UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

"THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING POWERPOINT FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY TO INCREASE THE VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE FOR THE READING SKILL, AMONG THE STUDENTS OF THE INTERMEDIATE INTENSIVE ENGLISH I OF SEMESTER II, 2011 AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR"

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Introduction

Technology has been used in education in different ways throughout the time. Since the 20th century, technology has expanded worldwide rapidly. Most of the time, it is related to sciences, industry, business and communications. Technology has been considered the cornerstone of all societies because it is necessarily linked to: instruments, machines, systems, methods, and organizations with the purpose of facilitating our lives (Jonassen & Reeves, 1996). In the eighties, the application of technology in education in developing countries commonly included the use of radio and television. In the nineties, technology made possible the use of film, VHS, VCR, cassettes, CD players and projectors of slides in classrooms. Moreover, in the 21st century, technological equipment included DVD, computers, digital projectors and multimedia tools (Gencilter, 2009). Thus, technology has provided different tools to contribute to education and improve tasks in a simple way.

Technological tools bring benefits into classrooms. According to Neuman and Foskinen (1992) "the use of technology in the classroom might be one of the factors which affects learners' attitude in a positive way in their learning process". For example, students may have the opportunity to see the real world with authentic materials at low price. This can motivate learners and develop their creativity and skills. Besides that, learners may develop their sense of freedom, encouragement, and involvement in their teaching/learning process. Therefore, technology can stimulate and create a great interest in learners, and educators

have noticed those positive advantages (Hutchens, 2010). Therefore, technology can be a helpful tool when learning a foreign language.

Today learning a foreign language, especially English, has become more important due to globalization. In this way, teachers are making use of technological equipment as a tool to help students reach their goals. Even though technology cannot do everything, it makes the teaching/learning process easier for both teachers and learners. In fact, many researchers in the EFL teaching profession have seen how technology can be used to increase students' motivation as well as to develop their language skills such as speaking, reading, listening and writing. For example, a teacher may use a TV set and a DVD player to watch a movie in English to activate his/her students' listening skill. In other words, technology in the classroom helps teachers achieve their goals to teach a foreign language (Schacter, 1999).

The application of technology through Computer-Assisted Language Teaching programs (CALT) provides advantages for English language teaching. Interestingly, one of these advantages that CALT offers is the activation of the four macro skills of the English language. Additionally, for language educators, Computer-Assisted Language Teaching Programs represent a source of motivation among their students (Reeves, 1998). Moreover, the use of CALT becomes a mean to reach the teachers' goals and objectives in language teaching. Nowadays, teachers make use of e-books, blogs, and Internet applications among others, this make students' reading enjoyable. Hence, teachers can use their creativity through

the use of technological resources in different ways so that it provides advantages

for them and it facilitates the language teaching/learning process.

A multimedia tool can be an innovative and complementary technique to

teach vocabulary for the reading skill at the Foreign Language Department of the

University of El Salvador. This tool is called PowerPoint. It is a presentation

software program that allows users to make use of images, colored texts with

simple animation (Microsoft, 2006). In the past decades, PowerPoint has been

used in business to present graphics and general information. However,

PowerPoint can be used today by language teachers as an effective and

innovative technique to teach vocabulary and educators may be able to substitute

the traditional techniques which teachers usually use in the form of flashcards,

pictures, pictionaries and others. The purpose of this research is to present the

effectiveness of using PowerPoint, to teach vocabulary to increase the vocabulary

knowledge for the reading skill, with the Intermediate Intensive English I students

of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

Statement of the problem

PowerPoint has become a powerful tool in classrooms. Since its appearance in the late eighties, PowerPoint has recently begun to spread to universities and schools in the last years. One of the main reasons for its delay is that technology requires hardware, which is relatively expensive. Today, most of universities, students and educators have access to computers and the necessary equipment to use PowerPoint. This multimedia tool has been commonly used in classrooms to present general information about a topic and graphics for business. Nowadays, language educators are using PowerPoint for initial teaching, games, for reviews and/or to summarize a given topic, among other activities. Also presentations can be used for practice and drillings (Johnston and Barker, 2002). In short, using PowerPoint in classrooms is increasing and its use can improve the teaching/learning process of a language (Ellis, 1995; Austin, Rudkin, Gaskins, 1986).

There are many positive advantages of using PowerPoint. In the first place, PowerPoint is user friendly. If teachers use it correctly, it can accommodate all learners' needs. Moreover, PowerPoint is fun to watch and fun to make. This software program allows users to manipulate images, texts, color, sound and video. Besides that, teachers can create their own presentations and use them again and again, and they are very useful in large classrooms. Therefore, as teachers become more familiar with PowerPoint more advantages can be found, especially to teach vocabulary (Radanov, 2008).

Vocabulary knowledge is an essential component of a foreign language acquisition. The amount of vocabulary someone knows is a very important indicator to evaluate his/her English level. Previous researches about vocabulary acquisition show that foreign language learners should know more than 4,000 words in the intermediate levels (Nation, 2006). But unfortunately, learners do not reach appropriate vocabulary knowledge. So, learners meet difficulties to have a good reading comprehension and conversation fluency as well. Thus, as Schmitt (2008) states "The point is that students must learn a large number of words to become proficient in English", so teachers must make them learn as much vocabulary as possible, and teachers must use the effective techniques to make them acquire acceptable vocabulary knowledge.

There are some traditional techniques still used to teach vocabulary at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. Traditional techniques can be defined as the ways that have been used repeatedly by teachers to present vocabulary for a long time without undergoing changes. One of these techniques is the use of word lists, in which words are listed and students look up the meanings and memorize them. Another technique usually used at the department is the use of bilingual dictionaries to understand the readings assigned. Furthermore, the repetition of words or expressions is commonly used by teachers and the use of flashcards, which is very popular (Oxford, Crokall, 1990). Also teachers make use of exercises such as pictionaries. Those techniques have helped students to retain vocabulary in a way. Some of them have been applied with the aid of particular tools of technology such as CD players or TV sets.

However, we are living in a world of technological advances and teachers have to integrate technology tools to improve the traditional techniques to teach vocabulary.

The problem observed is that teachers are not taking advantage of this multimedia tool, called PowerPoint, as an innovative and effective technique to teach vocabulary and increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill of the Intermediate Intensive English level I, at the Foreign Language Department. This experimental study case explored the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary for Intermediate Intensive English level I to increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill through the use of PowerPoint presentations, which included the use of animated images and text. The researchers selected an experimental and control group in order to improve the vocabulary knowledge and scores of the students. Also students were pretested at the beginning of the semester to measure the vocabulary knowledge and potential impact of treatment. During the semester the students were presented the vocabulary of the reading part from each unit of their textbook through PowerPoint. Then, students were post tested to check if their vocabulary knowledge had increased.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore an alternative and innovative technique, PowerPoint Presentations, for teaching vocabulary to increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill with the Intermediate Intensive English I students of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

Many students of the Intermediate level I of the Foreign Language Department (FLD) face difficulties to recall and retain new vocabulary to develop their reading skill. If teachers do not make use of alternative techniques to teach vocabulary, students will get low scores and poor reading comprehension skill performance. In El Salvador, students of bachelor's degree in English Teaching and Modern Languages are required to get very good grades in order to receive the diploma. Poor reading comprehension skills will affect them not only in their behavior toward English learning, but also to obtain their degree.

In order to increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill of the Intermediate Intensive English I at the department, the researchers implemented an innovative technique using the software program called PowerPoint. This technique includes the use of animated text and images. Sixty students that were divided into two groups: experimental and control. The experimental one was taught vocabulary through PowerPoint Presentations, and the control one was taught vocabulary through the use of traditional techniques. In the experimental group the vocabulary was presented at the beginning of two units. The PowerPoint Presentations included the vocabulary of the reading part of each unit. They were presented before the teachers in charge of the experimental and control group

taught the lessons of the units, during the sixteen weeks of the semester. The students' reading comprehension skills were measured through a previous test and a posttest. The students' attitude toward PowerPoint Presentations was observed by the researchers, too. In addition, teachers were interviewed to gather more information about the use of multimedia tools at the Foreign Language Department.

