View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk

brought to you by CORE

provided by Universidad de San Buenaventura Cartagena

IMPROVING VOCABULARY ACQUISITION BY MEANS OF LISTENING ACTIVITIES

ANDRES SEBASTIAN DIAZ CORDOBA

DAYANARA CARABALLO VASQUEZ

UNIVERSIDAD DE SAN BUENAVENTURA SECCIONAL CARTAGENA

FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y SOCIALES

PROGRAMA DE LENGUAS MODERNAS CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS Y FRANCÉS

CARTAGENA DE INDIAS

2019

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to Heberto Fernandez for his valuable input, sound advice, and unwavering support. We are thankful for the many hours he spent assisting us to achieve our final product. We learned so much from his knowledge and expertise; we admire his standard of excellence.

We are grateful to all the teachers that helped us in our formative studies, specifically Myriam Cabrales, José Quiroz, Nolbert Loaiza, and Nidia Orozco, who provided us with a solid foundation to build our thesis.

We are also deeply grateful to Darnelda Friesen and Amy Wachtendorf for their invaluable suggestions and editorial assistance.

Special thanks are given to Evan Wachtendorf, Luz Eliana Carriazo, Luisa Fernanda Restrepo, Jennifer Elliot, Ninfa Vásquez, Katya Córdoba, Samuel Paredes, María José Mouthon, Germán Tamara, and Anggie Arias for all the support and encouragement they gave us.

Table of Contents

Abstract....10
Introduction....11
1. Statement of the problem....13
1. 1 Description of the problem....13
1. 2 Research Question....13
2. Objectives....14
2. 1 General objective....14
2. 2 Specific objectives....14
3. Rationale....15
4. Theoretical Framework....17
5. Literature Review....23
6. Methodological Proposal....28
6.1 Context....28
6.2 Proposals....29
7. Methodology....45
8. Results and discussion....50
Activities....52
Conclusion....54
References....55
Appendix....58

List of tables

Table 1. CEFR levels and corresponding semesters at USB.....15
Table 2.Conditions for learning through input. Adapted from “Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking” by I. S. P. Nation & J. Newton 2009 p. 43. Copyright 2009, Routledge.....29
Table 3. Adapted activities.....44
Table 4. Table of methodological categories.....49
Table 5. Activities by specific objectives.....53

List of figures

Figure 1. 5th semester diagnostic test results 16
Figure 2. acquisition and learning process. Adapted from “Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition” by S. D. Krashen 1982 p. 16. Copyright 1982 Stephen Krashen. 19
Figure 3. “Average” order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for English as a second language (children and adults). Adapted from “Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition” by S. D. Krashen 1982 p. 13. Copyright 1982 Stephen Krashen. 20
Figure 4. Operation of the “affective filter”. Adapted from “Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition” by S. D. Krashen 1982 p. 13. Copyright 1982 Stephen Krashen. 21

Glossary[1]

Applied Linguistics: Term covering several linguistic subdisciplines as well as certain interdisciplinary areas that use linguistic methods: language pedagogy, psycholinguistics, language acquisition, second language acquisition, translation, contrastive analysis, language planning, lexicography,' computational linguistics, ethnolinguistics, sociolinguistics, and others. Applied linguistics differs from theoretical linguistics in that the latter is concerned with the formal structure of language as an autonomous system of signs. The term 'applied linguistics' is in some cases misleading, since in many of the subdisciplines language is studied from both a theoretical and practical (i.e. applied) perspective. Moreover, some areas should be considered 'applications' of linguistics. Applied linguistics has become a field of growing linguistic interest, as evidenced by the many journals devoted to these allied studies which have been launched since the 1960s.

Cloze Test: A technique for measuring reading comprehension as well as overall language proficiency. In a cloze test, words are deleted from a reading passage at regular intervals, leaving blanks. There are two widely used ways to create the blanks. The first is known as rational deletion, where words are deleted on the basis of some rational decision (e.g. parts of speech), which results in rational cloze. For example, prepositions may be deleted to assess test takers' knowledge of English prepositions. The second is known as fixed ratio deletion or nth word deletion, where every nth word is deleted. For example, every fifth word may be deleted. The test taker must then read the passage and try to guess the missing words. For example, a cloze passage looks like this: A passage used in _____ cloze test is a _____ of written material in _____ words have been regularly _____. The subjects must then _____ to reconstruct the passage _____ filling in the missing _____. Here, the test taker has to guess a, passage, which, removed, try, by, words. The cloze procedure can also be used to judge the difficulty of reading materials (i.e. readability). If the cloze procedure is being used for language testing, the test taker is given a score according to how well the words guessed matched the original cloze test 85 words, or whether or not they made sense. Two types of scoring procedure are used: the test taker must guess the exact word that was used in the original passage (as in the above example). This is called the exact word method. b the test taker can guess any word that is appropriate or acceptable in the context. This is called the

[1] Taken from: Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (2010). *Dictionary of language teaching & applied linguistics*. Harlow: Longman.

acceptable word method (also the appropriate word method, the acceptable alternative method, and the contextually appropriate method).

Competence: (in generative grammar) the implicit system of rules that constitutes a person's knowledge of a language. This includes a person's ability to create and understand sentences, including sentences they have never heard before, knowledge of what are and what are not sentences of a particular language, and the ability to recognize ambiguous and deviant sentences. For example, a speaker of English would recognize I want to go home as an English sentence but would not accept a sentence such as I want going home even though all the words in it are English words. Competence often refers to an ideal speaker/hearer, that is an idealized but not a real person who would have a complete knowledge of the whole language. A distinction is made between competence and performance, which is the actual use of the language by individuals in speech and writing. see also communicative competence, self-determination theory

Fluency: The features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions. If speech disorders cause a breakdown in normal speech (e.g. as with aphasia or stuttering), the resulting speech may be referred to as dysfluent, or as an example of dysfluency. In second and foreign language teaching, fluency describes a level of proficiency in communication, which includes: a the ability to produce written and/or spoken language with ease b the ability to speak with a good but not necessarily perfect command of intonation, vocabulary, and grammar c the ability to communicate ideas effectively d the ability to produce continuous speech without causing comprehension difficulties or a breakdown of communication. It is sometimes contrasted with accuracy, which refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but may not include the ability to speak or write fluently.

Grammar: (in generative grammar) a grammar which describes the speaker's knowledge of the language. It looks at language in relation to how it may be structured in the speaker's mind, and which principles and parameters are available to the speaker when producing the language.

Input: (in language learning) language which a learner hears or receives and from which he or she can learn. The language a learner produces is by analogy sometimes called output.

Language: The system of human communication which consists of the structured arrangement of sounds (or their written representation) into larger units, e.g. morphemes, words, sentences,

utterances. In common usage it can also refer to non-human systems of communication such as the “language” of bees, the “language” of dolphins.

Lexis: The vocabulary of a language in contrast to its grammar (syntax).

Linguistic Units: Parts of a language system. Linguistic units can be the distinctive sounds of a language (phonemes), words, phrases, or sentences, or they can be larger units such as the utterances in a conversation.

Methodology: (in language teaching) the study of the practices and procedures used in teaching, and the principles and beliefs that underlie them. Methodology includes: a study of the nature of language skills (e.g. reading, writing, speaking, listening) and procedures for teaching them b study of the preparation of lesson plans, materials, and textbooks for teaching language skills c the evaluation and comparison of language teaching method (e.g. the audio-lingual method). methodology (2) such practices, procedures, beliefs themselves. One can for example criticize or praise the methodology of a particular language course. see also curriculum, syllabus 3 (in research) the procedures used in carrying out an investigation, including the methods used to collect and analyze data. see also experimental method, scientific method.

Morpheme: The smallest meaningful unit in a language. A morpheme cannot be divided without altering or destroying its meaning. For example, the English word morpheme 375 kind is a morpheme. If the d is removed, it changes to kin, which has a different meaning. Some words consist of one morpheme, e.g. kind, others of more than one. For example, the English word unkindness consists of three morphemes: the stem1 kind, the negative prefix un-, and the noun-forming suffix -ness. Morphemes can have grammatical functions. For example, in English the -s in she talks is a grammatical morpheme which shows that the verb is the third-person singular present-tense form.

Phoneme: The smallest unit of sound in a language which can distinguish two words. For example: a in English, the words pan and ban differ only in their initial sound: pan begins with /p/ and ban with /b/ b ban and bin differ only in their vowels: /æ/ and /i/. Therefore, /p/, /b/, /æ/, and /i/ are phonemes of English. The number of phonemes varies from one language to another. English is often considered to have 44 phonemes: 24 consonants and 20 vowels.

Phonetics: The study of speech sounds. There are three main areas of phonetics: 1 Articulatory phonetics deals with the way in which speech sounds are produced. Sounds are usually classified according to the position of the lips and the tongue, how far open the mouth is,

whether or not the vocal cords are vibrating, etc. 2 Acoustic phonetics deals with the transmission of speech sounds through the air. When a speech sound is produced it causes minor air disturbances (sound waves). Various instruments are used to measure the characteristics of these sound waves. 3 Auditory phonetics deals with how speech sounds are perceived by the listener. For example, a listener may perceive: a difference in aspiration e.g. between the aspirated /p/ of [ph it] pit and the unaspirated /p/ of [tip] tip. b other differences in sound quality, e.g. between the “clear” /i/ of [lait] light and the “dark” /i/ of [hi\] hill.

