definitions for the sake of differentiating between near synonyms. However, those learners assume that dictionaries are the main source of a word definition (meaning).

Another way of getting definition is having a bilingual friend or teacher who will help the learner to get the word meaning through their clarification.

Finally, one very popular way of learning word meaning is through contextualization or putting words in situation. The learner then will guess the meaning of new words easily. Although the depth of definition needed may vary and the sources from which the meaning can be extracted may be quite different. All learners must get the meaning of words in some manners, or the word can never be considered truly learnt. As it is stated in our study, the word meaning is dictated by the context of a given the clue

5.1.7.4. CONSOLIDATING WORD FORM AND MEANING IN MEMORY

The fourth necessary step is to emphasize the consolidation of form and meaning in memory. This method calls for learning word through their appropriate context in which learners can acquire the word meaning and form at the same time. The most useful drills in this step are matching exercises, and practicing crossword puzzles. Through practicing crossword puzzles, the learner can decode the words‟ meaning from the context of the clue, and consolidate the words form that fit the squares of the puzzle

5.1.7.5. USING THE WORD

The final step in learning vocabulary is using the words. Some see that this step is not necessary especially if the knowledge of the acquired is only a receptive one. However, if the learners‟ aim from knowing a word is not receptive but productive, word use is essential to test the learners‟ knowledge of collocations, syntactic restriction and register appropriateness.

Conclusively, the learners need all these five steps in order to enrich their vocabulary and learn full knowledge of the words they want to learn. This can be done through a variety of activities, strategies, or techniques that the learners apply in each step such as crossword puzzles.

Brown and Payne's essential steps in learning vocabulary can be applied in our study. We believe that in doing numerous crossword puzzles, -the focus of our study, it will be detailed out in the coming chapter-, learners can encounter new words and phrases, they never knew before (Hutch & Brown, 1995). Thus, with practice, they become familiar with them, get a clear image of the word form, meaning, spelling, and even pronunciation. Consolidate them in memory. Then, the learners may even find themselves using them in conversation or writing assignments and impress their listeners or readers (teachers) with brilliant words. This strategy can offer for students so many chances to learn vocabulary since both entertainment and enjoyment are present. A relaxed atmosphere is also available and, hence, we can gain fruitful achievements.

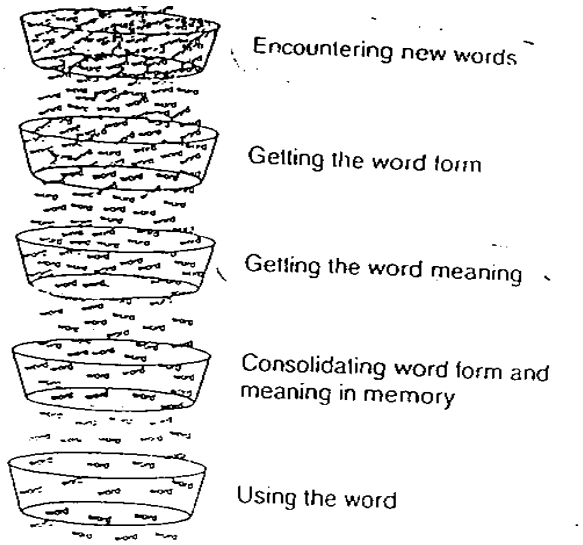


Figure 1: Five Essential Steps to Learn New Words (Hutch & Brown, 1995)

5.2. CROSSWORDS PUZZLES

5.2.1. THE HISTORY OF CROSSWORD PUZZLES

The first "word-cross" in the United States was published in the New York World in 1913, although similar puzzles have been around in different forms since Egyptian times. In 19 th century England, they were aimed mostly at a juvenile audience, and did not become a craze for adults until Simon and Schuster

printed the first book of them in the US in the 1920's, when they then took on the familiar name "crosswords." The puzzle's popularity continued to build throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Today, most daily newspapers include a crossword puzzle as well as many magazines. In fact, magazine racks usually include a number of magazines and books containing only crossword puzzles.

5.2.2. CROSSWORDS PUZZLE

A crossword puzzle, according to Wahyuningsih (2009) is a game in which words guessed from their definitions are fitted into a diagram of white and black squares. The crossword has words written horizontally (across clues) and words written vertically (down clues). The pattern of black squares usually serves to separate each word from adjacent words (Wahyuningsih, 2009). Correctly deciphering a crossword requires correct spelling, which for students means practicing dictionary skills. Making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing conclusions are important skills required for completing crossword puzzles (Wahyuningsih, 2009). Bressan (1970) and Wolfe (1972) have attempted to classify the kinds of crossword puzzles according to the clues used. Bressan (1970) discusses two main categories: direct-definition clues and cryptic clues.

Direct-definition clues include generic, synonymic, antonymic, definitory, and descriptive clues. Cryptic clues include anagrams, word inversions, double meanings and so on. Most second language puzzles use clues from the direct-definition clues, although cryptic clues in the form of anagrams occasionally appear. Bressan (1970) argues that crossword puzzles, among other things, enhance vocabulary building, orthography and develop and test the student's knowledge of morphology. The crossword puzzle normally takes the form of a square or a rectangular grid of white and black shaded squares. The goal is to fill the white squares with letters, forming words, by solving clues which lead to the answers. In this way, crosswords can be used to teach terminology, definitions, spelling, and pairing key concepts. Likewise, given that in order to

successfully complete the crosswords students need to spell items, they gain greater retention and memorization of vocabulary (Moore & Detlaff, 2005). In addition, the effectiveness of crossword puzzles has been shown in many studies, both as a strategy to enhance students' vocabulary growth and to increase motivation and students' interest in the topic (Franklin S, 2003).

5.2.3. TERMINOLOGY

Crossword puzzle has a specific terminology:

- **Entries or Answers:** are the horizontal and vertical lines of white squares into which answers are written.

- **The Definitions:** are the lists of numbered clues. "the clues"

- **The White Cells:** are sometimes called lights.

