KEY STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF VOCABULARY IN THE SECONDARY ESL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary, despite its obvious importance, has not always been given the same amount of attention in second language syllabus design as has grammar. With the development of communicative language teaching more attention began to be paid to vocabulary. Identifying the most effective approaches to use when presenting, practising and assessing vocabulary are key objectives for all teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) who seek to provide learners with the necessary tools to extend their lexical resources beyond the classroom in later life. In this project, I review the main approaches identified and applied in the applied linguistics literature and then examine to what extent teachers apply these approaches, how learners perceive them and how effective they are. A particular focus of interest is an evaluation of the efficacy of the use of the L1 and of translation when presenting vocabulary and checking understanding. Three research tools, in addition to observation, have been employed: the teacher's diary, a questionnaire and a vocabulary test.

Key words: teaching, vocabulary, techniques, activities, use of the L1

RESUMEN

Al vocabulario, a pesar de su obvia importancia, no siempre se le ha dado la misma atención en el diseño de programación de la segunda lengua como se le ha otorgado a la gramática. Con el desarrollo del método comunicativo, se le empezó a dar más atención al vocabulario. Identificar los enfoques más efectivos que podemos usar cuando introducimos, practicamos y evaluamos vocabulario son objetivos claves para todo el profesorado de inglés como lengua extranjera que busca proporcionar al alumnado las herramientas necesarias para continuar ampliando sus recursos léxicos más allá de la clase. En este trabajo, examino los principales enfoques identificados y aplicados en la lingüística aplicada, y, además, examino hasta qué punto el profesorado aplica estos enfoques, cómo los percibe el alumnado y cómo de efectivos son. Un particular dato de interés es la evaluación de eficacia del uso de la lengua materna, y de la traducción como vía para introducir el vocabulario y verificar el entendimiento. Tres herramientas de investigación, junto a la observación, han sido empleadas: el diario del profesorado, un cuestionario y un examen de vocabulario.

Palabras clave: enseñanza, vocabulario, técnicas, actividades, lengua materna

0. Introduction

The lexicon of English, like those of many of the world's languages, has been studied by researchers in fields such as semantics and lexicography. How we learn and extend our knowledge of vocabulary has also been researched by psychologists and applied linguists over many years. As Carter and McCarthy (1988) observed "issues in vocabulary learning cannot be divorced from the classroom teaching of vocabulary, any more than they can from theoretical and descriptive accounts of lexical structure and organization" (p. 17). These theoretical and descriptive accounts of lexical structure are not the focus of the study presented here. In this project I look at those approaches to the selection, presentation, practice and assessment of vocabulary considered to be effective by the main authorities in the field, by classroom practitioner-researchers from other educational contexts and by classroom teachers here in Tenerife. A particular question I wanted to examine was the use of the learners' first language in the teaching of vocabulary.

One thing is to know what teachers tell us they do and to observe them in their classrooms, but we also need to know how learners perceive and understand the teaching strategies their teachers use. We need to look at how effective the teaching strategies are by evaluating learning outcomes. To this end, I have reviewed the most important teaching strategies in relation to vocabulary and tried to find out whether teachers use these strategies. I have also asked learners about these teaching vocabulary approaches and how they think the strategies have helped them learn. In addition, I have done a test to see how well they have learned the vocabulary taught throughout the learning situation.

This project is divided into four main sections. In the first section, I present definitions of vocabulary, discuss why it is an important part of the L2 curriculum and how teachers frequently deal with vocabulary teaching in their lessons. In the following section, I analyse the effects of the use of the L1 and I include techniques to implement, like the translation technique, when presenting, practicing and assessing vocabulary. Finally, it can be observed the methods I have used to develop the present project with its results and conclusions reached. Due to the importance of exploring vocabulary activities, I have also included a section in which I present certain factors and activities that could be done in English lessons to improve vocabulary teaching and learning.

1. Defining vocabulary in the context of language learning and teaching

1.1. The importance of vocabulary

Vocabulary learning is the first contact people have with language learning, a contact that is maintained over the years one engages with either a first or a foreign language. It is essentially a life-long process. Every person needs to call objects by their names and stress and frustration may arise when we lack a word or struggle to express ourselves and make ourselves understood. We may have to solve this by pointing at an object, using a word from our first language or circumlocution, for example: "I do not know what this is called... but it's a thing you use to……" in order to keep the channel of communication open. Gaps in our knowledge of vocabulary or restrictions in our range can sometimes result in communication breaking down altogether. These breakdowns impede the successful acquisition of a language as Alqahtani (2015, p. 22) observes. By helping our learners acquire vocabulary we can "provide help when learners feel it is most needed" (Nation, 2008 p. 2). Even so sometimes teachers have to create the classroom conditions to make learners aware of this need (Allen, 1983, p. 9).

1.2. Goals for vocabulary teaching

According to Nation (2001), one of the first ideas when planning a course is to set certain goals, in this case, goals of vocabulary learning. Thus, it is necessary to reflect on the amount of vocabulary students need to learn. In order to do this, Nation considers that it is necessary to look at three types of information: firstly, the total number of words the language possesses; secondly, how many of them are known by native English speakers; and finally, how many words we really need to be able to produce the language (p. 6).

Answering the first question, Nation (2001) tells us is more complicated than we might think. It is in fact necessary to ask several additional questions. The first of these is how can we count words? The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics defines 'word' as "the smallest of the linguistic units that can occur on its own in speech or writing" but then goes on to note that even this criterion is difficult to apply. The approach taken by Nation (2001) is to divide the words teachers can count by using the following factors: tokens, those word forms that are counted one by one even if the same word is repeated. These words are usually found in written texts and also in spoken texts; types, those words that are counted one by one but without counting the same word; lemmas -

headwords and some of their inflected and reduced forms are also considered as a way of counting the words as the learning burden i.e. the time we must spend on learning it taking into account every aspect that is involved (p. 7); finally, it is important to mention word families, which refer to the inclusion of affixes, derived forms, and inflected forms. An issue arises when counting word families since it has to be decided what words are included in a word family and which of them are not (p. 8).

To the second question, Nation (2001) answers that obviously a native speaker does not know all the words in his/her language. It has been estimated that a well-educated native speaker knows between 20,000 and 30,000 vocabulary items and word families and uses around 5,000 in his/her everyday speech (Goulden et al 1990, cited in Siyanova-Chanturia & Webb, 2016, p. 228). Nation (2006) concludes that "an 8000–9000 word-family vocabulary is needed to deal with written texts, and 6000–7000 word families are needed to adequately comprehend spoken texts" (cited in Siyanova-Chanturia & Webb, 2016, p. 230). For students who are learning English as a foreign language, it is said to be complicated though not impossible to achieve vocabularies of the same size as those of native speakers.

Concerning the amount of vocabulary students need to know to use the language – the third question– Nation (2001) adds a distinction between four types of vocabulary that are usually involved in a text: high-frequency words, technical words, academic words and low-frequency words (p. 11).

High-frequency words are defined as those important words students encounter several times in all the uses we make of the language. Nation (2001) explains it is very important for teachers to pay attention to these words and also proposes both range –texts in which the words occur– and frequency to be kept in mind when deciding which of these high-frequency words we are going to teach. Therefore, it is mentioned that The General Service List of English Words, which was made by Michael West in 1953, includes 2,000 words families in which 80% is formed by high-frequency words (p. 16) giving a total number of 1,600 high-frequency words.

This author classifies academic words and technical words in specialised vocabulary, which is restricted by the range of topics and is part of high-frequency words addressed for special purposes (p. 17). Academic words are frequently found in different academic

texts and these words can also be found in a list Nation (2001) mentions –The Academic Word List– where 570 word families are helpful for students who are studying diverse areas (p. 17). Thus, researchers made this list by looking at those high-frequency words and by analysing the academic texts to find words that were not included in the group of high-frequency words. This list includes words that are helpful for general academic goals since it does not belong to any specific area

Technical words are also included in specialised vocabularies but the difference between these words and the academic words is that technical words are addressed to specific studies since they have specialised meanings (p.18).

Due to the fact high-frequency words are part of specialised vocabulary, Nation (2001) points out that specialised vocabulary should be taught as high-frequency vocabulary. Thus, teachers need to teach students high-frequency words but also the technical uses by using strategies so that they can observe the differences and it would lead them to remember the words they have seen.

As mentioned before, Nation (2001) also mentions a type of vocabulary formed by low-frequency words. This author refers to these words as words that students do not meet frequently since they are not really relevant to the comprehension or production of the language. As he explains, low-frequency words should not be given much time and they are mainly proper names (p. 19). Also classified as low-frequency words are those words that are part of our personal likes and interests (p. 20) since these words are relevant for our personal knowledge but they may not seem important to other people. Thus, Nation suggests that in order to know the number of low-frequency words, we must count using word families.

Although these words do not seem to be very important, they are also part of English vocabulary and it can help students to grow in vocabulary knowledge. As mentioned above, it is important that students have some strategies to deal with this type of vocabulary and the teacher's role is to help them and not to spend too much time on these words. Nation (2001) proposes certain strategies, for instance, guessing words from the context or the use of dictionaries for students to discover the meaning of those words.

In conclusion, a distinction between learning high-frequency words and low-frequency words has been established. As Nation (2001) reflects, this distinction is mainly

based on the frequency of the word, which means the number of times the word appears and the number of times students encounter the word; coverage, 'the degree to which words can be used to replace other words (Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, 1985) which refers to the percentage the word covers in, especially, written texts; and finally, the decisions have to be made about how many of each type of word a student should learn (p. 21).

1.3. Dimensions of vocabulary knowledge

As Tosuncuoğlu (2015) points out, vocabulary learning "should not be restricted to single words, but should also include collocations, longer words, and multi-words" (, p. 4). It is also important to decide if the main focus is on the written or spoken forms of the word and whether learners need to be able to produce the words they learn or simply recognise them in texts they read or hear. These questions lead us to attempt to define what it means to 'know' a word. Among the conditions that Nation (2001) lists for complete word knowledge are knowing the affixes that can change the semantic value of the word, its grammatical functions, word combinations and idioms, among other factors.

Milton (2013) and other researchers have studied vocabulary knowledge as 'dimensions' where the factors that have been mentioned previously can be found. The first of these dimensions is vocabulary breadth which refers to vocabulary size, that is the number of words a learner can recognise and possible translate into their L1. This dimension includes words of which the learner only has a superficial knowledge. Depth of vocabulary, on the other hand, concerns how familiar the learner is with various aspects of a given word or knowledge of a word beyond mere recognition (p. 61). The third dimension that is included by many authors is the dimension of automaticity in which the word is not only recognised but also produced when needed (p. 62).

Milton (2013) also establishes the distinction between receptive –listening and reading– and productive –speaking and writing—vocabulary, arguing that the language is usually assessed by making use of the four skills in the language. Milton also notes that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) makes use of global descriptors both for language performance and for the descriptors that are divided into listening, speaking, reading and writing (p. 63). A strong connection between receptive vocabulary tests and reading comprehension tests has been observed though,

Milton believes that the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and all the language skills is complicated to measure since to measure vocabulary knowledge the diverse dimensions commented previously will have to be measured separately. One such attempt is that of Stæhr (cited in Milton, 2013) in which a connection between vocabulary size and reading is established though this researcher also shows a strong relationship between vocabulary size and both writing and listening (p. 67). In his own study, Milton's results also showed a similar connection and he believes that vocabulary knowledge has implications for both in the writing and listening skills (p. 69). Thus, the results of this study demonstrated that vocabulary size is necessary when developing the four main skills found in a language in order to be able to communicate (p. 70). In short, the more vocabulary they know, the more readily students can develop in any skill. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge is seen as the key element in gaining mastery of the language.

