



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA
ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA
COMUNICACIÓN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAREER

“VOCABULARY STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS OF 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AT “BERNARDO VALDIVIESO” HIGH SCHOOL (MORNING SECTION) IN LOJA. ACADEMIC YEAR 2013 – 2014”

Research work as a previous requirement to obtain the Bachelor’s degree in Science of Education English Language Specialization.

AUTHOR:

HOVER ISMAEL CONZA ARMIJOS

THESIS ADVISOR:

ELIZABETH M. SARMIENTO BUSTAMANTE

LOJA – ECUADOR

2015

CERTIFICATION

Dr. Mg. Elizabeth Sarmiento Bustamante

PROFESSOR OF UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

THESIS ADVISOR

CERTIFIES:

To have directed and thoroughly revised this thesis work entitled: “VOCABULARY STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS OF 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AT “BERNARDO VALDIVIESO” HIGH SCHOOL (MORNING SECTION) IN LOJA. ACADEMIC YEAR 2013 – 2014”, under the responsibility of Hover Ismael Conza Armijos, undergraduate student pursuing his Bachelor’s degree in Science of Education: English Language Specialization. This work complies with the norms and requirements of Universidad Nacional de Loja, therefore I authorize its presentation and defense.

Loja, May 21st, 2015.


Dr. Mg. Elizabeth Sarmiento Bustamante

THESIS ADVISOR

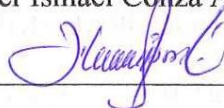
AUTORÍA

Yo, Hover Ismael Conza Armijos, declaro ser autor del presente trabajo de tesis y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Nacional de Loja y a sus representantes jurídicos, de posibles reclamos o acciones legales, por el contenido de la misma.

Adicionalmente acepto y autorizo a la Universidad Nacional de Loja, la publicación de mi tesis en el Repositorio Institucional-Biblioteca Virtual.

Autor: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos

Firma: _____



Cédula: 1104809155

Fecha: 21 de mayo de 2015.

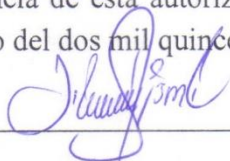
CARTA DE AUTORIZACIÓN

Yo, **Hover Ismael Conza Armijos** declaro ser el autor de la tesis titulada: “VOCABULARY STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS OF 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AT “BERNARDO VALDIVIESO” HIGH SCHOOL (MORNING SECTION) IN LOJA. ACADEMIC YEAR 2013 – 2014”, como requisito para obtener el grado de Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación, mención Idioma Inglés; autorizo al sistema bibliotecario de la Universidad Nacional de Loja para que con fines académicos, muestre al mundo la producción intelectual de la Universidad, a través de la visibilidad de su contenido de la siguiente manera en el Repositorio Digital Institucional.

Los usuarios pueden consultar el contenido de este trabajo en el RDI, en las redes de la información del país y el exterior, con las cuales tengan convenio la Universidad. La Universidad Nacional de Loja, no se responsabiliza por el plagio o copia de la tesis que realice un tercero.

Para constancia de esta autorización, en la ciudad de Loja, a los veintidós días del mes de mayo del dos mil quince.

Firma: _____



Autor: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos

Número de cédula: 1104809155

Dirección: Cdla. Esteban Godoy, III etapa. Av. Héctor Pilco 26-47 y Wladimir Aanaluisa.

Correo electrónico: sanblass_hc@hotmail.com

Teléfono: 072546996

Celular: 0985038824

DATOS COMPLEMENTARIOS

Director de Tesis: Dr. Mg. Elizabeth Sarmiento Bustamante

Presidente: Dr. Mg. Carmen Enith Dávila Vega

Primer Vocal: Lic. Mg. Miriam Eucevia Troya Sánchez

Segundo Vocal: Lic. Mg. Karina Alexandra Celi Jaramillo

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express my sincere gratitude to the staff of instructors who work for the English Language Department at Universidad Nacional de Loja. Their immeasurable dedication towards the alumni helped me during the undergraduate preparation. My special recognition to Dr. Elizabeth Sarmiento, whose assistance, guidance and commitment with her work allowed me to complete this work successfully. Lastly, I offer my blessings and regards to all of those who supported me in any aspect during the completion of this research work.

Hover I. Conza A.

DEDICATION

The result of this effort is dedicated to my parents, who have offered me their unconditional support and encouragement throughout my life; to my siblings, who have always been by my side expressing their love; and to my beloved nieces, who have been my motivation and inspiration at all times.

Hover I. Conza A.

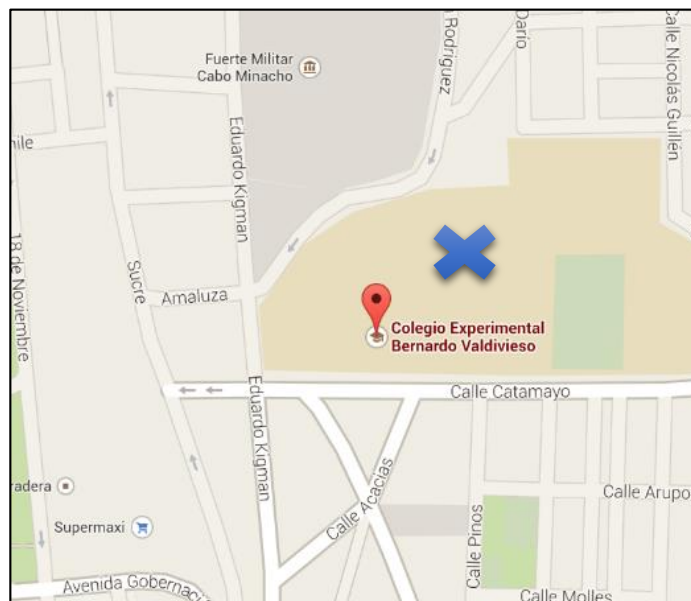
MATRIZ DE ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO

ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN											
BIBLIOTECA: Área de la Educación, el Arte y la Comunicación											
TIPO DE DOCUMENTO	AUTOR NOMBRE DEL DOCUMENTO	FUENTE	FECHA/AÑO	ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO						OTRAS DESAGREGACIONES	OBSERVACIONES
				NACIONAL	REGIONAL	PROVINCIA	CANTÓN	PARROQUIA	BARRIO		
TESIS	<p style="text-align: center;">Hover Ismael Conza Armijos</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“VOCABULARY STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS OF 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AT “BERNARDO VALDIVIESO” HIGH SCHOOL (MORNING SECTION) IN LOJA. ACADEMIC YEAR 2013 – 2014”.</p>	UNL	2015	ECUADOR	ZONA 7	LOJA	LOJA	SAN SEBASTIAN	LA PRADERA	CD	Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación, Mención Idioma Inglés

MAPA GEOGRÁFICO Y CROQUIS



CROQUIS



THESIS SCHEME

- i. Cover Page
- ii. Certification
- iii. Autoría
- iv. Carta de autorización
- v. Acknowledgements
- vi. Dedication
- vii. Matriz de Ámbito
- viii. Mapa geográfico y croquis
- ix. Thesis scheme
 - a. TITLE
 - b. RESUMEN
SUMMARY
 - c. INTRODUCTION
 - d. REVISION OF THE LITERATURE
 - e. MATERIALS AND METHODS
 - f. RESULTS
 - g. DISCUSSION
 - h. CONCLUSIONS
 - i. RECOMMENDATIONS
 - j. BIBLIOGRAPHY
 - k. ANNEXES
INDEX

a. TITLE

“VOCABULARY STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS OF 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AT “BERNARDO VALDIVIESO” HIGH SCHOOL (MORNING SECTION) IN LOJA. ACADEMIC YEAR 2013 – 2014”

b. RESUMEN

En esta investigación descriptiva se analizó la efectividad de estrategias de vocabulario utilizadas por docentes de inglés sobre el desarrollo de habilidades orales en estudiantes de 8vo grado de la Unidad Educativa Bernardo Valdivieso. Se elaboró un cuestionario que fue aplicado a docentes y estudiantes, mismo que constituye la evidencia para determinar las estrategias con las que estudiantes estaban más familiarizados, las más efectivas al momento de aprender y evaluar la adquisición de vocabulario, y aquellas con mayor efecto sobre escuchar y hablar. Los resultados indicaron que profesores y estudiantes reconocen la relación directa entre el uso de estrategias de vocabulario y el desarrollo de habilidades orales. Las imágenes, desafíos, y clasificación de palabras estimulan el desarrollo de escuchar y hablar, por lo cual es vital que los docentes las usen regularmente y en contextos relevantes con sus estudiantes para mejorar la calidad de habilidades comunicativas y se conviertan en hablantes proficientes.

Palabras clave: estrategias de vocabulario, habilidades orales, escuchar, hablar, competencia comunicacional.

SUMMARY

On this descriptive research, the effectiveness of the vocabulary strategies used by EFL teachers over the development of oral skills of eight grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso high school was analyzed. The researcher elaborated a questionnaire that was applied to both teachers and students. The results became the evidence to determine which strategies students were most familiar with, the most effective at the moment of learning and assessing vocabulary acquisition, and the ones with higher effect over listening and speaking. The results indicated that teachers and students recognize the direct relationship between the use of vocabulary strategies and students' development of oral skills. Strategies such as illustrations, challenges and word classifications indeed boost the development of listening and speaking, therefore it is imperative for teachers to use them regularly. By doing so, students will improve the quality of their communicative skills and will certainly become proficient language users.

Key words: vocabulary strategies, oral skills, listening, speaking, communicative competence.

c. INTRODUCTION

The process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language within the Ecuadorean context involves many challenges. Since the process itself demands a clear understanding and application of the different language components such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and fluency, educators and professionals in the field are constantly looking for the best strategies to address each of them properly. Taking as a premise that at Bernardo Valdivieso high school, 8th grade students enter middle school with very limited English proficiency, there is the need to increase vocabulary acquisition as a foundation because only then it will be possible for students to develop their oral skills.

Teachers use strategies to present and assess vocabulary, but it is not certain how the application of such vocabulary strategies affects the development of oral skills. There were other problems that the researcher realized, the first was regarding the extent to what the vocabulary strategies used by teachers are effective to enhance the development of oral skills. And lastly, how communication takes place within familiar situations in the classroom promoting the usage of vocabulary.

The main factor that led the researcher to choose this topic was the everyday struggle with middle-schoolers at this level. The most common response from students was “I don’t know” whenever they were asked a question. Being an in-service teacher in a public school allowed the researcher realize that students were not remembering the vocabulary previously covered which raised the interest in this issue.

The researcher carried out this research work aiming to establish the level of effectiveness of the vocabulary strategies used by teachers to enhance the development of oral skills. Likewise, it was intended to evaluate the efficiency of 8th grade students' communication within familiar situations in the classroom. These two objectives were set in order to analyze the effectiveness of the vocabulary strategies used by teachers over the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at "Bernardo Valdivieso" High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.

The general hypothesis was drawn upon the two variables, mainly because of the relationship between what students did and their performance. This hypothesis was: The vocabulary strategies used by teachers boost the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at "Bernardo Valdivieso" High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.

This is a non-experimental, descriptive and analytical research because of the methods that were chosen to determine if the vocabulary strategies used by teachers boost the development of oral skills. To gather evidence from the people involved in this study, the researcher created a questionnaire, and a sample of 8th grade students along with the two teachers in charge of those grades completed it in order to provide firsthand information. The data analysis and interpretation of the results was carried out using the bibliographic references from the literature review, which helped the description and explanation of the concepts and ideas essential to this research work.

This research work is organized as follows: the first element is the summary of the research, which briefly describes the suitability of the research, presenting the general objective and the main conclusions drawn upon the collected information. Next, there is a short introduction that presents the thesis work holistically, describing the contextual frame of the problem under investigation. Then it includes the literature review, which consists of a general overview of the bibliographical references that define the variables within this study; the concepts and definitions were grouped into two chapters containing the strategies to teach vocabulary, and, the development of oral skills accordingly. After that, the materials and methods' section contains the methods, techniques, instruments and the population researched. The results, presents the obtained data gathered through questionnaires, and is organized in statistic charts and graphics. Right after this section, the discussion of the results describes the procedures of how each hypotheses was proved. Finally, a set of conclusions and recommendations about vocabulary strategies and the development of oral skills was written to guide in-service teachers to develop communicative competence on their students so they can become proficient language users.

d. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. STRATEGIES TO TEACH VOCABULARY

Over the last years, many researchers have put all their effort towards investigating and developing strategies to increase vocabulary in ESL/EFL classrooms. The new insights gained through observation and experimentation have led to successful implementation of such tactics to promote proper usage of English in familiar situations.

Before moving deeper in each of the strategies, it is essential to describe the learners' features. By understanding their characteristics, teachers can make proper choices to select the best elements to address students' needs.

1.1 Twelve-year-olds in the classroom

According to Robert Wood (2007), students at this age have a lot of energy because they are now in growth spurts. Physical exercise helps them do better academically, and for those not athletically inclined, participating in group activities help them build bridges into adult-like roles. Children show self-awareness, insight and empathy because they're more able to think abstractly. Most children appear enthusiastic, uninhibited and interested in current events such as pop culture and the latest cool clothes.

They also showcase fine motor ability with patience for practice and self-confidence which make these tasks more pleasurable. Likewise, many kids find team sport satisfying and they understand the idea of training and regular exercise as a means to improve physical exercise. They find events highly motivating when tied to issues of clear relevance to their lives.

They love participating in class games but are also able to have a serious discussion a moment later. They increasingly understand and appreciate the need for rehearsal and revision. Children at this age like to help peers significantly with school work and they want opportunities to demonstrate their leadership qualities. (Brown & Knowles, 2007).

Given explained features of most eight-grade students, a set of inquiries remain unanswered, such as the specific number of vocabulary words that can be taught in a class or how teachers can decide which vocabulary needs to be covered. There are not any conclusive responses to these questions, for this reason educators must take into consideration the following criteria when planning and delivering a vocabulary lesson.

1.2 Vocabulary

This includes conceptual knowledge of words that goes well beyond a simple dictionary definition. Students' vocabulary knowledge is a building process that occurs over time as they make connections to other words, learn examples and non-examples

of the word, and use the word accurately within the context of the sentence (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005).

As students hear and read the word in many different contexts, their understanding and use of the word will develop and increase. Thus, the students within the classroom may have an understanding of a word, but the degree to which they know a word may differ. The Partnership for Reading (2003) has used the following three levels to describe students' knowledge for word meanings: unknown, acquainted, and established.

1.2.1 Developing fluency with vocabulary

Fluency with vocabulary means making the best use of what students already know, and such tasks have the characteristics of involving new language items, dealing with largely familiar content and discourse types, including some kinds of preparation or repetition. Fluency tasks are typically meaning-focused tasks.

There are some vocabulary items that must be learned to a very high degree of fluency such as numbers, polite formulas, items for controlling language use (to ask someone to repeat, speak more slowly), times and periods of time and quantities. In addition to this, it is important that all high frequency vocabulary is learned to a reasonable degree of fluency so that it can be readily accessed when it is needed. (Richards & Renandya, 2008). There are learning conditions that ease the development of fluency:

- The demands of the task are largely within the experience of the learners

- The learners' focus is on the message.
- The learners are encouraged to reach a high level of performance, through the use of repetition, planning and preparation.

Repetition and focus on the message may work against each other - the more something is repeated, the less likely it will continue to be seen as a message-focused activity. The teaching methodology solution to this is to balance the ease provided by the repetition against the challenge provided by new but similar material. At first, activities such as number dictation, prepared talks and dialogues are most suitable.

1.2.2 Strategies to teach vocabulary

There are different strategies to get across the meaning of a lexical item. Teachers can choose the strategy that best works on his/her classroom. The strategy will also depend on the item the teacher is presenting because some are more suitable for particular words. Often a combination of them can be both helpful and memorable. (Frost, 2004)

- *Illustrations*: useful for concrete words such as dog, rain, tall, and for visual learners; the only drawback is that not all items can be drawn.
- *Mime*: particularly effective to represent action verbs because it engages students making the lesson more fun.
- *Synonyms/Antonyms*: using the words a student already knows is effective for getting meaning across.

- *Translation*: it is considered as an outdated strategy because it does not promote L2 use.
- *Context*: the scenario where a word is used may be helpful to either describe it to the students or to give example sentences so the meaning is clear.

Teachers can give students a few items of vocabulary to find the meaning, pronunciation and then they write an example sentence with the word. After that, students teach each other in groups. It is also possible to prepare worksheets and ask students to match words to definitions. Students can also classify a group of words into different categories, for example, a list of transport words into air/sea/land.

1.2.3 Vocabulary assessment

Given the fact that vocabulary plays such a central role, it makes sense to assess students' comprehension and mastery of essential words and phrases introduced during the lesson. The new vocabulary should be prioritized, the most important words or phrases, so students can prepare and be aware of the lexicon that teachers intend to include in an assessment. (Kinsella, Stump, & Feldman, 2011)

Traditional vocabulary assessments do not reveal much about a student's actual word mastery. In this sense, assessments that require simple matching, a written definition, or use of the word in an original sentence are not the most suitable. While a student may be able to recall a memorized definition and an example sentence provided by the instructor, there is no guarantee that the student can actually use the word with facility.

Teachers should refrain from designing quizzes that merely tap into students' short-term memorization and should instead require critical thinking and creative application. The following are examples of more authentic vocabulary assessments formats that require relatively little preparation time:

- **Challenges.** There is one strategy that works really well with students and is known as *Thumb challenge*, this strategy allows students to focus on the target vocabulary by negotiating meanings of the words given. Learners practice their language through interaction and enrich their understanding of words by exchanging their points of view. To carry out this strategy, each pair of students need a strip of paper with the vocabulary that will be assessed. Then, one starts creating sentences or explaining the concept of the words on the template. If a student gives an incorrect answer, the other student starts with the concepts. Students can also be grouped with their peers in different rows, the teacher presents a category and the first student writes down an example and passes it onto the next classmate until all of them write a word. (Herrera, Kavidman, & Holmes, 2011).
- **Passage completion.** The teacher writes a brief passage (one detailed paragraph) that includes six to ten words from the study list. Then, the teacher takes out those words and leaves blanks for students to complete orally. In this way, students will be forced to scrutinize the context and draw upon a deeper understanding of the words' meanings. Advise students to first read the entire passage and to then complete the blanks by drawing from their study list. (Kinsella, Stump, & Feldman, 2011)

- **Grouping/Classification.** Grouping is a strategy that can help students remember new words better and for a longer period of time. Students can classify words into meaningful units either mentally or on a paper. The retention process becomes easier by reducing the number of discrete elements. Grouping can be done in a number of ways like: nouns, verbs, words related to specific areas, etc. (Jenpattarakul, 2012).
- **Providing explanations to word choice.** The teacher presents four to six sentences each containing an italicized word from the study list and asks students to decide whether each word makes sense in this context. If yes, the student must justify why the sentence makes sense. If no, the student must explain why it is illogical, and change the part of the sentence that doesn't make sense. Example: Carla's sister is a *small* person. This sentence doesn't make sense, in this case the proper word should be *short*.