Word: The smallest of the linguistic units which can occur on its own in speech or writing. It is difficult to apply this criterion consistently. For example, can a function word like the occur on its own? Is a contraction like can’t (“cannot”) one word or two? Nevertheless, there is evidence that native speakers of a language tend to agree on what are the words of their language. In writing, word boundaries are usually recognized by spaces between the words. In speech, word boundaries may be recognized by slight pauses.

Abstract

This thesis deals with the problem of vocabulary by means of listening. In particular, the question we are trying to answer is this: How can current teaching strategies can be enhanced to include listening skills thereby improving the vocabulary level in USB modern language students? The literature research process allowed us to explore a number of key terms and second language acquisition theories among which Stephen Krashen's second language acquisition theory (SLA), and its five hypothesis, prove to be coherent to the theoretical framework the work of Paul Nation and Jonathan Newton, who follow Krashen's ideas serve as a guide and from it we adapted a number of activities from Nation and Newton to improve listening and increase students' vocabulary levels. These activities have been adapted to the Colombian context and, specifically the Modern Language Program at San Buenaventura University.

Key words: vocabulary, listening, second language, Krashen's theory.

Introduction

In today's globalized world, teaching and learning a second language can open up a whole new world of possibilities. The Modern Language Program at San Buenaventura University (USB) plays a role at a local and national level to form and train future professionals in teaching English and French as a second language. Unfortunately, the English level of the students from first to fourth semester is currently below international standards.

This paper is divided into eight chapters. In chapter one, we mention the reasons why we are doing this research, we describe the problem we are facing, and from this problem we came with the following question: how can current teaching strategies be enhanced to include listening activities designed to improve the vocabulary level in USB modern language students? Afterwards, in chapter two we define the general and specific objectives for this research. In chapter three, we explain why this research is to be considered and show that the problem we identified still persist at the Modern Language Program.

In chapter four, we start to explain the theoretical ideas that support our thesis; these ideas help understand the problem behind the lack of vocabulary in students and find a solution. We based our thesis on Krashen's second language acquisition theory because his theory is more suitable for our investigation in the context of the USB students. We also realize that his affective filter hypothesis is a vital component in the L2 acquisition process. Moreover, we use other theories from authors such as Vandergrift, Nunan, and Richards to highlight the importance of listening instruction, the processes occur while we are listening and the fact that is not a passive skill. Nation, for example stresses the importance of vocabulary in teaching English. Hymes shows the relevance of developing students the communicative competence and, finally, Bacon demonstrates the influence of authentic input to develop the communicative competence and the SLA of students.

After all our theoretical foundations is establish, in chapter five, we begin by exploring different research papers that concentrate more on the practical side of implementing these theories, so we could use them to support our research. However, we had to adapt these findings to the specific needs of our study.

In chapter six, we adapt a series of activities from Paul Nation and Jonathan Newton's *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking* and *New ways in teaching vocabulary*, based on Krashen's SLA theory. Chapter seven summarizes the most important aspects of the thesis; the

chapter contain a detailed table explaining all the categories of the thesis. In chapter eight, we discuss the current problems with the San Buenaventura University Modern Language Program context, namely, course materials, attitude, and motivation; we then present the 18 activities we adapted organized around three main objectives.

The conclusion is a summarize of how our thesis was done. Following this, we make a list of the papers and researches we used for reference for our thesis. Finally, in the appendix we add the resources used for finding the persisting problem at the Modern Language Program.

1. Statement of the problem

1. 1 Description of the problem

Nowadays, both teaching and learning a second language can open up a whole new world of possibilities such as traveling, working abroad, meeting new people, and learning about different cultures in a globalized world. Cartagena is more open than other Colombian city to globalization because it is a cultural and tourist city; as a result, students need a quality second language education. The mission of the Modern Language Program at San Buenaventura University (USB) is to train future teachers that can contribute to the improvement of English level not only in this city but also in Colombia.

We often notice students struggle to carry out a conversation or make an oral presentation due to the lack of vocabulary; therefore, it is important for students to improve their vocabulary while they learn grammar. Although grammar is important, Lessard-Clouston (2013, p. 2) highlights the importance of vocabulary and states that, “without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand others or express their own ideas.”

Listening is one of the most important skills in learning a second language; as Devine (1982b, p. 25) says, “listening is primary in all learning, in that it comes before speaking, reading, and writing in the development of all communication skills” and that, "listening seems to be the primary means by which all incoming ideas and information are taken in." Teachers often emphasize other skills that are easier to measure and evaluate, such as writing and speaking, which is leaves out a key facet of reasoning; in Devine words (1982, p. 10), “listening involves facets of reasoning and thinking of a very high order.”

To summarize, students’ lack of vocabulary and listening has not been stressed enough; this leads to an overall English level that is far below from international standards. This will make it hard for them to be competitive in a globalized world; hence, in this thesis, we present a number of proposals as a contribution to solve this problem. In fact, as it will be shown in the literature review, little or no research has been devoted to solving this problem.

1. 2 Research Question

How can current teaching strategies be enhanced to include listening activities designed to improve the vocabulary level in USB modern language students?

2. Objectives

2. 1 General objective

To improve the English level of students enrolled at the USB Modern Language Program.

2. 2 Specific objectives

1. To analyze and compare the English level and general objectives of the USB Modern Language Program with those of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

2. To identify the CEFR English vocabulary level of fifth semester students at USB Modern Language Program.

3. To adapt a number of listening activities to enhance the vocabulary level of modern language students.

3. Rationale

In this project, a number of different proposals or activities are presented to teach vocabulary to students from the first to the fourth semester courses; this project can be seen as a contribution to the development of communicative competence of students at USB. As former students of English at USB, we ourselves have experienced the effects of poor vocabulary teaching, which is demonstrated by difficulties when carrying out a conversation, making a presentation, and writing an essay; therefore, the focus of this research is on the improvement of the vocabulary level of the Modern Language Program at USB.

We use CEFR criteria since they are international standard guidelines to describe language skill; moreover, these standards provide the basis to compare the actual English levels of students from the first four semesters to the real goals of the program. According to these goals, each student should be at a specific level of the CEFR when they finish a particular semester. The following table shows the semester and the corresponding English level they should have:

Semester	CEFR level at USB
1st semester	A1-
2nd semester	A1+
3rd semester	A2
4th semester	B1
5th semester	B2-
6th semester	B2
7th semester	B2+
8th semester	C1-
9th semester	C1
10th semester	C1+

Table 1. CEFR levels and corresponding semesters at USB.

We had fifth semester students take a test based on a Cambridge A2 – B1 test that we adapted; results showed that only 20% of the students achieved B1 level, whereas the rest of the students remained at A2 level or below. Figure 1 shows these results.

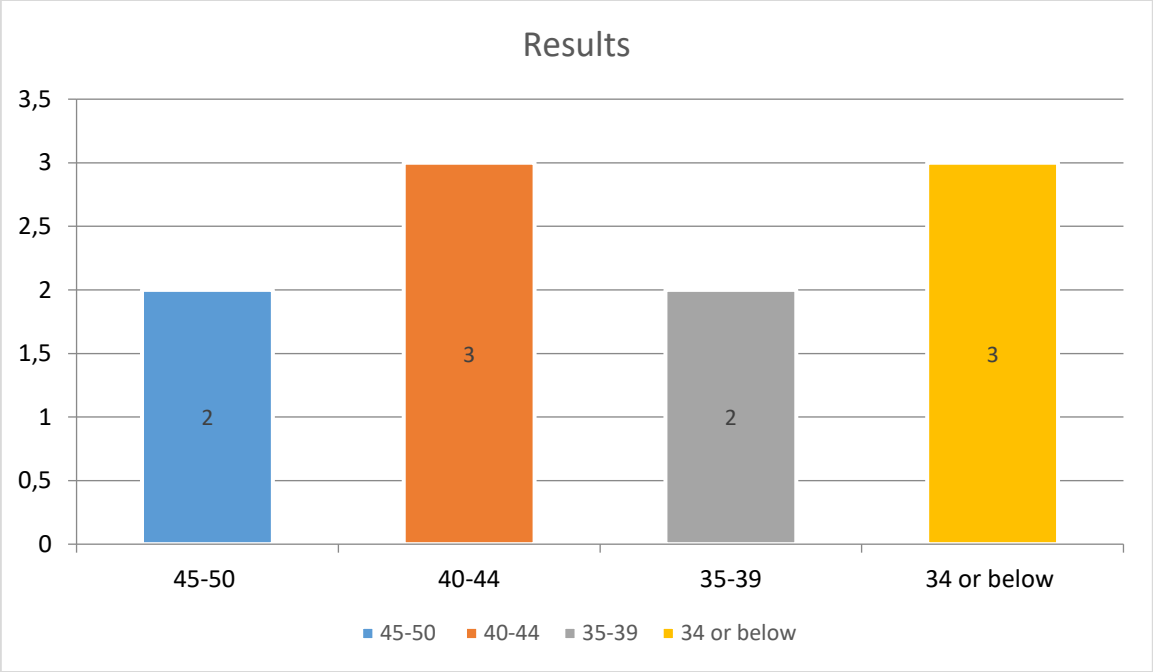

Figure 1. 5th semester diagnostic test results

We believe that implementing new English teaching strategies in the Modern Language Program is necessary both for students and teachers to increase the number of B1 students. By improving the English level of students, we will ensure future teachers are trained with a high English level, which would lead in turn to a high-quality program.

4. Theoretical Framework

Although, vocabulary is an important part of the foundation of all languages, its importance has not been stressed enough. For our purpose, the definition of *vocabulary* from the Longman Dictionary of language teaching & applied linguistics (Richards, 2010) will suffice; this dictionary defines the term as "the stock of a language; including: single words; compound words; phrasal verbs; and idioms."