2. Vocabulary in the second language classroom

2.1. Vocabulary as a neglected area

In many contexts the teaching of grammar has been given priority over the teaching of vocabulary. Some have gone so far as to say that vocabulary has been a "neglected area" (Taylor, 1990, p. 1). In their recent book, Marsaulina, Latief, and Iragiliati (2015) comment that "vocabulary building was not a priority for researchers or curriculum designers in the context of language teaching and learning" (p. 52) who saw grammar as the organizing principle of syllabus design from the mid-fifties until the last decades of the twentieth century. However, before that period, vocabulary actually dominated second language teaching and, as Allen (1983) mentions, was seen as the "only key to language learning" (p. 1). This shift from teaching vocabulary to grammar is connected to the idea that vocabulary learning could be take place outside the classroom without teachers' help while grammar needed to be actively taught. There was also a powerful assumption that learners needed to master grammatical structures first (Allen, 1983, p. 1-2). A contributing factor may have been that teachers were not able to find adequate ways of teaching vocabulary and opted to avoid trying to teach it altogether (Allen, 1983, p. 2).

This is not to say that grammar is unimportant. As Allen (1983) states "in the best classes, neither grammar nor vocabulary is neglected" (p. 5). Like Milton (2013) and Nation (2001 & 2008) Allen, as far back as the early 80s, could see that without a

knowledge of vocabulary, communicative functions, grammar and skills development could not take place (p. 3). Marsaulina et. al (2015) make the same point, stating that students need "to learn and master vocabulary to be able to communicate in the target language" (p. 52).

2.2. Second language teaching methods and vocabulary

The Grammar-Translation Method

The Grammar-Translation Method was first used in English lessons in the nineteenth century (Khiyabani, Ghonsooly and Ghabanchi, 2014; Du, 2016) having originated as the traditional method to teach Greek and Latin during the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries (Du, 2016, p. 30). As commented in Du's (2016) study, the initial purpose was "to reform the traditional scholastic approach" (p. 30) involving the use of dictionaries when interpreting a text in order to translate a passage word by word.

It is relevant to clarify that the Grammar-Translation method is rarely the approach used in current English lessons since it is a traditional method that was not considered as effective as expected. The development of new language teaching theories all but removed its use from the second language classroom. As the name of the method implies, the main focus was on learners' acquisition of grammar rules which could then be applied to translating from one language to another. Regarding vocabulary, due to the use of bilingual dictionaries, words were to be translated and memorized using long lists of words. There was little focus on production, since the method was largely teacher-centred.

The Direct Method

The Direct Method was developed as a response to the Grammar-Translation Method since researchers were starting to consider that students were not achieving the desired competence in the L2. The method represents a dramatic departure from Grammar-Translation in that it restricted the use of students' native language in the classroom (Khiyabani et al. 2014; Du, 2016). Thus, there were no translations, since the emphasis was on the use of the foreign language as the main language in the classroom connecting the English words students need to learn with their meanings (Khiyabani et al., 2014, p. 3). As in the Grammar-Translation method, vocabulary is observed in the Direct Method but there is no specific emphasis on it and what vocabulary teaching there is relies on

useful everyday vocabulary alone. As has been commented since the use of the L1 is regarded negatively in this approach, teachers using the Direct method employ gestures, simple commands, demonstrations, action, realia, and pictures approaches which are strategies still seen used today.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

In comparison to the previous teaching methods, Communicative Language Teaching does not emphasize learning grammar or vocabulary in isolation but the acquisition of communicative competence. Communicative competence includes not just a knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of a language but the ability to use the grammatical and lexical rules appropriately in communicative contexts to achieve communicative purposes. Richards (2006) summarises the components of communicative competence as follows:

- Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions
- Knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g., knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication)
- Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)
- Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g., through using different kinds of communication strategies) (p.3)

This approach was developed in the 1970s as a result of research in fields such as philosophy of language, pragmatics, sociology and anthropology. Fluency and accuracy were given equal importance. In part because of this greater emphasis on fluency as opposed to accuracy, vocabulary was not a major concern (Khiyabani et al. 2014, (p. 4).

As has been commented, vocabulary was often a neglected area in which isolated words were taught and direct translations were given but students were not able to work on vocabulary acquisition and extension. More recently this imbalance has been redressed. Renewed interest, as Laufer (2009) points out, in vocabulary learning and teaching began before the 1980s with the development of transformation generative linguistics vocabulary was again neglected despite an enormous among of lexical

research in that period. Those researching vocabulary asked questions about what kinds of input exercises promoted vocabulary learning (p. 341).

Laufer (2009) focuses on the external sources that can help students to learn a language. Two important factors this author mentions are: firstly, input-based learning, which refers to learning things from teachers or classmates and the environment around them, usually as passive vocabulary and often through reading and listening; and secondly, form-focused instruction, which refers to the instruction of teachers for students to pay attention to the form of the word. (p. 341).

2.3. Examining how vocabulary is taught in the secondary system in Spain

2.3.1. Vocabulary in the curriculum

According to the curriculum, communication in a second language is a priority that must be involved constantly in the classrooms:

> Para el proceso de aprendizaje de las lenguas extranjeras, se utilizará en el aula un enfoque comunicativo y orientado a la acción, priorizando la comprensión y la expresión orales en situaciones y en contextos de comunicación social. (BOC nº 169, 2015).

Teachers are required to base the contents students are going to learn through the course on learning situations. A learning situation is a learning process in which the key competences are decisive and it implies activities that must favour all eight of them and must be contextualized to have a meaning in students' daily lives. Vocabulary plays a decisive role in the curriculum, since as can be observed in several learning situations, the first lessons are usually about the teaching of words related to the topic teachers want students to meet and learn. Before starting the division of the sessions and the activities teachers are going to do in each lesson, it is necessary that they select one or more evaluation criteria found in the curriculum in which the final result teachers will be assessing and the achievements students will make are stated. It is important to mention that students must participate actively for them to develop the key competences and acquire a better learning.

As commented in the curriculum, teachers are a guide that help students to acquire techniques and to be able to build their own knowledge. Methods and resources teachers use to develop the learning situation are important since they need to use innovative resources that promote inclusion and cooperative work, among other factors.

In conclusion, teachers need to facilitate the students' acquisition of the language. Activities must be created paying special attention to key competences for students to develop skills and diverse capacities that will help them to pursue their own learning goals.

2.3.2. *Vocabulary in published materials*

Teachers frequently teach vocabulary by making use of textbooks and workbooks, which according to the Council of Europe (2003) are placed into the framework levels according to skills-based rather than knowledge-based criteria (cited in Milton & Alexiou, 2009, p. 194).

Books include charts where there are many words connected to the topic of the unit. The unit frequently includes fill-in-the-gaps exercise with some sentences for students to know one of the many contexts a word can be found. There are several words whose meanings alter depending on the context, which these exercises may not provide. Even if published materials offer a solid vocabulary learning syllabus involving vocabulary students meet every day, teachers may not give vocabulary as important a role as they should, preferring the grammar teaching.

Apart from those activities, teachers usually rely on reading and listening activities where students can extract new words. Nevertheless, as Nation (2008) comments if words students face during a reading or listening activity are not particularly useful, those "should be dealt with as quickly as possible" (p. 2). It has been established that words are remembered better when we read them several times, which is related to repetition, since the more students encounter a word, the more they learn it.

Reading and listening activities are generally believed to be positive when learning new vocabulary. Words are usually found in a specific context, especially in reading comprehensions, that will give students a higher level of information and teachers can clarify that words can have different meanings depending on the context. Although

teachers and researchers may find reading a powerful tool we can use, it is also true that many students are not very fond of reading texts and for this reason it may not be as effective a tool as we might hope. Creating materials students feel more motivated to use is a challenge teachers and materials designers need to accept.

2.3.3. Vocabulary for Specific Purposes

Currently, in secondary schools, there are groups formed by students in some courses of Basic Vocational Education and Training where students have school but also training that will allow them to work. Vocational Training is provided in areas, such as Marketing and Administration, among others. Teachers need to adapt their lessons according to students' needs. Consequently, as Katalin (2014) explains "English for Specific Purposes has been developed to meet the needs of those learners who intend to use English in professional contexts and for professional purposes" (p. 261).

Grammatical structures are also taught in these courses where there is a generally agreed upon 'grammar syllabus'. However, for vocabulary establishing a syllabus presents more challenges, since apart from general words found in secondary textbooks, students need to know the specific vocabulary concerning the course they are taking and their wants and needs. Wallace (1982) presents a problem the students may encounter which is not related to the learning of technical language but with "the language framework in which the technical expressions are placed" (p. 17). While students perform a role in vocabulary selection, it is also important for teachers and materials designers to select the words students are going to learn beforehand to prepare activities in which those words are used.

2.3.4. Vocabulary and CLIL

The acronym CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning, an approach that has been implemented in many high schools around Europe since 2013 to promote languages as a means of communication, especially in the light of the objectives of plurilingualism policy. This concept refers to the capacity a person has to communicate, not only in his/her mother tongue but also in at least, two more foreign

languages. As is observed in the curriculum[1], this approach at achieving plurilingualism is an opportunity to favour the learning situations implementation. In CLIL programmes the target language is used as the medium of instruction in content subjects such as science, arts, biology, mathematics, among others. As Castellano-Risco (2018) suggests this approach "advocates the use of interactive and experiential learning situations that promote autonomous learning and the development of critical thinking" (p. 33).

Many studies have been carried out to analyse the effectiveness of CLIL regarding vocabulary learning, among them Castellano-Rico's (2018) research based on a Spanish high school. The results of the study seemed to show that "the use of a CLIL approach influences receptive vocabulary size" (p. 43) and it also showed that "CLIL learners outperformed non-CLIL learners in terms of vocabulary level" (p. 43), since students who are required to study in this program need to have a certain level of English. It is believed students achieve a wider range of vocabulary due to the permanent use of the L2 in which students have to learn academic words involved in the diverse subjects. Castellano-Risco (2018) also considers that those students who are in a CLIL program are more autonomous in their learning process since if students do not know the meaning of a word, they try to look for synonyms and antonyms, whereas non-CLIL students are more inclined to ask for a direct translation (p. 43).

2.4. Use of L1 while teaching vocabulary

The use of the first language (L1) in a lesson where students are learning a second language (L2) has always been a controversial issue. This is believed to be due to the fact that students may rely too heavily on their L1s and that this can hinder second language acquisition (Augustyn, 2013).

According to the curriculum[2], teachers and students are required to speak in the L2 during the lesson using the L1 as support for the foreign language.

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[1] DECRETO 83/2016 de 4 de julio, por el que se establece el currículo de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y el Bachillerato en la Comunidad Autónoma de Canarias (BOC núm. 136, de 15 de julio del 2016)

[2] DECRETO 315/2015 de 28 de agosto, de la ordenación de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y del Bachillerato en la Comunidad Autónoma de Canarias (BOC núm. 169, de 31 de agosto de 2015)

As Nation (2008) establishes, there may be some reasons teachers appeal to the L1: one of those reasons is the fact that students feel more comfortable speaking in their mother tongue, since they are able to understand each other perfectly; another reason for L1 use is that it avoids "embarrassment particularly for shy learners and those who feel they are very proficient in the L2" (p. 2).

Concerning vocabulary, the L1 is mainly used when students are asked to translate words from their workbooks, sentences, and small texts from Spanish to English and the other way around. There are some situations where teachers give students a long list of words they need to translate into their language which may be a positive approach to reduce learners' stress and anxiety. Nevertheless, students tend to forget those words because they have learnt them by heart for the test and as Augustyn (2013) explains "vocabulary lists do not contribute to effective vocabulary acquisition in a communicative-approach model" (p. 367).