Because these qualitative and authentic assessments require more rigorous analysis and application than most objective test formats, it seems fair to allow students to first practice with the format as a class exercise, or complete tests in groups. There are various manners to do it, for example reviewing the vocabulary taught through a game or activity; this is quite effective and teachers should encourage students to do the same at home.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS

The term 'oracy' is credited to Andrew Wilkinson (1965) and he used it to give educational and pedagogical life to the primacy of speech in human development and culture, and to ensure that teachers treat children's oral development no less seriously than they treat the development of children's ability to read and write. Experts call it 'oracy', 'oral development', 'communication skills', or 'listening and speaking', but the field is the same. It is what the school does to support the development of student's ability to use speech to express their thoughts and communicate with others, in education and in life.

According to Williams and Roberts (2011), oral skills reflect the ability to use language orally for social and academic purposes. The development of oral skills help students formulate their ideas into clear thought, hence, accurate communication is reached. Likewise, when effective communication occurs in the classroom, students feel more confident to continue speaking. This accurate use of speech helps students improve accuracy in written work, especially grammar.

For the purpose of this academic research, the development of listening and speaking will be further explained. But first, definitions about communicative competence and English language proficiency will be discussed and briefly explained to better understand the implications and results these components pursue.

2.1 Communicative competence

In the National English curriculum guidelines (2012), the Ministry of Education of Ecuador recognizes that the main objective of the present English curriculum design is to build up learners' communicative language competence in its linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic components through the development of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In order to achieve this goal, the following principles need to be taken into consideration:

- Language is a system for the expression and conveyance of meaning.
- The primary function of language is interaction and communication.
- The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.

To better understand the main goal of TEFL in our scenario, it's crucial to cite Yule (2010); he states that communicative competence refers to the general ability of using language *accurately, appropriately, and flexibly*. The accurate use of words and structures is known as grammatical competence. Exclusive focus on this component doesn't allow learners interpretation or production of L2 expressions. The ability to use appropriate language is called sociolinguistic competence. This component guides the learner to know when to say *Can I have some water?* versus *Give me some water!* relying on the social context. The third component is called strategic competence and is related to the ability of organizing a message effectively, which means, using vocabulary already known by the learner to overcome potential communication problems in interaction.

2.2 English language proficiency

Hererra (2011) cites Cummins' definition of language proficiency where he argues that a person's proficiency in a language refers to the degree to which that person is able to use the language. In education he classifies the uses of language into two dimensions: social and academic dimension. These concepts can be compared to an iceberg. The portion that is visible on the surface, the social dimension, is only a fraction of the total iceberg. In order to use a language in academic work, the speaker must have an extensive foundation related to the language.

Cummins refers to the skills necessary for social interactions involving language as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). Learners acquire sufficient BICS in English within a two-year period to meet their needs in social situations.

2.2.1 BICS-Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

These are the skills involved in everyday communication, carrying on basic conversation, understanding speakers, and getting one's basic needs met. BICS can demonstrate the learner's ability to understand and use spoken language appropriately.

In terms of listening, learners generally understand nontechnical speech, including conversation with teachers and classmates. The characteristics of listening comprehension are as follows:

- **Comprehension:** According to Lund (1990) students at early BICS are able to understand the main idea. They comprehend the message and this depends primarily on recognition of vocabulary.

With regards to speaking, learners showcase the following characteristics in their speech:

- **Grammar and word order.** Students have a fair command of basic sentence patterns. They avoid constructions which demand more control of grammar and word order. They also begin to overgeneralize, applying grammar rules they have learned in inappropriate places. For example, students often apply the –s plural ending to irregular nouns, resulting in formations such as "childs" instead of "children".
- **Vocabulary.** The vocabulary which students use is adequate for social conversation. The fact that students can carry on a social conversation, often in relatively unaccented speech, persuades observers that the student is in greater command of the language than is actually the case.
- **Pronunciation.** Although students may have a noticeable accent, their pronunciation is understandable. Younger students, especially, may begin speaking with almost no accent though their command of vocabulary, grammar and syntax may be slight.

- **Fluency.** Students' fluency is smooth, although the length of their utterances is somewhat limited by difficulties with English. Their speech may be marked by restatements, repetitions, and hesitations.

2.2.2 Oral skills: listening and speaking

Learning English in EFL contexts requires that pupils develop the listening skill which involves high exposure to speech so they can internalize the vocabulary and pronunciation patterns, which will allow them later to produce the language orally. Although most learners feel reluctant to speak at first, they will eventually start interacting with other at their own pace.

Listening and speaking are both elements of oral communication. Although, they differ in terms of meaning; listening deals with abstracting meaning while speaking is about generating meaning. Unlike listeners, speakers can control the difficulty and scope of utterances. Therefore, teachers should move towards the integration of both skills after focusing on each skill's unique characteristics.

Thanajaro (2010) cites Byrnes and points that listening comprehension precedes production in all cases of language learning, and there cannot be production unless linguistic input was provided and became comprehensible intake for a listener. She also mentions Mackay who stated that language perception and production are intimately related and difficult to separate operationally. Every speaker is simultaneously a listener, and every listener is at least potentially a speaker. From an

evolutionary perspective as well, language perception and production are virtually inseparable: the capacities for perceiving and producing speech could only have evolved simultaneously.

Similarly, Herrera (2011) mentions Temple & Gillet's idea of the close relationship between listening and speaking stating that listening cannot be separated from the expressive aspects of oral communication. Listening is as much a part of group discussions and dialogues because when children develop their communicative powers they also develop their ability to listen appreciably and receptively. This is why both skills should be taught simultaneously. In the same ways, she also takes Holtgraves' remark that language use is intentional behavior. Speakers formulate their utterances with the goal of having their intentions recognized and recipients process a speaker's remarks with the goal of recognizing those intentions.

2.3 Listening

Listening encompasses a collection of micro-skills, including phonics, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and grasping the meaning. From the whole language perspective, listening is defined as an active process in which students construct meaning from an oral text. (Howatt & Dakin, 1974).

In developing classroom activities and materials for teaching listening comprehension, a clear understanding is needed of the nature of top-down and bottom-up approaches to listening and how these processes relate to different kinds of listening purposes. L2

listening is not just a "bottom-up" skill in which the meaning can be derived from perception or comprehension of the sum of all discrete sounds, syllables, words, or phrases (Herrera & Perez, 2012). L2 listening requires substantial amounts of "top-down" processing in which meaning is inferred from broad contextual clues and background knowledge.

The importance of listening lays on the fact that this skill is a prerequisite for oral communication to take place, helps to enlarge students' vocabulary, and affects the development of reading and writing. Thanajaro (2010)

2.3.1 Development of Listening

The listening skill in EFL contexts emphasizes the mastery of the sub-skills involved in listening for hope that students themselves would put these sub skills together and become proficient listeners. These sub-skills include identifying isolated speech sounds, recognizing words, stress patterns, distinguishing between similar-sounding words (as between cat and cut), and recognizing typical word-order patterns. These sub-skills and many others are mastered individually through direct explanation, modeling and repetition.

Although efficient auditory perception underlies effective listening, it is not right to suppose that learning to listen involves massive practice with decoding alone. Riches (2008). Listening is continuous and cannot be chopped up into discrete sounds. Therefore, it should be taught in real, meaningful communication settings where

students can fit everything they hear into a context. The following three-step procedure for the teaching of listening to EFL students serves as a guide to do so:

- **Presentation of listening.** In this step, the teacher explains some new vocabulary, a new structure to provide the basis for the other two steps.
- **Guided listening.** In this step, students listen to a short passage or dialogue. While listening, under the guidance of the teacher, students focus on the meanings of the language items explained to them in step one. They also try to guess the meanings of other language items from the context.
- **Independent listening.** In this step, each student independently listens to a passage or dialogue compatible with his/her prior knowledge. After listening, s/he proceeds on her/his own from answering questions about the ideas explicitly stated in the text.

2.4 Speaking

Speaking is defined as a collection of micro-skills, including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. It is the oral process of meaning construction and expression. Both definitions of speaking provide a clearer concept applicable in EFL classrooms. (Howatt & Dakin, 1974).

If students are to become successful speakers, they must do the majority of the talking in the classroom. Teachers must make the effort to increase the opportunities for students to use, practice, and reinforce the language. The teacher, of course, has to model the language first, but students are the ones that need to practice speaking and use it to interact with each other to convey meaning, exchange thoughts and ideas, and solve problems.

Speaking is regarded by some linguists as the foundation for other language skills like reading and writing. Moreover, talk in the classroom can develop students' thinking skills because it introduces them to new perspectives facilitating reflection and innovative thinking. There are some processes that occur in the brain when social interaction is taking place, Salam (2002) classifies these processes as follows:

2.4.1 Mental / social processing

Talking needs rapid processing skills to carry out effective communication. These processes include:

- **Language processing:** speakers need to be able to process language in their own heads and put it into coherent order so that it comes out in forms that are not only comprehensible but also convey the meanings that are intended. Including speaking activities in language lessons helps students develop habits of rapid language processing in English.

- **Interacting with others:** most speaking involves interaction with one or more participants. This means that effective speaking also involves a good deal of listening, an understanding of how the other participants are feeling, and a knowledge of how to take turns or allow others to do so.
- **Information processing:** learners need to be able to process the information they get at the moment of speaking. The longer it takes students to respond, the less effective they are as instant communicators.

2.4.2 Development of Speaking

The speaking skill in EFL settings includes a set of discrete sub-skills which embrace pronouncing the distinctive sounds of the English language, using stress and intonation patterns, using the correct forms of words, and putting words in correct word order.

To develop the ability to speak, teachers should promote spontaneous interaction in naturalistic situations. Skills and meaning are both equally necessary for students to speak a foreign language fluently. Richards & Renandya (2002) cite Dobson where he suggests that for teaching speaking to EFL students, the teacher should help the student move from pseudo-communication, in which his use of English is predictable, to communication where he expresses his personal ideas and needs in the context of reality.

Furthermore, the teaching of speaking to EFL students should move from oral drills to guided conversation, and finally to free-communication in every lesson. This three-step procedure is supported by Salam (2002) and it is explained below:

- **Presentation of speaking.** In this step, the teacher explains the reduced forms of some words and/or phrases, a speaking rule and a phonics rule. Such skills should provide the basis for the other two steps.
- **Guided conversation.** In this step, the teacher prompts students to interact with him/her or with one another, within the limits of their competence and the new materials introduced in step one and in previous lessons. S/he can use "Ask me/your colleague What/When/ Where."
- **Free conversation.** In this step, the teacher provides opportunities for the students to engage actively in using the newly introduced language items, among others, in peer or small group discussions. In these discussions, students express themselves in an uncontrolled way. Meanwhile, the teacher can move among them to make sure that every student is participating.

e. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Methodology

This research work is a descriptive and non-experimental investigation. The literature review was carried out to describe and conceptualize the variables involved in this research. Therefore, the descriptive and analytic methods were used to develop this academic work. The bibliographic method was used to gather information and create the theoretical frame. The data collecting and conceptualization of the problem included literature review from books, research papers, institutional reports, and legal documents governing education in Ecuador. The descriptive and analytic methods were used to describe, analyze and interpret the results of the written questionnaires applied to teachers and students.

Techniques and instruments

A written questionnaire was applied to 8th grade English teachers and their students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School – morning section- to collect the data needed for this research work. The data gathered in the questionnaire helped the researcher verify or deny the hypotheses. An observation sheet was filled out by the researcher to check some of the variables involved in the research.

Procedures

The procedures utilized after the data collection through surveys to teachers and students were the following:

Tabulation. After the application of the questionnaires, all the answers and information were tabulated. The answers to the different questions were counted and arranged in different charts.

Organization. The results of the survey after the tabulation were organized according to the variables, independent and dependent. The responses given by teachers and the students were classified in charts to facilitate the analysis. The questions were gathered according to the specific hypotheses, and that evidence helped the writer prove the first and second hypotheses accordingly.

Description. The statistic charts that contain the information allowed the researcher to write descriptions about the results. With this information it was easier for the researcher to contrast and analyze the results of each indicator.

Graphic representation. The results were represented in graphic bars in order to ease the comprehension and interpretation of the data.

Interpretation and analysis. After the tabulation, organization, and graphic representation of the results, the evaluation and interpretation proceeded. A meticulous

analysis of the answers in the questionnaires and charts was carried out. These results were supported by the theoretical references.

Hypotheses verification. Once the results were collected, interpreted and analyzed, the research continued with the hypotheses verification by a logical analysis contrasting the collected data with the hypotheses. The description of the indicators with higher tendency allowed the researcher to prove or deny the hypotheses.

Formulation of conclusions and recommendations. The researcher stated the conclusions based on the investigation objectives. Then a set of recommendations was elaborated, pairing one recommendation for each conclusion.

Elaboration of the report. As the final step of this research work, all the elements were put together and logically organized. This process required the review of the different components in order to let the organization flow. It was also necessary to take into account the current regulations from Universidad Nacional de Loja in order to present the research work.

Population and sample

To carry out this research work, and given that the entire population of 8th grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso was too large to apply questionnaires, the researcher established a significant sample of one hundred seven students; the two teachers in

charge of these classes were also part of this descriptive study. The population sample is described more in detail in the chart below:

POPULATION	SIZE		SAMPLE
English teachers in charge of 8 th grade students	2		2
Students attending 8 th grade classes	8th Grade "1"	41	11
	8th Grade "2"	41	11
	8th Grade "1"	38	9
	8th Grade "2"	42	11
	8th Grade "5"	38	10
	8th Grade "6"	40	11
	8th Grade "7"	42	11
	8th Grade "8"	41	11
	8th Grade "9"	42	11
	8th Grade "10"	42	11
	Total	407	107
TOTAL	409		109
<p>Source: Inspector's records of 8th Grades students. Researcher: Hover I. Conza.</p>			

f. RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

The vocabulary strategies implemented by teachers are unsuccessful and hinder the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.

1. Using various strategies to present and assess vocabulary during the class is:

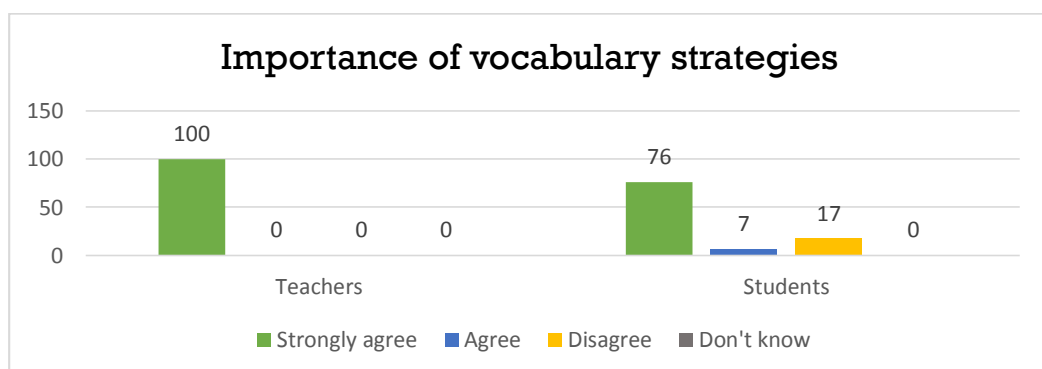
a. Chart 1

Importance of vocabulary strategies	TEACHERS		STUDENTS	
	f	%	f	%
Highly important	2	100	81	76
Important	0	0	8	7
Somewhat important	0	0	18	17
Not important	0	0	0	0
Total	2	100	107	100

Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 1



Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

The information shows that both teachers and students agree on the importance of using various vocabulary strategies. These results indicate that all teachers and more than three thirds of students regard the usage of different vocabulary strategies as highly important. This evidence assures that a variety within the classroom helps students retain and recall the vocabulary previously learned.

As stated by Snow, Griffin, & Burns (2005), varied strategies and techniques, often a combination of them, are quite helpful when learning a new language because they make the lexicon more memorable. Likewise, twelve-year olds enjoy classes and appreciate teachers who listen and respond to their suggestions for changes in routines, and different activities to motivate them. (Wood, 2007).