Teaching vocabulary is essential in the L2 learning process, for it helps students, both to express what they feel and understand what is being said; as a result, as students' vocabulary increases, so does their English level. However, learning vocabulary is not just learning random words; it implies learning how and when to use a word in its correct form; as Nation (2001, p. 38) states, "productive vocabulary use involves wanting to express a meaning through speaking or writing and retrieving and producing the appropriate spoken or written word form." Nation (2001, p. 38) continues by saying that, "receptive vocabulary use involves perceiving the form of a word while listening or reading and retrieving its meaning"; in other words, receptive vocabulary means being able to recognize and understand those words while listening or reading. In addition, these two aspects of learning vocabulary mean that the learner must also know how the word sounds, how it is written, how it is used in different contexts, and what its grammatical function is; all of this means that learning a word is a complex process requiring various types of knowledge to apply to any single word.

According to the National Reading Panel (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 4-3), there are five ways for a learner to acquire vocabulary through vocabulary instruction methods:

1. Explicit Instruction: Students are given definitions or other attributes of words to be learned.

2. Implicit Instruction: Students are exposed to words or given opportunities to do a great deal of reading.

3. Multimedia Methods: Vocabulary is taught by going beyond text to include other media such as graphic representations, hypertext, or American Sign Language that uses a haptic medium.

4. Capacity Methods: Practice is emphasized to increase capacity through making reading automatic.

5. Association Methods: Learners are encouraged to draw connections between what they do know and words they encounter that they do not know.

We also follow Nation's (2001, p. 23) definitions of explicit and implicit acquisition. *Explicit vocabulary acquisition* is learning new vocabulary in a clearly defined and intentional way provided by textbooks and teachers; here students are aware that they are learning vocabulary. *Implicit vocabulary acquisition* means learning vocabulary through the mere use and exposure to the language; an example of learning implicitly is guessing the meaning of words in different contexts, which is more meaningful for the learner.

There are different language competencies in linguistics. *Linguistic competence*, a concept introduced by Chomsky, is defined by Hymes (1972, p. 278), as the implicit knowledge of language structures, that is, knowledge that is not consciously available for spontaneous report, but necessarily implicit in what the (ideal) speaker-listener can say. On the other hand, *communicative competence* implies following grammar rules and other aspects such as phonetics, lexis, and semantics in a communicative context. The whole objective of both teaching and learning vocabulary and developing English listening skills is to enhance students' ability to effectively communicate with others.

Listening is a skill that is often overlooked by teachers. They often emphasize other skills easier to measure and evaluate; they also feel it is a passive activity and it does not require a lot of effort to teach or enhance. Thus, teachers may mistakenly think that it is not necessary to teach this skill as much as the others; however, as Vandergrift (1999, p. 168) shows, listening comprehension is as active as reading, writing, and speaking. In addition, Nunan (1998, p. 51) explains that listening comprehension is the ability to understand oral speech, which is anything but passive; this process demands an active participation from the listener to be able to decode and understand linguistic units, such as phonemes, words, and grammatical structures.

Listening involves two different processes: bottom-up processing and top-down processing. Richards (2008, p. 3-5) defines bottom-up processing as the ability of the listener to use the incoming input as the principle for understanding what is being heard; by this, we mean the listener first decodes words, sounds, and sentences before their meaning is understood. Conversely, in top-down processing, the listener uses his background knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. Without these processes, it would be impossible for the listener to understand the aural input.

Listening is enhanced by using authentic input; in our opinion, this is the ideal method for learners to develop this skill. Bacon (1992, p. 331) highlights the importance of authentic input materials in learning a second language when the learner is exposed to the natural style of the language. For example, authentic materials, including movies, music, literature, T.V., and

videos, help learners to understand cultural signals of the language they are learning. Authentic input enriches the cultural component and it encourages the proper use of language in context. In addition, Krashen (1992, p. 170) states that exposure to a L2 in a natural or authentic way improves language acquisition, which makes this a favorable way to acquire language.

Our proposals to improve the English level of students enrolled on USB Modern Language Program are based on Krashen's theory. Krashen's theory of second language acquisition (SLA) consists of five hypotheses:

1. The acquisition-learning hypothesis: according to Krashen, there are two independent systems of developing competence in a second language (Krashen, 1995, p. 10); the first one is the *acquisition system* and, the second one, the *learning system*. Krashen defines *acquisition* as a subconscious process where learners are usually not aware of the fact that they are acquiring a particular language, but they are using that particular language for communication. This process is effective when learners have a meaningful and natural interaction with the L2 and are just concentrated in communicating, but not in the form of the message. On the other hand, *learning* is defined as the product of formal instruction and as a conscious process which produces conscious knowledge about the language, i.e., knowledge of grammar rules. As a result, an authentic exposure to a L2 is more meaningful to the learner rather than just learning the forms of the language; therefore, acquiring is most important than learning.

2. The monitor hypothesis: while learning and acquiring are two different processes, this hypothesis explains how these two works together; normally, acquisition initiates our utterances in a second language and is responsible for our fluency. Learning has only one function, and that is as a monitor or editor (Krashen, 1995, p. 15).

The following graphic shows the acquisition and learning process of a L2 student:

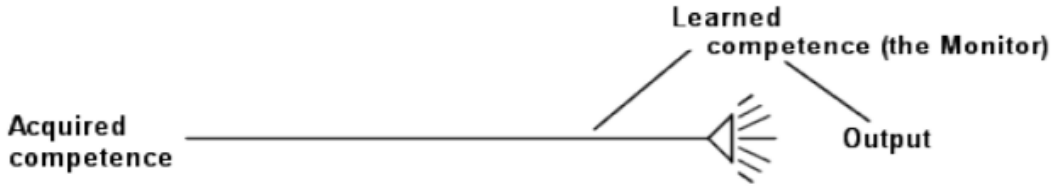

Figure 2. Acquisition and learning process. Adapted from "Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition" by S. D. Krashen 1982 p. 16. Copyright 1982 Stephen Krashen.

Krashen says that monitoring only takes place when three conditions are met: first, when the user has the time to think about and uses the rules consciously; second, when the user focuses on the form and thinks about correctness; and, third, when the user knows the rules. Krashen also suggests that the use of the monitor varies from person to person and, in addition, influences the personality of the user. He classified those that use the monitor all the time as over-users, who are usually classified as introverted and perfectionists. Under-users are those who have not learned or preferred to use their conscious knowledge, and they usually are extroverted people. Krashen classifies those who properly use the monitor as optimal users.

3. The natural order hypothesis: based on several earlier works (see Krashen, 1995, p. 13) this scholar suggested that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a natural order and it is similar in both L1 and L2. The following table shows what Krashen calls the “average” order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for ESL:

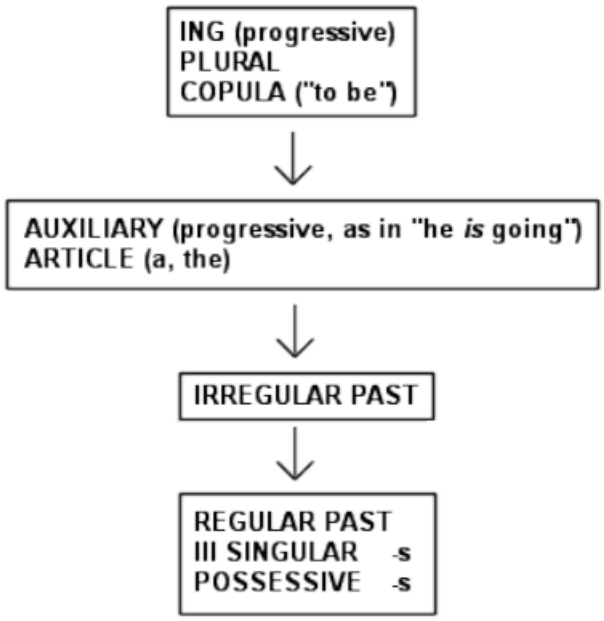

Figure 3. “Average” order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for English as a second language (children and adults). Adapted from “Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition” by S. D. Krashen 1982 p. 13. Copyright 1982 Stephen Krashen.

4. The input hypothesis: this hypothesis only involves acquiring and not learning, meaning that learners improve their linguistic competence when they receive second language input that is one step beyond their current level of competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to comprehensible input that belongs to

level 'i + 1'. Schütz (2017) then defines, *comprehensible input* as the target language that the learner would not be able to produce but can still understand. Comprehensible input is what learners cannot produce in the L2, but what they can still understand. This is more than just words: it also involves explaining, using visual cues, and negotiating meaning.

5. The affective filter hypothesis: this hypothesis states that several affective variables influence students' vocabulary acquisition. These affective variables may be anxiety, motivation, or self-confidence; for example, students with a high self-esteem, little anxiety, and high motivation are more likely to have a better acquisition process. On the other hand, students with low self-esteem, low motivation, and anxiety have more chance to create a mental block, thus making the SLA process poor. Therefore, when the affective filter is up, it is more difficult for students to have a proper SLA.