As commented previously, vocabulary was somehow rejected in the past and one of the aspects teachers realized was that vocabulary was not about learning the word and its meaning in another language but it was much more than that. Allen (1983) provides a good example of this in her book, which is the word garden. If students want to translate that word into French, they can find that the meaning of that word is the same meaning its translation "jardín" has. However, the word in English has more meanings than the French word has. For this reason, she explains that "vocabulary is not simply a matter of matching up words in the native language and the target language" (p. 2).

2.4.1. Negative aspects of L1 use

Many authors believe that using the L1, not only to teach vocabulary but the language itself, in an environment where students are learning a second language may represent a barrier to effective learning. As Solhi and Büyükyazi (2011) state "in situations where students have little opportunity to meet the L2 outside the classroom, maximizing its use in the classroom is very important" (p. 860), since if students communicate in L1, then they "hardly-ever get to the point of thinking in the foreign language" (Wallace, p. 48).

One of the most important aspects to take into account when teachers ask students to translate is that the meaning of a word depends on the context in which it is used since as Smith (1969) believes, teaching isolated words is not as effective as teaching them in

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context (p. 536). Along with this, another problem the students may encounter is the well-known "false friends", since when translation occurs, students tend to think that some words in English mean the same as they do in Spanish. For instance, the two most common words students usually get confused with "sensitive" and "sensible" are cases in point. By using a translation, students believe the first word means "sensitivo" in Spanish and the second one has the same meaning in both languages because it is spelled the same way. Moreover, it is important to clarify that certain words can act as a noun or verb and they can have several meanings depending on the context in which they are used. This is a factor the teachers must bear in mind when asking students to translate words using the dictionary, since students tend to translate the first word they encounter without thinking if the word they are looking for is a noun or adjective. For this reason, the use of the L1 can be observed as negative because of the translation of isolated words, since it is necessary to put words together in sentences and not just to learn the meanings.

Apart from this, it is believed that if students are used to being given a direct translation they often "give up if the exact word does not come to mind" (Wallace, 1982, p. 48) and they are not able to continue with their task. For this reason, if simple explanations are explained in the L2 instead of using translations, it may reduce students' difficulties when they cannot remember a word since they can always explain. The previous statement is also related to the fact that students tend to forget those words that were given by immediate translation faster than working on them. As Allen (1983) comments it is not enough to say "here is what the word means" (p. 9), it is necessary to work on the word and give them strategies through activities such as grouping words by their category or providing them with "a large number of "ties" in the child's mind between the new word and old words already known" (Nasr, 1972, p. 64).

There are many authors who agree on the fact that "everyday routine commands should always be given in English" (Allen, 1983, p. 41), since if it is done in their native language, we miss opportunities to teach them new words that are going to be useful throughout the years they are going to study the language. Furthermore, "as a general rule, intermediate students should hear only English from their teacher" (Allen, 1983, p. 45). Consequently, Yi Du (2016) argues in favour of communicating in the L2 "for everyday purposes" without using the L1 translations (p. 31), which is known as the Direct Method. It is believed that "translation of vocabulary into the mother tongue should be kept under tight control" (Wallace, 1982, p. 48).

Through a recent study carried out by Ekawati (2017) explains that by the diverse vocabulary they listen to and by implying movements and gestures, it is easier for them to learn vocabulary, since they become familiar with it (p. 64). These strategies will be explained with further details in the section of ways of presenting, practising and assessing vocabulary.

2.4.2. Positive aspects of L1 use

At the same time, many studies have been conducted to detect whether the use of L1 is a positive aspect when learning a foreign language. Moreover, they have also established that the use of L1 is beneficial for students since teachers can help them when comparing the L1 and the L2 linguistic rules, teaching new vocabulary through translation exercises and dictation and checking comprehension (Carson & Kashihara, 2012, p. 42).

It has also been argued that L1 is a useful tool that helps students to overcome the fear speaking in English may cause them, since productive vocabulary where they need to express their opinions and ideas may be more difficult from students' points of view. The use of L1 also helps students to avoid getting lost when complicated grammar items and new vocabulary are being explained. It also prevents students from becoming frustrated when they do not know the next step they must take when realizing a task, a factor which is mentioned by Nation (2008).

It is clear that the L1 facilitates teachers' and students' social exchanges since the L1 acts as a "medium of communication" (Altahab, 2016, p. 72). Moreover, it is easier to use the L1 when the teachers prepare activities that involve conversation, reading or writing (Solhi & Büyükyazi, 2011, p. 860). For this reason, teachers make use of the L1 as a technique "for the best exploitation of class time" (Atkinson, as cited in Almohaimeed & Almurshed, 2018, p. 435).

Augustyn (2013) also supports the idea of using the L1, since "comparative readings of translations can bring concepts that typical vocabulary building activities usually do not cover" (p. 380).

In conclusion, most of the authors agree on the fact that the L1 should only be applied to explain new grammar items or vocabulary and teachers are "normally expected to encourage students to build a direct link between meaning and L2" (Du, 2016, p. 31).

However, it is important to be aware of the fact that students generally ask for an L1 translation feeling they are getting lost and anxiety can block them in their learning process. Carson and Kashihara (2012) believe that "the use of L1 should not be punished, and the use of L2 encouraged" (p. 47).

2.5. Techniques to teach vocabulary

As commented previously, teaching vocabulary was sometimes neglected in the past and when it was a focus, the approach consisted mainly in memorizing individual words, as in the Grammar-Translation Method. As Alqahtani (2015) observes "language teachers and applied linguists now generally recognize the importance of vocabulary learning and are exploring ways of promoting it more effectively" (p. 23).

According to the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFR), it is relevant to choose and work on the words teachers want their students to know, since the more frequent a word becomes for the students, the more likely that word can be learnt (Allen, 1983; Milton & Alexiou, 2009). Nation (2008) argues that "the first decision to make when teaching a word is to decide whether the word is worth spending time on or not" (p. 2), dividing the words into high-frequency words and low-frequency words.

As commented earlier, Nation (2008) considers that high-frequency words are those words that occur more frequently, in both receptive –listening and reading– and productive vocabulary –writing and speaking–, and "fill a language need that the learners have" (p. 2). As explained, learning the burden of a word means that "it is worth giving attention to the spoken and written forms of the words, the grammar and collocations of the words and their meanings" (p. 10). Therefore, Nation (1983) includes some strategies to deal with those words:

1. Spoken form: The teacher anticipates and writes words on the blackboard students are going to meet and that may be difficult for them.
2. Written form: the teacher makes students aware of the spelling of the word by using analogies and also, the words can be spelt wrong for students to think and discover how they are truly written.
3. Grammar and collocation: students work in small groups to discuss the collocations they could give to the words in diverse situations.
4. Meaning: concerning this strategy Nation explains certain factors.

Nation (1983) explains that "teachers should use techniques which keep the meaning of the words away from the learners" and use several sentences where students can see the different meanings a word can have in order to create expectations and motivation on the students. In order to learn vocabulary, this author proposes the repetition of the words as a way of working on memory and promotes translation once students have achieved the learning burden. Translation could be done by letting students draw a picture of the new word or pointing at the object if it is in the classroom. As commented in the meaning of the word, it is relevant that students encounter those words over again to learn them since the words we use more frequently are easier to remember than words students do not usually use (Nation, 2008; Teng, 2014). Here are some exercises Nation (2008) proposes to work on the learning burden of a word that do not require preparation:

Word meaning	
Find the core meaning.	The learners look at dictionary entries and find the shared meaning in the various senses of the word.
Word card testing	The learners work in pairs. Each learner gives their pack of cards to their partner who tests them on their recall of the meaning by saying the word and getting them to give the translation. This can also be done by giving the translation and getting them to give the word form.

Using the dictionary:	When a useful word occurs in a reading text, the teacher trains learners in the strategy of using a dictionary.
Guessing from context.	Whenever a guessable word occurs in a reading text the teacher trains the learners in the guessing from context strategy.
Word form	
Spelling dictation	The teacher says words or phrases and the learners write them.
Pronunciation	The teacher writes words on the board and the learners pronounce them getting feedback from the teacher. Each learner picks what word to say.
Word parts	The teacher writes words on the board and the learners cut them into parts and give the meanings of the parts.
Word use	
Suggest collocates	The learners work together in pairs or small groups to list collocates for a given word.
Word detectives	A learner reports on a word he or she has found in their reading. They talk about the meaning, spelling, pronunciation, word parts, etymology, collocates and grammar of the word.

On the other hand, it was mentioned the low-frequency words, which are found mainly in reading, and according to Nation (2008), it is important not to give a lot of

attention to them and only "give a brief comment" (p. 7) in order to spend more time on high-frequency words.

Therefore, teachers must teach those high-frequency words first, since if students are going to meet with certain words several times, those words are likely to be learned. On the contrary, words that are not truly relevant for students to know should not be given a lot of time. As Nasr (1972) comments "some must be chosen for teaching and some must be left out" (p. 60).

Several techniques can be used to teach vocabulary in secondary levels. Thus, the following techniques have been divided into: ways of presenting, ways of practising and ways of assessing vocabulary. It is worth mention that some techniques can be used in the three or two of them, since vocabulary is present in every activity we do. Since one of this project's main research objectives is to create a wide range of activities to find the most effective ones in teaching and learning vocabulary, diverse activities will be created applying the same technique such as flashcards, translation, listening and reading activities and technology.

2.5.1. Presenting vocabulary

As observed, if a word is considered worth emphasizing, teachers need to spend time on those words that are relevant for students' learning. It has also been believed that it is always positive to start teaching vocabulary with things students need in their daily lives such as rules they must follow or orders we may give them: "a good way to encourage learning of new vocabulary is to put them on simple commands" (Allen, 1983, p. 23).

To create motivation for the students, as has been mentioned previously, presenting vocabulary is an important aspect that encourages teachers to create a feeling of need to know a word. As a result, it is relevant to know the purpose of teaching those words and whether if words are part of productive or receptive vocabulary. In every research study and the curriculum, what is highlighted is the fact that vocabulary activities need to be connected to their daily lives and experiences:

> (…) se trabajarán situaciones reales o simuladas que partan de aspectos familiares para el alumnado o que despierten su interés para, más adelante, ser usadas en contextos

cotidianos o menos habituales en los ámbitos personal, publico, educativo y ocupacional laboral (BOC, nº 136, 2016)

Schmitt (2000) proved this statement with a study that showed that students connected their "previous experiences via narrating an event or any other situation that happened to the students or associating the word with a person, place, thing, feeling, or situation" (cited in Faraj, 2015, p. 13). As Nasr (1972) comments "knowledge of new words and new meanings keeps increasing as we grow older" (p. 14). As a result, the more students encounter vocabulary words they use in their lives, the more they will get used to using them in the appropriate contexts. Allen (1983) agrees with this perspective highlighting on her book that "experience is the best vocabulary teacher" (p. 4).

Pictures and illustrations

Pictures are often the most common strategy found in presenting vocabulary as well as the use of flashcards, which can also be used to practise vocabulary. The use of textbooks was commented on in previous section as the main way teachers apply to present vocabulary. In some textbooks, especially in low levels', there are images that work as visual aids to help students recognize the words and the meanings. Allen (1983) believes pictures are a first contact with the word since students can visualize the content of the pictures and there is no need to translate at first but this author states that only using the textbooks pictures "is a waste of excellent opportunities" (p. 24). Along with the pictures, the most frequently encountered approach is word matching where new words are presented in box and students are asked to match them to images or definitions or, on occasions, to use them to complete texts (sentences, paragraphs and phrases).

Realia

Bringing real objects into the classroom has also been effective in the introduction of new vocabulary. This way of presenting vocabulary is known as realia which allows students to experience the words by observing and touching the objects. A study carried out by Ekawati (2013) seemed to show that students learnt more vocabulary when teachers used real objects, since "introducing a new word by showing the real object often helps learners to memorize the word through visualization" (Alqahtani, 2015, p. 27). For instance, bringing different types of clothes people wear in their daily lives is an effective way of learning the names for those objects.