2. On a scale from 1 to 5, how effective are the following strategies to learn and assess vocabulary acquisition:

1 = not effective

2 = little effective

3 = effective

4 = very effective

5 = completely effective

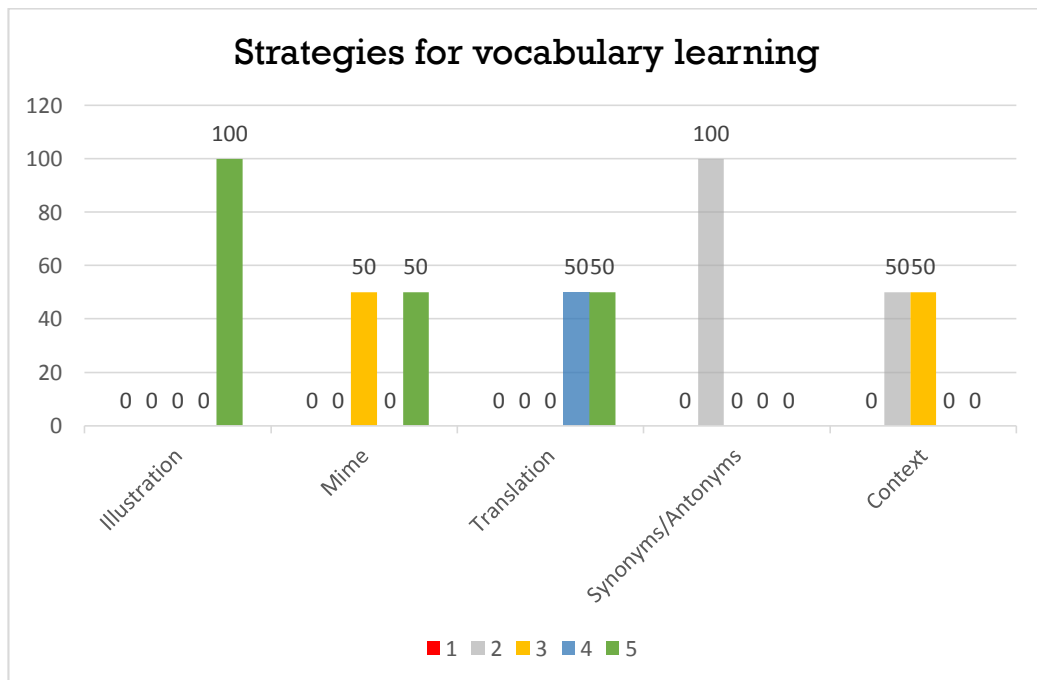
a. Chart 2.1

Strategies for vocabulary learning	Effectiveness scale										
	1		2		3		4		5		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Illustration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100
Mime	0	0	0	0	1	50	0	0	1	50	
Translation	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	50	1	50	
Synonyms/Antonyms	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Context	0	0	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0	

Source: Teachers' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 2.1



Source: Teachers' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

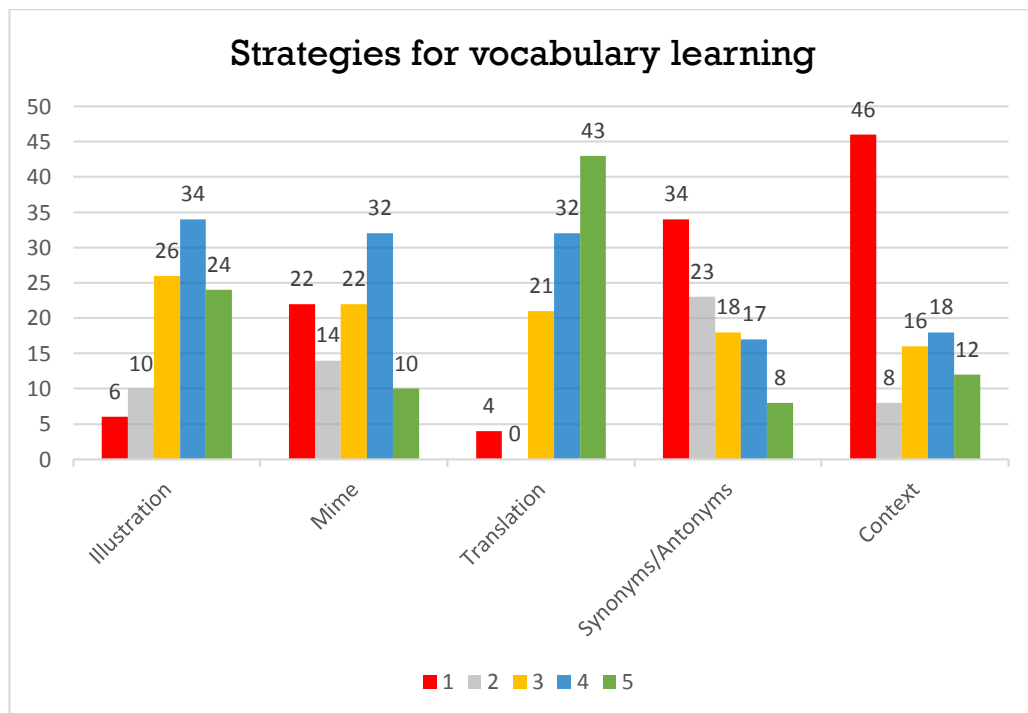
a. Chart 2.2

Strategies for vocabulary learning	Effectiveness scale									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Illustration	6	6	11	10	28	26	36	34	26	24
Mime	23	22	15	14	24	22	34	32	11	10
Translation	4	4	0	0	23	21	34	32	46	43
Synonyms/Antonyms	36	34	25	23	19	18	18	17	9	8
Context	49	46	9	8	17	16	19	18	13	12

Source: Students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 2.2



Source: Students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

With regards to vocabulary learning strategies, all teachers stated that illustrations are completely effective, and synonyms and antonyms are a little effective. On the other hand, almost half of students mentioned that translation is completely effective, and the context is not effective at all.

As mentioned by Frost (2004), there are different strategies to get across the meaning of a word. The strategy will also depend on the item the teacher is presenting because some are more suitable for particular words and often a combination of them can be both helpful and memorable. For middle-level students, illustrations or images provide visual representations of the word which makes it easy to remember. Although students prefer the direct translation, this strategy is not suitable because it prevents students from using L2 in the classroom.

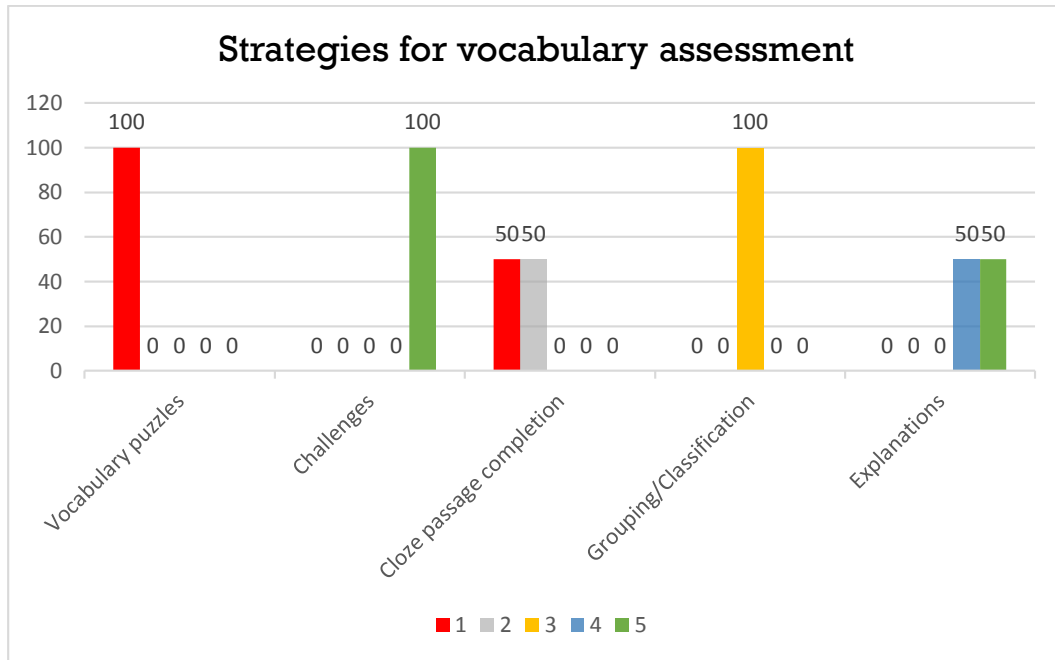
a. Chart 2.3

Strategies for vocabulary assessment	Effectiveness scale									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Vocabulary puzzles	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Challenges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100
Cloze passage completion	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grouping/Classification	0	0	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
Explanations	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	50	1	50

Source: Teachers' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 2.3



Source: Teachers' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

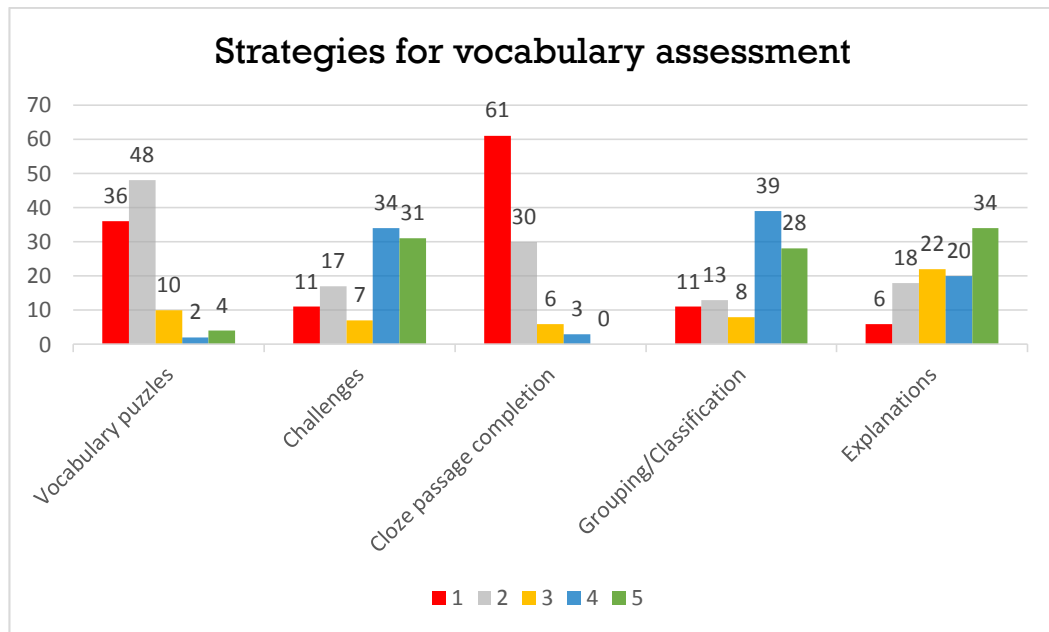
a. Chart 2.4

Strategies for vocabulary assessment	Effectiveness scale									
	1		2		3		4		5	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Vocabulary puzzles	39	36	51	48	11	10	2	2	4	4
Challenges	12	11	18	17	8	7	36	34	33	31
Cloze passage completion	65	61	32	30	7	6	3	3	0	0
Grouping/Classification	12	11	14	13	9	8	42	39	30	28
Explanations	7	6	19	18	24	22	21	20	36	34

Source: Students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 2.4



Source: Students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

For the vocabulary assessment strategies, all teachers pointed out that challenges are completely effective, and grouping or word classifications are effective. They chose vocabulary puzzles as the least effective strategies. Similarly, more than half of students picked cloze passage completions as not effective, and the other results such as challenges and explanations with divided criteria about being effective.

Since students are very competitive, Wood (2007), they enjoy challenges and competitions where they can demonstrate their skills and leadership if working in groups. Teachers must take advantage of the energy students have in order to create opportunities where they can release it. The results above mentioned contrast with the

idea that vocabulary acquisition is a building process that occurs over time as students make connections to other words to use them later accurately within the context of the sentence. The assessment of such word plays a crucial role because there are words that need to be learned to a very high degree of frequency (Richards, 2002).

The suitability of the strategies will depend on several factors like learning styles and motivation which affect heavily such process, Snow, Griffin, & Burns, (2005). Furthermore and citing Williams & Roberts (2011), the teaching methodology solution to this perception is to balance the ease provided by the repetition against a challenge provided by new but similar material, reducing time and increasing complexity. Initially, activities such as number dictations, prepared talks and interviews would be most suitable.

3. Using various vocabulary strategies helps students develop their readiness to do listening and speaking activities.

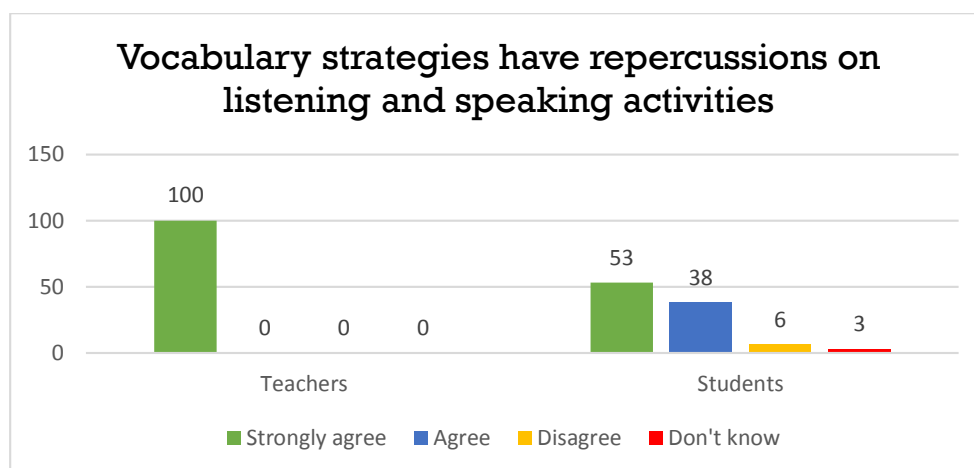
a. Chart 3

Vocabulary strategies have repercussions on listening and speaking activities	TEACHERS		STUDENTS	
	f	%	f	%
Strongly agree	2	100	57	53
Agree	0	0	41	38
Disagree	0	0	6	6
Don't know	0	0	3	3
Total	2	100	107	100

Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover I. Conza

b. Graph 3



Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

The information provides evidence to establish that all the interviewed teachers and half of the population of students strongly agree with the belief that vocabulary strategies affect directly the development of listening and speaking.

As mentioned by Salam (2008), in an EFL environment teachers must make the effort to increase the opportunities for students to use, practice, and reinforce the language. Teachers have to model the language first, but in the end students are the ones that need to practice speaking and using it to interact with each other and with the language to communicate. This initial encounter with the language helps develop students' thinking skills. If students are to become successful speakers, they must do the majority of the talking in the classroom. This conception may sound obvious to experts in the field, but nearly half of students marked the relationships as inexistent.

4. After presenting vocabulary, how good are you at completing listening activities first, and then speaking tasks?

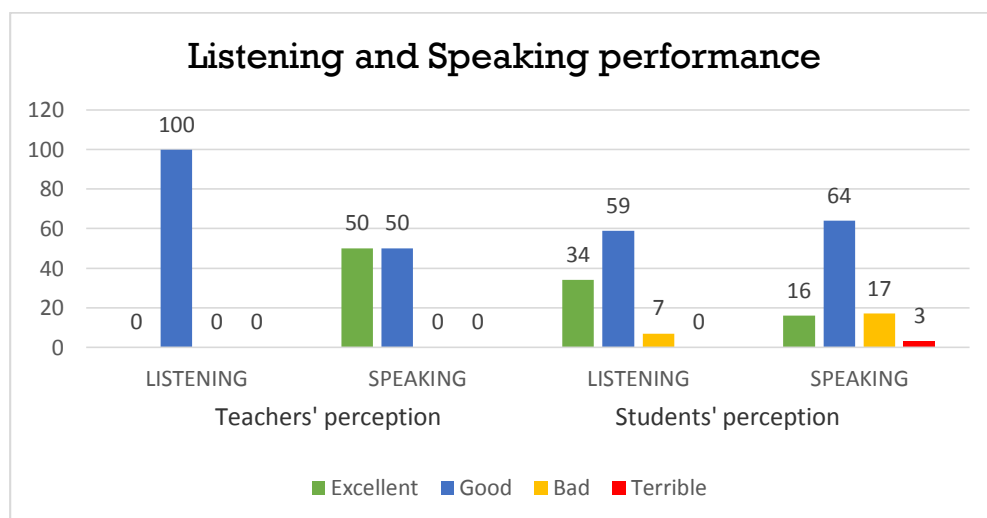
a. Chart 4

Listening and Speaking performance		Scale							
		Excellent		Good		Bad		Terrible	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
TEACHERS	Listening	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
	Speaking	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
STUDENTS	Listening	36	34	63	59	8	7	0	0
	Speaking	17	16	69	64	18	17	3	3

Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 4



Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

In this question, all teachers stated that after presenting vocabulary students' performance on listening activities is good, and in terms of speaking the criteria is divided between excellent and good. Likewise, half of students answered that their performance on listening and speaking activities is good. The results enable the researcher determine a direct relationship between the strategies used to present vocabulary and students' performance on listening and speaking activities.

Since students' proficiency is limited, the teacher has to guide or monitor listening activities, making sure that students focus on the meanings of the language items explained to them. They can also try to guess the meanings of other language items from the context. Later on, pupils will be able to independently listen to a dialogue compatible with their prior knowledge to answer questions about the ideas explicitly stated in the text. Salam (2008).

This principle is also applicable with speaking. The teacher can prompt students to interact with him/her or with one another, within the limits of their competence and the materials introduced in the lessons. Afterwards, more opportunities can be provided in order to actively engage students in using the newly introduced language items in peer or small group discussions. The control of the teacher is reduce allowing student to express themselves freely.