The following figure shows the operation of the affective filter:

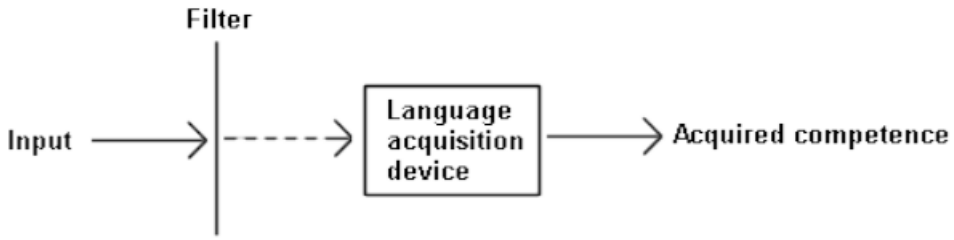

Figure 4. Operation of the "affective filter". Adapted from "Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition" by S. D. Krashen 1982 p. 13. Copyright 1982 Stephen Krashen.

Krashen also points out that learning and acquiring are two different processes: *acquiring* is defined as a subconscious process where learners are usually not aware of the fact that they are acquiring a language although they are using that language for communication. This process is effective when learners have a meaningful and natural interaction with the L2 and are just concentrated in communication but not in the form. *Learning* is defined as an intentional process where the learner obtains a specific type of knowledge, such as grammar rules. In this way, communicative competence of learners can be enhanced by using learning processes; comprehensible input improves learner's vocabulary learning and acquiring processes, which can be accomplished by natural or authentic ways.

Our proposal to improve the Modern Language Program students' English level is based mainly on Krashen's SLA theory. However, it should be noted that we will also be using ideas from authors such as Nation, Hymes, Vandergrift, Nunan and Richards to adapt Krashen's SLA

theory to the Colombian context. Most researchers have concentrated so far, their studies on students from first-world countries.

We want to make a small contribution to help future graduates from USB cope with the demands of our competitive and globalized world; learning a second language opens up opportunities to achieve that. Our proposal is based on difficulties that we ourselves experienced[2] and it is designed to improve the English level from the first to the fourth semester; the aim is to improve the quality of the Modern Language Program and its future graduates. Moreover, we would like to improve vocabulary teaching by emphasizing listening. Most research projects about vocabulary and listening are carried out in first world countries, so it is necessary to adapt the result to our country.

[2] See chapter 8

5. Literature Review

Seeing that there is no local research similar to our own, we began by focusing on relevant research on a national scale. We consulted the repositories of the top 15 universities in Colombia, according to Ranking Web Universities, six of them private and nine public. The private universities were the following: *Universidad de Los Andes, Universidad Javeriana, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Universidad ÚNICA*, and *Universidad Icesi*. The public universities were *Universidad Nacional, Universidad de Antioquia, Universidad Del Valle, Universidad Del Cauca, Universidad de Caldas, Universidad Distrital Franscico José Caldas, Universidad del Tolima, Universidad de Pamplona,* and *Universidad Del Atlántico*. We chose these universities because they have similar bachelor's degree in foreign languages programs to the USB program in Cartagena. In our research, we found three relevant papers to our research at the libraries from *Universidad Nacional, Universidad Del Rosario,* and public university *Universidad del Tolima* and *Universidad De La Sabana*.

A similar research project to our proposal, conducted by Ovalle (2011), applied strategies to students from a private elementary school, whereas we will be dealing with private university students. Through observation, she discovered that these students were afraid of speaking English because of their lack of vocabulary; she tried to address this problem by using real context-based activities such as conversations and class activities. The results show that students were more comfortable learning using this method, and they expressed that their English level improved. This highlights the value of authentic input in L2 learning process.

Serna (2011) showed that vocabulary learning has a huge impact on the L2 learning process of students using different strategies. Serna used three different strategies when working with prospective L2 teachers at the *Institución Universitaria Colombo-Americana (Única):* explicit vocabulary instruction, word study notebooks, and instructional conversations. The application of these strategies resulted in positive feedback from them. When interviewed by Serna, students gave positive feedback and mentioned that these strategies that became a fundamental part of their second language learning process. These strategies helped them obtain better grades and increase understanding. Serna's research helps us shed some light on the link between learning and teaching vocabulary, and the its efficiency in L2 acquisition.

Perez and Alvira (2017) also showed the importance of teaching and learning vocabulary strategies to students with low English level at a public school in Tolima. These students

never used general or specialized vocabulary learning strategies and had difficulty memorizing any kind of vocabulary. These scholars collected data over three stages using questionnaires, vocabulary tests, and a researcher journal. After receiving authorization from the 12 students' parents and school principal, the strategy was applied, and the data was validated and analyzed. Students were trained in each strategy, and the performance was measured. A questionnaire was applied to determine if the strategy was useful and/or a change was required. Lastly, students took a vocabulary test after each strategy and a final test at the end of the implementation. The results showed that using these strategies increased the vocabulary learning rate of the students; as a result, the language level of the students improved. Perez and Alvira's research demonstrated that the implementation of strategies helps students to improve their English level.

The discovery that similar research was more widely available internationally, rather than at a national or local level, indicates that more research should be done on these very relevant topics in language teaching. The following five papers are from Louisiana State University, United States; the *Universidad Autonoma de Madrid,* Spain; University Park, Nottingham, United Kingdom; Tianjin University of Finance and Economics, China; and National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan.

First, Dupuy (1999) demonstrated that vocabulary and second language as a whole can be better acquired through brief and repetitive aural meanings, also known as *narrow listening*. Dupuy worked with 255 students of French at a public university in the USA distributed as follows; 50 from the first semester, 75 from the second, 123 from the third and seven from the fourth semester. The materials Dupuy used were a series of tapes containing topics that students were learning in each course and other topics chosen by students, such as movies, music, and novels. All these tapes were recorded by six native French speakers, who talked for about one to two minutes on each topic in a conversational manner to sound as natural as possible. Several copies were made and placed in the language laboratory, where students could go and listen, or request the records to listen to them in their spare time. Additionally, a short survey was used to collect students' opinion on narrow listening and its impact on L2 acquisition. The survey contained six questions; students were asked what topic they chose, how many times they listened to each individual speaker, how much they understood the first and the last time they listened to them, and if narrow listening helped them to improve their language acquisition. In addition, they were asked to compare the narrow listening tapes to the text book tapes they used in class. Results showed that the

majority of beginning and intermediate students of French found narrow listening interesting, and helpful both to increase confidence and to improve listening comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. Student found narrow listening tapes to be better than the tapes from their textbooks. Dupuy's research proved that authentic materials help students improve their learning process and increase their self-confidence.

Second, Vidal (2003) shows vocabulary acquisition can be better using aural inputs rather than reading. She used three video-taped lectures made by researchers, target words, and type of words. Her research contained a pre-test, a testing phase and a post-test. The pre-test took place days before the experiment; the subjects took a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with target words. The testing phase describes a series of three fifteen-minute lectures for four weeks. While they attended each lecture, students were asked to take notes unless this would interfere with their comprehension. Once the lecture was finished, all notes were collected; students were then asked to answer true or false questions, complete a listening cloze test, and check if listening to academic lectures was a source of vocabulary acquisition. They tested their knowledge of the target words introduced in the given lecture. A month later, the post-test included the total number of target words to which they were introduced in the three lectures, and the same thing was done four months later. The results of this research showed that students were able to retain part of the learning they had achieved by listening to the lectures. Also, results showed that academic lectures can be a source of vocabulary acquisition and that vocabulary gain and retention is influenced by the subjects' English as a Foreign Language (EFL) proficiency. The main findings of this study may help us explain why vocabulary can be effectively acquired through aural means even though most of the experiments were not proven in real class context.

Third, Lin (2008) conducted a study with the purpose of evaluating the practical applicability of communicative methodologies in Taiwan classroom settings. She worked with 98 freshman students using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Lin focused on the connection between, on the one hand, students' interest, self-esteem, attitude, motivation and, on the other hand, the use of various student-centered communicative activities designed to enhance confidence and language acquisition. This researcher conducted a survey, where she asked ten questions about the student's feelings regarding towards learning through games, music, songs, and movies; students used Yes/No answers and short sentences to respond and reaffirm their feelings toward the applied pedagogies at the beginning and the end of the semester. Before applying any methodology, during the first

three weeks of the study, students were taught using traditional ways with articles from the TOEFL reading test this is a test taken by many to travel and study abroad, and it is a test that causes uneasiness to students. Lin teaches students to become familiar with the TOEFL test; therefore, they learn how to cope with some of the anxiety associated to it. When Lin applied these unconventional pedagogies, the results showed that the use of movies, games, and music did help improve students second language acquisition because its motivated students to learn English. Additionally, students remarked that these strategies should be used more often, as they preferred attending dynamic classes rather than traditional classes, which they said were boring and stressful. This study proved the effectiveness of Krashen's affective filter theory in the classroom.

Fourth, Zeeland and Schmitt (2013) studied L2 learners' acquisition of three vocabulary knowledge dimensions through listening; these dimensions are form recognition, grammar recognition, and meaning recall. The authors wanted to show how much vocabulary knowledge can be gained from aural input through different tests. There were 30 graduate students participating from a British university; 19 were Ph.D. students, and 11, masters' students. All the participants were required to have an English level of 100 on the TOEFL Internet-Based Test (iBT) or 6.0 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) since it is the minimum proficiency level required by the university. The participants were divided into two groups; 20 students received listening input, immediately followed by a post-test, and ten received the input followed by a two-week delayed post-test. Results showed that, while some types of knowledge are acquired rather easily (i.e. word form), others are not (i.e. meaning). This research demonstrated that it is possible to learn vocabulary through listening although it is not a reliable source for learning other skills.