Both real objects and pictures belong to visual aids, in which students visualize the object and can have a representation of its meaning without relying on translation. Thus, other strategies to present vocabulary that can be included here are the use of mime and hand gestures, such as facial expressions and body movements, since teacher can create activities where students need to observe other classmates performing an action that was commanded by the teacher. The mentioned strategy helps students to "infer the meaning of a spoken word or expression" (Allen, 1983; Alqahtani, 2015). That said, over use of any one method is to be discourage. Instead, we need to let students experience the words by themselves after presenting them.

Translation

Teachers make use of the L1 by translating words and sentences in order to observe if students have understood the context. It is a strategy that is sometimes used as a way of presenting vocabulary but also as a way of practising and assessing it. Regarding translation as a technique, Nation (2003) believes that "the direct learning of L2 vocabulary using word cards with their L1 translations" (p. 4) is one of the most effective ways to acquire vocabulary.

Augustyn (2013) proposes some techniques, based on the author Butzkamm, that mainly involve translation such as "mirroring", which consists of literal translation; sandwich technique that involves a "translation between two repetitions of new vocabulary" (p. 376); world trails and chunking[3] which "consists of giving learners a list of formulaic sequences in the L1 and then asking them to find the equivalents in the L2 text" (p. 380).

In presenting vocabulary, the technique of 'mirroring' can be said to be the most frequent strategy found in English lessons since it is a fast and easy way of dealing with vocabulary the first time. It can be done orally and in a written form, since on many occasions, a list of words in English can be given to students to write the new words in their notebooks along with their meaning in the students' L1. In order to do this presentation of vocabulary, bilingual dictionaries can be required as a way of students discovering the meaning of the words by themselves. However, teachers must be aware

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[3] Words that are commonly found together such as multi-word verbs, idioms and fixed collocations. For instance, "by the way".

of the process since teaching isolated words can be confusing for students when looking them up in the dictionaries.

2.5.2. Practising vocabulary

Presenting vocabulary is obviously a crucial factor in vocabulary teaching and learning, since it is the first contact students have with new words. Practising vocabulary is also a relevant, since if we do not practise the words students have learnt, those words will be forgotten and students may feel those words were not essential to learn. It is often common to practise vocabulary though recycling and repeated encounters with the words taught. Nation (2008) believes useful vocabulary, those high-frequency words, should be met over and over again if they are to be successfully learnt. One of the most important aspects teachers need to consider when teaching vocabulary is the fact that the information must be stored in long-term memory. It may sometimes feel that students learn new words but the next lesson that vocabulary has been forgotten. For this reason, repeating vocabulary items and using them in particular contexts are two of the important strategies to ensure learning, so the vocabulary will never be forgotten. A strategy Nation (2008) explains is not to let too much time pass between the vocabulary learned and the test teachers may want to do (p. 6).

Reading and Listening activities

There are many techniques to practice the vocabulary learnt that help students encounter the words several times. Two techniques are mainly related to receptive vocabulary, which can also be used as a way of assessing vocabulary. As mentioned, reading and listening are two skills that belong to receptive vocabulary where students can observe how a word is used in a specific context providing them with passive vocabulary.

In Altalhab's study (2016), he mentions that "one of the main sources of the new vocabulary is reading of English texts" (p. 67), since he considers reading as a relevant skill when it comes to expanding in learners' vocabulary. Both teachers and students "perceived learning vocabulary through reading as a beneficial strategy" (p. 72), since learners can see the context of words and it helps them to retain vocabulary. Many authors agree that listening is also an important skill students need to develop to acquire more vocabulary. Cohen (2008) establishes Nation's conditions for listening activities to be

effective but activities need to be motivating for students since this author believes students will not be receptive if they consider an activity is boring. To avoid that, he argues that "students' opinions should be part of the decision-making process when selecting texts or passages" (p. 3) since they will be more motivated and will maintain their interest if they feel they are part of the process.

That said, reading texts should be combined with other types of activities and motivating games to retain the keywords teachers consider students need to meet through the text they have read.

Flashcards and ICTs

As commented above, flashcards are techniques for presenting vocabulary and for practising vocabulary. Thus, different activities using this technique have been implemented to create a wide range of activities. In general terms, using flashcards and pictures also encourages working on memory, which has been proved to be effective when retaining vocabulary. If teachers want vocabulary to be stored in long-term memory, more techniques have to be involved to ensure learning since memory can sometimes block students, especially, when they do not find the exact word they are looking for.

Apart from flashcards, the use of technology can be considered a way of practising vocabulary, an approach frequently used by teachers in secondary schools. Teachers often create competitions in small groups for students to be motivated and engaged in vocabulary learning. These competitions are usually made through applications like Kahoot! (2013).

During the last decade, the use of technology has increased due to its importance in people's everyday lives. It is not only required that people are aware of the existence of this tool but are able to manipulate and control it. The use of technology is said to have changed "the way English is learned and taught. Language learning is no longer limited to the traditional classroom context where the teacher and the teaching materials often provide the main source of language input and language practice" (Renandya and Widodo, 2016, p. 4).

According to Ahmadi's research (2018) "through using technology, many authentic materials can be provided to learners and they can be motivated in learning a language" (p. 116). Many researchers agree on the fact that technology promotes vocabulary learning since it connects students' daily lives outside the classroom with the school (Clark, 2013, p. 13). It is suggested and believed that one of the reasons for this is that learning becomes student-centred. Students become autonomous and the use of technology helps them to develop critical thinking as well as to retain the information and vocabulary words more effectively. As explained in the curriculum, ICTs help students to become familiar with words and customs from other countries:

> La presencia de las TIC en el diseño de las situaciones de aprendizaje es primordial, pues, por sus características, ofrecen una variedad ilimitada de recursos para el aula, permiten la aproximación inmediata y real a lenguas diferentes y culturas lejanas y potencian el lenguaje oral y escrito, la adopción de estrategias de autoaprendizaje, el conocimiento de la lengua extranjera y su cultura, así como el acercamiento a personas de otras zonas geográficas (BOC, nº 136, 2016).

In a study carried out in a high school, the results apparently showed that students learnt more vocabulary when using technology because it was innovative and helped most of them to retain vocabulary. As Khiyabani et. al (2014) explain: "Giving students the opportunity to use images, watch videos, use internet, and other kinds of multimedia raised their level of enthusiasm; therefore, students showed that they learned new meanings" (p. 10).

Translation

As commented above, translation is a technique that can be used to present vocabulary, to practise vocabulary and finally, to assess vocabulary. Translation as a way of practising vocabulary can be done by translating exercises or reading passages, even songs students like. Teachers often use the strategy of translation asking students to translate reading stories students know, such as fairy tales. It is believed that stories are a useful tool that encourage creativity as well as vocabulary learning, since students' attention is drawn to vocabulary instead of focusing on the story they already know. This activity is a way of practising new vocabulary but also old vocabulary due to the fact that new words can be included with those words that already exist in students' memory.

Another tool to teach vocabulary could be the use of social networking which can engage students since every one of them uses this popular social networking. This tool has been applied in some studies to observe if students were more motivated in the learning by making use of technology which seemed to show positive results (Khiyabani et al. 2014, p. 2). In the curriculum, it can also be observed that the ICTs motivate students in their learning process:

> Las ricas alternativas que ofrecen las TIC, junto al aumento de motivación que conllevan, no solo mejoran el aprendizaje y lo adaptan a la diversidad del alumnado, sino que también permiten el acercamiento a la asimilación de la lengua meta de un modo más natural. (BOC nº 136, 2016).

Listening activities

In order to create an activity both to practise words students have seen and to engage them in the practise of vocabulary is to play a song they like. As seen in reading activities, we can ask students to translate a song they are already familiar with so that they would be paying more attention to the words rather than the music. To encourage and promote participation, the teachers can let students choose the song.

2.5.3. Assessing vocabulary

Tests are usually the tools applied to observe if students have acquired the knowledge teachers were encouraging. In fact, tests are observed as a manner of encouraging students to study and learn important words. However, as is explained in the curriculum[4], teachers need also to assess students' achievements and evolution in every lesson. As Wallace (1983) mentions, "in that sense, almost every question that the teacher asks is a kind of informal test". This observation can be worked on with record sheets to detect if the students have improved in terms of key competences.

Many types of exercises involve vocabulary tests. The two most frequent exercises are of multiple choice and fill-in-the-gaps. Dictation can also be included here as well as

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[4] DECRETO 315/2015 de 28 de agosto, de la ordenación de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y del Bachillerato en la Comunidad Autónoma de Canarias (BOC núm. 169, de 31 de agosto de 2015)

giving synonyms, antonyms or definitions in order to observe if students know the context in which the word can be used.

This is an example of a vocabulary test for students of the 1st year of Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (E.S.O.) (Pelteret, C. & Morris, D., 2015):

Clothes   **unit 7**   **1ˢᵗ ESO**

1.- Complete the clothes.

1 h _ t   2 dr _ ss   3 sh _ rt   4 b _ _ ts   5 j _ mp _ r   6   j _ ck _ t

2.- Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

cap   coat   sandals   shorts   skirt   trainers

1 You can't do PE in shoes. You need _____.

2 Take your _____. It's very cold today.

3 Jonny always wears a blue baseball _____ on his head.

4 In summer, _____ are cooler than trousers.

5 Lisa hates wearing trousers. She always wears a _____.

6 I never wear boots in summer; I wear _____.

In this test, students are working with receptive vocabulary, since they need to recognize the follow by reading the sentences. It does not include any production. Those words are taught in isolation since the students need to remember the written form of the words. However, in the second exercise, there are words within a box and students need to read the sentences to comprehend the context the word needs to be put on.

As commented above, flashcards, reading and listening activities are some strategies that can also be used, not only as ways of presenting or practising vocabulary but also as ways of assessing it. Apart from verifying that students have acquired the vocabulary, working in small groups is also part of the development of key competences due to the fact that through cooperative work students can be autonomous and develop leadership skills as well as being able to respect other people's opinions.

An activity that can also be assessed is role-playing since key competences are essential in this type of activity. Tosuncuoğlu (2015) also proposes a role play activity, "which requires the use of the new vocabulary items in question" with a follow-up writing task (p. 4). As Nasr (1972) comments "students must learn the exact meanings of words

as they are used in special sentences and special situations" (p. 12). To make students participants in the process of creating activities, which has been emphasized by many authors, it is relevant to let them decide certain aspects: for instance, the people involved in the role-play, the topic and the use of technology.

Another usual way of assessing vocabulary is by using translation. It is often common to ask students to memorize certain words and to do a quick test where the teacher dictates some words and students need to listen to the pronunciation and write them. Besides, the students need to translate isolated words. This is more frequently used when teaching irregular verbs but it can also be done with vocabulary if the teachers' purpose is to observe if students have understood and studied the words.

Reading activities

Another factor that has been mentioned is the importance of linking school experiences to students' daily lives. For this reason, an activity that can help students to review the vocabulary could be to create or look for some articles –depending on students' level—that are related to their interests. Synonyms have been considered as strategies to find more words related to a certain word the teachers want students to learn to turn passive vocabulary into an active vocabulary.

As a result, by making use of motivating articles, teachers could ask them to find a certain number of words connected to another word the teacher gives them. By associating the word given to a synonym the students would be working on the vocabulary as well as the recognition of old words they may know.

Flashcards in writing tasks

An activity that can be done to assess vocabulary is that teachers show students a picture of a word they have learnt throughout the unit. To produce the language, students need to write several sentences or a brief story, depending on the level of students, so that teachers can observe if students have learnt the meaning and the context.