5. To what extent are students' listening and speaking skills affected by the vocabulary strategies used by the teacher?

1 = not affected 2 = somewhat affected 3 = totally affected

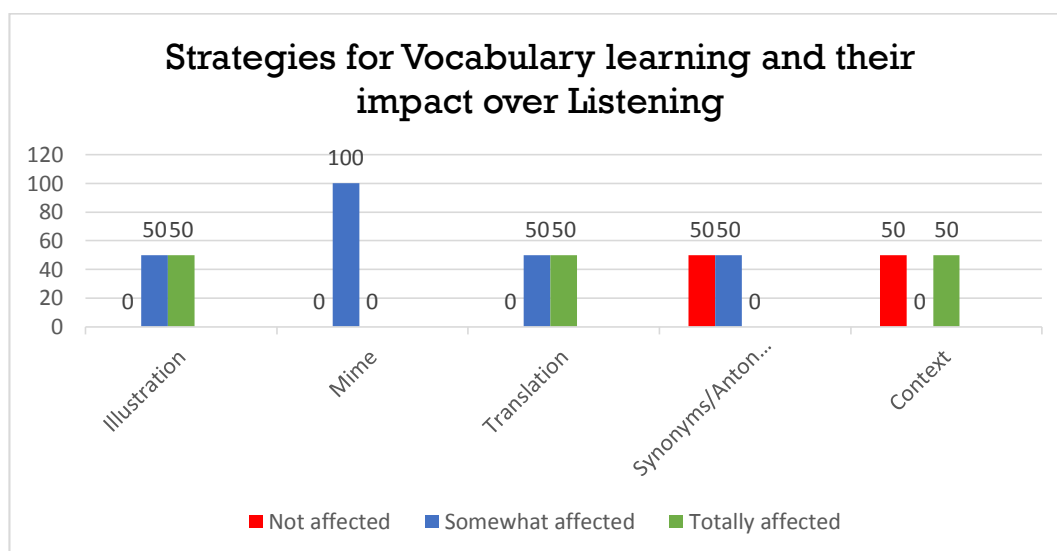
a. Chart 5.1

Strategies for Vocabulary learning and their impact over oral skills	ORAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT											
	Listening						Speaking					
	1		2		3		1		2		3	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Illustration	0	0	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0	2	100
Mime	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100
Translation	0	0	1	50	1	50	0	0	2	100	0	0
Synonyms/Antonyms	1	50	1	50	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0
Context	1	50	0	0	1	50	0	0	1	50	1	50

Source: Teachers' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

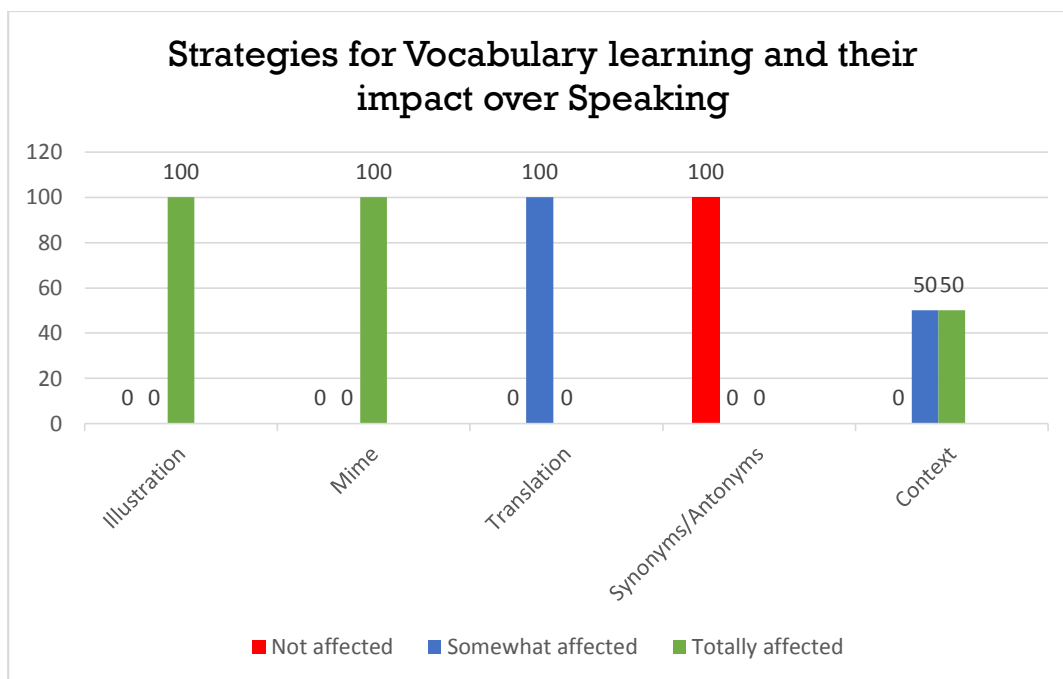
b. Graph 5.1.1



Source: Teachers' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 5.1.2



Source: Teachers' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

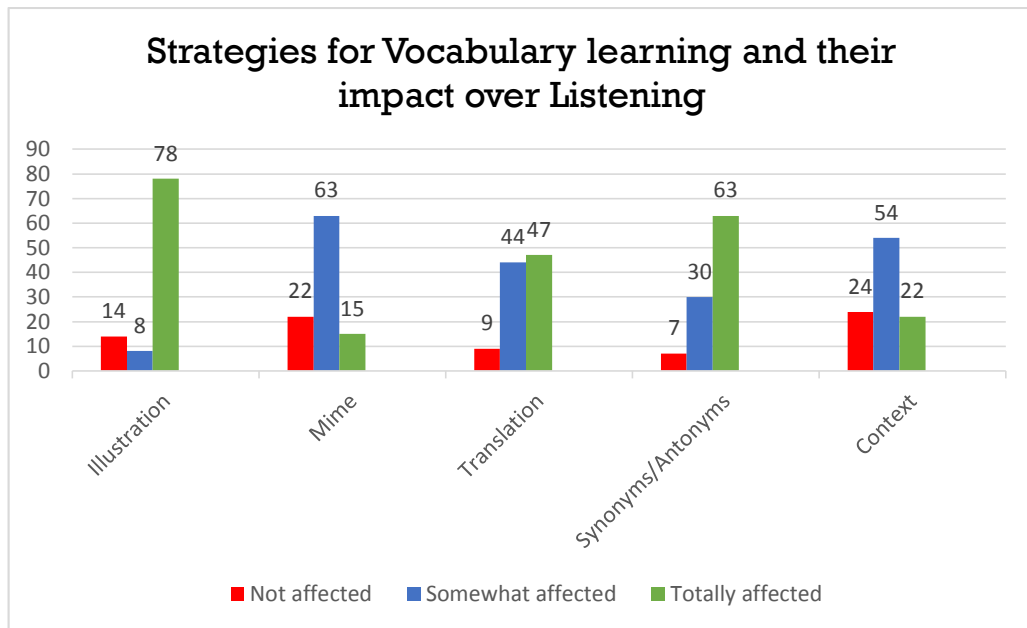
a. Chart 5.2

Strategies for Vocabulary learning and their impact over oral skills	ORAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT											
	Listening						Speaking					
	1		2		3		1		2		3	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Illustration	15	14	9	8	83	78	14	13	39	37	54	50
Mime	24	22	67	63	16	15	18	17	41	38	48	45
Translation	10	9	47	44	50	47	33	31	39	36	35	33
Synonyms/Antonyms	7	7	32	30	68	63	11	10	44	41	52	49
Context	26	24	58	54	23	22	26	24	64	60	17	16

Source: Students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

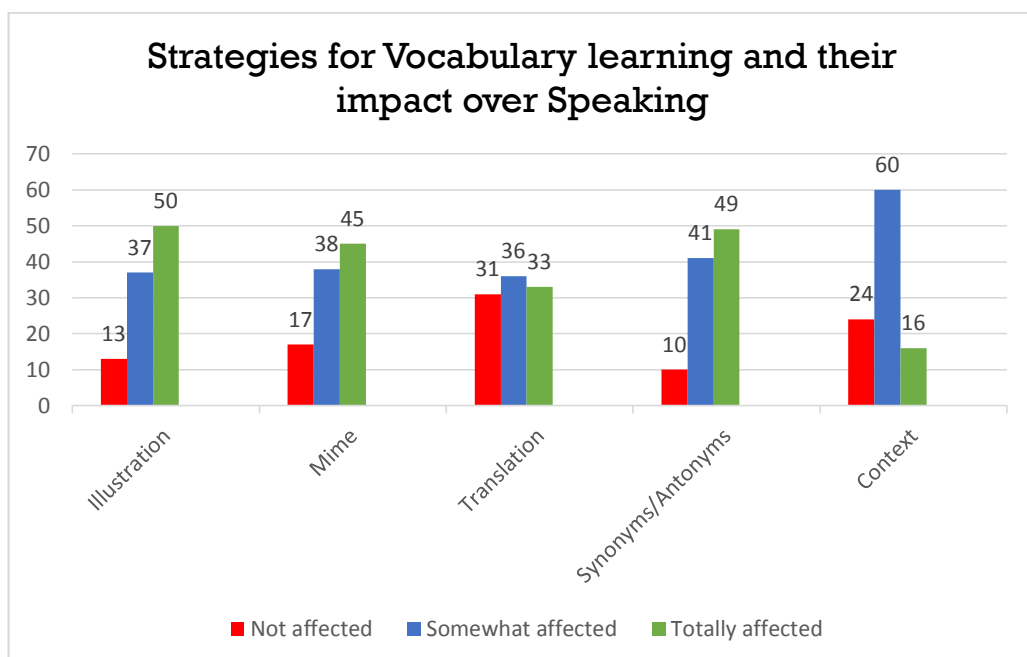
b. Graph 5.2.1



Source: Students' surveys

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 5.2.2



Source: Students' surveys

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

The results of this question indicate that *listening* is somewhat affected by the use of mime, which was supported by all teachers. On the other hand, two thirds of students mentioned that synonyms and antonyms, and illustrations totally affect this skill, and mime has an in-between effect. When it comes to speaking, all teachers pointed out that illustrations and mime totally affect the spoken production, and translation somewhat affects this skill. All teachers claimed that synonyms and antonyms do not affect the development of this skill. Similarly, half of students claimed that illustrations and, synonyms and antonyms totally affect this skill, and the context has an intermediate effect.

It can be inferred that different vocabulary learning strategies have different effects. The data shows that the strategies for vocabulary learning such as mime and illustrations have a great effect because after introducing the words students perform better on *listening* and *speaking* activities.

According to Frost (2004), teachers can choose the strategy that best works on his/her classroom taking into account the type of vocabulary. Illustrations are useful for concrete words such as dog or tall, and for visual learners; and, mime is particularly effective to represent action verbs because it engages students making the lesson more fun.

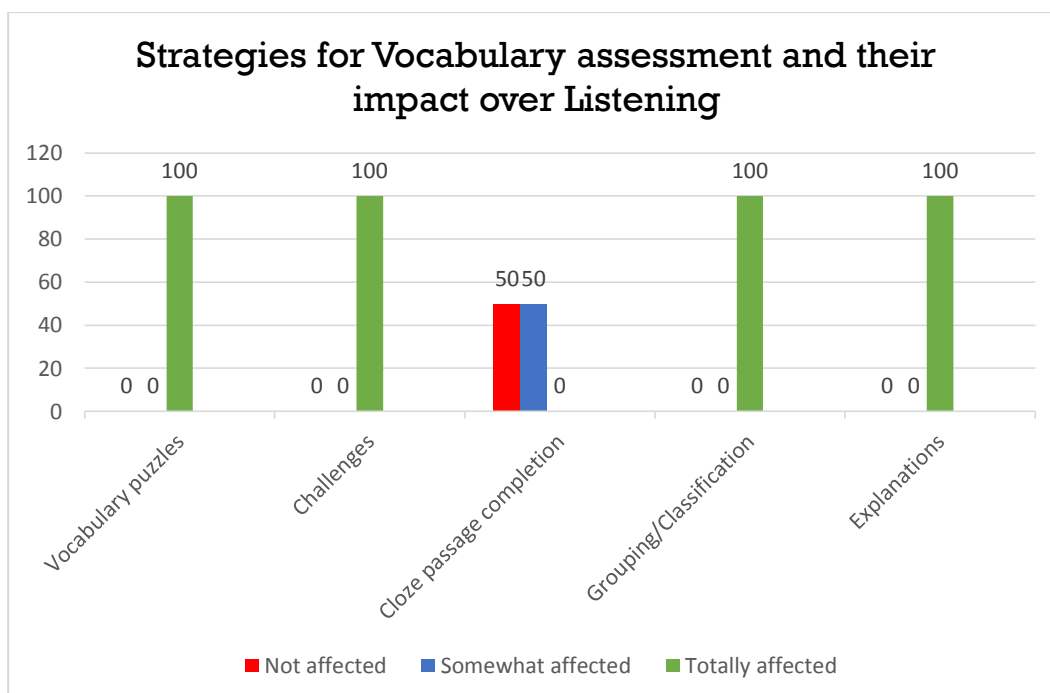
a. Chart 5.3

Strategies for Vocabulary assessment and their impact over oral skills	ORAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT											
	Listening						Speaking					
	1		2		3		1		2		3	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Vocabulary puzzles	0	0	0	0	2	100	0	0	1	50	1	50
Challenges	0	0	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100
Cloze passage completion	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0	1	50	1	50
Grouping/Classification	0	0	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100
Explanations	0	0	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0	2	100

Source: Teachers' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

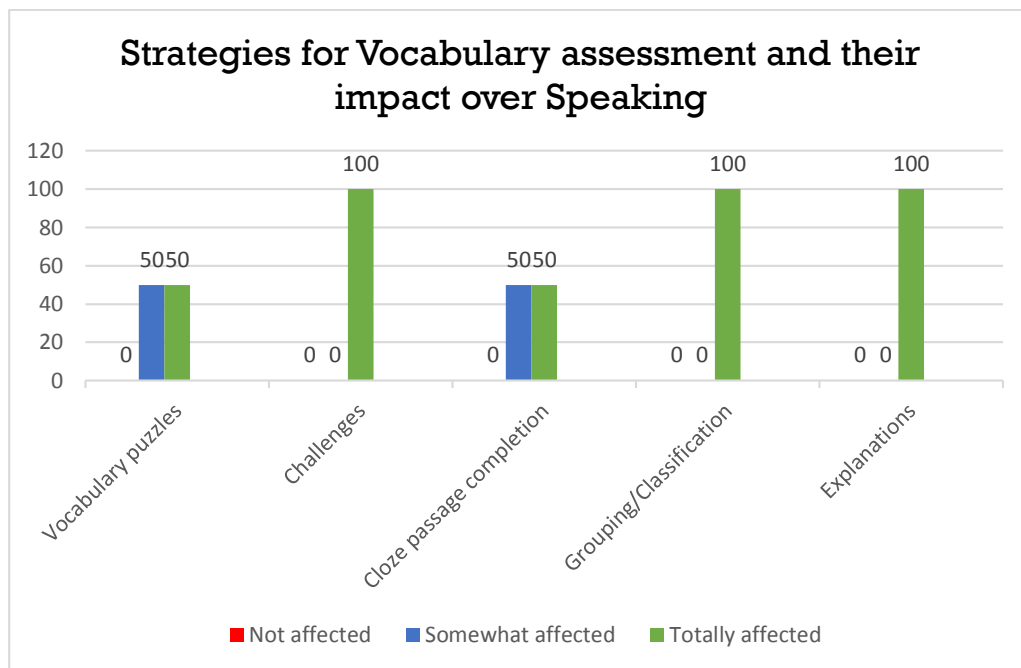
b. Graph 5.3.1



Source: Teachers' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 5.3.2



Source: Teachers' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

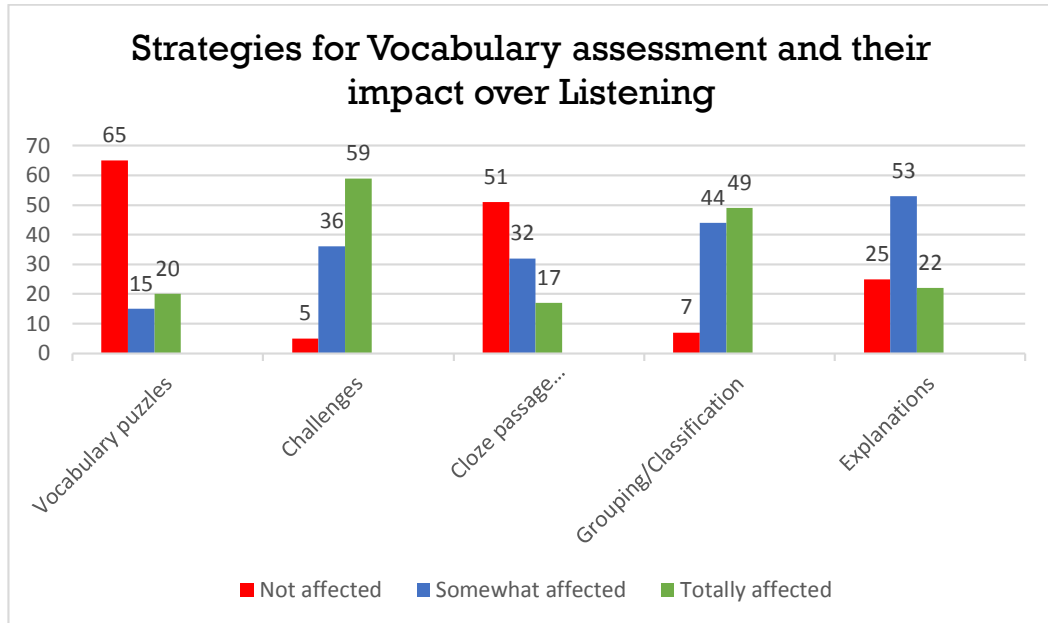
a. Chart 5.4

Strategies for Vocabulary assessment and their impact over oral skills	ORAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT											
	Listening						Speaking					
	1		2		3		1		2		3	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Vocabulary puzzles	70	65	16	15	21	20	51	48	33	31	23	21
Challenges	5	5	38	36	64	59	3	3	34	32	70	65
Cloze passage completion	53	51	34	32	20	17	62	58	31	29	14	13
Grouping/Classification	8	7	47	44	52	49	9	9	41	38	57	53
Explanations	27	25	57	53	23	22	16	15	45	42	46	43

Source: Students' surveys

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

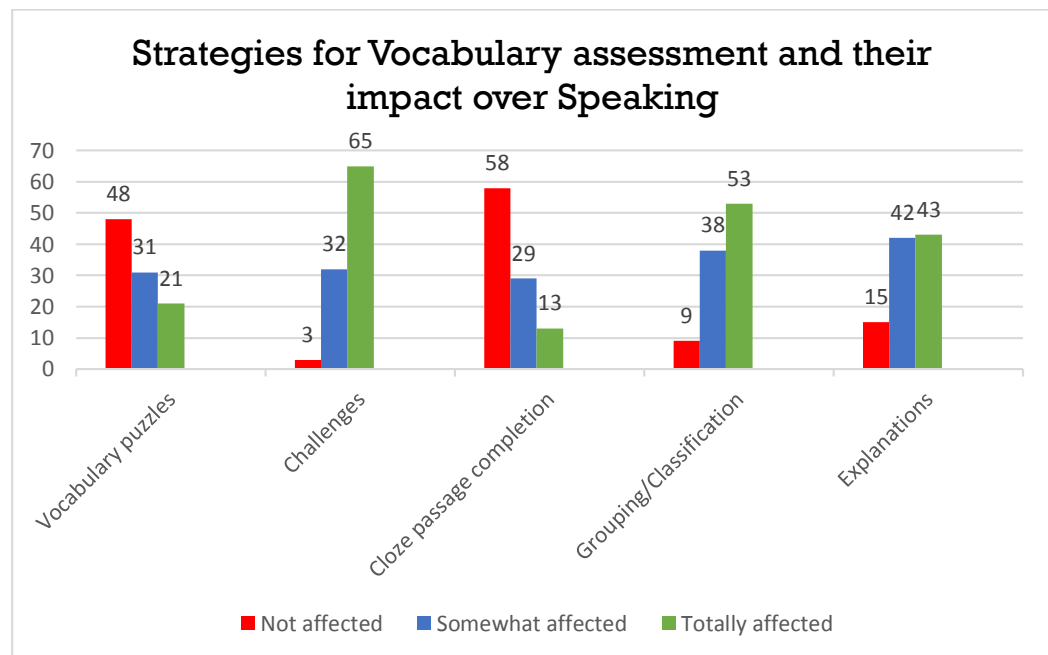
b. Graph 5.4.1



Source: Students' surveys

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 5.4.2



Source: Students' surveys

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

The data about the vocabulary assessment strategies that directly affect the oral development shows that all teachers believe that puzzles, challenges, classifications, and explanations totally affect the listening skill. Likewise, half of students' population supported the idea that challenges and word classifications boost the development of listening but vocabulary puzzles do not have an effect over this skill. With regards to speaking, all teachers stated that challenges, classifications and explanations produce good results. On the other hand, two thirds of students chose challenges, and half of them word classifications as being completely useful to develop speaking.