At the end of the PowerPoint Presentations, the Intermediate students were expected to increase their vocabulary knowledge for reading. Another objective of this study was to determine whether the students' attitude toward this innovative and alternative technique positively affected their learning process, specifically to increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill.

Literature Review

Technology in Teaching

The integration of technology in language classrooms has been effective through the years. In the eighties, the integration of technology in English classes included the use of radio, film, television and others. Later on, at the beginning of the nineties, tools such as VHS, cassettes, CD players and computers were included as well. These tools have helped educators to create motivational environments that affect learners' attitude in positive ways. Moreover, technology gives students the opportunities to be in touch with the real world (Reeves, 1998). In short, the integration of technology in language classrooms has made the language teaching/learning process possible, and it also activates the four macro skills, including reading.

Reading Difficulties

Students often face difficulties with the reading skill. One of the main reasons why learners have difficulties with reading comprehension is due to the insufficient vocabulary knowledge (Schmitt, 2008). It happens when language teachers barely put into practice techniques to teach vocabulary. So, students are unable to recall or retain new lexicon. Moreover, if teachers are not aware or do not make use of alternative techniques, students will have a low performance in their reading comprehension skill (Spratt; Pulverness; Williams, 2005). Therefore, students still struggle with these difficulties that could affect not only their performance but also the attitude toward English language learning.

The Importance of Vocabulary Knowledge to Develop the Reading Skill

Vocabulary is a very important subsidiary skill to develop the reading macro skill and it is an area of urgent attention if teachers want to develop the required level for reading. In fact, the generic descriptions for reading (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, 2001) say that an Intermediate English Student has to be "able to read consistently with full understanding simple connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs about which the reader has personal interest and/or knowledge. The students at this level should also be able to get some main ideas and information from texts at the next higher level featuring description and nonaction" (Omaggio, 1993). In this respect, the amount of vocabulary knowledge is a very important indicator to determine the students' English level. For example, some researchers have found that an Intermediate level student should know approximately 4,000 words to read a novel and comprehend the text (Nation, 2006). Also Preszler (2006) states "It seems obvious to say that a strong vocabulary contributes to reading comprehension." Therefore, to make students reach appropriate vocabulary knowledge, teachers can make use of technological tools, such as PowerPoint, as an aid to support their teaching and reach the goals.

The Insufficient Use of Technological Tools to Teach Vocabulary

Teachers need to integrate technological tools into their classes. Through the years, teachers have been making use of traditional techniques and strategies to teach vocabulary (Oxford & Crokall, 1990) However, today's world is being transformed by technology. For example, teachers from other countries are making

use of PowerPoint to introduce new vocabulary as an innovative technique in order to improve the students reading skills. Fortunately, technology has provided many tools to complement all kind of activities, and the educational field is not an exception (Craig, Amernic 2006). Therefore, technology could be introduced gradually in the classrooms as a complement to teach English as a foreign language (Iheanacho, 1997).

Advanced Organizer

The literature review will address three areas related to the effectiveness of PowerPoint to teach vocabulary in order to improve students' vocabulary knowledge for reading skill. The first section will address research related to the integration of technology in education. The second section will focus on research studies about reading, vocabulary and how to cope with its difficulties on reading comprehension. Finally the third section will address research related to vocabulary teaching and the innovative technique to increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill.

The Use of Technology in the EFL Classrooms in the 20th and 21st Century

Technology is an important growing part of any society because it has expanded worldwide rapidly in different areas such as industry, business, sciences, among others. Education is not the exception. Currently, technology is considered the cornerstone in education since it is linked to our daily activities (Jonassen & Reeves, 1996). In the 20th century, the application of technology in EFL classrooms included the use of the radio and television, film, VHS, VCR, and cassettes. By the end of the century, digital CD players, projectors of slides, DVDs and computers were used as well. Computers opened the doors to multimedia tools also known as CALT (Computer Assistance Language Teaching) (Segler, 2001). In short, technology has brought technological tools to contribute to education and facilitate the teaching/learning process (Reeves 1998).

Advantages of Technological Tools for Teachers

Teachers are taking advantages of technological tools to improve students' language skills in EFL classrooms. Although technology is not a panacea for education, it has to be used appropriately as a complement according to the goals and objectives of a particular class (Reeves, 1998). Interestingly, researchers have found that technology helps students to be involved in the language learning process. It gives them a chance to see the real world by using authentic material and it is possible for teachers to make a more interactive class by using, for example, online English exercises. Also technology can offer an active learning environment for language learners. For instance, some teachers may ask their

students to make a video about performing action verbs, dramatize a short tale, etc. Furthermore, it promotes positive attitude toward learning, saving time for both teachers and students (Scharter, 1999).   In conclusion, the use of technology in EFL classrooms provides different advantages to improve students' four language skills.

The Impact of Technology in Student's Behavior

Foreign language teaching is challenging, so teachers need to involve their students by using different methods and techniques in the teaching/learning process. During this process teachers have also to develop a positive motivation, encouragement, and attitudes in each student toward the learning process (Gardner, 1985). One of the factors that help teachers develop those aspects in students might be technology. It can affect the students' attitude positively in the learning process (Reeves 1998).   Using technology, for example, may give students the chance to be in touch with the real world and it can be motivating for them. In addition, using technology as an aid helps students to be active, eager and involved in classes due to the interest that the use of technology produces (Johnston & Barker, 2002). There is no doubt that using computers and the different kinds of technological tools affect students' behavior in a positive way.

The Purpose and Importance of Reading in EFL Classroom

Reading has been seen as an activity that has a purpose. A language student may read to gain information, to make a constructive critique of a writer's style or ideas, and/or to verify previous knowledge. Also someone may read to

increase knowledge of the language and for pleasure. However, to comprehend a text and support opinions a learner needs to know the vocabulary that is being used. Therefore, reading should be considered as an active skill which purpose is closely linked to the reader's needs, and this includes the knowledge they should have about the minimum required vocabulary. In that way, facts cause – effect sequences, hypothesis and ideas presented can be understood (Wesche & Paribakht, 2000).

Expectations from Students' Reading Skill at Intermediate English Level

Good readers should have six characteristics to develop their reading skill. First of all, a good reader should be able to read extensively. Secondly, good readers integrate the information in the text with existing knowledge and a flexible reading style which at the same time relies on what they are reading. Besides this, good readers need to be motivated to read, and this will lead them to enjoy the activity. Furthermore, good readers depend on different skills in which perceptual processing, phonemic processing, and recall interact. Hence, good readers are expected to have these characteristics to develop the reading comprehension (Miculecky, 2001).

Vocabulary Related to the Reading Skill

Vocabulary knowledge is bounded to the reading skill ,and is important to be taught. Having inadequate vocabulary knowledge, foreign language learners will meet difficulties in their reading comprehension. So, vocabulary is the base of a

language given as stated by Block & Mangieri (2006). Likewise, Intermediate language students of English are required to learn the denotation of words as well. Why is it important? Because according to Carr & Mazur – Stewart, 1998 "It is commonly assumed that knowing the meanings of words used in a particular text increases a reader's comprehension of the passage." Also knowing the meaning of words helps learners to "have a more complete and deeper understanding of vocabulary terms" (Carr & Mazur – Stewart, 1998). Therefore, vocabulary and reading are very tied to each one, and learners need to be taught vocabulary in order to succeed when reading different kind of materials in English (Nation, 2001).

Vocabulary in Teaching – Learning English

English language teachers have to give importance to direct vocabulary instruction. Researchers have found that vocabulary knowledge and fluent reading comprehension are strongly tied. They have shown that having strong word knowledge in Basic and Intermediate levels, students can predict how well they will have the capacity to comprehend a text in advanced levels (Nation, 2006). On the contrary, limited vocabulary knowledge might prevent students from comprehending a given text later on during the process of language instruction. It has been noticed that poor readers often read less because most of the time they find reading as a difficult and frustrating activity. So, the gap between a good and poor reader grows wider while they go through advanced levels (Preszler, 2006; Nagy & Anderson, 2006).