2.6. Multiple Intelligences and key competences

Activities and strategies that can help students acquire a wide range of vocabulary are also connected to the diversity we can find in the classrooms. As observed, vocabulary

can be implemented through different activities in which language skills are involved. Therefore, it is important to research and comment on the role vocabulary plays in the key competences found in the curriculum and the diverse multiple intelligences students may have and what activities teachers can develop in order to encourage key competences and multiple intelligences.

The European Union defined the concept of key competences as the combination of knowledge, abilities, and capacities each student needs to reach at the end of an educational stage. Thus, the purpose of reaching the key competences is to achieve personal development and fulfilment for the students' lives in terms of education and work. These key competences are found in the curriculum of every stage and every subject. Regarding the English subject, the curriculum has been based on the CEFR, which "describes what language learners can do at different stages of their learning" (Grimes, L., n.d.) since it is also divided in competences.

Both curriculum and CEFR work with competences to achieve lifelong learning, in which the students' role is to be autonomous turning the learning into student-centered where the teacher is considered as a mere guide for students to help them through the learning process. These competences are closely connected to multiple intelligences, since both are in favour of learning becoming student-centred and of developing abilities.

The theory of multiple intelligences was first developed by Gardner in his book Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences at the end of the twentieth century. In this book, Gardner proposed the existence of seven intelligences although later, he added one more while not excluding the possibility of the existence of more "intelligences" (Armstrong, 2009, p. 6). With this study Gardner suggested that intelligence concerns "the capacity for (1) solving problems and (2) fashioning products in a context-rich and naturalistic setting" (Armstrong, 2009, p. 6). Consequently, multiple intelligences are defined as the abilities human beings possess, in this case, students found in our classrooms.

- o **<u>Verbal-linguistic intelligence</u>** and linguistic competence are the closest concerning vocabulary since students need to work with vocabulary to express their ideas and opinions, as well as feelings. To acquire the language, it is relevant that teachers give students the appropriate strategies so they can work on their

diverse skills. These skills are found in the CEFR divided into reception, production, interaction, and mediation which, as commented above, is also found in the curriculum since it is based on the CEFR.

Thus, students with this intelligence are capable of using the words effectively being aware of the fact that communication is an essential factor both inside the school and outside school. Every activity the teachers do in class helps to develop this intelligence and competence and it helps students to remember, analyse and create, especially in production and reception. It is important to work on real situations with familiar topics learning the vocabulary concerning each of them for students to be able to communicate effectively and to be able to comprehend reading texts in which a lot of vocabulary is found.

o **Logical-mathematical:** although it may seem that this intelligence, as well as the basic competence in science and technology, do not have any connections with vocabulary, they certainly do. The definition Armstrong (2009) makes of this intelligence is the capacity some students have to use the numbers effectively (p. 6). However, numbers are also vocabulary students need to learn when learning a foreign language. It is the first vocabulary taught to children at schools. An activity found in English lessons is when teaching food vocabulary since many learning situations focus on going shopping to learn the vocabulary and this intelligence and key competence is needed when calculating the prices. Besides, it is necessary that students are capable of expressing logic relationships using vocabulary such as conjunctions, comparisons where they need to use adjectives, among others.

This intelligence is related to the basic competence in science and technology and, as has been commented, CLIL is used to teach the contents of diverse subjects in English in which vocabulary is considered the most important factor. For this reason, students need to be aware of the specific vocabulary science and technology require. Furthermore, both this intelligence and competence are the capacities some students have to reason well and "solve problems in logical and systematic ways (Dung & Tuan 2011, cited in Al-Mahbashi et al. 2017).

Activities that can be created to develop and reinforce this intelligence and competence are those of playing games where students need to reason and discuss possible options. Apart from this, reading texts can also help students to achieve this competence, since in small groups they can analyse similarities and differences of certain aspects of the text.

o **Spatial-visual:** intelligence refers to the ability "to perceive the visual-spatial world accurately" (Armstrong, 2009, p. 7) and to visualize mental images when speaking or reading. Students with this intelligence learn "best through drawing, watching movies, matching and describing pictures" (Al-Mahbashi et al., 2017, p. 185). For this reason, vocabulary is present in this intelligence through activities that contain pictures or flashcards. As has been commented, flashcards are used as ways of presenting, practising and assessing vocabulary in which students need to work on vocabulary and memory to be able to retain the words. It is frequently done by associating the image with its meaning.

In the strategies, technology was also considered a way of practising vocabulary, which is related to the digital competence. As is explained in the curriculum, students need to learn how to use information as well as the diverse sources they can find. Students are required to be able to use programs to create materials.

o **Bodily-kinesthetic:** intelligence is the capacity some students have to express their ideas and opinions using the movements of the body. A vocabulary activity that can be created to reinforce this intelligence is, for instance, acting out a story using the words students have learnt. It is believed that students learn best with activities that imply movement and action such as "roleplaying and hands-on activities" (Al-Mahbashi et al. 2017, p. 185).

o **Interpersonal:** it is the capacity to, as the idiom establishes, put yourself in someone else's shoes and to be able to empathize with other people's feelings. This intelligence is linked to social and civic competences, since it refers to students' behaviours and well-being. Both are related to vocabulary, since students need words to communicate and participate in social and working life. Moreover, students need to know the courtesy rules to express their beliefs and cooperative

work to encourage respect for other people's opinions. It is important that students are aware of the existence of other customs knowing the language and diverse words that will help them to understand people from other countries to solve conflicts through dialogues. Thus, Al-Mahbashi et al. (2017) differentiate some activities that help to improve this intelligence such as teamwork exercises and group discussion (p. 185).

o **Intrapersonal:** it is not the same as the previous intelligence, since intrapersonal intelligence concerns self-knowledge. Students with this intelligence are aware of their strengths and limitations as well as their interests and motivation (Armstrong, 2009). This intelligence could be related to learning to learn competence since the students have to organize their own learning in order to develop personal fulfilment as well as looking for their own needs concerning the language. An activity to ensure this competence and intelligence could be to write a presentation about earliest memories.

o **Musical:** it refers to the capacity of the students to express opinions through musical forms. Applying songs to English lessons is a method of practising vocabulary since the teachers can ask them to pay attention to certain words and work on them. This strategy was also commented on ways of practising vocabulary because it can encourage students to learn by doing an activity they like. Everyone loves music and it would help students to participate and enjoy. This intelligence can be related to cultural awareness and expression competence, since the students can transmit ideas and experiences through music and listening to English music would encourage them to meet other cultures that are not their own.

o **Naturalistic:** this intelligence is defined as the capacity to observe the natural environment and to respect it. Regarding vocabulary, many activities can be done to encourage students to protect our environment. In textbooks, there is always a unit in which teachers must teach vocabulary words related to the environment. For instance, the diverse problems our planet is affected by and the consequences they can have. To explain those aspects, students need to know certain vocabulary to develop a critical opinion.

Finally, it is important to mention the key competence based on the sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, which is often considered as the most relevant. This key competence's purpose is that students can create innovative products becoming autonomous to be able to take decisions and solve problems the students may encounter. The students need to elaborate oral presentations for them to plan the project and to promote confidence.

As has been commented above, teaching vocabulary is not an easy thing to do. There are certain characteristics teachers need to take into account to have a better impact on students' learning process. Although students learn English for several years, as Nasr (1972) comments, a person "cannot have complete control of the vocabulary of a new language in eight weeks or eight months or eight years" (p. 14).

Since students have to achieve key competences and reinforce the multiple intelligences, it is important to create and to use various activities and strategies to develop their skills and ensure their vocabulary learning in the best way teachers can. It is extremely relevant to attend to students' needs. There are a lot of activities that can help students improve their skills for them to feel they are good at something. It is important teachers take that as an advantage, so they will be reinforcing their intelligences and abilities as well as ensuring more effective learning. Many activities commented above have been put into practice during my practicum as an English teacher in which I have tried to stimulate students' multiple intelligences and to encourage them to achieve the established key competences.

3. Methods and materials

For the purpose of developing the research component of this project, I arrived at the following objectives:

1. To observe the vocabulary teaching strategies that teachers make use of in schools and to analyse how effective they are;
2. To create activities in an effort to improve the approach to vocabulary learning and teaching and to analyse their efficacy.
3. To examine the use of the students' L1 in presenting and assessing vocabulary learning.

To achieve triangulation three research tools have been employed in addition to observation. These tools are both qualitative and quantitative. The three elements in the data set are the: teacher's diary, results of a questionnaire-based survey, and results of a test.

In order to have more perspectives, in relation to the observation tool, three schools were selected to compare how teachers teach vocabulary and how they engage students in the learning. The teachers in these contexts were also observed in terms of how they made use of the L1 in the classroom. A primary school was included so as to evaluate to what extent there are any differences in the way teachers approach vocabulary teaching in the last year of primary education and the first year of secondary education. Thus, the participants of this observation are not the same students although the participants from the private and the public school are in the same course. It is important to mention that the rest of the action research tools, vocabulary test, and the questionnaire, were employed only with one 1st ESO group in the public secondary school. The teacher's diary has been based on the experience in that high school as well.

Firstly, in the teacher's diary, which was made in a document form, I was able to express my thoughts, especially about the activities that worked and the reasons why I considered they had worked successfully. These activities were created following the techniques to teach vocabulary previously observed, and paying attention to diversity as well as the achievement of key competences. Apart from the activities that worked, I differentiated those activities that did not have a learning impact on students and the reason why they did not. Observation on the use of the L1 was also commented on in the teacher's diary along with those factors that could be improved.

Secondly, due to the fact that the teacher's diary may be subjective, the students were given a questionnaire with open and closed questions about the activities and the use of L1 to contrast these opinions with the ideas found in the teacher's diary. Although in the beginning, the idea was to give them a printed questionnaire, there was insufficient time available in the last lesson. For this reason, some questions were uploaded on Instagram, where many students answered the questions. Since this social network has many resources such as polls, closed questions with *Yes* or *No* answers and open questions. It is, in my opinion, a useful tool and students were honest although it was not an anonymous questionnaire.

Finally, a vocabulary test involving translation was done in order to, as has been commented above, gain insight into the efficacy of using the L1 in vocabulary learning.

4. Results

4.1. Observation data

As mentioned, two secondary schools and a primary school were selected as part of my research to observe and compare how teachers dealt with vocabulary in their daily lessons and the frequency of use of the L1. Apart from this, some factors have also been observed: firstly, the books the students were required to have to know what part vocabulary plays in the use of them; and finally, whether dictionaries were considered as significant tools in the students' learning process.

Private school

The first secondary school was Hispano Británico which is a private school located in La Laguna. It offers a place for students from three to eighteen years old in the Spanish-British environment that includes native speakers of English on the teaching staff. Secondary students were required to have English textbooks as well as Spanish-English dictionaries except for 4th-year E.S.O. whose students needed an English-English dictionary since these students were expected to have an advanced level.

Textbooks

On the 1st of ESO, there were 20 students in each class whose English textbook was Gold Experience B1 textbook which usually comes with a student's workbook and a DVD room. In the content of the textbook, vocabulary is presented in a second place after the reading section which is not often observed in other textbooks because the grammar section usually comes first. The students always made use of the book to follow the units the teachers had decided to teach before the course began.

Vocabulary teaching

Owing to the fact that the observation took place a few lessons after the students had started a new unit, it was not possible to see how the teacher presented vocabulary.

Nevertheless, the ways of practising and assessing it were observed. The unit vocabulary was related to friendship and adjectives.

To practise vocabulary, students did some fill-in-the-gaps exercises found in the textbook. These exercises consisted of reading the sentences and choosing the most suitable word which was found within a box. This type of exercises was not only done in class but as homework, since apart from using the textbook, the teacher worked with Moodle and asked students to do certain vocabulary exercises through it. This was used in order for students to review vocabulary and for the teacher to know if they had any doubts.