It can be seen that vocabulary assessment strategies such as challenges, word classifications, and explanations help students recall more easily the vocabulary covered during the lesson. As a result of using these strategies, students' performance on listening and speaking activities is better.

When working with middle-school students, teachers must look for various strategies to address their needs and to achieve the learning goals set by the national curriculum. Vocabulary strategies such as word classifications, and challenges are quite useful to assess the lexicon that students will need in the lesson. Thomson (2005), claims that students perform better on listening activities when the strategies raise their interest, making the experience more engaging and enjoyable for everyone.

To develop *speaking*, a wide range of strategies can be used in class, varying from illustrations, mime, challenges, and explanations which can be graded according to students' proficiency. Activities which provide visual representations help students create links between the spoken version of such word and the object it signifies (Frost, 2004). At the beginning of the lesson, drills using scaffolding strategies help them develop accuracy and pronunciation. Simple repetition exercises can be also used to teach the structure and rules of the language, where students think and produce.

Hypothesis 2

Students who are not exposed to different vocabulary strategies are not able to communicate effectively within familiar situations at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.

6. If teachers expect to promote communicative competence in students, which ability should be emphasized more in the classroom? Order the sequence that language skills should follow. (1 / 2/ 3/ 4)

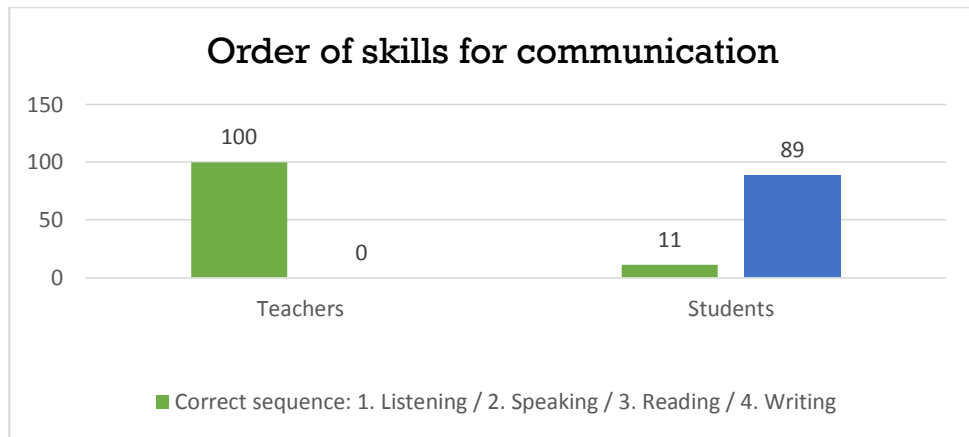
a. Chart 6

Order of skills for communication	TEACHERS		STUDENTS	
	f	%	f	%
Correct sequence: 1. Listening / 2. Speaking / 3. Reading / 4. Writing	2	100	12	11
Incorrect sequence	0	0	95	89
Total	2	100	107	100

Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 6



Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

The results show that all teachers know that the skills of listening and speaking precede reading and writing. Conversely, very few students are aware of how the process of learning a language occurs, which means that they do not have a clear path to follow. This evidence suggests that even if teachers plan classes properly including different activities and grouping configurations, students will not benefit from that instruction provided that the process looks illogical to them.

According to Wood (2007), students increasingly understand and appreciate what is explained to them, but they need to rehearse and review to make it clearer. This is also supported by Byrnes (1984) when stating that listening comprehension precedes production in all cases of language learning, and there cannot be production unless linguistic input was provided and became comprehensible intake for a listener.

Similarly, it is argued that listening and speaking are interdependent, and should be taught simultaneously.

7. Teachers who use different vocabulary strategies help students understand English more easily and produce it accurately?

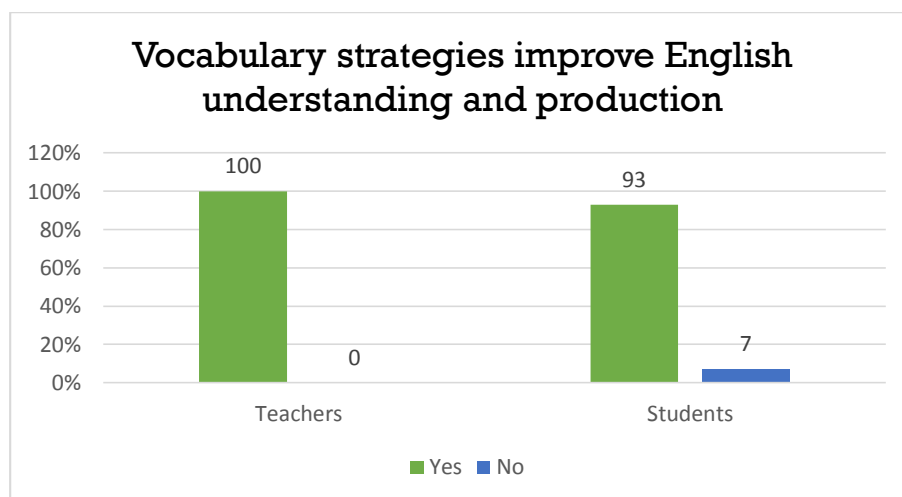
a. Chart 7

Vocabulary strategies improve English understanding and production	TEACHERS		STUDENTS	
	f	%	f	%
Yes	2	100	99	93
No	0	0	8	7
Total	2	100	107	100

Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 7



Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

In this question, all teachers claim that vocabulary strategies improve English understanding and production. Correspondingly, almost all students stated that using different vocabulary strategies helps students understand English more easily and produce it accurately.

Foreign language learners have different degrees of knowledge of vocabulary, called lexical competence, which is a central part of the communicative competence. As Coady (2001), states: “vocabulary learning is central to language acquisition, whether the language is first, second, or foreign”. The more vocabulary strategies the teacher uses, the more words students might recognize and apply. This process directly affects the receptive skill of listening because students identify a greater number of words. Furthermore, when students increase the repertoire of words, they can use it to communicate their ideas, which in the end is the purpose of the Communicative Language Approach adopted by the Ministry of Education in Ecuador.

8. Do students use the vocabulary they know to communicate in familiar situations in the classroom?

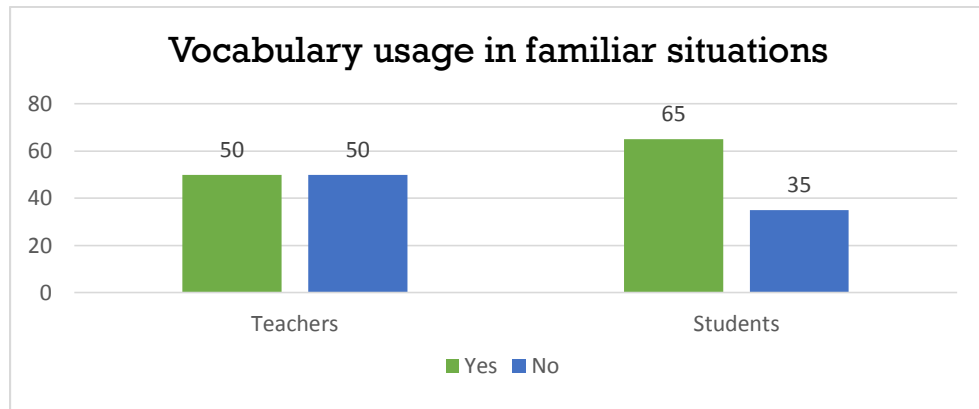
a. Chart 8

Vocabulary usage in familiar situations	TEACHERS		STUDENTS	
	f	%	f	%
Yes	1	50	70	65
No	1	50	37	35
Total	2	100	107	100

Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 8



Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

In this question, half of teachers' population mentioned that communication in English does take place in the classroom and the other half replied that it does not because students don't feel confident and lack vocabulary. Similarly, more than half of students stated that they do use the vocabulary they know to communicate in familiar situations within the classroom. These results support the idea that the basic interpersonal communicative skills are first acquired when learning a foreign language within a two-year period of time.

As stated by Herrera (2011) when citing Cummins, the skills necessary for social interactions involving language are regarded as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). Most non-native English speakers acquire sufficient BICS in English within a two-year period to meet their needs in social situations. They involve listening comprehension and speaking skills sufficient to understand and respond to social interactions.

9. How frequently is English used to communicate in the classroom within these interaction patterns?

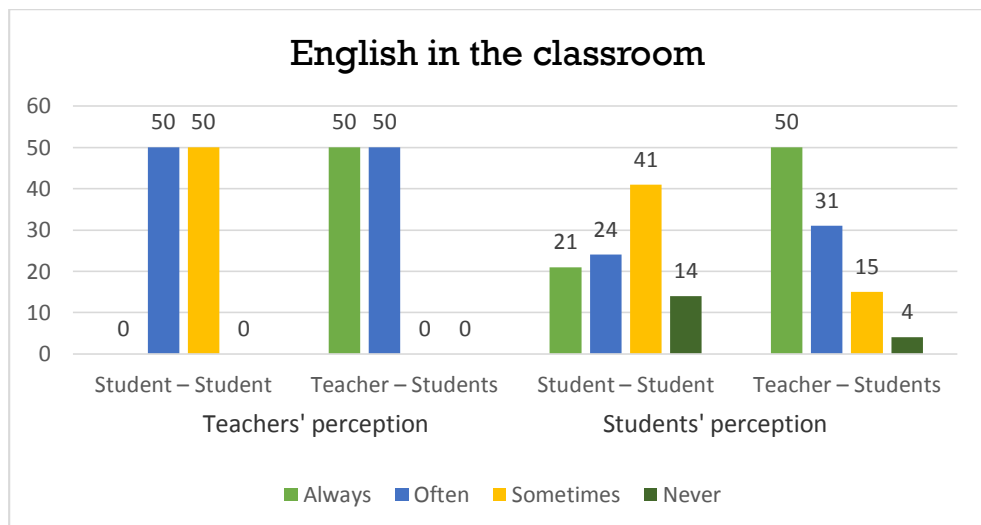
a. Chart 9

English in the classroom		FREQUENCY OF LANGUAGE USE							
		Always		Often		Sometimes		Never	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
TEACHERS	Student – Student	0	0	1	50	1	50	0	0
	Teacher – Students	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
STUDENTS	Student – Student	22	21	26	24	44	41	15	14
	Teacher – Students	54	50	33	31	16	15	4	4

Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 9



Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

The data collected through this question about the patterns of interaction reveals that half of teachers' population recognize that teacher-students interaction always occurs, and student-student interaction often occurs. In the same manner, half of students' population state that teacher-students interaction always takes place in the classroom whereas sometimes student-student interaction occurs in the class.

If teachers expect their students to succeed, in this case use English to communicate, they need to encourage language usage among students provided that learning involves participation. Given that most students feel hesitant and reluctant to speak, teachers find themselves talking for most of the time, and struggling to motivate their pupils to do it.

According to Howarth (2006), it is difficult to learn a language without engaging with that language, therefore motivation and practice time are essential within this process. Of course, this cannot be achieved over night, and students need to receive language input first to later be ready to interact in the target language. Teachers must use different interaction patterns to support the aims of the activities, consequently, generating variety in the class which students consider quite useful.

10. When social communication takes place in the English classroom, how good are the characteristics of the spoken language?

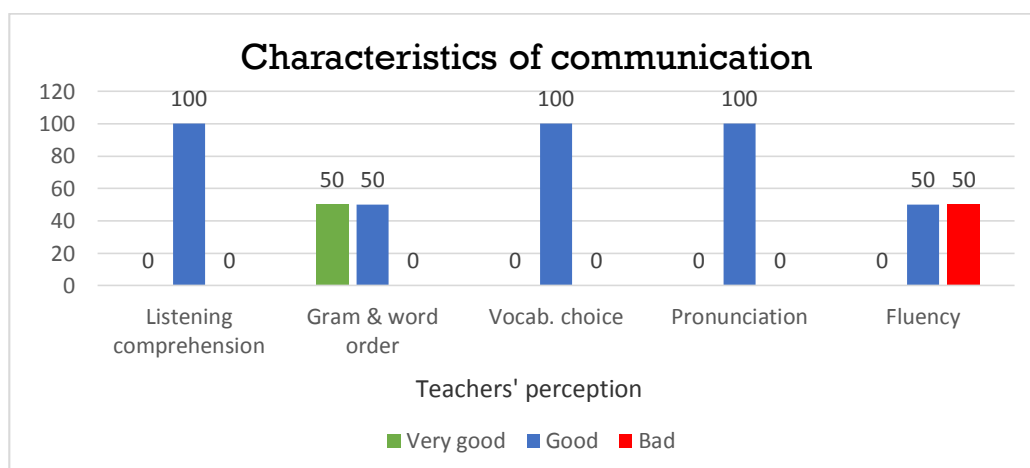
a. Chart 10

Characteristics of communication		Quality					
		Very good		Good		Bad	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
TEACHERS	Listening comprehension	0	0	2	100	0	0
	Grammar and word order	1	50	1	50	0	0
	Vocabulary choice	0	0	2	100	0	0
	Pronunciation	0	0	2	100	0	0
	Fluency	0	0	1	50	1	50
STUDENTS	Listening comprehension	44	41	53	50	10	9
	Grammar and word order	32	30	65	61	10	9
	Vocabulary choice	40	38	55	51	12	11
	Pronunciation	35	33	54	50	18	17
	Fluency	30	28	57	53	20	19

Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

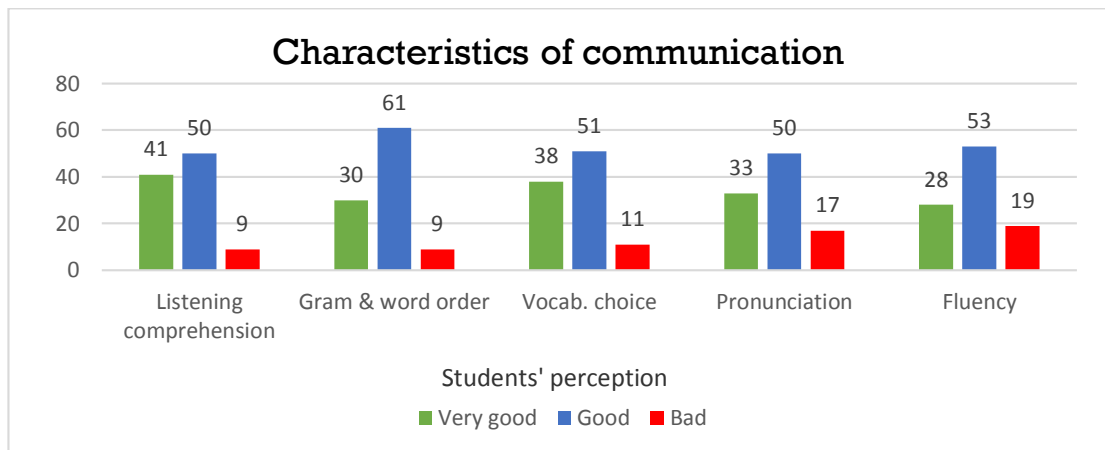
b. Graph 10.1



Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

b. Graph 10.2



Source: Teachers and students' surveys.

Researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos.

c. Logical Analysis

The information about the quality of basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) reflects that all teachers perceive the comprehension, vocabulary choice and pronunciation as being good. Likewise, little more than half of students consider that grammar and word order has good quality when communication takes place in the classroom.

Cummins (1981) describes that in terms of comprehension, students understand conversations with their classmates and teacher. In relation to grammar, they have a fair command of basic sentence patterns. The vocabulary is adequate for social conversation, but not for successful participation in discussion of subject-area content. Finally, they may have a noticeable accent, but their pronunciation is understandable. It seems that students' language proficiency, at least in a social context, presents significant clarity and good performance.

g. DISCUSSION

To prove or deny the validity of the hypotheses established for this research, the theory has been contrasted with the results obtained through the surveys applied to teachers and students of Bernardo Valdivieso high school. This valuable information has allowed the researcher to verify the hypotheses.

Hypothesis one

Statement

The vocabulary strategies implemented by teachers are unsuccessful and hinder the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.

Demonstration

In question **ONE**, which dealt with the importance of vocabulary strategies; 100 % of the teachers claimed that using various strategies to present and assess vocabulary acquisition is highly important. Correspondingly, 76 % of students’ population responded alike. These results support the idea of using various vocabulary strategies helps students recall vocabulary previously learned.

In question **TWO**, which was about the effectiveness of strategies for vocabulary learning; 100% of the teachers pointed out that illustrations are the most effective and that synonyms and antonyms are little effective. On the other hand, 46% of students answered that the context is not effective, but 43% of students mentioned that translation is effective. In terms of the effectiveness of strategies for vocabulary assessment, 100% of teachers stated that challenges are the most effective, word classifications are effective, and vocabulary puzzles are not effective. Conversely, 61% of students responded that cloze passage completions are not effective at all, and 48% chose vocabulary puzzle as little effective. These answers suggest that among the different strategies listed by the researcher, illustrations and challenges have a greater effect when teaching and assessing vocabulary acquisition.

In question **THREE**, related to whether vocabulary strategies affect or not students' readiness to perform listening and speaking activities; 100 % of teachers mentioned that they strongly agree with the belief that vocabulary strategies affect students' oral skills. Similarly, 53% of students supported that idea. This means that vocabulary strategies indeed have an effect on students' keenness to carry out listening and speaking activities.

In question **FOUR**, which collected information about the effectiveness of vocabulary over listening and speaking; 100% of teachers answered that students' performance in *listening* activities is good, which was backed up by 59% of students with the same criteria. In regards to *speaking*, 50% of teachers considered that student's performance is excellent and 64% of students claimed that their performance is good. It is evident

that when a vocabulary lesson is well planned and the teacher uses various strategies, students perform better on listening and speaking activities.