Fifth, Yang and Wang (2013) conducted a very similar study to ours, where they discussed Krashen's SLA theory and its implications on vocabulary teaching and learning in college oral English courses. Yang and Wang worked with 30 students; 15 of them were randomly chosen and the other 15 were a control group. These 30 students were from the same class of the same major, with the same English level, and none of them knew that they were under observation. The 15 students involved were divided into three groups of five members each, according to different English levels. The experiment was carried out in four steps: the first step was a pre-test, where the 30 students were given the same topic about economy and had to do an oral presentation about the topic one by one. The second step was the experiment process, where each student was given essays; 15 students were asked

to memorize all the keywords and phrases, while the other 15 students were given no specific instructions. All of the essays were after-class assignments, and a test was scheduled a month later. The third step was a test with the same procedure as the pre-test, and the fourth step is the same test applied two months later to both groups. After tracking students for one month, they received scores based on pronunciation, intonation, clear delivery, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency; one point was assigned to each aspect. Yang and Wang’s experiment showed that acquiring vocabulary improves students' oral English abilities and that learning vocabulary in context is an efficient way of enhancing students' vocabulary size and knowledge.

These were the five research papers that we found on an international level. Let us now move on to a discussion of our methodological proposals

6. Methodological Proposal

After deciding Krashen's SLA theory provides the appropriate framework to develop our project, we are going to propose a number of activities to enchance the English vocabulary of modern language students at USB. It is important to mention that these proposals are adaptations from other activities in order to make them more relevant for the modern language students in particular and the Colombian context in general. Most of these activities are adapted from Paul Nation and Jonathan Newton's book *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*; these authors deal with teaching listening and speaking to young school students, whereas we will be working with college students. We also adapted activities from Nation's *New ways in teaching vocabulary*.

6.1 Context

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, the definition of *context* refers to "the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occur." In applied linguistics, the definition of context is rather different; *The Routledge dictionary of language and linguistics* defines *context* as "all elements of a communicative situation: the verbal and non-verbal context, the context of the given speech situation and the social context of the relationship between the speaker and hearer, their knowledge, and their attitudes." In this research, the notion of context is important because we will adapt activities to a specific target, namely, the USB Modern Language Program students.

Most of the students enrolled in the USB Modern Language Program are young adults between the ages of 17 and early 20s. There are usually from 15 to 20 students per classroom. Most of them do not like or do not have the time to read either academic literature or fiction in general. They spend most of the time paying attention to their cell phones rather than to classes.

More importantly, they are part of heterogeneous groups, where some students have better English level than others; this is completely normal, but it causes some problems. First, the level of English varies in the classroom; hence, emotional problems arise in the classroom because some students feel they are not as good as the others. They feel left behind, a situation that affects their motivation negatively. Second, the fact that students neither read nor use dictionaries hinders their vocabulary level, especially when we consider that reading is one of the main incomes of vocabulary knowledge.

6.2 Proposals

As mentioned before, these proposals are adapted from Nation and Newton's book *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking* (2008) to the context of USB Modern Language Program students.

These proposals follow most of the Krashen's SLA theories, in particular the comprehensible input theory (CI), which states that the learner will improve their linguistic competence only if the input received is one level beyond the learner's current level of competence. Nation and Newton mention that Krashen's CI can be translated into a set of learning conditions needed for language development through listening. These conditions are represented by the acronym "M I N U S", which it is explained in the following figure.

Conditions	Questions the teacher should ask
Meaningful and Interesting	Is the input a piece of meaningful communication? Does the input contain useful or interesting information that will attract the learners' attention? What features of the input make it useful or interesting and will engage learners' attention?
New Items	What learnable language, ideas, skills, or text types (L I S T) will learners meet through the listening experience?
Understanding	Can the learner understand the input? How are the learners assisted with understanding the input (e.g. through controlling the difficulty of the input or through activities that scaffold learning)? How are the new language items being made comprehensible and how is skill development being scaffolded?
Stress-free	How is stress and anxiety being controlled?

Table 2.Conditions for learning through input. Adapted from "Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking" by I. S. P. Nation & J. Newton 2009 p. 43. Copyright 2009, Routledge

Following is a list of activities that we consider will help improve listening skills and increase the vocabulary of USB modern language students. Any of these activities can be used as a warm-up activity (taking from 10 to 20 minutes) or full class activities (taking the whole class time or two classes in a row). Ideally, full class activities can be done once a month or whenever the teacher thinks it is necessary.

Activity one

Name	Oral cloze
Objective	To expose students to a source of new vocabulary input and train listening comprehension.
Semester	1st to 2nd semester
Description	Students listen to a story or a song and the teacher occasionally pauses the recording, so students can guess the next word in the story or the missing word in the lyrics. The word should be easy to guess, and the time period to guess words should not be too long. If students have a lower English level, a list of possible words can be written on the board for them to choose from.
Time	15 minutes

Activity two

Name	Listen to instructions and draw
Objective	To train listening comprehension
Semester	1st to 4th semester
Description	Students follow instructions from the teacher and, on a white sheet, they draw what the

	teacher describes. Students will have a time limit of 10 minutes and, when the activity is done, the teacher show students what they were supposed to draw.
Time	10 minutes

Activity three

Name	Listen and choose (guess who)
Objective	To improve students' fluency, increase their vocabulary, and practice listening comprehension.
Semester	1st to 4th semester
Description	This activity is similar to picture ordering. Students listen to a description and choose the picture that is described from a set of similar but not identical pictures. It is easy to record such descriptions without much preparation, so that they can be used for self-study listening. The same sets can be used again and again. Descriptions should not be brief and add several bits of irrelevant information; they should be interesting and recurring. This activity can be done in groups too. Students can be divided into groups and one group should describe someone from the classroom or someone famous (if they have pictures of them that everyone can see); if someone guesses right, it will earn the group a point. In this way, the activity can be made more interesting to students.
Time	15 to 20 minutes

Activity four

Name	What is it?
Objective	To teach students different ways to describe a person and to use adjectives.
Semester	1st to 2nd semester
Description	The teacher brings pictures and puts them all in a bag, then he will ask a student to go in front of the class and take one of the pictures from the bag without looking at it. When the student has the picture in his hand, he will put it on his forehead and the activity begins. The rest of the group will have to describe the picture to the student, or the teacher will describe a random item to students, and they will have to guess what he is describing. The description that the teacher uses at first should not be detailed, an; he should gradually give more and more information about the item, for example: "I forgot it when I left home this morning. It made me angry because it is useful. I do not like it very much, but I need it. Everyone has one. Some people like to look at it and now many people play with it." The description goes on until a student guesses what is being described; when the guessing is done, the teacher should show a picture of what was described.
Time	10 minutes

Activity five

Name	Gap filling

Objective	To have students learn new vocabulary and practice listening comprehension.
Semester	1st to 4th semester
Description	This activity is similar to the oral cloze drill. The teacher will hand students the lyrics of a song with some missing words, he will play the song and students will have to write down what they hear and fill in the gaps to complete the lyrics.
Time	10 to 15 minutes

Activity six

Name	Listening to stories
Objective	To have students practice their listening skills, identify key words in a speech, and learn more sophisticated vocabulary.
Semester	3rd to 4th semester
Description	The teacher chooses or asks students to bring a story, a short story, a poem, a news article, audiobooks, or similar items that are at the right level for them, considering what was said before about Krashen's comprehensible input; these readings must have a few unknown words. The teacher (or students that he chooses) will sit in front of the class and slowly read the story to the others. He has to be careful and make sure that students understand what is being said. When an unknown word comes up, the teacher pauses, writes it down on the board, and explains it briefly; or he may draw, gesture, or give a simple definition in the

second language. As students get familiar with the audio, the reading will be a little faster and the repetitions and explanations will be less frequent. The unknown words may also be written down on the board, and the teacher will ask students to look up the meaning at home for discussion during the next class.

According to Nation and Newton (2008, p. 43), this activity has the following advantages:

a. The learners are interested in what they are listening to.

b. They can understand what they are listening to.

c. The material is at the right level for the learners.

d. There are few unfamiliar or partly unfamiliar items that they can understand through the help of context, or through the teacher's explanation.

e. There is a little bit of deliberate attention given to language features without too much interruption to the flow of the story.

f. There are possibilities for interaction during the listening as the teacher occasionally asks questions or gets the learners to anticipate what will happen, and as the learners ask the teacher to repeat, slow down, or explain.

g. There is a large quantity of input.

h. Learners do not have to produce much

	output.
Time	30 to 50 minutes

Activity seven

Name	Picture ordering
Objective	To have students practice and use previous knowledge.
Semester	2nd to 4th semester
Description	According on Flenley, 1982 (as quoted by Nation and Newton 2001 p. 449) the teacher shows some pictures without a specific order. Then, students in small groups will have to organize them according to the way they think they should be. After the groups organize the pictures, the teacher will ask students to tell a story with the pictures that they previously arranged. The groups will have some time to organize their ideas, write them and, finally, say them out loud for the rest of the class to hear. For this activity, authentic materials can be used, such as newspapers, movie plots, comic strips, slide shows, or simply random pictures. In addition, instead of telling a story, students can arrange the pictures according to what is being described by the teacher or an audio.
Time	30 to 50 minutes

Activity eight

Name	Movie vocabulary
Objective	To have students learn new vocabulary through authentic input.