Apart from the textbook, the teacher used some applications. These applications are mainly used a few days before having a test as a way of practising vocabulary and grammar that had been explained and worked on. One of the applications was Kahoot! (2013) which, as has been commented, is the most common application used to practise vocabulary, since it is easy for teachers to create activities and to motivate students through competitions and games to help them study.

To assess vocabulary, apart from doing vocabulary and grammar tests, the teacher used an application that created comic stories. To develop the game, the teacher divided the students into pairs using an application called ClassDojo (2011), which created the pairs automatically. Then, the teacher gave a piece of paper to each pair in which they had some vocabulary words the students were learning related to adjectives ending in '– ed' and '-ing'. To assess the students, the teacher asked them to record their voices in the application to check the pronunciation and if they had used the vocabulary.

It is important to comment on the fact that the teacher joins other teachers from diverse subjects to create interdisciplinary projects in favour of the students' learning process. The English teacher shows them certain words that are important for the topic, which is related to CLIL, through investigation projects and games. For instance, students prepared a project that had to do with Geography, and the teacher taught them cultural aspects about two specific countries: Scotland and Ireland in order for them to know the customs, the most famous places they can visit there and certain vocabulary items such as landscapes, cliffs, etc.

Use of L1

There are many Spanish-English dictionaries in the classroom and the teacher encourages the students to use them by giving them a positive point. This method is a manner of motivating and engaging students to feel the need for learning new words. In order to learn a new vocabulary, the teacher asked the students to write the translation of some high-frequency words. However, due to the fact that the teacher is a native speaker, she does not communicate with the students' in the L1 except for a student who has a learning disability. Students can speak between them in their first language, however, if the teacher considers the same person is relying heavily on the L1, she asks him/her to speak in the L2.

Participants	Activities	Use of the L1
20 students	1. Practising vocabulary: - *Kahoot*! - Exercises from the textbook in Moodle and in the classroom. - Translation. 2. Assessing vocabulary: - Creating stories through an application. - Vocabulary tests.	The teacher always communicates in the L2 and gives synonyms as well as the context so the students can understand the meaning. However, the teacher also asks them to translate words using a Spanish-English dictionary.

Public school

The second secondary school is Óscar Dominguez, a high school located in Tacoronte. As well as the first school that has been mentioned, it offers secondary and baccalaureate. However, it also offers a higher level of education for those students who want to continue their studies in a more practical alternative.

Textbooks

In this high school, students from the 1st of E.S.O. had both the Student's Book and Workbook Spectrum 1. However, the last one was considered as the major priority in case

students could not afford both books. In this case, the teachers had the digital book in order to project it in class, so that those students who did not have the textbook were able to follow the class.

Vocabulary teaching

In this secondary school, the observation was longer, specifically for two months.

To present vocabulary, the teacher used the textbook in order to do the exercises found there for example on food vocabulary. The students were provided with some images of food and they were asked to match the images to the corresponding word found in a box. Apart from this, the students were asked to translate the food vocabulary they had just learnt and to ask their classmates personal questions about the food they usually had for breakfast and lunch.

To practise vocabulary, the students continued working on the exercises found in the textbook and workbook as well as using the interactive activities found in the digital book. The teacher did not place too much emphasis on vocabulary since she considered the students had already learnt this vocabulary at primary school.

To assess vocabulary, the teacher used some brief vocabulary tests that consisted of fill-in-the-gaps exercises to know if the students understood the meaning and knew the appropriate word. These mini-tests were done to observe if they had any difficulties or if it was necessary to do more work on the language taught.

Use of the L1

In this high school, the English teachers speak in the L2, since they want to promote students' interaction in the language but sometimes it is not possible due to the low level the students have. The teacher explained grammar using the L1 but gave basic instructions in the L2 to stop students getting lost and to allow them to follow the lesson.

The students had two English teachers, their main teacher and another one who helped part of the group once a week. The students that went to the last teacher's lessons were those who did not have any special problems with the language. This teacher always spoke in the L2, since she believed the L2 was the language students were acquiring and needed to learn. However, like the other English teacher, the teacher asked students to

translate words from English to Spanish not only in the classroom but in tests. Regarding dictionaries, the students were asked to have a Spanish-English dictionary but they did not use them although there were many of them in the English classroom.

Participants	Activities	Use of the L1
28 students	3. Presenting vocabulary: - Images. - Exercises from the textbook and workbook. - Translation. 4. Practising vocabulary: - Exercises and interactive activities. - Translation. 5. Assessing vocabulary: - Mini-vocabulary tests through the unit.	The teacher explains grammar and instructions in the L1, except from basic instructions that are explained in the L2. Students do not use dictionaries but ask for a direct translation. Translation is always present in communication and written tasks.

Comparing both high schools, it has been noticed that there are certain differences between them concerning vocabulary teaching and the use of L1.

On the one hand, there are more creative activities in the private school apart from the exercises on the textbook. The teacher tries to connect the activities with students' interests and believes technology is a useful tool. However, it is important to take into account the fact that teachers have more resources to use technology since the students have ipads.

On the other hand, communication is considered as an important factor in both schools. Due to the British environment, in the private school, the students use the L2 more frequently than the public school. Every teacher uses translation as the main approach when teaching vocabulary and grammar items. However, the native English

teacher tries to cover students' need for translation by giving them the context or by giving them synonyms.

Primary school

Ramón y Cajal is a public primary school located in La Orotava. In the last course of primary school, the English teacher prepares students for high school. The students use the book Big Surprise 6 but it was more frequent that the students used their notebooks and several worksheets.

To practise vocabulary, the teacher worked on the exercises found in the book and also used the application Kahoot! (2013). They created one in order to prepare students for an exam they were having within a few weeks, which consisted of adjectives and comparatives, superlatives and the past simple of some verbs.

Another activity the teacher does frequently is the translation of text passages, for instance, the teacher asked the students to translate some part of the fairy tale of *The Three Little Pigs*.

The teacher always used the L2 to communicate with students. Moreover, there was also a native speaker English teacher who comes to their lessons twice a week for students to improve their oral expression and interaction with their classmates and teachers. This teacher barely speaks Spanish and for this reason, students see themselves forced to speak in the L2 if they want to ask her to clarify something. This motivates them and helps them to get over embarrassment and shyness.

As commented, in written tasks, the teacher asks students to translate and when the students encountered a word they had not learnt before, she gave a direct meaning in the L1. For instance, she told them the word "noisy" meant that they liked to gossip but she did not clarify that word can be used in many other contexts as in "making too much noise".

Participants	Activities	Use of the L1

23 students	1. Practising vocabulary:
	  - Translation.
	  - Exercises from the textbook.
	  - *Kahoot!*
	2. Assessing vocabulary:
	  - Vocabulary tests.
		The teacher explains grammar and instructions in the L2 but sometimes she makes use of the L1 if students do not understand something. Students do not use dictionaries but ask for a direct translation. Translation is always present in written tasks.

Comparing the two high schools with the primary school, the students learn vocabulary in the same manner. In the secondary public school and the primary school, it was observed that students from the primary school had a higher level at least in terms of the grammatical component than the secondary public school students since both groups were learning the past simple of the verb "to be". The students in Ramón y Cajal knew regular verbs as well as some irregular verbs, for students in 1st year of ESO took more time to explain the past simple.

Regarding the activities done to practise vocabulary, the teachers use the book but in the primary school the students have more interesting contents to learn, for instance, the story of The Three Little Pigs which they had to translate but also to act out.

A tool used in the three schools was technology, in which the teacher promoted interaction and activities through application activities.

4.2. Questionnaire data

In the methodology part, it was mentioned that some open and closed questions uploaded as well as polls were uploaded on Instagram for students to evaluate the activities carried out through the learning situation. It is important to mention that these questions were written in Spanish, so the students could feel more comfortable when answering them.

The first question (*see appendix 2*) was the following: *"What was your favourite activity?"*. Due to the fact that the students tend to answer briefly, another question was asked in order for students to reason and tell their opinions: *"Why?"*

Most of the students chose the Kahoot! quiz[5] that had been created for them in the last lesson. All of them answered the why question explaining that they could review the vocabulary and the grammar in a fun way they had never experienced before.

The purpose of the *Kahoot!* game was, apart from reviewing vocabulary and grammar students learned during a period of three weeks, that they did a different activity they had not been in contact with. For this reason, a competition was made in which students had to work in pairs only using a device. As commented in the social and civic competence as well as in interpersonal intelligence, working in pairs can help students to overcome shyness and to be able to learn from their classmates. Furthermore, the students learn how to respect each other's opinions and how to discuss what the best option would be. In this *Kahoot!* (2013) quiz, most of the questions were of multiple choice but some of them were about looking at the pictures and to choose the best option, since similar options were included to make them think and discuss. In other questions, the students needed to read and understand the meaning to be able to choose the most suitable word.

Another activity that was chosen as one of the favourites was the final dialogue the students had to create as a final product for the learning situation. In this dialogue, the students had to imitate a real situation working in pairs: one of them was the shopping assistant and the other one was the customer. The students had to include the vocabulary and the functional language they had learnt throughout the three weeks. The students could also bring clothes from home since they had to do the dialogue as real as possible.

The second and third questions (*see appendix 2*): *"What was the activity you liked the least?"* along with a why question; and the third question was: *"What would you improve?"*. Many of the students answered that they liked all of them and that they would not change any activities. However, many other students answered they had not liked a listening activity done in the seventh lesson. In this activity, the students had to extract

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[5] Kahoot quiz: https://create.kahoot.it/share/are-you-ready-to-play-and-win/b15dc0f4-86a1-48ad-ac11-4bd974fa59de

information and classify it in a chart the teacher gave them. The students considered it had been very difficult.

Apart from this activity, the students commented that they had not liked a reading activity we had done in the first lessons because the content was boring for them.

To the third question, students suggested doing more dynamic and fun games like Kahoot! since they considered it was necessary to have fun while learning a new language.

Apart from the open questions, closed questions were also included: "*Have you learnt new vocabulary?*" and *"Do you think you learn better when I speak in English or Spanish?"*. For the first question, the students replied that they had learnt a new vocabulary.

For the second question, the students –unexpectedly—replied that they learnt better if the teacher used the L2 instead of the L1. However, those students who had difficulties replied that it had not been easy to understand. During the lessons, I tried to speak most of the time in English but in the end, I needed to use the L1 in order to be understood. It is surprising that although the students may not have a high level since they are in the first year of ESO, they believed it was better for them to listen to L1 in the lessons. One question that should have been included was why they thought they learnt better to discover more in detail their opinions.

Activities	Students (N=28)	Reason
Favourite activity	92% (25 students) = Kahoot! 8% (3 students) = dialogue	These activities were fun and dynamic in which the students could work in pairs.
Least favourite activity	70% (20 students) = liked all the activities 20% (6 students) = listening activity 10% (2 students) = reading activity	Many students liked the activities because they explained they were different and connected to some of their interests. The listening activity was very difficult and the reading activity was boring because we read it aloud and the content was not interesting.
Activities to improve	95% (26 students) = more fun activities	The students explained that they learnt better when the activities we did were related to interesting content.

4.3. Vocabulary test data

The students of the 1st of ESO were learning vocabulary and grammar through a learning situation, in which the final product was a dialogue. For this reason, throughout the learning situation, some record sheets (*see appendix 1*) of key competences about vocabulary and diverse skills were taken into account to assess students. It is important to mention that in this vocabulary test, the students did not have to produce the words since they had already use the words in description contexts that, as said, were taken into account for the final mark.