Importance of Teaching Vocabulary to Develop the Reading Skill

Giving direct instruction in vocabulary can help to reduce that gap among good and poor readers. Yet, explicit instruction can help students acquire more vocabulary to become better readers. In fact, direct vocabulary instruction is useful for students at all levels. However, it is particularly useful for beginners in the Basic and Intermediate levels. Students at those levels have limited reading vocabulary and exposure to incidental vocabulary learning outside the classroom (Miculecky, 2001). Thus, it is essential for teachers to teach direct vocabulary to beginning learners to increase their vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill and avoid trouble in advanced levels (Schmitt, 2008).

Vocabulary Teaching Techniques in EFL Classrooms

Traditional techniques can be defined as the way that has been repeatedly used for a long time by teachers to present vocabulary without any significant change (Cambridge Dictionary, 2003). It has been noticed that most of EFL teachers give less importance to vocabulary instruction which is aimed at supporting students along the language learning process. Learners can have access to different courses such as grammar, pronunciation, conversation and others; however, most of such courses are not usually aimed at teaching vocabulary. Typically, students learn vocabulary when they are given word lists to learn them by heart. In summary, teachers might have the tendency to ignore the use of other techniques to deal with vocabulary instruction in EFL classroom. Oxford & Crookall (1990) state that "those techniques may be classified into four

groups: decontextualizing, semi-contextualizing, fully contextualizing, and adaptable." Each of them is summarized below:

Decontextualizing Techniques. In this case the word is removed completely for any communicative context to disable students remember and provide some notion about how a word is used as a part of language. Those decontextualizing techniques include word lists, flashcards and the use of bilingual dictionaries.

Semi-contextualizing techniques. These techniques consist in providing the context and linking words with others or word-sounds. In other cases, the context is more extra-linguistic such as visual imagery, physical response and physical sensation. Semi-contextualizing techniques include word or concept association, semantic mapping, words grouping, visual and aural imagery, physical response and sensation and keyword.

Fully contextualizing techniques. They refer to the use of new words totally fixed to the four skills of a language. Some of those techniques are related to reading and listening practice, speaking and writing practice.

Adaptable technique. This technique is often used to reinforce any other technique previously mentioned. Those are some of the techniques that have been used to teach and learn vocabulary in both EFL /ESL classrooms until now. But among those techniques, the most commonly used in classrooms is the use of flashcards, a decontextualizing technique. Therefore, there is a close relationship between the flashcard technique and the memorization of vocabulary with the

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purpose of increasing vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill (Oxford & Crookall, 1990; Shejbalová, 2006; Bocková, 2007).

Pictures and Vocabulary Teaching

The use of visual aids has traditionally helped teachers in foreign language classrooms. It is known that a normal classroom is not a natural environment for learning a foreign or second language. So, teachers are required to use their creativity to build a suitable and similar environment to resemble the real world of the language. Actually, pictures or flashcards become one of these useful aids (Iheanacho, 1997). The use of pictures not only recreates the real world of the language, but it also provides fun to the class. Surprisingly, the use of these visual aids affects other aspects of the foreign language teaching positively as well. For example, the fact of employing flashcards can help language educators to teach structure, function, and at the same time activate all four language skills. Thus, using visual aids reinforces the language teaching and provides a different environment (Bockova, 2007).

Benefits of Visual Aids

There are some advantages of using visual aids in language teaching. First of all, they are a mean of motivation because they draw learners' attention easily. Second, they give a sense of context to the language. Also, the use of visual aids is suitable for any English level and age; however, it must be mentioned that it works better with beginners. Moreover, visual aids can be used in different ways in the classroom. For example, they can be stored easily. Also they are often free to

get in any magazine or in the Internet, and they can be personalized. Finally, because of the nature of visual aids, students are always curious and pay more attention to what teachers are going to do with the pictures, for example, the ones that are displayed in a class. In summary, the use of this traditional technique has been a useful aid in language teaching (Hutchens & Hutchens, 2010).

Choosing the Appropriate Vocabulary to Teach

Teachers have to select the vocabulary to teach according to the level, the number of words and the students' need. According to Nation (2006) and Schmitt (2008) "learners need to know approximately 98 percent of the words in written or spoken discourse in order to understand the message well", and "students must learn a large number of words to become proficient in English, so teachers must help them learn as much vocabulary as possible." In this regard, teachers have to identify which vocabulary to teach and the quantity of words that students need to retain in every level of English they are supposed to teach. Interestingly, researchers agree with the fact that explicit vocabulary must be taught with basic and intermediate levels. Why? Because students in those levels do not have too much contact with the language (Nation, 2006). Schmitt (2008) states that "with true beginners it is probably necessary to explicitly teach all words until students have enough vocabulary to start making use of unknown words they meet in context." So, teachers might select the words which frequent use is quite low but necessary. Therefore, teachers need to consider the quantity and level in any given lesson to make students able to learn words in a better way (Block & Mangieri, 2006).

PowerPoint in Education

Technology and its tools have raided into the education field. With the emergence and popularity of the well-known Computer- Assisted Language Learning and Computer- Assisted Language Teaching (CALL & CALT) more language educators are putting aside their old school teaching methods and techniques, and they are moving ahead to experiment the new technology applications in order to enhance students' learning (Iheanacho, 1997). As technology is transforming education, it is obvious that teaching only with textbooks and traditional methods would no longer be appropriate. In this way, teachers have to think of new techniques and materials, so that learners can meet the conditions to face up to the challenges of today's global civilization. As mentioned earlier educators have been making use of computer tools or as they are called CALL and CALT to improve both teaching and learning. And one of these tools is PowerPoint. Therefore, the information included in the following parts is intended to show the advantages of using PowerPoint as a tool to teach vocabulary to increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill.

The Use of PowerPoint Presentations in Teaching

PowerPoint has been used as a technological tool in the teaching field. PowerPoint is a type of presentation software program developed by Microsoft Office with the purpose of creating presentations (Austin, Rudkin & Gaskins 1986). In fact, this presentation software has migrated from business and industry to the teaching field. First of all, PowerPoint was adopted by the business field when

executives and sales agents used the program to give reports and presentations to clients at meetings. Later on, it was introduced in classrooms to present statistical reports, graphics, key point of lectures, etc. PowerPoint made a way into education because of its capability to show and clarify information (Apple & Kikuchi, 2007). In summary, PowerPoint has shown to be an effective pedagogical tool in classrooms (Brock & Joglekar, 2011).

PowerPoint is foraying into the English language teaching. Inevitably, PowerPoint is being adopted in English teaching, too. According to Radanow (2008) "PowerPoint presentations can be used in classrooms for initial teaching, for students' projects, for practice and drilling, for games, for reviews and tests." Actually, this is an attractive format to learners' diverse learning styles, such as auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and creative by making use of "PowerPoint" (Iheanacho, 1997). So, this presentation software can contribute to the efficiency of English language classroom instruction. Thus, PowerPoint can help teachers organize their ideas and thoughts or any kind of information in an orderly and attractive way as it is gaining entrance in English teaching field (Jones, 2003).

Using PowerPoint in the classroom can be intimidating for teachers. It has been noticed that not all teachers are using the different tools that CALT offers in their teaching methods (Jalali & Dousti, 2012). Some English teachers are still having problems being "technophobic" and most of them are still doubtful of the benefits that PowerPoint offers. Probably, they are even unsure about how to incorporate technology into their language teaching or they have not realized about the fact that students' learning is more effective when technology is used in

classrooms. Some teachers only use technological tools for personal purposes; however, they are not aware of the need to include them in the teaching field. In some cases, the situation gets even worst for those teachers whose students have become more competent in the use of technology than teachers themselves. So, there is a need to follow the trend and get familiar with technology devices and tools such as PowerPoint (Gallagher & Reder, 2005).

PowerPoint Presentations to Teach Vocabulary and Develop the Reading Skill

For most of EFL (ESL) students, the traditional way to learn vocabulary is by memorizing words through the use of different classroom techniques from different sources. However, using multimedia tools can help students improve the results of word memorizing. As expressed by Nouri & Shahid "PowerPoint presentations arouse student's imagery system, which become more activated when information is presented." This could contribute to comprehension and improve short and long-term memory. Also Peck (1987, as cited in Nouri and Shahid, 2005) concluded that "when the mixture of pictures and text are presented together, the information retention is improved." As mentioned earlier, the amount of vocabulary has an important effect on language students not only to read consistently but also to communicate (Jalali & Dousti, 2012). In this context, PowerPoint presentations in teaching vocabulary supply other tools such as video, picture and sound, and it can be used for both visual and auditory channels. Also researchers have found that this kind of tools "creates more favorable conditions and facilitates the vocabulary learning" as explained by Assadi & Mozafari (2012). Therefore, using these

innovative tools can help students increase word memorization and therefore word knowledge.