Semester	4th semester
Description	This activity takes place in two classes. On the first class, the teacher projects a movie to students, but, before doing so, he has to make sure that no student has watched the movie before. The movie will be in English with English subtitles. During the movie, students must pay attention to any words or expression that they might find unknown and write them down. The teacher can stop the movie at certain parts, where he thinks there is a word that students might not know at all or that may be a new vocabulary item, just to make sure that they do not skip them. Students must bring the lists of the unknown words with their definitions in English to the second class and share them with their classmates.
Time	Two classes

Activity nine

Name	Narrow listening
Objective	To have students learn new vocabulary through authentic input.
Semester	3rd and 4th semester
Description	Narrow listening means a series of one to three minutes audio tapes made by native speakers about different topics. Students will choose a topic and listen to the tape as many times as they want, at their leisure. In this way, they will not get bored of listening to the same thing repeatedly; repeated listening, interest in the topic, and familiar context help

	make the input comprehensible. Topics are gradually changed, which allows students to expand their competence comfortably. Krashen (1996) proposed *narrow listening* as an alternative not only to train the listening skill but also to enhance students' listening comprehension, vocabulary, and confidence.
Time	30 minutes

Activity ten

Name	Listen very carefully
Objective	To become involved in producing descriptive vocabulary.
Semester	1st and 2nd semester
Description	The teacher will ask students to bring paper and pencils with them as they move from the regular classroom to elsewhere on campus; afterwards, the teacher will ask students to close their eyes and listen very carefully to their surroundings. After two minutes, the teacher will ask students to open their eyes and list five things they heard, for example, bird sound or people speaking. When learners have returned to the classroom, have them tell the class what they heard while the teacher write it down on the board. Suggest related vocabulary based on the learners' description.
Time	20 minutes

Activity eleven

Name	Say That Again
Objective	To practice known words in context
Semester	3rd to 4th semester
Description	The teacher will divide the classroom into two groups, each group will choose a representative to read sentences which forms half of a simple conversational exchange. Each sentence will be listed in a grid on the board; then, one representative selects a number and reads the corresponding sentence. Next, another member of the group picks a number and does the same; if the sentences match (that is they form a logical pair), the team will get a point and continue. If the sentences do not match, the other team continues.
Time	40 minutes

Activity twelve

Name	Hit the word
Objective	To practice auditory and visual discrimination of words
Semester	1st and 2nd semester

Description	The teacher divides the class into two or more groups. The teacher will write 10 words on the board, for example, 10 verbs in the past tense. Then, he draws a line on the floor about one meter away from the board; a student from each team will stand behind the line. Rules: Listen to the sentence or dialogue and choose the word on the board that corresponds to the one in the sentence/dialogue. The first student to hit the correct word earns a point for the team. Example: Write on the board the past tense verbs *ran, came, went*, etc. Then say: "Yesterday, Peter ran to school." A student runs to the board to the board and hits the word.
Time	30 minutes

Activity thirteen

Name	Listening/speaking crosswords for vocabulary practice
Objective	To reinforce and recycle vocabulary
Semester	1st to 4th semester
Description	Divide the classroom in pairs and hand out a crossword grid to each pair. Divide the clues into across and down, one of each for each pair.

If necessary, the teacher should write on the board the following type of phrases:

- What's 6 across?
- What's 3 down?
- Pardon
- I'm sorry. I don't understand, could you repeat that again?
- How do you spell that?
- Pass

Have pairs sit facing each other; one student will have the grid and the other one a set of clues. One student will read the clues while the other solves the crossword. As pairs complete the first set of clues in the crossword, the teacher will hand the second set of clues the first set may be down clues and the second across, and students will switch roles.

Time 30 minutes

Activity fourteen

Name Vocabulary in news broadcasts

Objective To expand and practice vocabulary

Semester 3rd to 4th semester

Description Play a segment from a news show related to the lesson the class is studying. Some segments may require two or three playbacks, depending on the level of the students and the

	complexity of the language. Then, the teacher leads a discussion examining the importance of the topic in their personal life, in the country or the city and elicits cross-cultural information from students. After the class examines the difficult vocabulary used in the segment, the teacher prepares a list of unknown words or students can point out problem words on their own. Students can act out the role of newscaster, giving their own version of the news using one or more of the vocabulary items.
Time	50 minutes

Activity fifteen

Name	Idioms in popular music
Objective	To learn idioms in context, to practice guessing from context, and to focus on listening practice.
Semester	1st to 4th semester
Description	Print song lyrics (with idiomatic expressions underlined) and hand them over to students. The lyrics will have words deleted from it, and the idioms underlined. The teacher will have students listen to the song at least three times to complete the lyrics; after the lyrics are completed, students will have to guess from context the meaning of the underlined word.

Time	40 minutes

Activity sixteenth

Name	Whattya hear?
Objective	To increase vocabulary in context
Semester	4th semester
Description	Play an audio of the following sounds: applause, whispering, sneezing, whistling, screaming, coughing, laughing, yawning, sighing, kissing, or chewing. Students will easily recognize these words since they hear them every day. The teacher will put on the board pictures of people doing each action with the verb below and use each word in a sentence to give them a meaningful context; then, he will make students use each word in different sentences to verify they understand the words and use them in appropriate contexts.
Time	20 - 25 minutes

Activity seventeen

Name	Ghost story
Objective	To learn the vocabulary needed to tell a ghost story
Semester	4th semester
Description	Give students one week to prepare a ghost story to tell the class. Although this will typically be taken from a well-known writer, some students may share personal experiences. The teacher will divide the class into groups, and each student will tell his/her story in the group. The teacher monitors group work, supplying vocabulary as needed and writing new words on the board.
Time	40 minutes

Activity eighteen

Name	Listening to the news headlines
Objective	To become fluent listeners of the news by repeated listening to international news headlines
Semester	3rd to 4th semester
Description	Play headlines from different news broadcasts (e.g. BBC World News), first straight through

	and, then headline by headline. After each pause, ask different students what they understood and make them write it on the board. Different students will hear different things. When all the headlines have been written on the board, play the headlines again. Discuss frequently occurring phrases and interesting collocations with students.
Time	10 to 15 minutes

Table 3. Adapted activities

In this section we discussed the notion of context; also we presented a series of 18 proposals to apply to the USB context. Now, we will continue to the methodology section

7. Methodology

The main idea behind this thesis is to suggest a different approach to vocabulary teaching, namely, a series of activities to improve the English level of USB Modern Language Program students. The reason to explore this problem is twofold: first, personal reasons; during our time at the USB, we, and our classmates as well, noticed certain difficulties at the moment of making oral presentations, writing essays, and/or taking part in a conversation in English. These difficulties were, for example, stuttering when we did not remember a word, repeating the same words during our speeches and/or in writing. These difficulties were product of a lack of vocabulary instruction. Second, English nowadays is really important if we want to compete in this globalized world, using English or any other second language fluently is crucial to do so.

With this in mind, we began to look for papers related to ours. First, we began by looking into web repositories from national universities, both public and private. As we mentioned in chapter five, on a national level we found little research about this specific topic. Ovalle (2001) identified that students from a private elementary school were afraid to talk because their lack of vocabulary; through real context-based activities like conversations and class activities the author addressed this problem. Serna (2011) proved that explicit vocabulary instruction can have a huge impact on the L2 learning process; he applied different strategies to prospective English teachers, who expressed on interviews that the strategies used became a fundamental part of their second language learning process. Perez and Alvira (2017) applied specialized vocabulary learning strategies with students with low English level from a public school in Tolima. Their research was carried out in three stages where they used vocabulary tests, questionnaires, and a research journal; results showed that using these strategies increased the vocabulary learning rate of the students and their English level.

On an international level, where we were able to find more content related to our thesis, Dupuy (1999) showed that vocabulary and SLA can be better acquired through narrow listening. In this research, he handed to 255 students of French at a public university in the USA a series of brief records to listen to in their spare time or at their own leisure; by the end of the research, students were asked to answer a questionnaire about the topics they chose. Results showed that most of the beginners and intermediate students found narrow listening helpful to increase their confidence and improve their listening comprehension, fluency, vocabulary; they also found the records better than the ones from their textbooks. Vidal (2003) conducted a similar study with tourism students at a university in Spain; she proved that listening can sometimes be

a better source of vocabulary than reading. In this research, the subjects were presented with a series of three fifteen-minute lectures for four weeks, and they had to take notes; once the lecture was finished, all notes were collected, and students had to answer true or false questions and complete oral cloze test. A month later, they were post-tested on the total number of target words, to which were introduced in the three lectures, and the same thing was done four months later. Results showed that students were able to retain part of the learning they received. Lin (2008) proved the effectiveness of Krashen's affective filter theory in a Taiwan school. She focused on the connections among students' interest, self-esteem, attitude, and motivation. She used various activities to enhance confidence and language acquisition. Results showed that the use of movies, games, and music did help improve their SLA, for it motivated them to learn English; besides, students remarked that these strategies should be used more because they found them more interesting than traditional classes. Zeeland and Schmitt (2013) investigated L2 learner's vocabulary acquisition through listening in a group of 30 PhD and masters' students; one group received a listening input followed by a post-test, and the other just received the listening input by a two-week delayed post-test. Results showed that some types of knowledge can be better acquired through listening. Yang and Wang (2013) also conducted a study where they discussed Krashen's SLA and its implications on vocabulary teaching and learning during English oral courses. Results showed that acquiring vocabulary improve student's oral English level and that learning vocabulary in context is an efficient way to enhance vocabulary size and knowledge.