- **The Shaded Cells:** are sometimes called Darks, Blanks, Blocks, Blacks or Shaded Squares. Shaded Squares make the constructor's job much easier. In some types of crossword puzzle, they are specified; the number of the answers" letters which limit the blanks before and after each answer's letters.

- **The Crossed Cell:** is a white cell which is part of two entries (both cross and down). It is also called checked or keyed.

- **The Unchecked Cell:** is a white cell which is part of only one entry. It is called Unkeyed, or Uncrossed.

- **Cruciverbalism:** the creativity or designing of crosswords including its practitioners.

- **Cruciverbalists:** are the creators or the originators of crossword puzzles. They are called creators, compilers, settlers in Britain (Wikipedia, 2012).

5.2.4. TYPES OF GRID

Usually, crossword puzzles take the form of square grid of white and black squares.

According to Wikipedia, there are four types of grid; American, British, Japanese and the Swedish style grid. Hence, creators should make a decision upon which type of grid he going to use for his puzzle.

5.2.4.1. AMERICAN STYLE GRID

The most obvious feature of the North American style crosswords is the fact that every letter in the puzzle is “an interlinking letter”. In other words; every letter in the puzzle is a letter in an across word, and also in a down word. This style facilitates the solver’s job because difficulty can be removed through some assistance of those previously used letters, in addition to the words which intersect with each other’s. Shaded squares are limited, whereas white squares are mainly used in such type of the North American style. It is also characterized with rotational symmetry which means that, if the crossword puzzle i.e. the graph is turned up or down, the grid remains the same. In other words; if it is turned 90° or 180 degree, the patterns of the blocks is exactly the same (Wikipedia, 2012), as the figure 3 below shows.

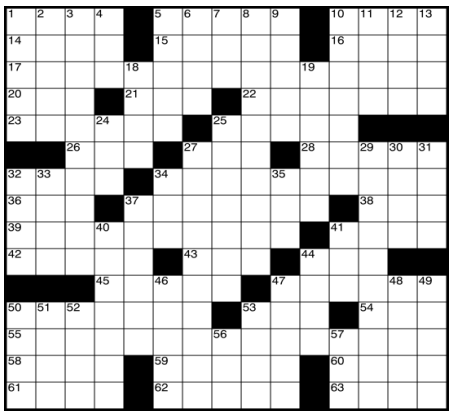


Figure 3: American Style Grid (Wikipedia, 2012)

5.2.4.2. BRITISH STYLE GRID

A British crossword puzzle has also 180° rotational symmetry; if the puzzle is turned Upside down, its pattern of blocks remains the same. However, in some ways, the British style and the American one are completely different. Typically, shaded squares are used with higher percentage and unchecked (uncrossed) cells are mainly involved. For example, if the first row of the crossword puzzle is in an across way, then, there will be no across in the second row, as shown on figure 4 (Wikipedia, 2012).

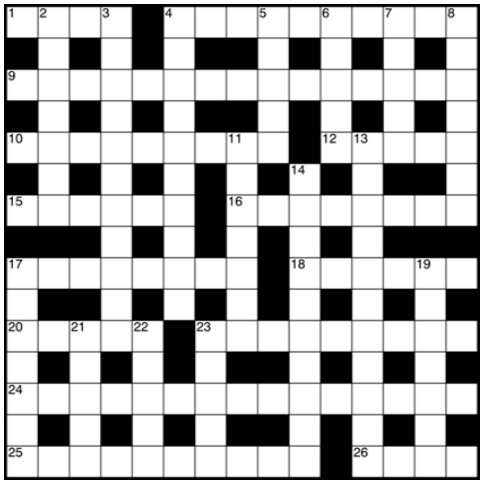


Figure 4: British Style Grid (Wikipedia, 2012)

5.2.4.3. JAPANESE STYLE GRID

There are two additional rules involved in the design of the Japanese crossword grid:

1. The corner square must be white.
2. The shades square are diagonal; they are not beside each other, as shown in figure 5 (Wikipedia, 2012).

The difference between the three grids is that the British grid uses the vertical and horizontal blanks; the Japanese grid uses only the diagonal blanks, while the American grid uses a combination of them.

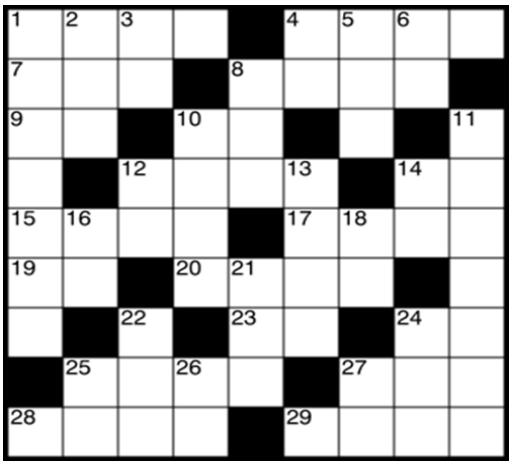


Figure 5: Japanese Style Grid (Wikipedia, 2012)

5.2.4.4. SWEDISH STYLE GRID

The Swedish style grid is different from the previous grids. In this type of grid, the clue numbers are not used; they are included inside the squares which would normally be blackened in other countries. Thus, those clues are followed by arrows. This latter indicates in which direction the clues have to be answered (across or down). The shaded squares can be also replaced by a photo or a movie star and it serves as a clue to an answer. This type of grid does not have

a rotational symmetry. It is the most popular type grid in Algeria and it is used in most countries other than Sweden, as shown in figure below (Wikipedia, 2012).

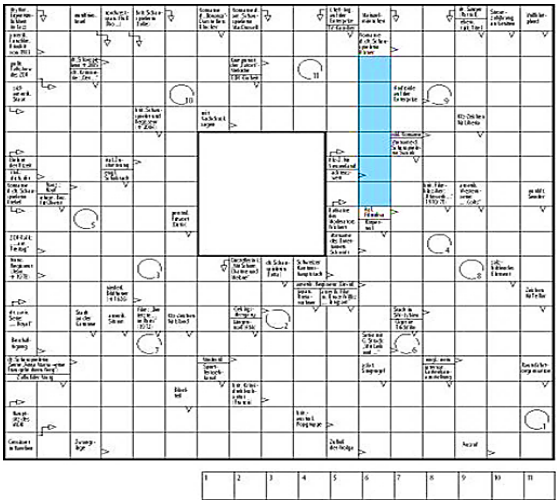


Figure 6: Swedish Style Grid (Wikipedia, 2012)

In addition to these types of grids, there are other common forms:

- Barred crosswords in which bold line are used between squares to separate answers.
- Free Form Crosswords are not symmetric and it is characterized with simple design.