Some researchers have found that using PowerPoint presentations to teach vocabulary influences students in different ways. Indeed, they claim that students like to be taught through PowerPoint slides because of its novelty, availability, and entertaining context. Also they enhance clarity, and aid recall subject matter. This innovative technique offers more attention capturing than the traditional techniques used in classrooms and they attract more interest on students. So, PowerPoint presentations provide a great benefit by giving them the opportunity to recall or memorize vocabulary easily. Furthermore, Urbanová & Ctrnactová explain that the use of relevant pictures or images "show a positive influence". Besides that, they agree with the argument that PowerPoint presentations "increase the students' attentiveness", which contributes to memorize information. In summary, the positive influence of PowerPoint presentations on students has to be taken into consideration by teachers (Craig & Amernic, 2006).

Incorporating PowerPoint Presentations into EFL Traditional Classrooms

Including PowerPoint presentations in EFL traditional classroom is easy. One of the multimedia tools includes static or animated texts and audio among other features (Patel, 2007). Ideally, it is suggested to use PowerPoint presentations in combination with various multimedia forms in the language teaching context when developing the reading skill. However, this research is concentrated only in the use of PowerPoint and the tools provided by the software.

At first glance, learning the basic functions may seem difficult. However, to use PowerPoint it is not necessary to know all the functions of the program to get its benefits. Learning how to use the main functions of PowerPoint can include, for example, using the PowerPoint templates to make a slide, inserting either images or pictures that can be easily downloaded from Google images, use of sound, use of animated text among others. By using all the resources offered by the program, teachers may realize about the usefulness of this software and the advantages it brings to the classroom.   In conclusion, if teachers want to offer their students an effective teaching they are expected to incorporate multimedia tools, such as PowerPoint, to teach vocabulary and improve the students' reading skills.

Aids in Reading Comprehension

Using pictures mixed up with color and text can strengthen the visual and textual ways to integrate the new information into the students' learning. Some researchers such as Segler (2001), Carr & Mazur – Steward (1998) have said that the process of text comprehension implies important factors. First, paying attention to and selecting relevant information according to the students' need. Second, building internal connections which imply the organization of new information in short term memory into a coherent form. Third, making external connections or integrating new information with the existing previous knowledge into the learners' mental process. In the same way, the use of pictures with colored texts and/or sound files can work in a similar way to integrate the new information (Segler, 2001; Carr & Mazur – Steward, 1998).

Making use of PowerPoint can facilitate reading comprehension and it is advisable for teachers to make use of the different tools that PowerPoint provides for this purpose. According to Jones (2004) "The presence of both pictorial and verbal cues can facilitate learning, in particular when the corresponding visual and verbal presentations are contiguously present in working memory." So, the impact of a picture facilitates the memorization of a word. In addition, Meyer (1997/ 2001, as cited in Jones 2004) explains in his generative theory of multimedia learning that "in order to meaningfully comprehend the text in a multimedia format, learners must select relevant pictorial and/or linguistic information from it, organize the input into coherent visual and verbal mental presentation, and integrate it later by constructing referential connections between the two." Clearly, those researchers give emphasis to the importance of using appropriate and relevant pictures to recall vocabulary.

Also using the features correctly in written text salient by highlighting it in a different color when it appears on the screen is important. Kellogg and Howe (1971, as cited in Jones, 2004) state that "foreign words associated with images or actual objects are learned more easily than those without such additional information." However, Terrell (1986) and Underwood (1989, as cited in Jones, 2004) conclude that the combination of unknown L2 word with visual representation facilitates vocabulary learning and students are able to "remember images better that words," hence we remember words better if they are strongly associated with images. But if teachers add colored text to presentations, they will

give an extra help to memorize and comprehend the vocabulary to develop the reading skill.

Advantages of PowerPoint to Teach Vocabulary

PowerPoint presentations provide advantages for teachers. This software allows users to create from basic slide shows to complex presentations. In fact, PowerPoint presentations will "transform a routine lesson into a lively, even memorable session" (Alster, 2002 as cited by Gallagher & Reder 2005). Besides, the presentations are comprised of slides, which may contain animated text, pictures or images, sound effects and animated transitions which add extra appeal to the presentation. This multimedia tool is being used by English language educators for initial teaching, for reviews, to summarize topics, and for games. Moreover, the presentations can be used for practice and drillings (Radanov, 2008; Gaskins, Austin & Rudkin, 1986).

PowerPoint is also fun to watch and fun to make. It has a spelling-check function, something that the white or black boards do not have. Additionally, most of PowerPoint presentations can be created from a template. A template includes a background color or image, a standard font (possible to change) and a choice of several slide layouts (M. Jones, 2003). The changes made in a template can be saved and modified at any time. Interestingly, the presentation can be used over and over again and it is possible to adapt the material to different levels according to need. Besides this, the presentations can be used for children, young learners and adults in both EFL and ESL classrooms. Furthermore, the creation of

PowerPoint files is easy and they can be shared with colleagues and be e-mailed as attachments. Therefore, PowerPoint presentation tools plus the creativity of language teachers can provide important advantages in order to teach vocabulary and improve the reading skill of the students (Poole, Jackson & Randall, 2002).

Added to the advantages mentioned above, there are other important advantages related to PowerPoint presentations. Schcolmik and Kol (1999) indicated that "PowerPoint gives opportunities to teachers and learners experience a world of real language." So, the use of PowerPoint in classroom creates a different atmosphere. Gaskins (1984) expressed that "PowerPoint improves effectiveness to presentation and clarity to complex material." As a consequence, students are able to retain much information of what they see on the slides. The table below presents a summary of the impact that PowerPoint presentations have in the ESL/EFL classrooms.

Stimulate prior knowledge. **Teachers have to find out what learners already know by asking questions during a presentation or by making connections.**
Gain attention. **Use funny images or pictures, cartoons, colored and/or animated images, colored texts, and interact during the presentation.**
Construct New Knowledge. **Give the students the chance to explore the new vocabulary to build sentences, and express their ideas.**
Provide feedback. **Make sure that students understand the examples given. Whenever is possible give them a copy of the PowerPoint presentation.**
Promote Retention. **The correct use of images, text, and transitions, facilitates the retention of new vocabulary (Nouri & Shahid, 2005)**

Positive Attitude, Motivation and Better Grades

PowerPoint presentations affect the attitude of students. First of all, PowerPoint affects the students' motivation. The incorporation of innovative tools such as PowerPoint, can achieve motivated learning experience among students (Jalali & Dausti, 2012). Well-motivated students always succeed when learning a foreign or second language. In many cases, teachers' challenge is how to stimulate or enhance that motivation. However, this type of software can be used to make the presentation of the vocabulary more effective and to make it more interesting when appropriate images are used. So, the interest of students in the material being presented will increase. Nouri & Shahid (2005) confirm that "students with higher use of imagery performed better on quizzes" when teachers use PowerPoint instead of traditional teaching techniques. Second, students taught under PowerPoint presentations have showed a positive attitude toward learning. Researches have showed that students are more interested in learning when they receive a class through PowerPoint presentations.

Also students enjoy the class because the routine is avoided, and they are more motivated to attend those classes (Susckind, 2004). Moreover, the use of this program in classrooms helps students to focus attention on main points, communicate ideas and get fun at the same time (Assadi & Mozaparin, 2012; Susskind, 2004). "Students under PowerPoint presentations condition have reported understandability about classroom presentation" as Nouri & Shahid hold (2005). Moreover, students who are taught with PowerPoint, increase not only their performance and vocabulary retention but also their grades (Fedisson & Braidic,

2009; Sorden, (2005). For example Lowry, (1999) as cited in Craig & Amernic, 2006) indicated that teaching with PowerPoint makes the students achieve better grades than in the traditional way. Finally, students also show a positive attitude toward teachers when they make use of PowerPoint presentations. According to Nouri & Shahid (2005) "students in the PowerPoint sections perceived the instructor was more prepared than did students in the traditional section." In this regard, teachers are seen as being more professional and committed with their teaching. Hence, using PowerPoint presentations can help teachers to improve their language teaching and also promote their personal image to the students.