Afterwards, we discuss several key concepts, such as vocabulary, teaching vocabulary, methods of vocabulary acquisition, communicative competence, listening process, and authentic input. We chose Krashen's second language acquisition (SLA) theory as our theoretical framework. Krashen's SLA theory became the foundation of our thesis proposal, for it seemed to us to be the best suited to the university program context. Moreover, it allowed us to adapt a number of proposals from authors like Nation and Newton. We propose a series of activities to enhance vocabulary teaching. These proposals are activities with the purpose of teaching vocabulary. These activities and its objectives can be seen with more detail in chapter 8, table 5.

The following table summarizes the main categories of our thesis.

Subject field	Statement of the problem	Research question	General objective	Specific objectives	Categories	Sub-categories	Methodology		Guidelines	Criteria
							Techniques	Instruments		
English didactics	Design activities to enhance the English language vocabulary level of modern language students at USB.	What listening activities can be designed to improve the vocabular-y level in USB modern language students?	To improve the English level of students enrolled at the USB Modern Language Program.	1) To analyze and compare the English level, general objectives of the USB Modern Language Program with those of the CEFR.	TESOL	-Teaching vocabulary to students of English in the Colombian context. -Written and oral language.	Classroom observation. Proficiency test.	Chart of equivalence between CEFR and USB modern language program.	Does the English level of USB modern language students meet the require-ments of the CEFR?	-Creates or adapts vocabulary activities to the Colombian context. -Strengthen vocabulary instruction and listening skills.

				2) To identify the CEFR English vocabulary level of fourth semester students at USB Modern Language program.	Teaching English vocabulary.	-Teaching English vocabulary to lower level courses. -Vocabulary acquisition at the USB Modern Language Program.	Classroom observation.	Proficiency test.	What kind of test is the most adequate to assess the vocabular-y level of USB fourth semester students?	Designs or adapts an international proficiency test to measure the English vocabulary level of USB fourth semester students.
				3) To design a number of listening activities to enhance the vocabular-y level of	Krashen's SLA.	-Compre-hensible input. -Input hypothesis.	Observation ..	Activities based on Krashen's second language acquisition theory.	Which theory of second language acquisition provides the best framework to develop a number	Designs or adapts a series of activities based on Krashen's SLA theory to enhance the vocabulary

				modern language students.					of proposals aiming at enhancing the vocabular-y level of USB modern language students?	level of USB modern language students.

Table 4. Table of methodological categories.

8. Results and discussion

We have highlighted so far the importance of vocabulary when learning a language and why it is worth teaching. Vocabulary plays an important role in the SLA process and it improves the communicative competence of students. Teaching more vocabulary means better communication; therefore, it leads to an enhancement to students' English level. Students without sufficient vocabulary are not able to express themselves appropriately nor understand others.

The Modern Language Program at USB has ten semesters, that we can divide, for the purposes of this paper, into lower level courses (first to fourth semester) and upper level courses (fifth to tenth semester). When taking lower level courses, students deal with the basic curriculum and academic prerequisites, such as basic English, basic French, basics of linguistics, among others. Upper level courses students deal with more complex curriculum, more specialized classes, and students are required to think critically. We will focus our attention on the lower level courses, an area that we have identified as problematic.

On these lower level courses, the language teaching work load is enough. Each language (English and French) is taught in two-hour sessions, totaling eight hours a week. Six of these hours are spent in the classroom while the remaining two are on a multimedia classroom. The materials used by the teachers were sometimes a stereo, photocopies and, most of the time the text book Interchange by Jack C. Richards. This is a four-level, American English course used by over 50 million students worldwide; each book has 16 units, eight progress checks, and a Grammar Plus section to make sure that students receive all the practice they need. Inside each book there used to be a CD that was replaced, by a single-use code for online for self-study; it allows us to access videos, audio records, exercises, and works; it works on PCs and Macs. ("Interchange Intro | Interchange Fifth Edition," n.d.)

Most of the English classes were about the book contents. The book per se is well written; it has good content and the activities are well-designed. As we mentioned before, the book came with a CD that students could use for self-study; the CD had plenty of native-like conversations and a lot of activities that could help us strengthen our SLA process. In our opinion, it is a good book, but it lacks listening instruction because most of the listening activities are mainly focused on phonetics and pronunciation. Listening goes beyond phonetics and pronunciation. Also, we think that the book was underused; we didn't study a lot of its content, mostly because we had no means to use it as it should be used. In addition, most of our classmates did not have the book nor the CD to work at home, and it became tedious delaying classes waiting for the rest of

our classmates to make copies. We had to wait for a specific day in the week to use the CD, so we could use it in the multimedia classroom. This classroom was not well-equipped to listen to audio; hence, classes in this classroom became uncomfortable for us as students and for the teacher. The lack of materials and resources were also an issue we faced; the university does not have the proper classrooms to teach an L2 lesson, nor does it have a language laboratory, as most of the universities offering this degree do.

The current problem with vocabulary instruction methods is that they may be somewhat outdated, and they are not effective as a long-term strategy. Vocabulary instruction is based on excessive drilling and it is not meaningful for students. Furthermore, in some cases materials like textbooks and audios used in classrooms are not sufficiently exploited, or teachers might follow too much the textbook. They make the whole classes about the book content instead of using it as a guide. As a result, some teachers focus in aspects of the language like reading, speaking, writing, grammar, and phonetics, leaving aside others, such as listening, vocabulary, and context, thus making the SLA process poor.

Learning a second language is a two-way street; the teacher plays the role of a guide in the learning and acquisition process, and the student should participate actively, but this idea of the teacher as a guide has been distorted. Most students have gotten a laid-back attitude; they mostly want to spend their time in classes using their cellphones, talking with other classmates or sleeping. Most of them do not care at all about studying nor about getting good grades, or even doing the activities assigned; this attitude obstructs this two-way street. Maybe this lack of interest towards learning and studying is due to the learning conditions; for example, classrooms are not conditioned to make students feel comfortable; in fact, they are hot, the acoustics is not adequate, people talk in the hallways, hedge trimmers and leaf blowers make lessons difficult to understand. In addition, the need of resources for self-studying like a language laboratory is urgent since some students cannot afford materials such as books or computers.

Problems like these can be seen at USB classes, where vocabulary instruction in our opinion is not enough and is not given enough importance. The methods used for vocabulary instruction are as we mentioned before, almost outdated. Learning vocabulary is less efficient through drilling exercises because only works as a short-term memory strategy; vocabulary should be made meaningful for students. They should build relational understandings when learning vocabulary, so that students actually enjoy vocabulary instructions, making these types of classes less boring and encouraging them to learn more.

The aforementioned reasons made us suggest the proposed activities to contribute to the enhancement of the Modern Language Program at USB as our contribution. These activities work in conjunction with the Krashen's SLA theories, specifically with four of them. First, the acquisition-learning hypothesis is applied in each activity, because in each activity we are trying to make students forget they are actually learning a language by stressing the acquisition process rather than the learning. Second, the monitor hypothesis is applied, for students are using the monitor optimally in these activities although, as Krashen states, the use of the monitor varies from learner to learner and it depends on the personality of each of them. The input hypothesis is used, because most of the activities should contain material that is new to the students. Finally, the proposed activities aim to create a comfortable environment for students to learn, thus following the affective filter hypothesis. Following there is a list of the activities and organized according the three main objectives; please note that empty spaces mean that there is no activity related to the objective.

	Objectives		
Activities	**Train and practice vocabulary comprehension**	**Learn new vocabulary (in context/isolated)**	**Practice new/old vocabulary**
	Oral Cloze	Oral Cloze	
	Listening to instruction and draw		
	Listen and choose (Guess who?)	Listen and choose (Guess who?)	
		What is it?	What is it?
	Gap Filling		
	Listening to stories	Listening to stories	Listening to stories
			Picture ordering
		Movie vocabulary	
		Narrow listening	
	Listen very carefully	Listen very carefully	

			Say That Again
Activities (cont.)	Hit the word		
			Listening/speaking crosswords for vocabulary practice
		Vocabulary in News Broadcasts	Vocabulary in News Broadcasts
	Idioms in Popular Music	Idioms in Popular Music	Idioms in Popular Music
		Whattya hear?	
		Ghost story	
	Listening to the news headlines		

Table 5. Activities by specific objectives

So, we present these activities as a result of our research, hoping they will be put into practice by lectures and, therefore, contribute the students' language enhancement.

Conclusion

Vocabulary and listening instruction are an important part of teaching English. Researchers have demonstrated that a good implementation of these can lead to an effective SLA process; however, these parts of the language are being ignored and this fact is hindering the overall performance of students at USB. For this reason, adapting and trying different methods to the USB context is essential to keep students up to the international standards.

Our general objective being improve the English level of students enrolled at the USB Modern Language Program, we proceed to explore different theories such as bottom-up and top-down listening, vocabulary, teaching vocabulary, communicative competence, and Krashen's SLA theory. Then, we began to look for researches like ours; we found three on a national level and five on an international level to support our research. After we had the information needed, we continued to adapt a series of 18 activities for the USB Modern Language Program. The methodology highlights the key aspects of the thesis; also, we explain all the categories of our paper. Finally, we explain what could be wrong with the current USB Modern Language Program context and then we present the 18 activities we adapted organized by three main objectives.

This paper was made with the intention of proposing a series of activities with the aim of improving listening instruction and vocabulary acquisition, areas of the language that we think are overlooked in most instructions at the USB Modern Language Program. Through this thesis, we have demonstrated how important these areas are, and its positive impact on the SLA. As a result, we firmly believe that theories such as Krashen's, and activities or methodologies based on it, will increase students' vocabulary, their English level, and the USB Modern Language Program quality.