Therefore, this test consisted of telling students twelve words we had already practised through the learning situation (six related to clothes and six related to physical appearances) and they needed to write down the words they heard as well as the translation.

This test's purpose was mainly to observe if students learnt more words by using the L1 to see if it had a positive effect on their learning. Although it was planned to be a test where the students had to match images to the correct words and complete some sentences using physical appearances words, it was changed into a dictation test, following Nation's (2008) ideas for vocabulary activities (p. 4).

The results of the tests demonstrated the idea that translation helps students to learn and to study vocabulary since 85% of the class knew the Spanish translation for the words. Some of them were more difficult than others such as 'straight' and 'medium-height' since many of them confused 'height' with 'high' as in 'high school'. It is important to mention that before using the translation technique as a way of assessing vocabulary, it had also been implemented in the learning situation as a way of practising it by using the students' workbooks. The *Kahoot!* quiz was employed a few lessons after the vocabulary test and it demonstrated that students still know the vocabulary learnt.

Despite the fact the students had practised and listened to how the words were pronounced and written by doing several activities, the test was not as successful as expected. Since it was a type of listening where they heard a word and had to write it down, many of them had the spelling wrong as they wrote them in the way they are pronounced, such as the words 'wavy', which was written as 'weibi', 'hat' written as 'jat'.

As a result, I believe it is necessary that students are capable of dealing with the pronunciation and activities that help them overcome the spelling difficulties that should be created. That was an aspect I did not take into account since I believed that working on repetition and having the words written several times through picture descriptions would have been enough. Nevertheless, I realized they were not used to it and I should have prevented that, especially in those students that below the level of the rest of the students in the group.

Participants	Translation	Spelling
28 students	An 85% of the students (= 24 students) learnt the words by translation which has been effective in their learning process. The other 15% (= 4 students) were those students with difficulties in the language.	A 90% of the students had the spelling of the words incorrectly, since they wrote the word as they heard it.

4.4. Teacher's Diary data

Along with the previous quantitative research tools, as commented, qualitative tools have also been used: observation and a teacher's diary. The teacher's diary can be observed and read with more detail *in appendix 2*.

It is important to mention that those vocabulary activities that have been carried out through the learning situation have been based on the achievement of key competences, since as it has been commented previously, both multiple intelligences and key competences are essential when promoting the learning of a language. Techniques previously explained have also been taken into account in the creation of different activities.

The conclusion achieved with this tool has been that, although it was not possible to put into practise every activity that was planned to do, many of them led students to achieve better vocabulary learning. I believe the cause of this has been because activities were always planned according to the students' interests and experiences since as it has been commented in the project, one of the most essential strategies to learn vocabulary is to connect the words with the students' daily lives.

5. Conclusions

Through the elaboration of this project, it has been acknowledged the fact that students achieve better results when teachers give them a motivation to learn the subject.

In the project, it has already been mentioned the fact when students feel they do not need to learn anything because they have all the information they need, the teacher must create that feeling of need. For this reason, language learning also depends on what the teachers do to teach vocabulary and grammar, the activities they create and if students are receptive. I believe teachers are the key to motivate students although there are students who do not want to be motivated because they are forced to go to school. For this reason, activities have to be adapted to the students' level.

Along with the previous factor, the main research objectives have been observed due to the research tools that have been applied.

Due to my observation and comparison of three schools –two secondary schools and a primary school—it was observed how diverse teachers deal with vocabulary in their daily lessons. It has been mentioned that in private schools the students and the teachers may have more resources they can use to reassure students' learning process by using diverse tools and the interdisciplinary projects they may be involved in. However, the three teachers that have been observed made use of the same materials and similar activities. It is important to mention the fact that the three of them worked very hard for students to study and comprehend the vocabulary and grammar.

As has been observed, teachers often use 'traditional methods', for instance, the use of the vocabulary exercises found in textbooks to teach both grammar and vocabulary, which in certain situations it is necessary to implement. However, it has also been discovered that the teachers try to apply innovative resources as a way of engaging students in learning. Thus, it is relevant to try to find resources to look for the most interesting strategies and the most effective ones. For instance, as has been mentioned, the use of technology can help teachers to develop different activities in which the students can also be participants of the process and help them to develop autonomy.

Another stated main research objective has been to create activities and analyse if they had been effective and had helped students to learn vocabulary, which has been included in the teacher's diary. Due to this qualitative tool, it has been researched that activities worked more effectively when they were associated with students' likes and interests as well as recent events since the students felt like they were part of the classroom. This fact has also been established by many researchers: students accomplish tasks effectively

when they know what they are doing since they live that situation or meet those words every day.

Finally, the last research objective was to know if the use of L1 had positive or negative effects on the achievement of the language. In this project, it has been observed that in general terms, the use of L1 has been positive when learning and teaching new vocabulary due to translation and dictation exercises since the students had a meaning in their mother tongue for those new words we wanted them to know. Apart from this, the use of L1 has also been helpful when explaining new grammatical structures as well as to make instructions more clear for them so the students did not get lost or frustrated.

However, it must be kept in mind that the participants of this study were students from the first year of high school who have just finished primary school. Thus, the use of L1 has seemed to prove that it has positive effects but it has also been observed that relying too heavily on the use of the L1, students get used to communicating in the L1 and they find the learning of the L2 more difficult. The students believe that foreign language always works as it does in Spanish.

In conclusion, it can be seen as a useful tool for teachers and it may be a good technique to learn vocabulary. However, it would be important to combine those techniques with more activities where they can use definitions to observe words do not mean the same in every context.

5.1. Proposal for future research studies and approaches to vocabulary learning and teaching

5.1.1. Limitations of the current study

As mentioned above, this project has shown the results of analysis through quantitative and qualitative tools to investigate vocabulary teaching and learning in secondary schools. This project has been focused specifically in the first year of secondary school since the main purpose was to investigate what activities teachers use to teach vocabulary and if they made use of the L1 to do it. Thus, it would be essential to observe the rest of secondary lessons to observe if these factors are also part of English lessons although the students are supposed to have a higher level.

5.1.2. How vocabulary learning and teaching can be improved

Throughout the project, vocabulary teaching and learning has been proved to be an important factor in the acquisition of a learning. Also, it is a complicated area that requires work and techniques. As Nation (2008) and Castellano-Risco (2018), among other authors, explain vocabulary does not only involve memorizing long lists of words or give students the translations but it also involves teaching students how they can work with the words they are learning in order to acquire vocabulary. This a common factor among English teachers, since due to my observation in diverse high schools, I have noticed that they emphasize more on grammar.

Teaching and learning vocabulary can mainly be improved by exploring the diverse activities that can be done and techniques that can be used. An example is to work with the words themselves as Nation (2008) explains in his research. Students can pay attention to the word by, for instance, discovering where the word comes from or giving them diverse contexts so that the students can work in groups to discuss what the meaning of a certain word is, among others.

As mentioned, many techniques have been researched and activities have been created based on them to develop this project and to put them into practise with students of 1st ESO. One of the techniques, which has been mentioned above, is the use of the L1. Its implementation in English classrooms has appeared to be effective when learning vocabulary and in my opinion, teachers should not punish its use since students can understand better, especially grammatical structures, by comparing them to their mother tongue. Nevertheless, it is important to clarify students that certain words are not the same because contexts can alter the meanings. If translation is not a strategy we want to use, we can apply other techniques such as bringing real objects or show students pictures and illustrations in order for them to start working on vocabulary afterward. Apart from translation and realia techniques, reading and listening activities have been created to find the most effective ways of teaching vocabulary, since our duty is to facilitate students' learning process and help them to develop autonomy and personal development.

Due to its level of difficulty and sometimes the lack of time, teachers usually rely too heavily on the use of textbooks, which can also be helpful and it is a material students are required to have. However, I believe we should create brief activities or quick games,

such as 'word soups', to introduce some new words every day so that students can use them daily and to review the old ones they are supposed to know. It is not only the teachers who have to work, students must also be involved in this process so it is necessary to try to give them an active role in the lesson.

From my point of view, an aspect I consider relevant is to apply students' likes and dislikes in the different activities we create, which has been demonstrated during my practical experience. Many tools can be used to promote a motivating learning so that students are engaged and ready to learn. As has been commented, reading is a powerful tool students and teachers can use to learn new words. It is important to keep in mind that students may not like reading but as it is an essential skill we need to work on, we can implement reading, listening and writing activities that are closer to students' interests.

Below are some original activities that could be implemented in the lessons based on the techniques explained through the project.

<u>Activities</u>

The following two activities can be used as a way of presenting vocabulary:

1. **<u>What is it?</u>**

Time	Description	Materials
10 minutes	The teacher brings a suitcase with some objects that are the new vocabulary the students are going to learn, for instance, clothes. Then, the teacher asks what they think it is hidden inside in order to promote interaction. Thus, the teacher writes the words they say and ask the students to form small groups. The teacher shows them the objects one by one to discover if the students remember words. They cannot say the word but try to write them.	Whiteboard Real objects

Time	Description	Materials
	Once the students have seen all the objects, they start telling the name in order for the teacher to write it on the table.	

2. **Let me guess…**

Time	Description	Materials
10 minutes	The students work in small groups and the teacher gives them some printed flashcards. In those flashcards there is a picture of the object with its name. The rest of the group have flashcards with certain words. The student with the picture needs to draw it and the rest of the group have to guess the name of the picture by choosing one of the names in the flashcards.	Flashcards

Apart from using Kahoot! (2013), the following activity can be used as a way of practising vocabulary that implies the use of technology, since as has been mentioned in the project, is a helpful tool with diverse resources. In this case, a technology tool that can be used to develop vocabulary is PowerPoint to create a memory game. This activity can also be used as a way of assessing vocabulary, since students need to write the words correctly and it can be useful for teachers to observe the spelling.

Time	Description	Materials
10 minutes	The students form small groups of three people. The teacher shows them a PowerPoint slide with a lot of images from the vocabulary they are learning for 45 seconds. In a piece of paper, the students need to write all the words they remember from the PowerPoint slide.	PowerPoint

	The team that has more correct words is the winner.	

The following activity can be used as a way of assessing vocabulary and it also helps students to be motivated due to its relation with their everyday lives. It is an activity of vocabulary clothes that can be adapted according to the diverse levels of secondary school.