Although the above stated types differ in shape, they are alike in principle. That is to say, the constructor has to fill in the blanks with regard to certain clues.

Generally, puzzles themes are general ones i.e. they include terminology from different fields: political, cultural, health, etc. We assume that if certain puzzles are designed with accordance with writing terminology-needs (polysemy, synonymy, hyponymy and so on), we would help learners to benefit from them a great deal. We would call this type *instrumental*, as opposed to pleasurable ones.

5.2.5. TYPES OF CLUES

To answer crossword puzzles, of course, the solver deeply relies on the clues. There are different kinds of the clues:

5.2.5.1. STRAIGHT OR QUICK

The clues which contain usually simple definitions for the answers are straight or quick. The crosswords‟ clues and their solutions should be related to each other in terms of tense and number. If a clue is in the past tense, for example “travelled on a horse back”, the answer would be in the past tense “rode” and not “ride”. If a clue is in the plural, for example “family members”, the answer would be in the plural “aunts” or “uncles” and not “aunt” or “uncle” (Wikipedia, 2012). As it is clearly stated in our empirical touch concerning the word “vaccinations”. The equivalent answer would be in the plural form as “shots”, and not in singular one as “shot”.

- Some answers are determined through the previously use of one letter.
- Some clues are represented through the distribution of letters of another word

  (Anagrams). For example, “Worth” is anagram of “throw”.

  □□□□□□□□□Fill-in-the blank clues are the most easiest in a puzzle, for example

  “…….Johnson, explorer” = Osa
- Sometimes, some clues are ended with a question mark which usually indicates that some sort of related “pun”, “wordplay”, or “metaphor” is involved in the clue and the answer combination.

- There are also straight clues which require colloquial answers; colloquial language would be involved in the entries of the puzzles‟ grid. Phrases like“what‟s up”, “as”, or “whaddya” are included in such a crossword puzzle.

- The use of abbreviation in the clue indicates that the answer is to be abbreviated.

- Hence, a crossword's constructor must be aware of the answers‟ abbreviation. For example, "SEN" is the abbreviation of "senator". Thus, the solver might choose the abbreviation of the equivalent of "senator"; i.e. "member of congress" abbreviated.

- Variant Spelling: The use of "Var." signals that the answer is a variant spelling. For example: "EMEER", "EMIR".

- The use of foreign language or a foreign place within the clues indicates that the answer is also in a foreign language. For example: Printemps "French for spring" might be clued as "spring in the Sorbonne".

- The abbreviations of common three-letter answers are also used as answers; it is generally indicated in the clue. When asking for a PC key, there are also three letter keys like ESE for (East-Southeast), NNW for (North-Northwest) etc. Three letter answers can also be used when the clues are asking for directions or compass points (Wikipedia, 2012). Thus, learners must be aware of these instructions to follow a specific order to solve their crossword puzzle.

5.2.6. CROSSWORD THEMES

Some crossword puzzles have themes. When the theme is identified, then the other words would have some degree of relationship, pun or somehow related with the theme words. The theme is the general category or class where all the answers of the puzzle belong to that general class. For example; stubble, grass, grain, chaff, cows, bees, jar, are answers which belong to one category theme which is "country life".

Sometimes the most important aspects of a subject are not immediately obvious. Hence, it is the job of the students to keep reading to get the complete picture about the theme. Some crosswords would have the theme as the title as it is stated in our study. For example; the main theme, or the title is “Stages of Life”, and words such as, “baby, child, kindergarten, teen, old, grave”, etc; have a great relationship with the category theme. i.e. they belong to the same class. Sometimes the theme is not written as the title, it can be the longest word in the puzzle (Wikipedia, 2012).

5.2.7. FIRST ENTRIES

This kind of clues combines a few words into a phrase. For example “You, ill, never, walk, alone” would become “You’ll never walk alone”. It is popular in the British newspapers.

5.2.8. CLUES FOR CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS

The clues of the cryptic crossword puzzle are different from other type of clues. The clue itself is a puzzle. This kind of clue has a definition at the beginning or the end of the clue. Most of the times, the length of the answers are stated in parentheses after the clue. Cryptic would also use homophobes and different kinds of wordplays. It would also include anagram clues. These kinds of clues are more common in United Kingdom.

The cryptic crossword puzzle differs from any other kind of crosswords in the fact that the clues themselves contain little puzzles. So, unlike the usual crossword where all what is needed to do is to read the clue and try to figure out the answer. However, in a cryptic puzzle, the solver will need to decipher what the clue is all about before he starts thinking of the possible answers (Wikipedia, 2012).

We assume that, despite the fact that this type of puzzles is difficult for learners to decipher the meaning of a given clue. However, it is to the learners‟ advantages to be exposed to a variety of types to measure or develop their abilities in understanding a given utterance, as well as in practicing their skills in making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing up possible conclusions.

5.2.9. DOUBLE CLUE LISTS

Some crossword grids can have two sets or lists of clues, one is straight and the other one is cryptic. The solution can be different or the same. When the solution is the same, the straight clue sometimes serves as reinforcement for the cryptic clue. This type of clues enables both beginners and experts to work the same puzzle.

5.2.10. INDIRECT CLUES

The answer is not in their literal meaning, in this type of clues. Thus, the constructor would end the clue with a question mark to indicate that it is a metaphor.

The last four types of clues of crossword puzzle are very difficult for our students to decipher/decode/ or figure out the meaning of the clue (the answer). Thus, in our study, the level of the students is taken into consideration. Hence, a themed crossword with a title is provided (Stages of Life). Furthermore, simple clues are used, to facilitate the students‟ job.