In question **FIVE**, which was about the extent to what students' listening and speaking skills are affected by the vocabulary strategies; 100% of teachers answered that *listening* is totally affected when using vocabulary puzzles, challenges, word classifications, and explanations. In terms of *speaking*, 100% said that illustrations, mime, challenges, word classification, and explanations totally affect this productive skill. In students' answers about *listening* being totally affected, 78% said that this occurs when using illustrations, 63% when using synonyms and antonyms, and 59% when using challenges. With regards to *speaking*, 65% picked challenges, and 50% illustrations as the strategies that totally affect this skill. These results allowed the researcher establish that the strategies which have a greater effect on oral skills are illustrations, challenges, and grouping or word classifications, which aren't used very often.

Decision

Based on the results gathered through the questions previously analyzed, the first hypothesis is **rejected**. This stated that vocabulary strategies implemented by teachers are unsuccessful and hinder the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at "Bernardo Valdivieso" High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.

Teachers and students recognized the importance of using various strategies to learn and assess vocabulary, and agreed that such strategies directly affect students' listening and speaking performance. Among the strategies for vocabulary learning and assessment listed by the researcher, both teachers and students praised illustrations, challenges, and grouping or word classifications as completely effective or successful. This results show that students are familiar with different strategies, and depending on the content, some are more successful at the moment of recalling, identifying and using the vocabulary covered during the lesson.

Hypothesis two

Statement

Students who are not exposed to different vocabulary strategies are not able to communicate effectively within familiar situations at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.

Demonstration

In question **SIX**, about the sequence that language skills should follow in order to promote communicative competence; 100% of teachers identify that the correct sequence starts with *listening*, then *speaking*, next *reading*, and finally *writing*. On the contrary, 89 % of students chose the incorrect alternatives. This data suggests that even though teachers have a clear path to follow in order to meet national standards, students fail to recognize the importance and sequence of each language skill.

In question **SEVEN**, created to find out if teachers who use different vocabulary strategies help students understand English more easily and produce it accurately; 100% of teachers supported that idea. Furthermore, 93% of students agreed with this statement. It is evident that when teachers use different vocabulary strategies, students' comprehension and production occurs with ease and accuracy.

In question **EIGHT**, which dealt with the occurrence of communication in the classroom; 50% of teachers said that communication in English occurs in the classroom. Additionally, 65% of students claimed that communication does occur. This results show that students are increasing their proficiency and they are in fact developing their basic interpersonal communicative skills in English.

In question **NINE**, about the patterns of interaction when using English in the classroom; 50% of teachers stated that student-student and teacher-student interaction often occurs in the classroom. Nonetheless, 50% of students answered that teacher-students interaction always takes place in the classroom, and 41% of students said that sometimes English interaction occurs among students. This data made the researcher realize that the predominant pattern of interaction when using English occurs between teachers and students. Given that students' proficiency is limited, teachers must elicit answers from students until they feel confident enough to take the initiative.

In question **TEN**, which collected information about the quality of BICS in the classroom; 50% of teachers said that grammar and word order is very good, and 100% said that comprehension, vocabulary choice, and pronunciation is good. Similarly,

41% of students claimed that comprehension is very good, 61% grammar and word order is good, and 51% said that vocabulary choice is good. It seems that students' BICS are developing under what is expected, therefore it is possible to meet the standards set by the national curriculum.

Decision

Taking into consideration the data obtained through the questionnaires applied to teachers and students, the second hypothesis is **rejected**. This hypothesis stated that students who are not exposed to different vocabulary strategies are not able to communicate effectively within familiar situations at "Bernardo Valdivieso" High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.

The sample of teachers and students who were part of this research provided arguments that contradicted this hypothesis: teachers mentioned that when they use more vocabulary strategies, students find it easy to remember the words covered during the lesson. Also, both teachers and students stated that communication in English takes place in the classroom having teacher-student interaction as the predominant pattern, which is normal because students are in the initial process of second language acquisition. Finally, teachers and students recognized that the quality of students' communication in English is good, which means that the process showcases the expected characteristics for students at this level.

h. CONCLUSIONS

After the analysis and interpretation of the information collected through the questionnaires, the following conclusions were inferred:

1. The use of strategies for vocabulary learning and assessment plays an essential role in teaching English because these elements affect students' development of listening and speaking skills.
2. Teachers at Bernardo Valdivieso High School are in fact using various strategies for vocabulary learning and assessment, these include illustrations, challenges, and grouping or word classifications, which have allowed students to develop their English comprehension and production with ease and accuracy, of course, under what is expected for learners at this level.
3. Students use English in the classroom to communicate within familiar situations. Although the most common pattern of interaction is between teacher-student due to students' lack confidence to take the initiative, from time to time this communication occurs among students exclusively.
4. The characteristics of students' basic interpersonal communicative skills are good. These include grammar and word order, comprehension, vocabulary choice, and pronunciation. Students' BICS are developing under what is expected and with a reasonable degree of quality.

i. RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions allowed the researcher to determine that the vocabulary strategies used by teachers boost the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja. Based on the aforementioned inferences, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. At the moment of planning and delivering a lesson, teachers should be aware of the importance of vocabulary strategies in order to select the ones more suitable for his or her students. Taking into consideration that 8th grades students like challenges, teachers can choose games to review vocabulary and make learning not only more fun but also more engaging to learners.
2. Teachers at Bernardo Valdivieso High School should continue using different vocabulary strategies; by doing so, teachers make English learning more memorable and students are likely to perform better within the classroom. Of course, the purpose of teaching is not vocabulary acquisition itself, but this component is the foundation for students to become effective language users, which in the end is the main goal of the national curriculum for English.
3. Even though students’ development of listening and speaking occurs to the expected extent, teachers should create scenarios where students use the language without fear, apart from the strategies for vocabulary learning and assessment; students need to do the majority of speaking because this autonomy

will break down barriers that prevent them from communicating freely with one another.

4. Given that students' basic communicative skills are good, teachers should take advantage of these characteristics by setting more demanding activities. This will help students move from what they know to the unknown; projects are good strategies where students can demonstrate their ability to use English, and the teacher is able to monitor students' progress more frequently to provide positive feedback aiming better performance.

j. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, R. (2010) Improving oracy and classroom talk in English schools. Presentation at the National Curriculum and Educational Standards. Unites States of America. Retrieved on December 16th, 2013 from: http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/downloads/_news/2012/02/2012_02_20DfE_oracy_Alexander.pdf
- Alvear, J. (2009) Educational Research II. Editorial de la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja. First Edition. Loja – Ecuador.
- Brown, D. & Knowles, T. (2007) What every middle school teacher should know. Heinemann. Second Edition. New Hampshire – USA.
- Ecuador, Ministerio de Educación. (2012) Curriculum Specifications EFL. Quito – Ecuador. Retrieved on January 5th, 2014 from: http://educacion.gob.ec/wpcontent/uploads/downloads/2013/09/Curriculum_Specifications_EFL-SPECS_-Level-A2.pdf
- Folse, K. (2009) Vocabulary activities for the English language classroom. English Teaching Forum. Unites States of America. Retrieved on January 9th, 2014 from: <http://www.cieetrc.chc.edu.tw/Vocabulary/Six%20Vocabulary%20Activities%20for%20the%20EL%20Classroom.pdf>
- Frost, R. (2009) Presenting vocabulary. British Council. London – UK. Retrieved on December 18th, 2013 from: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/presenting-vocabulary>
- Herrera, S., Kavidman, Sh., & Holmes, M. (2011) Crossing the vocabulary bridge. Teachers College Press. First edition. New York – USA.
- Herrera, S., Perez, D., & Escamilla, K. (2010) Differentiated Literacies. Allyn and Bacon. First edition. Massachusetts – USA.
- Herrera, S., & Murry, K. (2011) Mastering ESL and Bilingual methods. Allyn and Bacon. Second Edition. Massachusetts – USA.
- Jenpattarakul, W. (2012) An Examination of the Usage of Vocabulary Retention Techniques (VRTs) of Thai Undergraduate EFL Students. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences. Retrieved on February 2nd, 2014 from: http://www.mcser.org/images/stories/2_journal/mjss_may_2012/win.pdf
- Kinsella, K., Stump, C., & Feldman, K. (2011) Strategies for vocabulary development. United States. Retrieved on December 21st, 2013 from: http://www.phschool.com/eteach/language_arts/2002_03/essay.html

- Richards, J., & Renandya, W. (2008) *Methodology in Language Teaching: an anthology of current practice*. Cambridge University Press. First edition -11th printing. New York – USA.
- Salam, A. (2008) *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language: A Comprehensive Approach*. Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). United States of America. Retrieved on January 16th, 2014 from: http://www.academia.edu/3694962/Teaching_and_Learning_English_as_a_Foreign_Language_A_Comprehensive_Approach
- Unidad Educativa Bernardo Valdivieso. (2013) *Proyecto Educativo Institucional PEI*. Loja – Ecuador.
- Williams, C., & Roberts, D. (2011) *Strategic Oral Language Instruction in ELD*. Ballard & Tighe Publishers. California – USA. Retrieved on February 6th, 2014 from: <http://bt-helpdesk.com/carousel/whitepaper.pdf>
- Wood, Ch. *Yardsticks: children in the classroom ages 4 -14*. (2012) Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc. Third edition. Massachusetts – USA.
- Yule, G. *The study of language*. Cambridge University Press. Fourth edition. New York – USA. 2010.



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA
ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAREER

PROJECT

THEME:

“VOCABULARY STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS OF 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AT “BERNARDO VALDIVIESO” HIGH SCHOOL (MORNING SECTION) IN LOJA. ACADEMIC YEAR 2013 – 2014.”

AUTHOR:

HOVER ISMAEL CONZA ARMIJOS

LOJA – ECUADOR

2014

a. THEME

“VOCABULARY STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS OF 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AT “BERNARDO VALDIVIESO” HIGH SCHOOL (MORNING SECTION) IN LOJA. ACADEMIC YEAR 2013 – 2014”.

b. PROBLEM STATEMENT

BACKGROUND

The present research work will be carried out at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the academic year 2013-2014. This prestigious and traditional High school was founded in 1826 as San Bernardo High School. Years later, it was named after its founder and protector, Bernardo Valdivieso, who provided the space to build this institution. In 1985, through resolution N° 945 from the Ministry of Culture and Education, this high school adopts the categorization of “Colegio Experimental Bernardo Valdivieso”.

In 2011, following and obeying the new legal corpus that regulates educational institutions, this high school changes its name to “Unidad Educativa Bernardo Valdivieso”. There are 172 teachers covering different subjects, and around 3000 students including the three sections. At the beginning of the academic year 2013 – 2014, it was announced by the “Zone 7” Education Coordinator, Dra. Lorena Reyes, that this high school would be part of a governmental intervention to reconstruct the infrastructure, and would implement the International Baccalaureate Certification.¹

CURRENT SITUATION OF THE RESEARCH

The national educational authorities have been making significant changes in order to promote the acquisition and learning of the English as a foreign language. It was considered a fallacy that students were in fact learning English because even after six years of taking classes, they were not able to communicate with their peers. The curriculum is still undergoing a series of modifications to make students reach the B1 level in terms of proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). The curriculum includes five academic periods of EFL per week. The textbooks used in high schools are implemented by levels. So far,

¹ Unidad Educativa Bernardo Valdivieso. *Proyecto Educativo Institucional PEI*. (2013). Pg. 8.

there are three books being used for the levels A1.1, A1.2, and, A2.1, with three more texts still to come.

In accordance with the new standards, 8th grade students will reach an A1.1 level. In other words, students are expected to develop the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and sub skills not only to face communicative challenges in their immediate school and community environment, but also in the tasks and activities that a basic user of the English language carries out daily in his/her social and academic life under different conditions and restrictions.²

Given that students' performance will meet higher criteria, teachers must provide students with better learning experiences in order to achieve the aforementioned outcomes. Nevertheless, most teachers obtained their degrees several years ago where the context of teaching English was different, hence they lack expertise to teach it under the communicative approach. Institutions of higher education have done a few adaptations to make the training throughout college years more effective and have taken into consideration the new curriculum requirements in preparing English teachers. But this process will take time to actually show results.

Based on the premise that all methods, strategies and techniques fall under the communicative approach to teaching a foreign language, teachers must rely on a myriad of activities and techniques to warrant meaningful and enduring learning. But how can teachers promote communication among students if they are not even familiar with basic vocabulary to communicate in common situations? This is a complex question, and teachers struggle every day to find a fulfilling answer. Research has shown that effective vocabulary strategies promote the development of oracy skills, that is, speaking and listening. To maximize the positive results, these strategies need to be age appropriate and must include real-life context for communication. Thus, students remember the lexicon and use it later autonomously in familiar situations.

² Ecuador, Ministerio de Educación. *Curriculum Specifications EFL (2012)*. Pg. 5.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Considering the aforementioned elements, it is essential to investigate the following problem:

HOW DOES THE USE OF VOCABULARY STRATEGIES AFFECT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS OF 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AT “BERNARDO VALDIVIESO” HIGH SCHOOL (MORNING SECTION) IN LOJA? ACADEMIC YEAR 2013-2014.

DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

Temporal

The research will be developed during the academic year 2013 – 2014.

Spatial

The research work will take place at Bernardo Valdivieso High School – morning section – in the city of Loja

Observation Units

In the current research, 8th grade teachers and students will participate as subjects of investigation.

Subjects	Number
8 th Grade teachers	2
8 th Grade students	407
Total	409

Sub problems

- To what extent are the vocabulary strategies used by teachers effective to enhance the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.
- How does communication take place within familiar situations in the classroom promoting the usage of vocabulary of 8th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.

c. JUSTIFICATION

Preparing professional human resources, committed to improve the living conditions and welfare of vulnerable sectors are tenets that Universidad Nacional de Loja states on its mission and vision. Identified with these statements, the researcher considers highly important to observe and describe issues related to education that are commonplace in the EFL classroom.

As a former student of the Education, Arts and Communication Area, it is a priority to plan, develop and execute innovative strategies and techniques that benefit the teaching-learning process. As part of the teachers’ professional praxis within the social function as educators, there is the need to demonstrate that changing traditional and obsolete vocabulary teaching procedures is possible as long as there is the will, vocation and commitment to do it.

Likewise, as a recent English as a Foreign Language graduate, there is the motivation of becoming a competent and qualified professional, capable of promoting good attitudes within the classroom. In consonance with the English language learning standards established by the National Educative Authorities, the main goal of the teacher is to create a positive classroom environment where real-life communication

take place daily. If teachers fail to do so, all the efforts and investments made towards improving education in Ecuador would be worthless.

Finally, since the objective set by the Ministry of Education is to develop the communicative competence of students, teachers must use different strategies to teach vocabulary and decide which one is the most effective and fits best the classroom scenarios. If teachers are to become successful facilitators, they must know their students' learning features in order to properly address the contents set in the curriculum, and meet their needs. The researcher pursues to evaluate the effectiveness of the vocabulary strategies applied by teachers, to create proposals to increase students' vocabulary acquisition and their willing to use English in familiar situations in class.

d. OBJECTIVES

GENERAL

- To analyze the effectiveness of the vocabulary strategies used by teachers over the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.

SPECIFIC

- To establish the level of effectiveness of the vocabulary strategies used by teachers to enhance the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.
- To evaluate the efficiency of 8th grade students' communication within familiar situations in the classroom at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning shift) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.

e. THEORETICAL FRAME

STRATEGIES TO TEACH VOCABULARY

Over the last years, many researchers have put all their effort towards investigating and developing strategies to increase vocabulary in ESL/EFL classrooms. The new insights gained through observation and experimentation have led to successful implementation of such tactics to promote proper usage of English in familiar situations.

To start it off, it is also highly important to describe features of 8th graders. By understanding their characteristics, teachers can make proper choices in terms of strategies to address students' needs.

Twelve-year-olds in the classroom

According to Robert Wood (2007), students this age have a lot of energy because they are now in growth spurts. Physical exercise helps twelves do better academically, and for those not athletically inclined, participating in group activities help them build bridges into adult-like roles. Children show self-awareness, insight and empathy because they're more able to think abstractly. Most children appear enthusiastic and uninhibited. They are interested in current events such as pop culture and the latest cool clothes.

Other features that twelve-year-olds showcase include:

- ✓ Increased fine motor ability. Patience for practice, and self-confidence make all fine motor tasks more pleasurable.

- ✓ Many kids find team sport satisfying; also enjoy individual work in other fields like dance, martial arts or gymnastics. They understand the idea of training and regular exercise as a means to improve physical exercise.
- ✓ They find events highly motivating when tied to issues of clear relevance to their lives.
- ✓ They're both playful and serious. They love participating in class games but are also able to have a serious discussion a moment later.
- ✓ Children appreciate teachers who listen and respond to their suggestions for changes in routines. They can help peers significantly with school work.
- ✓ They need opportunities to demonstrate their leadership qualities.
- ✓ They increasingly understand and appreciate the need for rehearsal and revision.

Given explained features of most eight-grade students, there is a grouping of inquiries that remain unanswered. Is there a specific number of vocabulary words that can be taught in a class? What does vocabulary teaching involve? How can teachers decide which vocabulary needs to be covered? There aren't any conclusive responses to these questions. Then, educators must take into consideration the following criteria when planning and delivering a vocabulary lesson.

Vocabulary

Vocabularies include conceptual knowledge of words that goes well beyond a simple dictionary definition. Students' vocabulary knowledge is a building process that occurs over time as they make connections to other words, learn examples and non-examples of the word and related words, and use the word accurately within the context of the sentence (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005).

As students hear and read the word in many different contexts, their understanding and use of the word will develop and increase. Thus, the students within the classroom may have an understanding of a word, but the degree to which they know a word may differ. The Partnership for Reading (2003) has used the following three levels to describe students' knowledge for word meanings:

- ✓ **Unknown:** The word is completely unfamiliar and its meaning is unknown.

- ✓ **Acquainted:** The word is somewhat familiar; the student has some idea of its basic meaning.

- ✓ **Established:** The word is very familiar; the student can immediately recognize its meaning and use the word correctly. (p. 43)

Strategies to present vocabulary

There are different ways of getting across the meaning of a lexical item. It is up to teachers choosing the one that best works on his/her classroom. The strategy will also depend on the item the teacher is presenting. Some are more suitable for particular words. Often a combination of techniques can be both helpful and memorable.

Illustration

This is very useful for more concrete words (cat, dog, eraser, tall) and for visual learners. It has its limits though, not all items can be drawn.