References

Bacon, S. (1992). Phases of Listening to Authentic Input in Spanish: A Descriptive Study. *Foreign Language Annals*, 25, (4), 317-333.

Devine, T. G., ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills., National Council of Teachers of English., & National Institute of Education (U.S.). (1982). *Listening skills schoolwide: Activities and programs*. Urbana, Ill: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, National Institute of Education.

Devine, T. G (1982b). Teaching study skills. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Devine, T. G. (1996). *Teaching Study Skills: A Guide for Teachers*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Dimas, H. M. S. (2011). Explicit Vocabulary Instruction in an English Content-Area Course with University Student Teachers: When Comprehensible Input Needs to Be Comprehended. *Gist Education and Learning Research Journal, 5,* 5, 84-103.

Dupuy, B. C. (1999). Narrow Listening: an alternative way to develop and enhance listening comprehension in students of French as a foreign language. System, 27, 3, 351-361.

Flenley, T. 1982. Making realistic listening material. Modern English Teacher 10, 2: 14–15.

Hymes, D. H. (1972). On Communicative Competence. In Pride, J. B., & Holmes, J. (Eds.), Sociolinguistics, 269-293. Baltimore, USA: Penguin Education, Penguin Books Ltd.

Krashen, S. D. (1995). Principles and practice in second language acquisition. Hertfordshire [England: Phoenix ELT.

Krashen, S. (1996). The case of narrow listening. *System*, *Oxford-*, 24, 1, 97-100.

Lessard-Clouston, M. (2013). *Teaching vocabulary*. Alexandria, Va: TESOL International Association.

Lin, G. H. C. (2008). Pedagogies Proving Krashen's Theory of Affective Filter. Hwa Kang Journal of English Language & Literature, 14, 113-131.

Merriam-Webster, Inc. (1996). *Merriam-Webster dictionary online*. Springfield, Mass: Merriam-Webster.

Nation, I. S. P. (1994). New ways in teaching vocabulary. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Nation, I. S. P. (2001). Learning vocabulary in another language. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking. New York: Routledge.

Nunan, D. (1991). *Language teaching methodology: A textbook for teachers*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Pérez, L. & Alvira, R. (2017). The Acquisition of Vocabulary Through Three Memory Strategies. Colomb. Applied Linguist. J., 19(1), pp. 103-116.

Richards, J. C. (2009). *Teaching listening and speaking: From theory to practice*. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre. (Richards, C. J.(2008) Teaching listening and speaking: From theory to practice. Cambridge :Cambridge University Press)

Richards, J. C. (2013). Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (4th ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315833835

Schütz, Ricardo. "Stephen Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition." English Made in Brazil <http://www.sk.com.br/sk-krash.html>. Online. 12 de março de 2017.

Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, Departmento de Lenguas Extranjeras, PROFILE Journal, & Colombia Ovalle, María. (2009). Improving New Vocabulary Learning in Context. (PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development; Vol. 2, Núm. 1 (2001): PROFILE 2, NO.1. Issues in Teachers' Professional Development; 22-24.) Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas.

Vandergrift, L. (1999). Facilitating second language listening comprehension: Acquiring successful strategies. *ELT Journal*, 53 (3): 168-176.

Vidal, K. (2003). Academic Listening: A Source of Vocabulary Acquisition? *Applied Linguistics, 24,* 1, 56-89.

Wang, Y., & Yang, J. (2013). Steven Krashen's SLA Theories and Vocabulary Teaching in College Oral English. In International Academic Workshop on Social Science (IAW-SC-13). Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/iaw-sc.2013.195

Van Zeeland, H. & Schmitt, N. (2013). Incidental vocabulary acquisition through L2 listening: A dimensions approach. *System*, 41, 609–624.

Units 1–8 *TEST A*

Name: _____
Date: _____
Score: _____

1. Check (✓) the correct words to complete the conversation. **(5 POINTS)**

Mr. Peterson: Dan, _____ (1) you mind washing the dishes?

☐ should ☐ could ☐ would

Dan: Can I do it later? I don't _____ (2) to go to practice tonight.

☐ have ☐ must ☐ ought

Mr. Peterson: No. You _____ (3) do it now. Our guests are arriving in an hour.

☐ needs ☐ should ☐ would

Dan:All right, but _____ (4) you give me a few minutes to finish this video game?

☐ should ☐ ought ☐ could

Mr. Peterson: Well, OK, but _____ (5) better start right after that.

☐ you'll ☐ you'd ☐ you've

2. Circle the correct word or phrase. **(3 POINTS)**

1. If you drive to work, you ('ll have to / won't have to / may have to) find a parking space.
2. If you (take / travel / don't go) a vacation, you may feel better and more relaxed.
3. If you bring an umbrella, you (won't get / might have / will have) wet in the rain.

3. Circle the correct word. **(3 POINTS)**

1. Keith carefully plans his day so he's never late for appointments. He likes to be (creative / punctual / forgetful).
2. Britta tries to help people and never says "no" when someone asks her for a favor. She seems like a really (generous / impatient / disorganized) person.

3. Liz and Patrick get angry easily and almost never smile. Everyone thinks they're moody and (level-headed / hardworking / short-tempered).

---

4. Read each conversation. Check (✓) the correct response. **(5 POINTS)**

1. A: Would you mind waiting here, please?
   B: _____
   ☐ Sorry. I'm cold.
   ☐ I'm sorry. I can't. I don't have time.
   ☐ Yes, I agree. We are!

2. A: What are you going to do Saturday?
   B: _____
   ☐ I probably won't do anything.
   ☐ That doesn't sound like much fun.
   ☐ It's too early.

3. A: You'd better take a sweater with you.
   B: _____
   ☐ This one is better.
   ☐ Thanks. I will.
   ☐ Yes, you should.

4. A: Do you know where the nearest bus stop is?
   B: _____
   ☐ That's great. I really appreciate it.
   ☐ Sure. Would you like to see them?
   ☐ No, I'm sorry. I don't.

5. A: I wish I could take a vacation.
   B: _____
   ☐ That's too bad. Why not?
   ☐ I know what you mean.
   ☐ I don't like to, either.

---

5. Complete the paragraph with words from the box. One word will not be used. **(5 POINTS)**

almost	enough	more
as	fewer	too

My city has some serious transportation problems. First, there aren't _____ (1) buses, and many of the buses are _____ (2) crowded. There is a subway system, but the subways are busy, too – they're as crowded _____ (3) the buses. Part of the problem is the lack of parking downtown. There should be either _____ (4) cars, or one or two _____(5) parking garages.

---

6. Check (✓) the correct word or phrase to complete each sentence. **(6 POINTS)**

1. The city passed a new bill to build several new bike _____ .
   ☐ lanes ☐ lights ☐ spaces
2. Your boots are wet. _____ before you walk on my clean floor.
   ☐ Take them out ☐ Turn them off ☐ Take them off
3. Molly's new apartment is amazing. It's so bright and _____ .
   ☐ shabby ☐ dingy ☐ modern
4. When I travel, I don't usually bring a large suitcase. I use my _____ instead.
   ☐ first-aid kit ☐ carry-on bag ☐ vaccination
5. I use my computer to _____ websites.
   ☐ drag ☐ back up ☐ browse
6. Could you _____ the TV, please.
   ☐ turn down ☐ take out ☐ put down

---

7. Complete this conversation with the past or the present perfect of the verbs in parentheses. **(5 POINTS)**

A:_____ you ever _____ (1) (try) chai tea?

B: Yes. but I _____ (2) (not have) any for a long time.

A: When _____ you _____ (3) (drink) it?

B: Last winter. I _____ (4) (use) to make it for my roommate when the weather _____ (5) (get) really cold

---

7. Circle the correct word. **(4 POINTS)**

1. One of the crops grown in China is (cattle / wheat / shrimp).
2. (Goats / Microchips / Oysters) are manufactured in California.
3. I thought I had lost my cell phone, but, (coincidentally / sadly / fortunately), I found it in my coat pocket.

4. I was looking for a job when, (miraculously / unfortunately / strangely), I won the lottery and went on
   vacation instead.

8. Check (✓) the correct word or phrase to complete each sentence. **(5 POINTS)**

1. Remember _____ the new software tomorrow.
   ☐ download ☐ downloading ☐ to download
2. Do you know how often _____ texts to your friends?
   ☐ do you send ☐ send ☐ you send
3. I wish I _____ get better cell-phone service here.
   ☐ will ☐ could ☐ can
4. This file is used _____ business reports.
   ☐ prepare ☐ to prepare ☐ preparing
5. _____ you receive a gift, make sure you write a thank-you note.
   ☐ Before ☐ When ☐ After

9. Circle the incorrect word in each sentence. Then write the correct word or words on the blank. **(5 POINTS)**

1. Where did you born? _____
2. As a teenager, I didn't like to take away the trash. _____
3. Did you used to collect comic books when you were a child?
   _____
4. July was the month where I visited my grandparents. _____
5. Would you mind open the window? _____

10. Complete the conversations. Circle the correct word. **(4 POINTS)**

1. A: Look at Carla sitting over there tapping her foot.
   B: Oh, (maybe / may / might) it means she's waiting for a phone call.
2. A: What does Pedro's gesture mean?
   B: It (probably / might / could) means he wants you to be quiet.
3. A: What does it mean when somebody does this?
   B: That's easy! That gesture (perhaps / definitely / possibly) means everything's OK.
4. A: Look! The girl is rolling her eyes at her brother.
   B: (Must / Perhaps /Could) it means she doesn't like what he's saying.