5.2.11. TYPE OF CROSSWORD PUZZLES

Mainly, there are five crossword variants. Those five types of crossword variants may be different from a regular shape grid puzzle; they need different clues and different solving skills.

5.2.11.1. CIPHER CROSSWORDS

Cipher crosswords contain numbers in the clues, and the solver must break the cipher code to read the clues and solve the puzzle. A cipher crossword replaces the clues for each entry with clues for each white cell of the grid – “an integer from 1 to 26 inclusive” is printed in the corner of each. Cells with matching numbers will also have matching letters/answers, and no two numbers will stand for the same letter throughout the entire puzzle. (http:// www.Wikipedia. Org.)

5.2.11.2. FILL-IN CROSSWORDS

Fill-in crosswords may often have longer word length than regular crosswords, because the more characters the solver start working from, the easier the puzzle will be to solve. The constructor is required to enter a full list of words to the grid, but there are no explicit clues for where each word goes. So, he has to figure out how to integrate the list of words together with exact spelling within the grid, so that all intersections of words are valid, because a misused word or even phoneme may distort the whole puzzle.

5.2.11.3. CROSSNUMBERS

In this type of crossword puzzles, the clues of the puzzle are numbers instead of words. They are typically mathematical expressions or formulas, but could also be verbal clues to reference specific numbers, such as dates or populations.

5.2.11.4. ACROSTIC PUZZLE

Acrostic puzzles are usually composed of two sections: first is a set of lettered clues and the second part is a long series of numbered blanks and spaces.

5.2.11.5. DIAGRAMLESS CROSSWORDS

Diagramless crossword often called a" skeleton" or "carte blanche" Originated from the UK, they offer overall dimensions, and the locations of most of the clue numbers and shaded squares are unspecified. Not only does the solver have to come up with the correct answers to the given clues, but he must figure out how to arrange answers into larger arrays, using properly spaced black squares, as shown in figure 7.

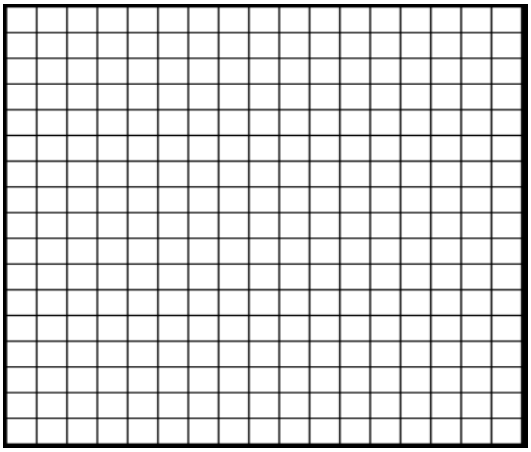


Figure 7: Diagramless Crossword Puzzle Style Grid

Diagramless crossword puzzles cannot be solved until students can decode the two secrets "the clue numbers and the symmetry". Thus, as far as our students‟ level is concerned, it is too difficult for them to decode the clue numbers and the symmetry. Hence, in our study, a diagramless crossword puzzle is used. It contains a set of horizontally located letters and a set of vertically located numbers. The clues are directed by them, for example; C2. The number of the answer's letters is specified at the end of each clue. Moreover, simple clues are used and the difficult words are explained at the bottom of the paper, and the square before and after each answer must be blackened. Thus, there is no symmetry. It is worth mentioning, here, that certain types of crossword puzzle are very difficult, so the use of them in educational setting might not have the desired results. In this respect, in this study, we use diagramless type that can be modified in order to achieve our purpose (facilitating the learning process).

5.2.12. THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF CROSSWORD PUZZLES

According to Jones K., Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, (2007), there are many benefits of crossword puzzles in EFL classrooms:

5.2.12.1 MOTIVATION

Most language teachers agree that learners‟ motivation is one of the most important factors that influence their success or failure in learning English as a foreign language. In other terms; it drives forwards learning operation for success. Slavin, (2003) considers motivation as “one of the most ingredients of effective instruction”. It is also considered as “a component of metacognition in so far as it plays a self-regulatory role in learning”. O‟Malley&Chamot (1999) and it has been found to have great effect on enhancing students‟ performance in the target language (Woolfolk, 2004). In fact, “the will to learn appears to be essential for developing the skill to the learner” (O‟Malley & Chamot, 1999).So, it is generally agreed that if some learners do well and others poorly in language learning, this fact is much related to motivation than to intelligence. In this connection, the role of the teacher is to vary his materials to avoid boredom. Slavin(2003) claims that “it is the educator’s job to sustain students‟ motivation and to engage them in activities that lead to learning”. Thus, to acquire new vocabulary items, crossword puzzles can serve this goal. Corder (1967) states that “in language teaching, given motivation, a human being will inevitably learn a language if he is exposed to the data of that language”. Therefore, crossword puzzles can provide the necessary stimulus to invite the learners to make more efforts to learn a language (Fadel, 2005).

5.2.12.2. VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE

After doing numerous crossword puzzles, the learners will become familiar with a number of words and phrases that they never knew about before. This often yields to acquiring new vocabulary items. They may even find themselves using them in conversation or writing assignments and impress their teachers with

brilliant words. In this respect, self-confidence can be created. i.e. the student can use a word and he/she is aware and sure about the word's form (spelling), meaning, class, and even pronunciation. Harmer (2005) raises the issue of self-confidence and considers it a very important factor for good writing.

5.2.12.3. EXACT SPELLING

A student trying to solve a crossword puzzle must first understand the clues that lead to the answers. If the student is unable to answer a particular puzzle question, he can then consult the dictionary to get the right answer and use the exact spelling. Obviously, this will lead to huge results in improving the students‟ large skill or proficiency. This is so because the student will be able to practice spelling, word identification and even pronunciation.

5.2.12.4. LESS THREATENING

Another benefit of using crossword puzzles in classrooms is that they can be less threatening for students as a review tools. They offer challenge between students.