In summary, teachers have to take into consideration the advantages the software provides. The integration of technological tools can greatly enhance quality in language teaching. In this context, teachers can be able to determine how students like to learn and they will understand the students learning needs, as English becomes a global language.

Design of the Study

This chapter presents an experimental study that investigated the effect of a multimedia software program, PowerPoint, as an innovative and effective technique and the traditional techniques used at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador for teaching vocabulary to develop the reading skill. Two tests were administered: Pretest (T1 Annex 1.1), and a posttest (T2 Annex 1.2).

Participants:

The study was conducted with 60 students divided into two groups at the University of El Salvador. There were 40 students in the experimental group which was larger than the control group with only 20 students. The distribution of the students did not depend on the researchers; it was a matter of the academic registration process of each student. The participants of the study belonged to the Intermediate English level of the Foreign Language Department. They were enrolled in the second semester of the academic year. The ages of the participants ranged from 17 to 29 years old. All participants were non-native speakers of English.

Setting:

Students received English classes, by the teachers in charge of the experimental and control group, 4 days a week for two hours during 16 weeks. The text book used to teach each class was "New American Framework 3" (Goldstein, Gray, Holley, Jeffery, Jones, Lloyd, Metcals & Norris, 2010). The

textbook contained different topics in each unit, and the vocabulary was presented in different ways such as matching vocabulary, crosswords, and reading sections. Sometimes the vocabulary was presented with pictures to illustrate the words. Both student's book and workbook contained different activities that checked the understanding in each of the texts of the units. The teachers' resources included CDs containing the audio of the listening part as well. In this case both groups were tested at the beginning of the semester. The experimental group was taught the vocabulary every two units in thirty minutes of class. Then, they were tested with a post-test at the end of the two units. The vocabulary was presented with animated pictures, the written word highlighted in color and an animated transition, the corresponding pronunciation, and two or three sample sentences in which the vocabulary is used in a real context. The PowerPoint presentations were presented before the teachers in charge of the experimental and control group taught the lessons of the units. The control group was taught with traditional techniques to teach vocabulary. However, they received the same pretest and posttest as the experimental group did. Both the experimental and control group had different teachers in charge.

General Procedures

The study chose two sets of vocabulary belonging to four units of the student's book. At the beginning, when the students received the previous or pretest, they were not familiarized with the vocabulary of their textbooks. So, most of the vocabulary was totally unknown for the students.

Testing and Scoring Procedures

Pre-test.   Students were provided with an instrument that was used to obtain demographic information such as, gender, age, and exposure to the English language at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. The pretest gathered a 38 item vocabulary that was administered one week before the instruction of the two vocabulary sets started. The test contained two parts: multiple-choice and a matching section and both groups received the same previous test. However, the test was provided to the students who were present the day selected by the researchers.

Post-test.   At the end of each unit, the students were administered a test again to evaluate the written production, visual recognition, and their retention by answering the 23 item test. It contained the same items as the pretest.

Scoring.   In the pre-test every item was assigned 0. 3% point for each item. On the other hand, the post-test was assigned 0.4% for each item to obtain a total of 10 points. Students' answers were allotted a percentage that was taken from the total of correct answers divided by the total number of items of the tests.

Teaching Procedure

Students received vocabulary instruction based on the corresponding unit and their reading section. Even though the teachers of both groups, the control and experimental one, had already studied the first three units, the researchers were able to teach the rest of the units. Both groups were taught in two different conditions. The experimental group received instructions through a structured PowerPoint presentation. The control group, on the other hand, received instructions under traditional vocabulary techniques which mainly consist of the use of bilingual dictionary, of word grouping, memorization of vocabulary, etc. The students were taught the same unit and the same material, including the vocabulary, at the same time.

Vocabulary Selection

The words selected for the instructions were taken from the reading sections of the students' textbooks, and they belonged to the units planned to be taught during the semester. In this case, the first vocabulary set was taken from unit number four and five. The second set of vocabulary was selected from units six and seven according to the timetable in the syllabus that Intermediate English professors were following. According to researchers, the selection of words depended on the frequency, and relevance in the topics or units (Oxford and Crockall, 1990).

The teaching procedures were fully integrated into the rest of activities developed by the teachers assigned in charge of both groups, who were different in each section. For example, in the experimental group the vocabulary instruction was integrated to the rest of the skills of English language such as listening, writing and speaking.   Furthermore, the vocabulary instruction became part of the subsidiary skills such as grammar and pronunciation. The students received the instructions before the beginning of the two units. The teacher in charge of the experimental group was present at all the teaching sessions held by the researchers to observe the development of the instructions.

The control group received the instruction under the traditional techniques to teach vocabulary. These traditional techniques included the use of: bilingual dictionary, word grouping, memorization of vocabulary and others. However, the teacher in charge of the control group barely applied these techniques. Therefore, students were force to use their own strategies to learn the new vocabulary of the units.

During the PowerPoint presentations where students were exposed to new vocabulary through the structured and planned material, they were informed that the vocabulary was going to be part of the following units to be taught later. All the words were presented with the corresponding images or pictures in color, the spelling of the words was showed in a highlighted and animated text, the pronunciation of the words was modeled by the researchers and students repeated chorally three times. However, the researchers did not have absolute control of the rest of activities that included the use of the vocabulary taught. Then, students

were given two or three sample sentences to show the proper use of the word in the real context.   The rest of the vocabulary was presented in the same manner. The presentations lasted about 30 minutes. At the end, when the two units were taught by the teachers in charge of both groups, the researchers administered a posttest to both groups, the experimental and control. The posttest consisted in a multiple choice exam which contained all the vocabulary presented during the two units.

All of this was accomplished in order to gather information and to see the relative effectiveness of the treatment of the experimental and control groups. This research presents the scores of the pretest for the control and the experimental groups and makes a comparison between them. Then, there is a presentation of the scores for the post-tests administered to both groups in order to prove the effectiveness of the use of PowerPoint presentations which are compared to the traditional techniques, used by most teachers, to teach vocabulary to develop the reading skill.

Data Collection, Instruments and Analysis

In this research the most appropriate and suitable data collection instruments were used in order to guarantee the validity and the reliability of the final report. According to Beaumont (2009) reliability refers to "the level of consistency of a particular measure or procedure." Validity refers to "the degree to which the measure or measure equals the concept which it is attempting to measure." So validity and reliability allow researchers to facilitate a repetition of an experiment if is required and the final results can be compared with previous experiments as well. In order to provide validity to the study a questionnaire was employed to gather information from the teachers assigned to the Intermediate Intensive English I during the second semester of the year 2011(Annex 1.3). The questionnaire administered consisted of 13 items and it provided information about the use of traditional techniques, and PowerPoint presentations to teach vocabulary and the students' attitude toward the use of PowerPoint presentations.

The second data collection procedure employed a pre-test and the post-test to the students of the Intermediate English level I, divided into two groups. The pre-test consisted of 38 items for the previous test and 23 items for the post-test (Annexes 1.1, 1.2). The third data collection procedure to gather information was the observation of the control and experimental group during the process, and the certified grades obtained by the students at the end of the Intermediate course from the professors in charge. The control group implemented the use of traditional techniques whereas the experimental group implemented the use of structured PowerPoint presentations to teach vocabulary (Beaumont, 2009).

Pilot Study

A pilot study took place in July 1997 which has been used in this research as backup support. As stated by Iheanacho (1997) the study was conducted at a large urban community college in The United States. The objective of the design of the experimental study was to verify the experiment and its arrangements. In this study all the students enrolled in the experimental and control groups had participation. The pretest was administrated to both groups previous to the treatment. And a posttest was used after the treatment was applied. The pretest and posttest took place for at least 20 minutes. The former study revealed the following results: the result of the experimental group "indicates that learning occurred and that the students retained what they have learned over a period of time. The pretest mean for the experimental group was 6.3 and the delayed posttest mean was 18.0 at the end. On the contrary, the results obtained in the control group showed that "learning occurred; however, the students in this group could not retain what they have learned over a period of time" as the experimental group did. The mean of the previous test for the control group was 6.4 and the delayed posttest mean was 17.4 (Iheanacho, 1997). This fact allowed other researchers to make a depth study of the use of PowerPoint presentations including this current research.