Mime

This is particularly helpful to represent action verbs (walk, smile, think, eat) and it can be fun and memorable.

Synonyms/Antonyms

Relying on the words a student already knows can be effective for getting meaning across, like tall is *antonym* of short.

Translation

If you know the students' L1, then it is fast and efficient. Remember that not every word has a direct translation.

Context

Think of a clear context when the word is used and either describe it to the students or give them example sentences to clarify meaning further.

Alternative strategies of teaching vocabulary

Give students a few items of vocabulary and tell them to find the meaning, pronunciation and write an example sentence with the word in. They can then teach each other in groups.

Prepare worksheets and ask your students to match words to definitions. Ask students to classify a group of words into different categories. For example, a list of transport words into air/sea/land. Ask students to find new vocabulary from reading homework and teach the other students in the class.

Vocabulary assessment

Given the fact that vocabulary plays such a central role, it makes sense to assess students' comprehension and mastery of essential words and phrases introduced during a unit or lesson. Nevertheless, the new vocabulary should be prioritized, most

important words or phrases, so students can prepare and be aware of the lexicon that teachers intend to include in an assessment.

Traditional vocabulary assessments do not reveal much about a student's actual word mastery. In this sense, assessments that require simple matching, a written definition, or use of the word in an original sentence are not the most suitable. While a student may be able to recall a memorized definition and an example sentence provided by the instructor, there is no guarantee that the student can actually use the word with facility. Teachers should refrain from designing quizzes that merely tap into students' short-term memorization and should instead require critical thinking and creative application. The following are examples of more authentic vocabulary assessments formats that require relatively little preparation time:

Challenges

This strategy allows students to focus on the target vocabulary by negotiating meanings of the words given. This particular strategy, thumb challenge allows learners practice their language through interaction and enrich their understanding of words by exchanging their points of view. To carry out this strategy, each pair of students need a strip of paper with the vocabulary that will be assessed. Then, one starts creating sentences or explaining the concept of the words on the template. If a student gives an incorrect answer, the other student starts with the concepts.

Cloze passage completion

The teacher writes a brief passage (one detailed paragraph) that includes six to ten words from the study list. Then, the teacher deletes these words and leaves blanks for students to complete orally. In this way, students will be forced to scrutinize the context and draw upon a deeper understanding of the words' meanings. Advise students to first read the entire passage and to then complete the blanks by drawing from their study list.

Grouping/Classification

Grouping is a strategy that can help students remember new words better and for a longer period of time. By this strategy students can classify words into meaningful units either mentally or on a paper. The retention process becomes easier by reducing the number of discrete elements. Grouping can be done in a number of ways like:

- a) Type of words: All nouns or all verbs.

- b) Topic: Words related to a specific subject area.

Providing justification to word choice

The teacher presents four to six sentences each containing an italicized word from the study list and asks students to decide whether each word makes sense in this context. If yes, the student must justify why the sentence makes sense. If no, the student must explain why it is illogical, and change the part of the sentence that doesn't make sense. Example: Carla's sister is a *small* person. This sentence doesn't make sense, in this case the proper word should be *short*.

Because these qualitative and authentic assessments require more rigorous analysis and application than most objective test formats, it seems fair to allow students to first practice with the format as a class exercise, or complete tests in groups. There are various manners to do it; reviewing the vocabulary taught through a game or activity is very effective and teachers should encourage students to do the same at home. It is also helpful to assign brief vocabulary quizzes rather than expansive tests, to motivate students to review vocabulary regularly and to facilitate transfer to long-term memory.

Developing fluency with vocabulary

Fluency with vocabulary means making the best use of what students already know, and fluency development tasks have the characteristics of involving no new language

items, dealing with largely familiar content and discourse types, including some kinds of preparation or repetition. Fluency tasks are typically meaning-focused tasks.

There are some vocabulary items that must be learned to a very high degree of fluency. These include numbers, polite formulas, items for controlling language use (for example, to ask someone to repeat, speak more slowly and so on), times and periods of time and quantities. In addition to this, it is important that all high frequency vocabulary is learned to a reasonable degree of fluency so that it can be readily accessed when it is needed. There are learning conditions that ease the development of fluency:

- The demands of the task are largely within the experience of the learners. That is, the learners are working with known language items, familiar ideas and familiar tasks. Fluency activities should not involve unfamiliar vocabulary.
- The learners' focus is on the message.
- The learners are encouraged to reach a higher than usual level of performance, through the use of repetition, time pressure, and planning and preparation.

Repetition and focus on the message may work against each other - the more something is repeated, the less likely it will continue to be seen as a message-focused activity. The teaching methodology solution to this is to balance the ease provided by the repetition against a challenge provided by new but similar material, reducing time, a new audience, and increasing complexity. Initially, activities such as number dictation, prepared talks, interviews and questionnaires would be most suitable.

DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS

The term 'oracy' goes back to 1965, and is credited to Andrew Wilkinson. He used it in an attempt to give educational and pedagogical life to the primacy of speech in human development and culture, and to ensure that teachers treat children's oral

development no less seriously than they treat the development of children's ability to read and write. Experts call it 'oracy', 'oral development', 'communication skills', or 'speaking and listening', but in the end, the field is the same. It is what the school does to support the development of student's ability to use speech to express their thoughts and communicate with others, in education and in life.

According to Williams and Roberts (2011), oracy skills reflect the ability to use language orally for social and academic purposes. It involves the participation of a speaker in discourse for purposes such as arguing a point, contrasting a notion, defining, persuading, predicting, or summarizing. The development of oracy skills help students formulate their ideas into clear thought, hence, accurate communication is reached.

Likewise, when effective communication occurs in the classroom, students feel more confident to continue speaking. This accurate use of speech helps students improve accuracy in written work, especially grammar.

For the purpose of this academic research, the development of listening and speaking will be further explained. But first, definitions about communicative competence and English language proficiency will be discussed and briefly explained to better understand the implications and results these components pursue.

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

The new English curriculum in Ecuador sets communicative concept as the main target. According to Yule (2010), communicative competence refers to the general ability of using language *accurately, appropriately, and flexibly*. The accurate use of words and structures is known as grammatical competence. Exclusive focus on this component doesn't allow learners interpretation or production of L2 expressions. The ability to use appropriate language is called sociolinguistic competence. This component guides the learner to know when to say *Can I have some water?* versus *Give me some water!* relying on the social context. The third component is called

strategic competence and is related to the ability of organizing a message effectively, and compensating (if any difficulties) by using strategies to convey meaning. This means, using vocabulary already known by the learner to overcome potential communication problems in interaction.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Cummins (1981), states that a person's proficiency in a language refers to the degree to which that person is able to use the language. Language is used for various purposes. In education we can classify the uses of language into two dimensions: the social dimension and the academic dimension. These concepts can be compared to an iceberg. The portion that is visible on the surface, usually the social dimension, is only a fraction of the total iceberg. In order to use a language in academic work, the speaker must have an extensive foundation related to the language.

Cummins refers to the skills necessary for social interactions involving language as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). They involve listening comprehension and speaking skills sufficient to understand and respond to social interactions. Most non-native English speakers acquire sufficient BICS in English within a two-year period to meet their needs in social situations.

BICS-Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

The skills involved in everyday communication - listening, speaking, carrying on basic conversation, understanding speakers, and getting one's basic needs met.

Characteristics of Students' Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

BICS can demonstrate the learner's ability to understand and use spoken language appropriately.

Listening

Students generally understand nontechnical speech, including conversation with teachers and classmates. Since students sometimes misinterpret utterances, teachers must adjust their vocabulary and rate of speech.

Speaking

✓ Grammar and word order

Students have a fair command of basic sentence patterns. They avoid constructions which demand more control of grammar and word order. They also begin to overgeneralize, applying grammar rules they have learned in inappropriate places. For example, students often apply the -ed past tense ending to irregular pasts, resulting in formations such as "bringed" instead of "brought".

✓ Vocabulary

The vocabulary which students use is adequate for social conversation, but not for successful participation in discussion of subject-area content. The fact that students can carry on a social conversation, often in relatively unaccented speech, often persuades observers that the student is in greater command of the language than is actually the case.

✓ Pronunciation

Although students may have a noticeable accent, their pronunciation is understandable. Younger students, especially, may begin speaking with almost no accent though their command of vocabulary, grammar and syntax may be slight.

✓ **Fluency**

Students' fluency is smooth, although the length of their utterances is somewhat limited by difficulties with English. Their speech may be marked by restatements, repetitions, and hesitations.

ORAL SKILLS: LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Listening and speaking are because both are elements of oral communication. Although, they differ in terms of meaning; listening deals with abstracting meaning while speaking is about generating meaning. Furthermore, unlike listeners, speakers can control the difficulty and scope of utterances. Therefore, teachers should move towards the integration of both skills after focusing on each skill's unique characteristics.

As Byrnes (1984) points out, "Listening comprehension precedes production in all cases of language learning, and there cannot be production unless linguistic input was provided and became comprehensible intake for a listener" (pp. 318-319). On the other hand, whole language proponents, among other language educators, claim that listening and speaking are interdependent (Cutler, 1987; Mackay, 1987; Temple & Gillet, 1984). They further claim that both skills should be taught simultaneously.

As Mackay (1987) states it: "Language perception and production are intimately related and difficult to separate operationally. Every speaker is simultaneously a listener, and every listener is at least potentially a speaker. From an evolutionary perspective as well, language perception and production are virtually inseparable: the capacities for perceiving and producing speech could only have evolved simultaneously".

Similarly, Cutler (1987) supports the same view saying: "Speech production is constrained at all levels by the demands of speech perception...the production of an

utterance is constrained by factors which have more to do with the nature of the listener's perceptual process than with the nature of the production process itself”.

Moreover, Temple & Gillet (1984) also emphasize the close relationship between listening and speaking in this way: “Listening cannot be separated from the expressive aspects of oral communication. It is impossible to "teach listening" separately from speaking, or to set aside a portion of the instructional time for listening instruction and ignore it the rest of the time. Listening is as much a part of group discussions, dialogues, presentations, etc., because when children develop their communicative powers they also develop their ability to listen appreciably and receptively”.

Thomas Holtgraves (2008) argues that language use is intentional behavior. Speakers formulate their utterances with the goal of having their intentions recognized and recipients process a speaker’s remarks with the goal of recognizing those intentions. To do this successfully a person must be able to translate intentions into words and do so in such a way that those intentions will be recognized by the recipient. And recipients must be able to engage in reasoning processes in order to recognize the speaker’s intention.

LISTENING

Listening encompasses a collection of micro-skills, including phonics, vocabulary, grammar, etc. From the whole language perspective, listening is defined as an active process in which the students construct meaning from an oral text.

In developing classroom activities and materials for teaching listening comprehension, a clear understanding is needed of the nature of top-down and bottom-up approaches to listening and how these processes relate to different kinds of listening purposes. (Richards, 1990, p. 65)

L2 listening is not just a "bottom-up" skill in which the meaning can be derived from perception or comprehension of the sum of all discrete sounds, syllables, words, or

phrases (Ur, 1984). L2 listening does indeed involve some "bottom-up" processing, but at the same time it requires substantial amounts of "top-down" processing in which meaning is inferred from broad contextual clues and background knowledge (Richards, 1983).

The importance of Listening

The importance of listening lays on the fact that this skill is a prerequisite for oral communication to take place (Benson & Hijett, 1980). It often influences the development of reading and writing (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992), and helps to enlarge students' vocabulary (Rubin, 1982). In addition, it plays a central role in academic success because the lecture remains as the most widely used method for instruction at all levels (Dunkel, 1991).

Extensive and intensive Listening

Students gain valuable input through a combination of extensive and intensive listening material and procedures. Listening of both kinds is especially important since it provides the perfect opportunity to hear voices other than the teacher's, enables students to acquire good speaking habits as a result of the spoken English they absorb, and helps to improve their own pronunciation.

Extensive listening: experts claim that extensive listening (where a teacher encourages students to choose for themselves what they listen to and to do so for pleasure and general language improvement) has a dramatic effect on a student's language learning.

In order to encourage extensive listening, teachers can have students perform a number of tasks. They can record their response to simple problems, fill in a report form that aims them to list the topic, assess the level of difficulty, or summarize the content of a song. The purpose of such tasks is to give students more and more reasons to listen. If

they can then share their information with peers, they will feel they have contributed to the progress of the group. The motivational factor comes into play, and shouldn't be underestimated.

Intensive listening: it can be either using taped material or live listening in the EFL class.

✓ **Using taped materials**

These materials allows students to hear a variety of different voices apart from just their own teacher's. It gives them an opportunity to "meet" a range of different characters, especially where real people are talking. Taped material is extremely portable and readily available. CDs are cheap and Cd-players are relatively inexpensive. For all these reasons, most books include Cds to provide a significant source of language input.

If students are to get the maximum benefit from a listening then teachers should replay the track two or more times, since with each listening they may feel more secure, and with each listening they will understand more than they did previously. As the researcher John Field (1998) suggests, students get far more benefit from a lot of listening than they do from a long-pre listening phase followed by only one or two exposures to the listening text.

So even when we set prediction and gist tasks for first listenings, we can return to the track again for detailed comprehension, text interpretation, or language analysis.

✓ **Live listening**

A popular way of ensuring genuine communication is live listening where the teacher and/or visitors to the class talk to students. This has obvious advantages since students

can interrupt speakers and ask for clarification. By their expressions and demeanor, students can indicate if the speaker is going too slowly or too fast.

Reading aloud: an enjoyable activity, when done with conviction and style, is the teacher reading out loud to a class. This allows them to hear a clear spoken version of written text, and can be extremely enjoyable if the teacher is prepared to make a big thing of it. The teacher can also read/act out dialogues either by playing two parts or by inviting a colleague into the classroom.

Story-telling: teachers are ideally placed to tell stories which, in turn, provide excellent listening material. At any stage of the story, the students can be asked to predict what is coming next, or be asked to describe people in the story or pass comment on it in some other way.

Interviews: one of the most motivating listening activities is the live interview, especially where students themselves dream up to the questions. In such situations, students really listen for answers they themselves have asked for, rather than adopting other people's questions. Where possible teachers should have strangers visit the class to be interviewed, and teacher themselves can be subject of interviews.

Conversations: teacher can persuade other colleagues to visit the class to hold a conversation about any topic. Students then have the chance to watch the interaction as well as to listen to it. Having a person who also speaks English will help teachers to role play stories making students' exposure to the language more authentic.

Development of Listening

The listening skill in EFL contexts emphasizes the mastery of the sub-skills involved in listening for hope that students themselves would put these sub skills together and become proficient listeners. These sub-skills include identifying isolated speech sounds, recognizing words with reduced syllables, recognizing the stress patterns of words, distinguishing between similar-sounding words (as between cat and cut),

recognizing reduced forms of words, discriminating between intonation contours in spoken sentences, recognizing typical word-order patterns, etc. These sub-skills and many others are mastered individually through direct explanation, modeling and repetition.

Although efficient auditory perception underlies effective listening, it is not right to suppose that learning to listen involves massive practice with decoding alone (Rost, 1992). In whole language classrooms, listening is learned as a unitary art because normal speech, as whole language theoreticians believe is continuous and not chopped up into discrete sounds. Therefore, whole language teachers teach listening in real, meaningful communication settings. In these settings, students fit everything they hear into a context.

It is clear that the whole-language approach stresses meaning at the expense of skills in spite of the fact that the lack of skills can present an obstacle to FL comprehension. This is largely because FL listeners are still mastering the basic patterns of phonology and grammar which the native speaker understands so effortlessly. The following three-step procedure for the teaching of listening to EFL students serves as a guide to do so:

- **Presentation of listening skills**

In this step, the teacher explains some new vocabulary, a new structure and a phonics rule. Such skills should provide the basis for the other two steps.

- **Guided listening**

In this step, students listen to a short passage or dialogue. While listening, and under the guidance of their teacher, students focus on the meanings of the language items

explained to them instep one. They also try to guess the meanings of other language items from the context.

- **Independent listening**

In this step, each student independently listens to a passage or dialogue compatible with his/her prior knowledge. After listening, s/he proceeds on her/his own from answering questions about the ideas explicitly stated in the text, to answering questions that require information inferred from or implied in this text. S/he then discusses what s/he listened to with other students.

SPEAKING

Speaking is defined as a collection of micro-skills, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc. From a holistic language perspective, speaking is defined as an oral process of meaning construction and expression. Both definitions of speaking provide a clearer concept combining skills and meaning to promote it in EFL classrooms.

If students are to become successful speakers, they must do the majority of the talking in the classroom. Research throughout the years has revealed that teachers do the majority of the talking, and in an EFL environment, this situation must be reversed. Teachers must make the effort to increase the opportunities for students to use, practice, and reinforce the language. The teacher, of course, has to model the language first, but the students are the ones that need to practice speaking and using it to interact with each other and with the language to convey meaning, exchange thoughts and ideas, and solve problems on an oral level first, so they can move on to the written level.

The importance of Speaking

Speaking is regarded by some linguists as the foundation for other language skills. As Palmer (1965) points out, "Learning to speak a language is always by far the shortest road to learning to read and to write it". Likewise, research suggests that "the practice of hurrying children away from talk into work with paper and pencil – of discounting their oracy – has grave effects on their literacy" (Gillard, 1996, p. xiii).

Moreover, talk in the classroom can develop students' thinking skills because it introduces them to new perspectives facilitating reflection and innovative thinking.

Mental / social processing

Talking needs rapid processing skills to carry out effective communication. These processes include:

- ✓ **Language processing:** effective speakers need to be able to process language in their own heads and put it into coherent order so that it comes out in forms that are not only comprehensible, but also convey the meanings that are intended. It involves the retrieval of words and phrases from memory and their assembly into syntactically propositionally appropriate sequences. One of the main reason for including speaking activities in language lessons is to help students develop habits of rapid language processing in English.

- ✓ **Interacting with others:** most speaking involves interaction with one or more participants. This means that effective speaking also involves a good deal of listening, an understanding of how the other participants are feeling, and a knowledge of how linguistically to take turns or allow others to do so.

- ✓ **Information processing:** quite apart from our response to others' feelings, we also need to be able to process the information they tell us the moment we get it. The longer it takes for "the penny to drop" the less effective we are as instant communicators. However, it should be remembered that this instant response is

very culture-specific, and is not prized by speakers in many other language communities.

Development of Speaking

The speaking skill in EFL settings includes a set of discrete sub-skills developed through production of oral texts. These sub-skills embrace pronouncing the distinctive sounds of the English language, using stress and intonation patterns, using the correct forms of words, putting words in correct word order, etc.