5.2.12.5. MEMORY AND RECALL

According to Brown when solving themed crossword puzzles, Memory and recall also come into play. "A science teacher may create a puzzle that uses scientific terms to coordinate with lessons, while a history related puzzle might have terms from one particular time period, with historical figures, key place names, and other relevant historical facts" (Discovery education).

5.2.12.6. PRACTICING SKILLS

Practicing crossword puzzles, students will be able to practice their skills in making inferences, evaluating choices, and drawing up possible conclusions.

5.2.12.7. DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLE

Crossword puzzles also have the advantage of appearing to different learning styles:

5.2.12.7.1. VISUAL LEARNERS

They often have a great desire to solve a crossword and feel great satisfaction when they complete one.

5.2.12.7.2AUDITORY LEARNERS

They enjoy step by step reasoning, so they are actively involved in the sequential steps of completing a crossword puzzle.

5.2.13. ADVANTAGES OF USING CROSSWORD PUZZLE IN TEACHING VOCABULARY

There are number of teaching technique in order to maximize the absorption and increase the understanding of what the teacher taught. One of them is using crossword puzzle game. As explained before, crossword puzzle has an important role in teaching learning process, especially in teaching vocabulary.

First, the advantages of using crossword puzzle in teaching English vocabulary is clearly stated by (Jones, 2008), a home educator and writer on educational games. He states that crossword solving involves several useful skills including vocabulary; reasoning, spelling, and word attract skills. To solve any crossword puzzle, students must be able to identify and understand the term being used. Correctly deciphering crossword also requires exact spelling, which for students may mean practicing their dictionary skill.

Second, due to the characteristic that vocabulary games commonly have, crossword puzzle is also reported to be able to increase students' vocabulary mastery because it motivates student to participate and engage actively with the learning material, especially learning vocabulary.

Third, encouraging memorizing strategies is important in learning vocabulary. Just like in solving the crossword, students need to memorize the words that they previously learn then link it to new information (clues) to finally find the possible answer for crossword puzzle.

Fourth, crossword puzzle is also a good tool to review vocabulary. Reviewing, revising and recycle vocabulary that have been learnt are important strategies to help students, especially children. The use of crossword puzzle to review vocabulary has been recognized.

It has come into conclusion that crossword puzzle maybe used as an alternative technique in teaching learning vocabulary, especially as a review tool.

f. METHODOLOGY

6.1. DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

Action research has become more popular as a mode of research among practitioners. It includes the process of actively participating in a change situation at the same time as conducting research. Action research can be undertaken by undergraduate and postgraduate students, assisted or guided by professional researchers, with the aim of improving their strategies, practices and knowledge of the surroundings within which they practice.

This study is an applied educational research work since it is a practical action research that will allow the practitioner to study aspects of practice with the use of crosswords to improve the vocabulary and see the reflections of his intervention.

6.2. METHODS, THECNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

6.2.1. METHODS

This study will make a description of the data resulting from the application of an intervention plan. The following general methods will be applied along the descriptive research: The Scientific method will facilitate the study of the crossword puzzles applied in the developing of the English vocabulary. It will help in the observations done before and during the intervention. This one will also assist during the prediction of the possible solution; it will assist with gathering data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it.

The Descriptive method will enable to describe the different stages of the study and the kind of resources used by the researcher. It will serve to explain and analyze the object of the investigation. The analytic-synthetic method will be used to analyze the obtained results through the questioners and the

researcher field diary. It will be used also to make the interpretation of the data, the logical analysis and draw up the conclusions. The statistic method will be used to make the quantitative statistical analysis of the data received from the questionnaires and the qualitative text analysis of the data received from the teacher's diary.

This work will use the research spiral cycles proposed by Kemmis & Mc Taggart, (2000) since the process is likely to be more fluid, open and responsive. It includes planning, acting and observing, and reflecting suggests.

Action research is an inquiry, undertaken with rigor and understanding in order to constantly refine practice; the emerging evidence-based outcomes will then contribute to the researching practitioner's continuing professional development (Koshy, 2005, pág. 2). Action research is a process of study done by systematically collecting data on one's everyday practice and analyzing it in order to draw conclusions about how future practice should be.

It involves a self-reflective cycle of identifying a situation or problem, planning a change, acting and observing the processes and consequences, and then re-planning, and so forth. It offers a valuable opportunity for teachers or practitioners to be involved in the research to collect first-hand information (McNiff, 1993; Atweb, Kemmis& Weeks, 1998). Action research will be applied in this study because it will enable the practitioner or researcher of this project to follow the steps in the spiral that helped him reflect upon his teaching and improve his students' situation. The researcher intends to see if the plan would work well or if any necessary modification or amendment would be needed to improve his students' language learning.

6.2. 2. TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

Data Collection

Researcher's close observation of students' performance during class, a research field diary and two sets of structured questionnaires will be used to

collect data in this study. Quantitative data will come from the questionnaires and qualitative data will come from the research field diary. All the data will be triangulated to confirm validity.

Questionnaires

Two sets of face-to-face questionnaires will be used. A questionnaire of Yes/no questions will be used to collect students' answers about the students' vocabulary and the use of crosswords puzzles at the beginning and at the end of the intervention. This will allow the students to provide a wide range of responses. Another questionnaire will be used to collect students' progress about the improvement of the students' vocabulary through the use of crossword puzzles. All questionnaires will be conducted in class so that researcher give a clear explanation to students and clarify all queries raised. In addition, one hundred percent return rate should be ensured.

Field Dairy and notes

The researcher will use a dairy to record what happens in each lesson. In this way, it will help to write up the findings during the intervention, significant events during the observation or any particular situations that happen.

6.3. PROCEDURES

The action research work process will include the following stages:

The intervention plan will start and end with questionnaires or interviews. Two semi-structured interviews will be conducted. Two questionnaires will be applied; one at the beginning of the study to collect data on students'. A variety of crossword puzzles will be introduced to improve the students' vocabulary through the use of crossword puzzles. A check list will be used as instrument to help the researcher to observe students' performance during class. Afterwards, a video of students' performance will be done during the intervention or a semi-

structure interview will be conducted to see students' perceptions of the strategies used.