Data Collection

As stated before, the data collection included a questionnaire for the
teachers who were in charge of the Intermediate English classes at that time. The
questionnaire consisted of opened and closed questions in order to obtain the
appropriate information to support the research. The questionnaire took place at
the Foreign Language Department, and the research process did not disrupt the
teachers' activity. Also the students of the experimental and control groups were
tested with a pretest and a posttest to analyzed their scores and the effect of the
use of traditional techniques, and the innovative technique proposed by the
research team to teach vocabulary and increase the vocabulary knowledge for the
reading skill. These tests took place in the experimental group classroom and the
procedure took from 20 to 25 minutes with the authorization of the teacher in
charge of the group. Moreover, this control group was tested at the end of their
classes. This procedure did not interrupt the normal activities.

Socio-Demographic Information

Graph 1 shows the sample that consisted of 60 students who were registered in the Intermediate Intensive English I of the semester II-2011, divided into two groups. They were assigned to one group as the experimental and the other one as the control group. Thirty seven of the participants were female which accounted for 62% of the sample, and twenty three were male which accounted for 38% of the sample. In graph 2 the ages range between 17 to 29 years old, but most of them were between 18 and 20 years old which represented the 76% of the universe.

	Female	Male
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	26	14
CONTROL GROUP	11	9
TOTAL	**37**	**23**
	TOTAL OF STUDENTS	**60**

Graph 1 students' gender of control and experimental group.

FEMALE	**37**
MALE	**23**

GENDER

FEMALE   MALE

38%

62%
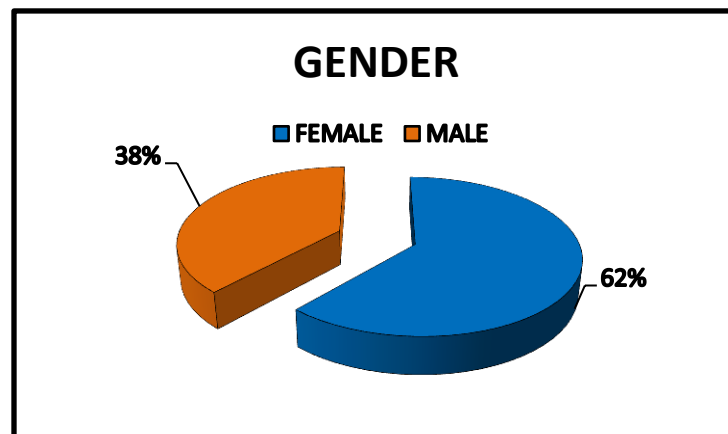
Graph 2 students' ages of control and experimental groups.

In graph 2 the ages range between 17 to 29 years old but most of them were
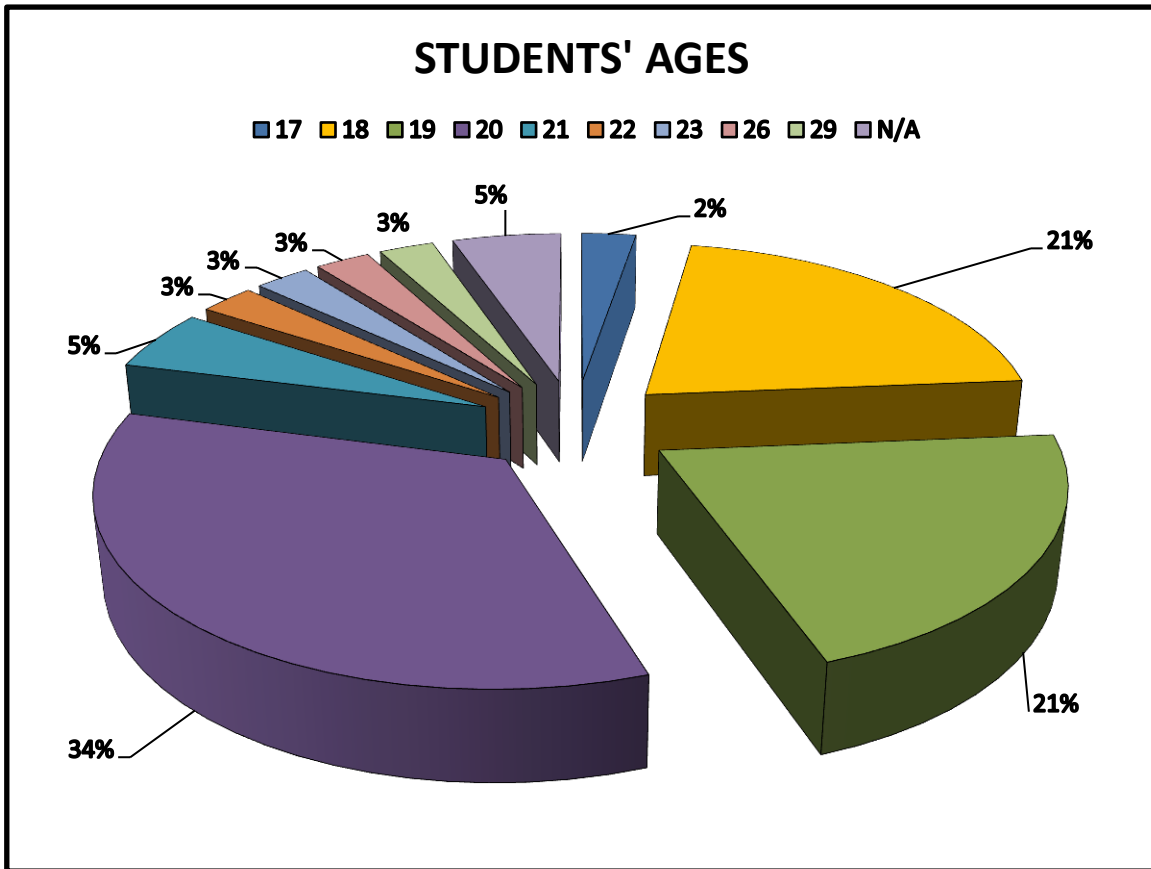between 18 and 20 years old which represented the 76% of the universe.

Results

Static-group comparison design allowed the researchers to obtain the results for this research. This study investigated the use of traditional techniques, and the effectiveness of PowerPoint presentations to teach vocabulary to increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill of the students in the Intermediate English level I, of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. It was developed in the second semester of 2011. Also this study analyzed the impact of the presentations in the attitude of the students. First of all, a pretest was conducted before the beginning of the treatment to compare if there was a significant considerable difference among the students of both groups. The preliminary results observed in graph 3 showed a difference between the control and the experimental group. Surprisingly, the control group obtained the highest mean score in this case and the experimental one obtained the lowest average. Even though the researchers were not trying to find out any answer for this phenomenon, there are at least two possible causes to be taken into consideration. The first cause could have been related to the participation of the students of the experimental group in the election process of some authorities at the University of El Salvador. That election process was being developed by the same time the experimental group was having the English class. So, the students rushed to answer the previous test to be on time and vote after the test. The last assumption has to do with the deficiency in the competence of the students in the experimental group.

In graph 4 a posttest was conducted to evaluate the effect of PowerPoint presentations as an alternative technique to teach vocabulary in opposition to the traditional techniques. In the written production and reading competence, the results of the posttest indicated that the mean for the vocabulary test mean scores where students were taught vocabulary words in the PowerPoint condition or treatment was significantly greater than the mean for vocabulary test scores when students were taught with traditional techniques. The experimental group scored 1.6 points more than the control group.

In graph 5 the scores obtained in the mid-term exam were evaluated, specifically the students' reading skill of both the experimental and the control group. This comparison showed a greater difference between the experimental and control group. The experimental group obtained the highest mean score in the reading skill. The difference is 2 points higher than the mean of the control group.