Time	Description	Materials
30 minutes	The teacher shows students a PowerPoint slide with some pictures of famous people the students like. Those famous people need to be wearing diverse types of clothes so students can make use of more vocabulary. In a piece of paper, the students choose two of those people and describe the clothes and physical appearances. Once the students have finished, the teacher can promote interaction by making personal questions.	PowerPoint

I have had the opportunity to apply some of these activities using the techniques that have been discussed in the present project. I have found them to be effective with students of 1st of ESO and foreign learners that were learning Spanish. It remains to be seen how well these activities would work in other classroom contexts. It is, after all, the teacher's role to reflect on the classroom activities he/she carries out rather than simply assuming that a successful approach can be applied in all situations. Thus, research tools are crucial when teachers want to improve certain factors for their students to acquire the language. Furthermore, every very well-designed activity and task can always be improved and modified to engage students in this life-long learning process.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Record sheets to assess key competences

HOJA DE REGISTRO DE COMPETENCIAS CLAVE

- Activity: Who is...?　　**- Group/Level**: 1º ESO　　**- Timetable fit**:

Interactúa de manera fluida			Hace descripciones con el vocabulario aprendido			Expresa sus puntos de vista y sus gustos			Planifica sus tareas			Participa y muestra una actitud positiva			Asume cualquier rol y busca soluciones		
CL			CL			CL			AA			AA			SIEE		
A	A	X	A	A	X	A	A	X	A	A	X	A	A	X	A	A	X

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for students

First question:

Some students' replies:

rubeee10 responded to your question sticker: "La de kahoot porque es divertida y aprendes" 6 h

nicolasayalaacosta responded to your question sticker: "La del Kahoot! Y los diálogos Por qué eran divertidas " 5 h
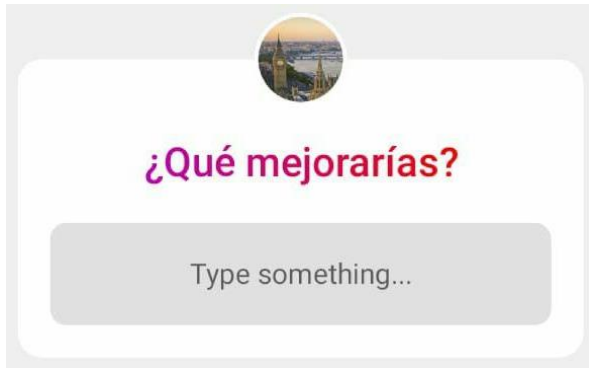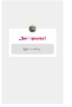
Second and third questions:

Some students' replies:

dian_ebi responded to your question sticker: "Todas me gustaron , y fueron muy divertidas, entretenidas y aprendimos nuevas cosas" 5 h
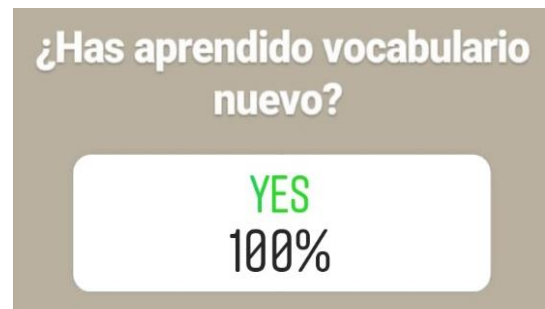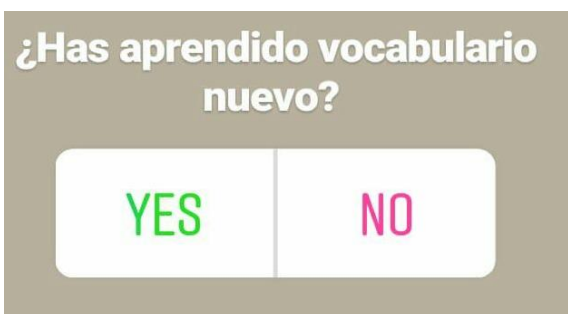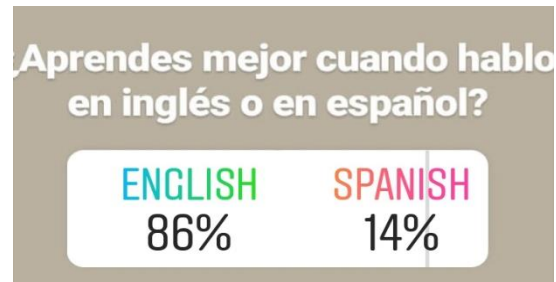
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¿Qué mejorarías?

Type something...

yamilengg_ responded to your question sticker: "Hacer más actividades como las q hicimos hoy" 5 h

Polls: **Results:**

¿Aprendes mejor cuando hablo en inglés o en español?

ENGLISH | SPANISH

¿Has aprendido vocabulario nuevo?

YES | NO

¿Aprendes mejor cuando hablo en inglés o en español?

ENGLISH 86% | SPANISH 14%

¿Has aprendido vocabulario nuevo?

YES 100%

Appendix 3: Teacher's Diary

<mark>Things to improve</mark>

<mark>Activities that didn't work</mark>

<mark>Activities that worked</mark>

<mark>Use of L1</mark>

> I created an Instagram account so I could communicate with my students and give them exercises to review vocabulary and grammar with their favourite social network.

TEACHER'S DIARY

Lesson 1: I introduced the vocabulary about clothes. I started the lesson with a student in order to ask the rest of the students what he was wearing. They didn't understand my question because everyone said "pink" referring to the colour of the sweater he was wearing.

Later, I used a word map that worked, since they said lots of words related to clothes they knew. However, some of them were not paying attention. I tried not to give translations speaking in English but they asked me for direct translation of the words. After the activity, we matched images to pictures using the textbook and they kept working on the vocabulary. However, I noticed that although I gave a direct translation, some of them asked me once again what some words meant. I think that the word map was a good idea but maybe I should have let them do it in pairs first in order to think about clothes and then, tell me their answers.

An activity I created and I felt that it worked was a chart with some fashion styles on it. They were hípster, casual, sporty and rocker. I felt they were motivated because they already knew what those words meant in the fashion context since they knew what type of clothes I was talking about and offered me some suggestions. I even showed them some pictures so they could contrast the clothes and I asked them what fashion style they think they had.

Lesson 2: In this lesson, I reviewed the vocabulary they had seen the previous day by asking them to tell me the words they remembered. They did remember but when I was correcting the homework I told them to do, which was related to read sentences and choose the correct answer, they did not remember quite well how to write the names of clothes. For this reason, I pointed at some students and asked them what they were wearing as well as the clothes I was wearing that day.

I introduced grammar related to the past simple of the verb "to be" by using the whiteboard. I made a chart with YESTERDAY and TODAY and I put some real examples I had done. Then, I asked them where they had been yesterday to promote interaction. They responded quite well because they saw me interested in them. We made an exercise together so they could know when they needed to write was or were. They did not like this exercise because I had already asked them to copy the theory so they would have it for a future study. That's why it took them too long to copy the exercise and do it. Maybe I should have done another activity that implied the use of past simple.

We read a reading found in the textbook about some descriptions of fashion in the past in which the past simple was present. In this text, we could review some vocabulary as well. Some of them were not even reading or paying attention. It was boring for them. Maybe I should have created one as I intended to do about the same topic using the past simple but with things, they are interested in.

To wake them up, I told them after a short description was read to think about the main idea. I used L1 when I asked them if they understood the text, which they did but they also asked for some words they were not quite sure.

Lesson 3: In order to introduce adjectives to describe physical appearance, I created a PPTX slide with some famous people with different hairstyle. There were three options for each photo and was something related to their nowadays lives, they liked the activity. They learnt some adjectives and it was quite good for them to do something different. Furthermore, we played "Who is Who", in which they had to describe a person of the class in groups of 4 people. They needed to use the descriptions as well as the clothes they were wearing. I went group by group in order to see how they were doing. It was quite motivating for them to be able to describe someone.

I consider this lesson went better than I expected but I think it was also due to the fact that there were only half of the students since the other half went to an English class with another teacher.

Lesson 4: This lesson was quite fun since I wanted to promote interaction and writing to see if they had reviewed the vocabulary learnt during the week. I created PPTX slides with some famous people I know most of them like, for example, Captain America, Rosalía, Bad Bunny and J Balvin. They need to describe those people as we had done in the previous lesson. They liked this because then, I asked them a few personal questions about them. For instance: Why do you know him/her? Have you listened to any of his/her songs? What do you like about her?

I corrected the writings they made and I noticed some of them did not know the colours and although I explained before the activity the order of the

adjectives some of them did not apply what I had said.

However, I could improve this activity by making them choose one of them instead of doing three, since it can be boring for them and I did not let them much time to finish the last two people, so some writings were incomplete.

In this lesson, I had to explain what they were going to do in the following lesson. Due to the fact that it was a complicated explanation, I decided to explain it in L1. Even though I explained that in Spanish, they did not get quite well what they had to do.

When I gave basic instructions I knew they could understand, I tried to speak in English all the time but when it was something I knew it could be difficult for them to process, I used L1.

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Lesson 5: I told them the previous class to do a presentation. They could send me the photo via Instagram, which I had created for them in order to motivate them, or they could do a PowerPoint. They needed to explain the picture using the past simple of the verb "to be". Only some of them did the presentation and I noticed that many of them did not know the name of some clothes. For this reason, I told them to translate vocabulary from their workbooks in order to observe if by using this method they were able to remember and learn them. Although we had already seen vocabulary many times, when they were translating, they did not remember the meanings.

Lesson 6: I reviewed the past simple of the verb "to be" and I introduced them the past simple of regular verbs. I taught grammar in a traditional way using the whiteboard, since I wanted to start the lesson with a YouTube video in which they had to see an image and think what happened next. However, my teacher thought it was too complicated for them.

I practised grammar with some exercises found in the books. I also created a PPTX slide in which I explained the past simple. When they needed to double the consonant when they needed to add "-ed", or replace "y" for "-ied". They liked this activity because of the animation effects in PPTX. It helped them to understand better the changes they had to do.

Since I had to explain grammar they have not met before, although I tried to do it in English, I decided to explain it in Spanish because they could not understand very well what I was talking about.

Lesson 7: In this lesson, I mostly practised interaction and listening so they could learn some words they are going to need for the learning situation. Since I wanted to review past simple, I created a word search in which they had to look for the infinitive form of some verbs I wrote in the past simple.

They liked this activity because it was a way of motivating them with something different. However, I didn't have much time to do it in class but the other teacher that was with the other half of my group was able to do a competition with them. That's why I think I could improve this activity leaving them more time to do it in class instead of finishing at home. It would have been funnier.

Lesson 8: In this lesson, I planned a writing activity. In this activity, we first read a text found in the textbook about a boy's memory of his first day of school. In the students' case, they had to write about a memory of their first day at school, since they have recently arrived at the high school. I wanted to know how they felt the first time they came to this school if they were nervous or excited. Also, I wanted them to tell me how their

friendships had changed as a way for them to reflect on how their lives had changed in a few months.

In this writing, they had to use the past simple of the verb "to be" as well as describing their best friends in order to practise physical appearances.

I think this activity worked because they were excited about writing their personal experiences. However, many of them copied the text model and did not express as I wanted them to. For this reason, I think I could improve this activity by establishing the paragraphs they must follow but not to let them copy the entire text model.

Lesson 9: A few days earlier, I had told them they were going to do a mini-test vocabulary since I thought that with all the activities of vocabulary we had done as well as the descriptions, they already knew them.

However, I was wrong. The test I told them to do was not the test I had created for them which consisted of matching words to images and a quick fill-in the gaps exercise. My teacher told me it was an easy test and that I should give them something a little bit more complicated. That's why following what I had observed in her lessons, I decided to try –to see how they would do it—a dictation in which I took into account not only that they translated the words, but that they listened to the word and recognized it.

The results were good but I think they would have been better if I had practised this with them beforehand. I realized that although they had translated the words into Spanish, they did not still translate the English words into the correct ones. For instance, they translated "socks" as "zapatos".

Lesson 10: In order for students to practise grammar, I gave them a piece of paper with the lyrics of a song in it. I think they were really surprised because they had never done that before. The song was Love yourself by Justin Bieber.

In this activity, they had to circle the correct answer and I felt that liked it because they were singing. I think it was a good idea but I should have given them more time to go through the song underlying some words they didn't understand and work on them. They listen to music every day, so I think working vocabulary through songs would be a good idea, since they would be so motivated to understand what they listen to every day and to know what the song is saying.

Apart from that, I gave them the instructions for the final dialogue they had to create in Spanish since I realized some of them didn't know what to do. I told them to do the dialogue in Spanish first and then, they introduced the functional language we have learnt

in English. It worked since in the last lesson, they created original dialogues and tried to do it as different as the model of the book was.

Lesson 11: I created a Kahoot! to play with the students and to review the things we had learnt through the learning situation. They had to do it in pairs and I prepared the high school tablets so they could use them. It was fun because they really wanted to win. Playing Kahoot! I could explain to them why an answer was the correct one and why the other answers weren't.

Observations: Translation did not work as I expected. They did not remember the vocabulary although they had seen it, worked on it and translated it several times. In the last lesson, they were still asking for the name of some clothes.

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