Finally, the second questionnaire will be applied to check the overall students' progress after the intervention plan. A semi- structured interview will be conducted to see teacher's perception of the students' progress. The Students' progress before and after the intervention will be compared and analyze to draw the conclusions about the action research work.

After the intervention the researcher will analyze the data collected. Then, he will draw the conclusions of the intervention. Finally, the report of his intervention will be disseminated among the teachers, the partners and the school.

6.3. 1. Tabulation

The tabulation of data will be done with the data collected in the two questionnaires conducted. A logical analysis will be done with the information received.

6.3.2. Organization

The researcher will organize the work with the information received in all the strategies applied to compare and analyze the impact of the intervention. A report of the intervention will be disseminated with the findings and ideas among the teachers, the partners and the school.

6.3.3. Description

The description of the data collected and graphics will be described considering the information pre and post intervention. The description of each questionnaire's data will be completed to facilitate the interpretation of the information shown; and also do the logical analysis of the data received.

6.4. Population Sample

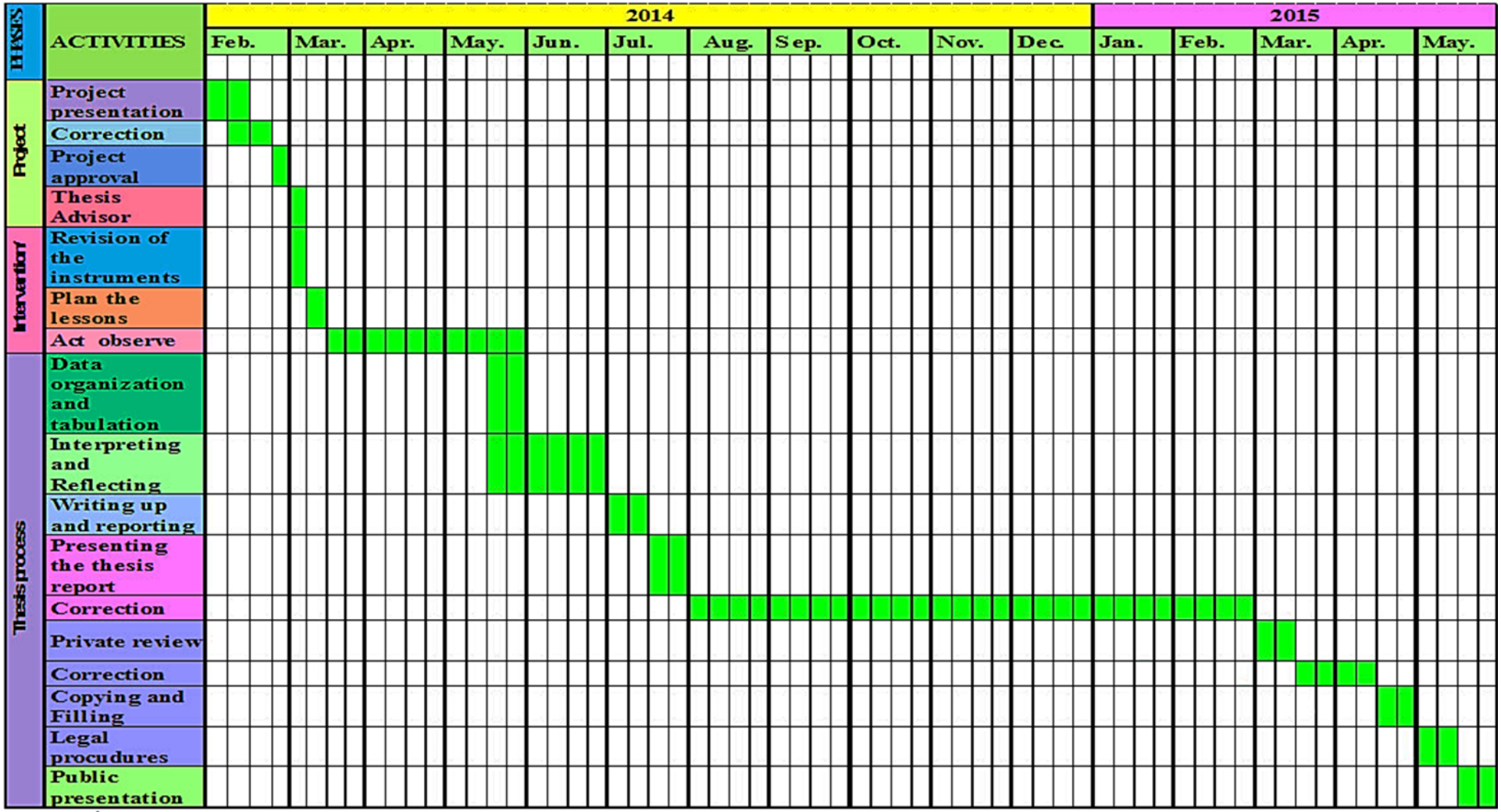
The fifth grade of basic education parallel “A” at Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo public school has 25 students (girls). They are among 8 to 9 years old. They receive one period of English class per week with a certified teacher; each period is about 40 minutes.

6.5 INTERVENTION PLAN

	INTERVENTION PLAN			
	OBJECTIVES	**ACTIVITIES**	**PROCEDURE**	**RESOURCES, INSTRUMENTS**
Week One	To evaluate students' vocabulary knowledge through the questionnaire and the pre-test.	Answering the questionnaire and the pre-test.	The Researcher(R) gives the pre-test to the students. Students are asked to complete the pre-test.	Questionnaires Tests Pencils
Week Two	To recognize the vocabulary words about animals, using a **Fill-in** crossword puzzle.	Recognizing the new vocabulary in a **Fill-in** crossword puzzle	R. presents the new vocabulary (Duck, Dog, Rabbit, Monkey, Lion, and Elephant) R. says the name of the animal and students repeat it. R. displays the flashcards around the class and asks students to point out them. Students color the animals with the word. Students complete the **Fill-in** crossword puzzle with the name of the animals.	Pencils Worksheets Flashcards
Week Three	To identify the utensils with a word search puzzle.	Finding out the utensils names in a word search puzzle.	R. introduces the utensils using cards with pictures and words. R. names the utensils and students repeat them. R. spells the utensils words and students say which one it is. R. uses a Short vocabulary activity called Pass-the-utensils. R. plays a song and as the music start students have to pass around the utensils until the music stops. When the music suddenly stops, that student has to identify the utensil that he or she is holding (spoon, fork, dish, knife, and glass). At the end researcher provides students a word search puzzle to check vocabulary of the topic taught.	Worksheets Pencils Utensils cards