In graph 6 the scores of the experimental group obtained in the two important exams during the Intermediate course were compared. Interestingly, the results show that students obtained higher grades in the mid-term exam. However, in the final exam of the Intermediate Intensive course, the students obtained lower grades. Before the students received the mid-term exam, they were still being taught vocabulary through PowerPoint presentations. But for the final exam they did not receive the vocabulary through the PowerPoint condition.

In graph 7 the final global scores were compared as well. It shows the difference of the global scores of both groups at the end of the course. As it can be seen, the effectiveness of the PowerPoint presentations was relevant for the experimental group. Teaching vocabulary through PowerPoint presentations affected positively the global grades at the end of the course for the experimental group which was 0.9 of a point more superior to the control group.

In summary, the graphs 4, 5 and 6 showed that teaching vocabulary with PowerPoint presentations as an innovative technique is effective to teach vocabulary to develop the reading skill, to improve the memorization of vocabulary of the students, and to improve their scores as well.

Graph 3 students' mean scores of pretest of control and experimental groups.

	MEAN SCORE
EXPERIMENTAL	4,7
CONTROL	7,2
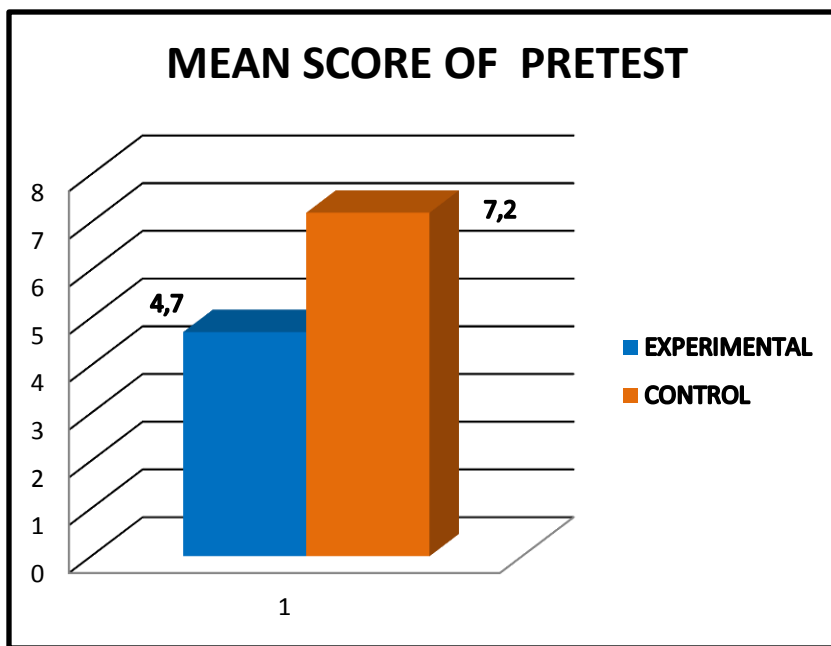
This graph shows the results of the previous test of the control and experimental groups which were significantly different. The mean score for the control group was higher than the mean score for the experimental group. The control group obtained 2.5 points more than the experimental group.

Graph 4 students' mean scores of posttest of control and experimental groups.

	MEAN SCORE
EXPERIMENTAL	7,9
CONTROL	6,3
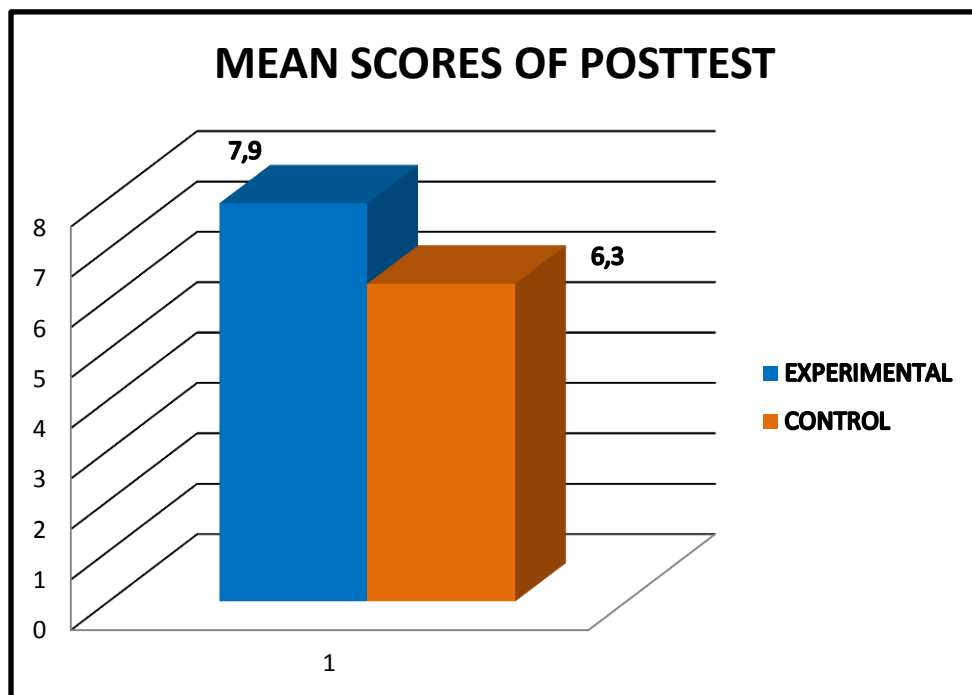
Graph 4 shows that the mean score for the experimental group was higher than the control group. The difference is 1.6 points more for the experimental group after the vocabulary was taught through PowerPoint presentations.

Graph 5 students' mid-term reading scores of control and experimental groups.

	MEAN SCORE
EXPERIMENTAL	9,2
CONTROL	7,2

MID-TERM MEAN SCORES
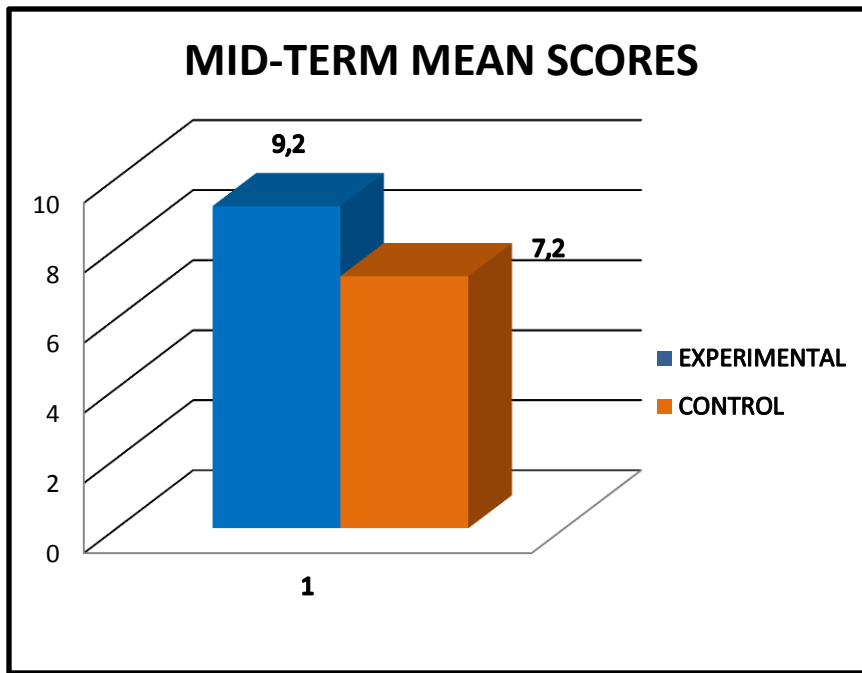
Graph 5 shows a greater difference between the experimental and control group. The experimental group obtained the highest mean score in the reading skill. The difference is 2 points higher than the control group.

Graph 6 students' mid-term and final reading exam scores of experimental group.