To develop the ability to speak, teachers should promote spontaneous interaction in naturalistic situations. It is assumed that spontaneous interaction may lead students to cease progress at a certain level because FL beginners cannot spontaneously interact with the teacher or with one another given their lack of skills that enable them to do so. However, ignoring skills or meaning may result in making speech generation more difficult for EFL students. In other words, both skills and meaning are necessary for students to speak a foreign language fluently.

Dobson (1989) suggests that for teaching speaking to EFL students, the teacher should "help the student move from pseudo-communication, in which his use of English is fictitiously concocted and predictable, to communication where he expresses his personal ideas and needs in the context of reality".

Accordingly, the teaching of speaking to EFL students should move from oral drills to guided conversation, and finally to free-communication in every lesson. This three-step procedure is explained below.

- **Presentation of speaking skills**

In this step, the teacher explains the reduced forms of some words and/or phrases, a speaking rule and a phonics rule. Such skills should provide the basis for the other two steps.

- **Guided conversation**

In this step, the teacher prompts students to interact with him/her or with one another, within the limits of their competence and the new materials introduced in step one and in previous lessons. S/he can use "Ask me/your colleague What/When/ Where...." or "Ask me/your colleague if...."

- **Free conversation**

In this step, the teacher provides opportunities for the students to engage actively in using the newly introduced language items, among others, in peer or small group discussions. In these discussions, students express themselves in an uncontrolled way. Meanwhile, the teacher can move among them to make sure that every student is participating.

HYPOTHESES

GENERAL

- The vocabulary strategies used by teachers boost the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.

SPECIFIC

- The vocabulary strategies implemented by teachers are unsuccessful and hinder the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.

- Students who are not exposed to different vocabulary strategies are not able to communicate effectively within familiar situations at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.

f. METHODOLOGY

DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

This research work is a descriptive and non-experimental investigation. The literature review will be carried out to describe and conceptualize the variables involved in this research. Therefore, the descriptive and analytic methods will be used to develop this academic work.

METHODS, TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

Methods

The bibliographic method will be used to gather information and create the theoretical frame. The data collecting and conceptualization of the problem being studied would include literature review from books, research papers, institutional reports, and legal documents governing education in Ecuador. The analytic and descriptive methods are going to be used to describe, analyze and interpret the results of the surveys for teachers and students.

Techniques and instruments

A survey will be applied to 8th grade English Teachers and their students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School – morning section, to collect the data needed for this research work. The data collected in the questionnaire will help the researcher verify or deny the hypotheses.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures will be utilized after the data collection through surveys to teachers and students:

Tabulation

After the application of surveys, all the information collected will be tabulated. The answer to all of the questions will be tabulated in different charts.

Organization

The results and the survey after the tabulation will be organized according to the variables, independent and dependent. The responses given by teachers and the students will be organized in charts to facilitate the analysis.

Description

The statistic charts containing the information will allow the researcher to write descriptions about the results.

Graphic Representation

The results will be represented in graphic bars in order to ease the comprehension and interpretations of the results.

Interpretation and analysis

After the tabulation, organization, and graphic representation of the results, the evaluation and interpretation will proceed. A meticulous analysis of the answers in the surveys and the graphic charts will be carried out. These results will be contrasted with the theoretical references.

Hypotheses Verification

Once the results are collected, interpreted and analyzed, the research will proceed with the hypothesis verification by a logical analysis contrasting the collected data with the hypothesis. This analysis will help the researcher to prove or deny the hypotheses.

Formulation of conclusions and recommendations

The researcher will state the conclusions based on the investigation objectives. Then, a set of recommendations for each conclusion will be elaborated.

Elaboration of the report

As the final step of this research work, the conclusions and recommendations will be redacted, together with the elaboration of the report.

POPULATION SAMPLE AND DISTRIBUTION

$$n = \frac{PQ * N}{(N - 1) \frac{E^2}{K^2} - PQ}$$

PQ = first quartile

N = population

n = sample

K = Proportionality constant $(2)^2$

E = sample error (10%)

$$n = \frac{PQ * N}{(N - 1) \frac{E^2}{K^2} - PQ}$$
$$n = \frac{0.25 * 407}{(407 - 1) \frac{0.1^2}{2^2} - 0.25}$$
$$n = \frac{101.75}{\frac{(406)(0.01) - 0.25}{4}}$$
$$n = \frac{101.75}{\frac{3.81}{4}}$$
$$n = 107$$

The distribution of surveys in the different groups is calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{n}{N}$$

$$n = \frac{107}{407}$$

$$n = 0.2629$$

The result must be multiplied by the population per grade to obtain the sample by class.

Class	Number of students	Surveys
8th Grade "1"	42	11
8th Grade "2"	41	11
8th Grade "3"	38	10
8th Grade "4"	42	11
8th Grade "5"	38	10
8th Grade "6"	38	10
8th Grade "7"	42	11
8th Grade "8"	42	11
8th Grade "9"	42	11
8th Grade "10"	42	11
	407	107

h. BUDGET AND FINANCING

RESOURCES

Human

The individual researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos

Materials

Laptop, printer, internet, flash drive, books, e-books.

BUDGET

ITEM	COST
Office materials	\$ 50.00
Transportation	\$ 50.00
Copies	\$ 10.00

Print	\$ 80.00
Unforeseen expenditure	\$ 100.00
Total	\$ 290.00

FINANCING

The expenses derived from the present work will be assumed by the researcher.**i.**

h. BUDGET AND FINANCING

RESOURCES

Human

The individual researcher: Hover Ismael Conza Armijos

Materials

Laptop, printer, internet, flash drive, books, e-books.

BUDGET

ITEM	COST
Office materials	\$ 50.00
Transportation	\$ 50.00
Copies	\$ 10.00
Print	\$ 80.00
Unforeseen expenditure	\$ 100.00
Total	\$ 290.00

FINANCING

The expenses derived from the present work will be assumed by the researcher.**i.**

i. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, R. (2010) Improving oracy and classroom talk in English schools. Presentation at the National Curriculum and Educational Standards. Unites States of America. Retrieved on December 16th, 2013 from: http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/downloads/_news/2012/02/2012_02_20DfE_oracy_Alexander.pdf
- Alvear, J. (2009) Educational Research II. Editorial de la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja. First Edition. Loja – Ecuador.
- Brown, D. & Knowles, T. (2007) What every middle school teacher should know. Heinemann. Second Edition. New Hampshire – USA.
- Ecuador, Ministerio de Educación. (2012) Curriculum Specifications EFL. Quito – Ecuador. Retrieved on January 5th, 2014 from: http://educacion.gob.ec/wpcontent/uploads/downloads/2013/09/Curriculum_Specifications_EFL-SPECS_-Level-A2.pdf
- Folse, K. (2009) Vocabulary activities for the English language classroom. English Teaching Forum. Unites States of America. Retrieved on January 9th, 2014 from: <http://www.cieetrc.chc.edu.tw/Vocabulary/Six%20Vocabulary%20Activities%20for%20the%20EL%20Classroom.pdf>
- Frost, R. (2009) Presenting vocabulary. British Council. London – UK. Retrieved on December 18th, 2013 from: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/presenting-vocabulary>
- Herrera, S., Kavidman, Sh., & Holmes, M. (2011) Crossing the vocabulary bridge. Teachers College Press. First edition. New York – USA.
- Herrera, S., Perez, D., & Escamilla, K. (2010) Differentiated Literacies. Allyn and Bacon. First edition. Massachusetts – USA.
- Herrera, S., & Murry, K. (2011) Mastering ESL and Bilingual methods. Allyn and Bacon. Second Edition. Massachusetts – USA.
- Jenpattarakul, W. (2012) An Examination of the Usage of Vocabulary Retention Techniques (VRTs) of Thai Undergraduate EFL Students. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences. Retrieved on February 2nd, 2014 from: http://www.mcser.org/images/stories/2_journal/mjss_may_2012/win.pdf
- Kinsella, K., Stump, C., & Feldman, K. (2011) Strategies for vocabulary development. United States. Retrieved on December 21st, 2013 from: http://www.phschool.com/eteach/language_arts/2002_03/essay.html

- Richards, J., & Renandya, W. (2008) *Methodology in Language Teaching: an anthology of current practice*. Cambridge University Press. First edition -11th printing. New York – USA.
- Salam, A. (2008) *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language: A Comprehensive Approach*. Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). United States of America. Retrieved on January 16th, 2014 from: http://www.academia.edu/3694962/Teaching_and_Learning_English_as_a_Foreign_Language_A_Comprehensive_Approach
- Unidad Educativa Bernardo Valdivieso. (2013) *Proyecto Educativo Institucional PEI*. Loja – Ecuador.
- Williams, C., & Roberts, D. (2011) *Strategic Oral Language Instruction in ELD*. Ballard & Tighe Publishers. California – USA. Retrieved on February 6th, 2014 from: <http://bt-helpdesk.com/carousel/whitepaper.pdf>
- Wood, Ch. *Yardsticks: children in the classroom ages 4 -14*. (2012) Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc. Third edition. Massachusetts – USA.
- Yule, G. *The study of language*. Cambridge University Press. Fourth edition. New York – USA. 2010.

Annex 1

CONSISTENCY MATRIX

THEME: VOCABULARY STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS OF 8TH GRADE STUDENTS AT “BERNARDO VALDIVIESO” HIGH SCHOOL (MORNING SECTION) IN LOJA. ACADEMIC YEAR 2013 – 2014.

PROBLEMS	OBJECTIVES	HYPOTHESES	VARIABLES	INDICATORS
How does the application of vocabulary strategies affect the development of oral skills of 8 th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.	To analyze the effectiveness of the vocabulary strategies used by teachers over the development of oral skills of 8 th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.	The vocabulary strategies used by teachers boost the development of oral skills of 8 th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.		
SUBPROBLEMS				
To what extent are the vocabulary strategies used by teachers effective to enhance the development of oral skills of 8 th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.	To establish the level of effectiveness of the vocabulary strategies used by teachers to enhance the development of oral skills of 8 th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.	The vocabulary strategies implemented by teachers are unsuccessful and hinder the development of oral skills of 8 th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.	Vocabulary strategies	Middle schoolers’ learning features Vocabulary Strategies to teach vocabulary Vocabulary assessments
How does communication take place within familiar situations in the classroom promoting the usage of vocabulary of 8 th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja? Academic Year 2013-2014.	To evaluate the efficiency of 8 th grade students’ communication within familiar situations in the classroom at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning shift) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.	Students who are not exposed to different vocabulary strategies are not able to communicate effectively within familiar situations at “Bernardo Valdivieso” High School (Morning section) in Loja. Academic Year 2013-2014.	Oral skills	Communicative competence English language proficiency Development of Speaking and Listening skills

Annex 2

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA
ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT
TEACHER’S SURVEY

Dear Teacher: In order to develop my thesis focused on “*Vocabulary strategies to enhance the development of oral skills of 8th grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” high school (morning section) in Loja. Academic year 2013 – 2014*” I request your kind contribution to respond the following questions:

1. Using various strategies to present and assess vocabulary during the class is:
 - a.- Highly important
 - b.- Somewhat important
 - c.- Important
 - d.- Not important

2. On a scale from 1 to 5, how effective are the following strategies to teach and assess vocabulary acquisition:

<i>Strategies</i>		<i>Effectiveness</i>				
		-	←————→			+
		1	2	3	4	5
Learning	Illustration					
	Mime					
	Synonyms/Antonyms					
	Translation					
	Context					
Assessment	Vocabulary puzzles					
	Challenges					
	Cloze passage completion					
	Grouping/Word classification					
	Explanations					

3. Using various vocabulary strategies helps students develop their readiness to do listening and speaking activities.
 Strongly agree___ Agree___ Disagree___ I don’t know___

4. After presenting vocabulary, how good are your students at listening and speaking tasks?

Oral skills	Effectiveness scale			
	Excellent	Good	Bad	Terrible
Listening				
Speaking				

5. To what extent are students’ listening and speaking skills affected by the vocabulary strategies used by the teacher?
1 = not affected **2** = somewhat affected **3** = totally affected

<i>Strategies</i>		<i>Listening</i>			<i>Speaking</i>		
		1	2	3	1	2	3
Learning	Illustration						
	Mime						
	Synonyms/Antonyms						
	Translation						
	Context						
Assessment	Vocabulary puzzles						
	Challenges						
	Cloze passage completion						
	Grouping/Classification						
	Providing justification to word choice						

6. If teachers expect to promote communicative competence, which ability should be emphasized more in the classroom? Order the sequence that language skills should follow. (1 / 2/ 3/ 4)

Reading___ Listening___ Writing___ Speaking ___

7. Teachers who use different vocabulary strategies help students understand English more easily and produce it accurately?

Yes___ No___

8. Do students use the vocabulary they know to communicate in familiar situations in the classroom?

Yes___ No___

9. How frequently is English used to communicate in the classroom within these patterns of interaction?

Patterns of Interaction	Frequency			
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Student – Students				
Teacher – Students				

10. When social communication takes place in the English classroom, how good are these characteristics?

Characteristics of communication	Quality		
	Very good	Good	bad
Comprehension			
Grammar and word order			
Vocabulary choice			
Pronunciation			
Fluency			

Thanks for your valuable contribution.

Estimado estudiante: La presente encuesta tiene como objetivo recolectar información para el desarrollo del proyecto de tesis denominado: “*Estrategias de vocabulario para potenciar el desarrollo de habilidades orales de estudiantes de 8vo año de la Unidad Educativa Bernardo Valdivieso (Sección matutina) en Loja. Año lectivo 2013 – 2014*”, para lo cual solicito gentilmente responda las siguientes interrogantes:

1. La utilización de estrategias variadas para presentar y evaluar vocabulario es:
 - a.- Muy importante
 - b.- Algo importante
 - c.- Importante
 - d.- No es importante
2. En una escala del 1 al 5, ¿cuán efectiva considera usted las siguientes estrategias para aprender y demostrar la adquisición del vocabulario?

<i>Estrategias</i>		<i>Efectividad</i>				
		1	2	3	4	5
Aprendizaje	Ilustraciones					
	Mímica					
	Sinónimos y antónimos					
	Traducción					
	Contexto					
Evaluación	Rompecabezas					
	Desafíos					
	Párrafos con opciones					
	Agrupar /Clasificar					
	Explicaciones					

3. ¿Cree usted que utilizar varias estrategias de vocabulario ayuda a desarrollar su aptitud para ejecutar actividades de escuchar y hablar?

Bastante de acuerdo__ Estoy de acuerdo__ Estoy en desacuerdo__
Desconozco__

4. Después de ser presentado el vocabulario, ¿cuán bueno es usted en actividades de escuchar y hablar?

Habilidades orales	Efectividad			
	Excelente	Bueno	Malo	deficiente
Escuchar				
Hablar				

5. ¿Hasta que nivel cree usted que las habilidades de escuchar y hablar de los estudiantes son afectadas por las estrategias de vocabulario empleadas por su docente?

1 = no son afectadas 2 = afectadas medianamente 3 = totalmente afectadas

<i>Estrategias</i>		<i>Escuchar</i>			<i>Hablar</i>		
		1	2	3	1	2	3
Aprendizaje	Ilustraciones						
	Mímica						
	Sinónimos y antónimos						
	Traducción						
	Contexto						
Evaluación	Rompecabezas						
	Desafíos						
	Párrafos con opciones						
	Agrupar /Clasificar						
	Explicaciones						

6. Si los docentes desean desarrollar la capacidad comunicacional en Inglés de los estudiantes, ¿cuál habilidad debería ser potenciada en clases? Ordene la secuencia que deberían seguir: (1 / 2/ 3/ 4)

Leer__ Escuchar__ Escribir__ Hablar__

7. ¿Los docentes que utilizan diferentes estrategias de vocabulario ayudan a que sus estudiantes comprendan el Inglés más fácilmente y que lo produzcan con precisión?

Si __ No__

8. ¿Los estudiantes utilizan el vocabulario que conocen en Inglés para comunicarse en situaciones comunes en el aula?

Yes__ No__

9. ¿Con qué frecuencia es utilizado el Inglés para la comunicación en el aula dentro de estos parámetros de interacción?

Interacción	Frecuencia			
	Siempre	A menudo	Algunas veces	Nunca
Estudiante – estudiante				
Docente – estudiante				

10. ¿Cuándo la comunicación social ocurre en Inglés dentro del aula, cuán buenas son éstas características?

Características de la comunicación	Calidad		
	Muy Buena	Buena	Mala
Comprensión			
Gramática y orden de palabras			
Selección de vocabulario			
Pronunciación			
Fluidez			

INDEX

THEME	2
PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
Background	3
Current situation of the research	3
Research problem	5
Delimitation of the research	5
JUSTIFICATION	6
OBJECTIVES	7
General	7
Specific	7
THEORETICAL FRAME	8
STRATEGIES TO TEACH VOCABULARY	8
Twelve-year-olds in the classroom	8
Vocabulary	9
Ways to present vocabulary	10
Illustration	10
Mime	10
Synonyms/Antonyms	11
Translation	11
Context	11
Alternative ways of teaching vocabulary	12
Vocabulary assessments	13
Thumb challenge	13
Cloze passage completion	14
Grouping/Classification	14
Providing justification to word choice	14
Developing fluency with vocabulary	15
DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SKILLS	15
Communicative competence	16

English language proficiency	17
BICS-Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills	18
Characteristics of Students' Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills	18
Listening	19
Speaking	19
Oracy skills: Listening and Speaking	20
Listening	21
The importance of Listening	22
Extensive and intensive Listening	22
Extensive Listening	23
Intensive Listening	23
Using taped materials	23
Live listening	24
Reading aloud	24
Story-telling	24
Interviews	25
Conversations	25
Development of Listening	25
Presentation of listening skills	26
Guided listening	26
Independent listening	27
Speaking	27
The importance of Speaking	28
Mental / social processing	28
Language processing	28
Interacting with others	29
Information processing	29
Development of Speaking	29
Presentation of speaking skills	30
Guided conversation	30
Free conversation	30
HYPOTHESES	30

General	30
Specific	30
METHODOLOGY	31
Design of the research	31
Methods, techniques and procedures	31
Procedures	31
Population sample and distribution	31
TIMETABLE	32
BUDGET AND FINANCING	33
Resources	32
Budget	32
Financing	32
BIBLIOGRAPHY	34
ANNEXES	35
INDEX	41