Week Four	To master vocabulary words learned using a **Fill-in** crossword puzzle.	Solving a **Fill-in** crossword puzzle to confirm the students' previous knowledge of the vocabulary words learned.	R. starts the class by showing flashcards about the bathroom vocabulary After that, he hides the flashcards and encourages students to remember the pictures showed. R. starts pronouncing the vocabulary related to the bathroom so that students can hear the correct pronunciation. R. asks students to repeat the objects that we can find in the bathroom after him. R. shows students flashcard with the objects of the bathroom and ask students to name them. R. uses an activity called Group vocabulary activity to practice the new vocabulary (the bathroom vocabulary). To carry out this activity researcher writes a scrambled vocabulary word on the board(towel, comb, toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, and shampoo) Students get into 2 groups. One student from a group will unscramble the word on the board. Student come up and unscramble the word, and say a "This is" phrase, and draw its picture. Finally, R. applies a **Fill-in** crossword puzzle to confirm the students' instant vocabulary. After that students have to look up the words that were used to solve the crossword puzzle in the word search puzzle.	Flashcards Worksheets Pencils
Week Five	To check students' vocabulary improvement through the questionnaire and the pre-test.	Completing the questionnaire and the pre-test.	The Researcher starts taking the posttest to the students. Students are asked to complete the posttest.	Questionnaires Tests Pencils

g. TIME LINE


PHASES
ACTIVITIES
2014
2015
Feb.
Mar.
Apr.
May.
Jun.
Jul.
Aug.
Sep.
Oct.
Nov.
Dec.
Jan.
Feb.
Mar.
Apr.
May.
Project
Project presentation
Correction
Project approval
Thesis Advisor
Intervention
Revision of the instruments
Plan the lessons
Act observe
Thesis process
Data organization and tabulation
Interpreting and Reflecting
Writing up and reporting
Presenting the thesis report
Correction
Private review
Correction
Copying and Filling
Legal procudures
Public presentation

h. BUDGET AND FINANCING

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RESEARCH

7.1. RESOURCES

Human

- The researcher
- The fifth grade students in parallel “A”

Material

- Printed materials
- Books

Technical

- Computer
- Internet

7. 2. BUDGET

Resources	**Cost**
Internet	$85.00
Printed of the project	$50.00
Print of reports	$ 150.00
Printed of final report and thesis	$200.00
Others	$150.00
Total	$ 635.00

7.3. FINANCING

All expenses related to the present research will be assumed entirely by the research conducting the investigation.

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ANNEXES

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

AREA OF EDUCATION, ART AND COMMUNICATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAREER

Questionnaire

Dear Students,

The following questionnaire is part of research work that deals with the impact of crossword puzzles on the acquisition of vocabulary. It examines the use of crossword puzzles as a teaching strategy to enhance students' knowledge of vocabulary.

Your answers will be of great help for the research. Would you, please, tick the appropriate box.

Questionnaire

1. Do you like the way your teacher explains the vocabulary?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Do you have difficulties in the learning of vocabulary?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Which resources are used to learn English vocabulary in your class?

Strategies	**yes**	**no**
Flashcards		
Real things		
Translation		
Actions/ Gestures		
Crossword puzzles		

4. How often are these strategies used in the English classes to practice vocabulary?

Strategies	always	often	sometimes	never
Flashcards				
Real things				
Translation				
Actions/ Gestures				
Crossword puzzles				

5. Do you like to be taught vocabulary using crossword puzzles?

Yes ☐ No ☐

6. Using crossword puzzles to improve English vocabulary is:

Fun ☐

Boring ☐

Complicated ☐

Easy ☐

Thanks for your collaboration

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

AREA OF EDUCATION, ART AND COMMUNICATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAREER

Questionnaire

Dear Students,

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Your answers will be of great help for the research. Would you, please, tick the appropriate box.

Questionnaire

1. Do you like the way your teacher explains the vocabulary?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Do you have difficulties in the learning of vocabulary?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Which resources are used to learn English vocabulary in your class?

Strategies	**yes**	**no**
Flashcards		
Real things		
Translation		
Actions/ Gestures		
Crossword puzzles		

4. How often are these strategies used in the English classes to practice vocabulary?

Strategies	always	often	sometimes	never
Flashcards				
Real things				
Translation				
Actions/ Gestures				
Crossword puzzles				

5. Do you like to be taught vocabulary using crossword puzzles?

Yes ☐ No ☐

6. Using crossword puzzles to improve English vocabulary is:

Fun ☐

Boring ☐

Complicated ☐

Easy ☐

Thanks for your collaboration

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

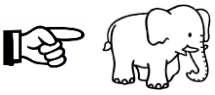
AREA OF EDUCATION, ART AND COMMUNICATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAREER

Pre Test

Name: _____ **Class:** _____

1. Complete the sentences with the correct word.

This is an _____ 

That is a _____

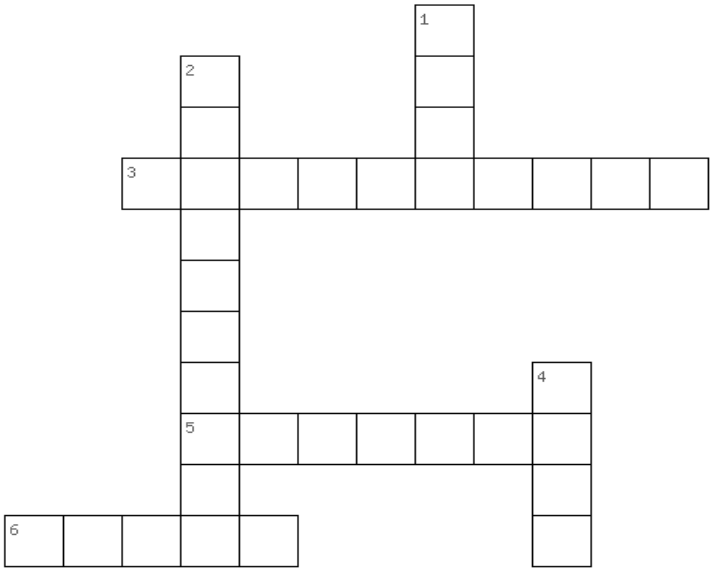
This is a _____

That is a _____

This is a _____

That is a _____

2. Solve the following crossword puzzle using the pictures as clues to complete the crossword puzzle



Down

1. comb

2. toothpaste

4. soap

Across

3. toothbrush

5. shampoo

6. towel

3. Unscramble the following English words to form the correct word.

nopos _____

korf _____

ifenk _____

ishd _____

lagss _____

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

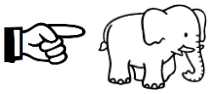
AREA OF EDUCATION, ART AND COMMUNICATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAREER

Post Test

Name: _____ Class: _____

1. Complete the sentences with the correct word.

This is an _____ 

That is a _____

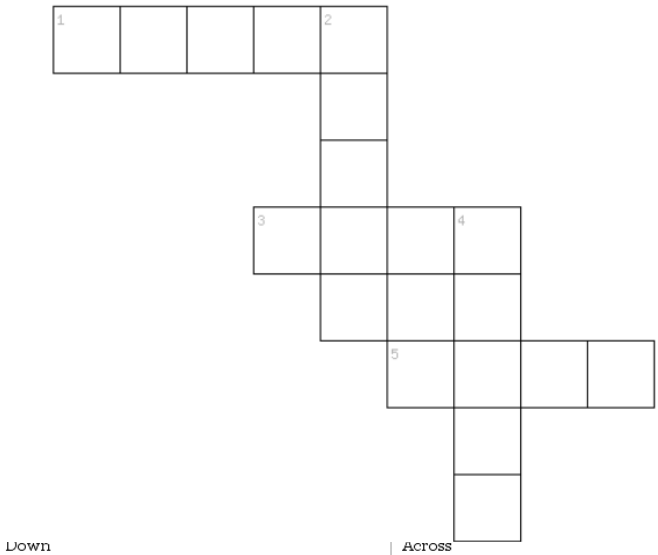
This is a _____

That is a _____

This is a _____

That is a _____

2. Solve the following crossword puzzle using the pictures as clues to complete the crossword puzzle



Down

2. spoon

4. knife

Across

1. glass

3. fork

5. dish

3. Unscramble the following English words to form the correct word.

bomc _____

rhusb _____

ootsaphtet _____

paos _____

opohsam _____

owelt _____

Researcher Field diary

Lesson						
activity						
objective:						
Materials:						
Timing						
Procedure						
Grouping						
Do students like it?	yes		For a while		Not really	
Are they bored?	yes		No			
Do they make an effort?						
Do students understand the new vocabulary?						
Comments						

Matrix

Theme: The Use of Crossword Puzzles as a Strategy to Improve the Vocabulary of Fifth Year Students of Basic Education parallel "A" At "ZOILA ALVARADO DE JARAMILLO" Public School, Academic Period 2013-2014

Problem	Objectives	Theoretical frame	Methodological design (action research)	Instruments
Main (Research) problem: How does the use of crossword puzzles improve the vocabulary of fifth year students of basic education parallel "A" at "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" public school, academic period 2013-2014?	**General** To improve the vocabulary of fifth year students of basic education parallel "A" at "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" school through the use of crossword puzzles, academic period 2013-2014.	**Vocabulary** - The definition of vocabulary - The importance of vocabulary - Teaching vocabulary - Vocabulary learning - Techniques in teaching vocabulary - Steps of teaching and learning vocabulary - Steps of learning vocabulary **Crossword puzzles** - The history of crossword puzzles - Crosswords puzzle - Terminology - Types of grid - Types of clues - Crossword themes - Type of crossword puzzles - The educational value of crossword puzzles - Advantages of using crossword puzzle in teaching vocabulary	**Preliminary investigation** -observing the English classes -Stating the background of problem -Describing current situation -Locating and reviewing the literature -Creating a methodological framework for research -preparing an intervention plan **Intervention and observation** -applying, observing and monitoring students' performance according to the intervention plan	**Questionnaires** **Tests** **Diary**
Sub-problems What kind of theoretical references about vocabulary and crossword puzzles are effective to the fifth year students of basic education parallel "A" at "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" school, academic period 2013-2014? What are the issues that limit the vocabulary learning with the use of crossword puzzles with the fifth year students of basic education parallel "A" at "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" school, academic period 2013-2014?	**Specific** To investigate the theoretical references about vocabulary and crossword puzzles as a strategy to improve the vocabulary of the students of the fifth year students of basic education parallel "A" at "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" school, academic period 2013-2014. To diagnose the issues that limit the vocabulary learning with fifth year students of basic education parallel "A" at "Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo" school, academic period 2013-2014.			
What are the important phases of the intervention plan that address	To design an intervention plan with the use of crossword		**Presentation of research**	

the current issues of the vocabulary learning with the students of fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014? Which crossword puzzles are implemented to improve the vocabulary learning of the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014? How do crossword puzzles as part of the classroom activities reduce the limitation of the vocabulary learning of the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014?	puzzles to improve the vocabulary of the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014. To apply the intervention plan as part of the classroom activities in order to solve the limitations in the learning of vocabulary of the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014. To reflect upon the effect that the crossword puzzles had on the vocabulary of the fifth year students of basic education parallel “A” at “Zoila Alvarado de Jaramillo” school, academic period 2013-2014.		**findings** **-**reflecting, analyzing and answering the proposed inquiries -organizing the final report	

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