	MEAN SCORE
MID-TERM	**9,2**
FINAL	**7**
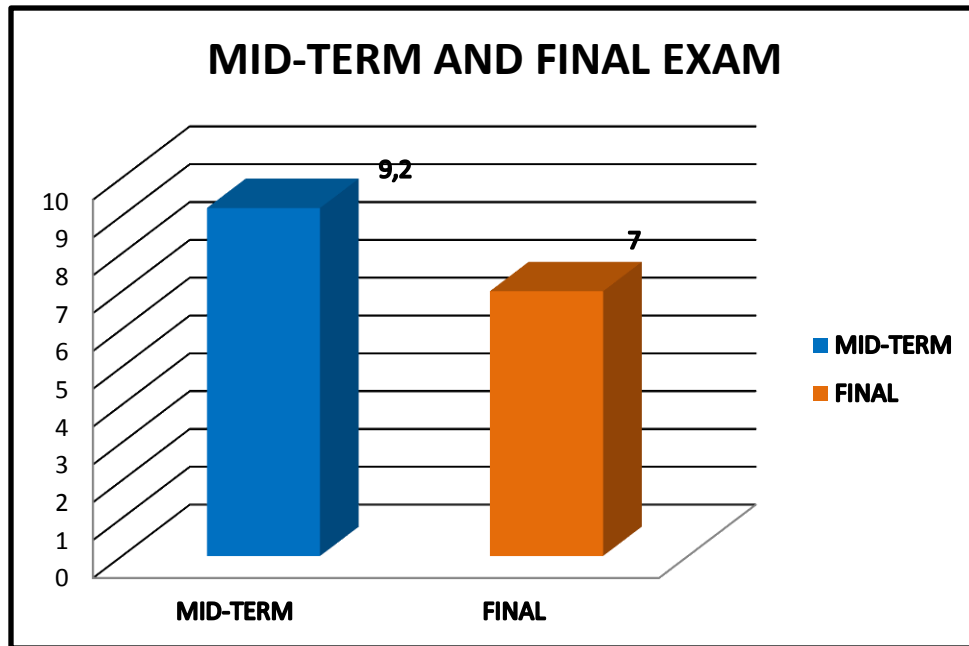
Graph 6 shows the scores of the 2 main exams done during the Intermediate English course. These are the scores obtained by the experimental group only. In the mid-term exam students were still being taught vocabulary through PowerPoint presentations. However, for the final exam, the students were not being taught via PowerPoint presentations. In this case the students obtained 2.2 points more in the mid-term exam than in their final exam.

Graph 7 students' final global scores course of control and experimental

groups

	MEAN SCORES
EXPERIMENTAL	7,2
CONTROL	6,3
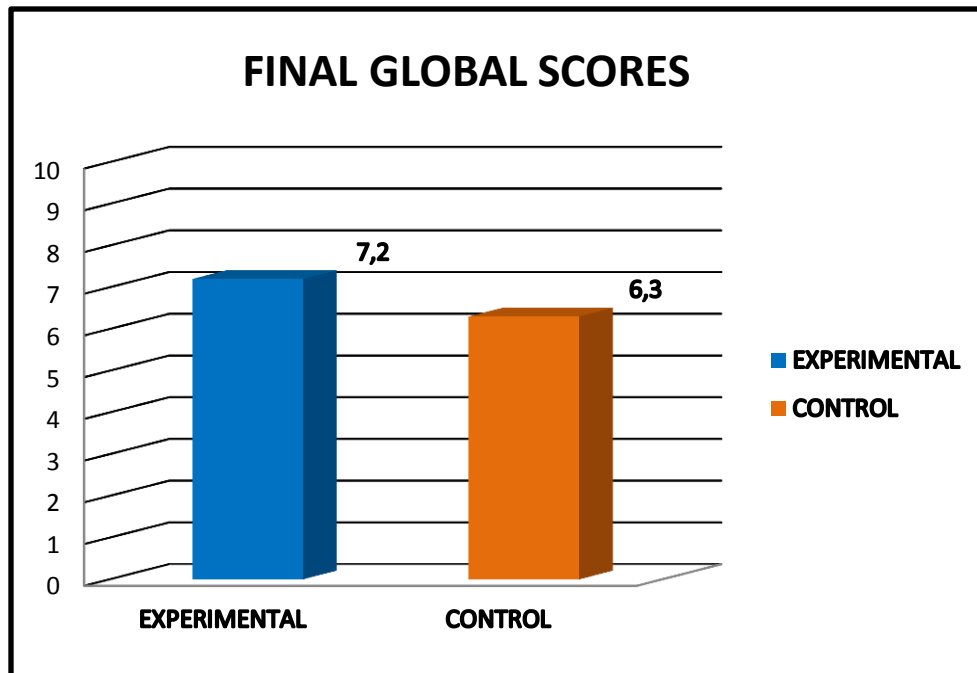
Graph 7 shows the difference of the global mean scores at the end of the course of both groups. The vocabulary teaching through PowerPoint presentations affected positively the global grades at the end of the course for the experimental group which had 0.9 of a point more than the control group.

Results of the Questionnaire of Intermediate Intensive English Teachers II – 2011 (Annex 1.3)

GRAPH 8 USE OF THE PROJECTOR IN THE CLASSROOM
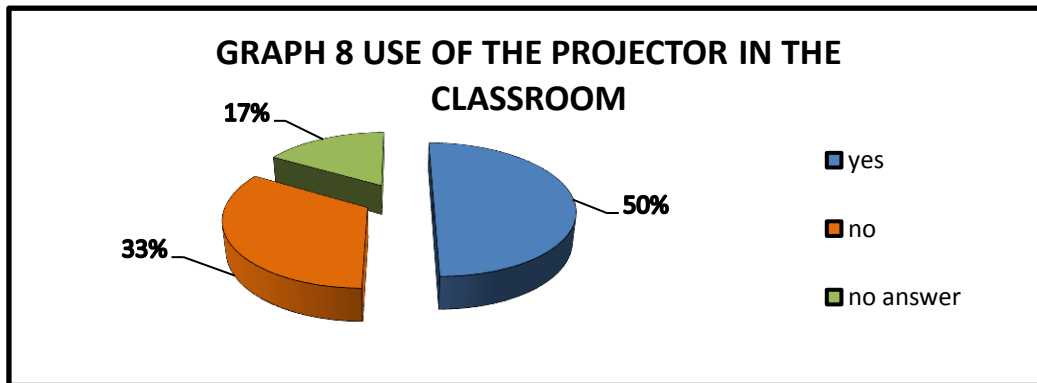
Graph 8 shows the answers provided by the teachers in charge of the Intermediate English course of semester II – 2011 at the Foreign Language Department. As it can be seen a 50 % of the teachers use the projector in the classroom. But the other 33% of them do not use the projector, and the rest 17% did not provide any answer.

GRAPH 9 TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES USED AT THE FLD TO TEACH VOCABULARY
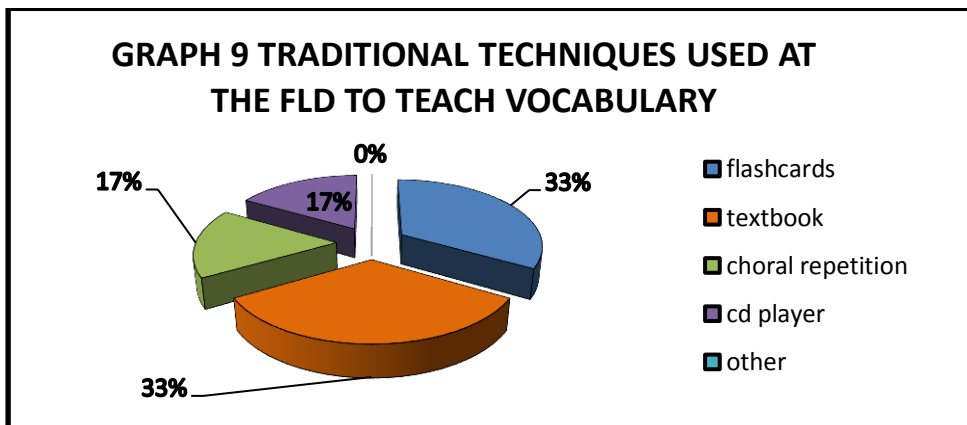
Graph 9 shows the most common traditional techniques used to teach vocabulary at the Foreign Language Department. 33% of the teachers used the textbook to teach vocabulary. Other 33% of them use flash cards in their lessons. The rest uses choral repetitions, the CD player and other techniques to teach vocabulary.

**GRAPH 10 POWERPOINT HELPFUL TO
VOCABULARY RETENTION**

■ yes   ■ no

50%   50%
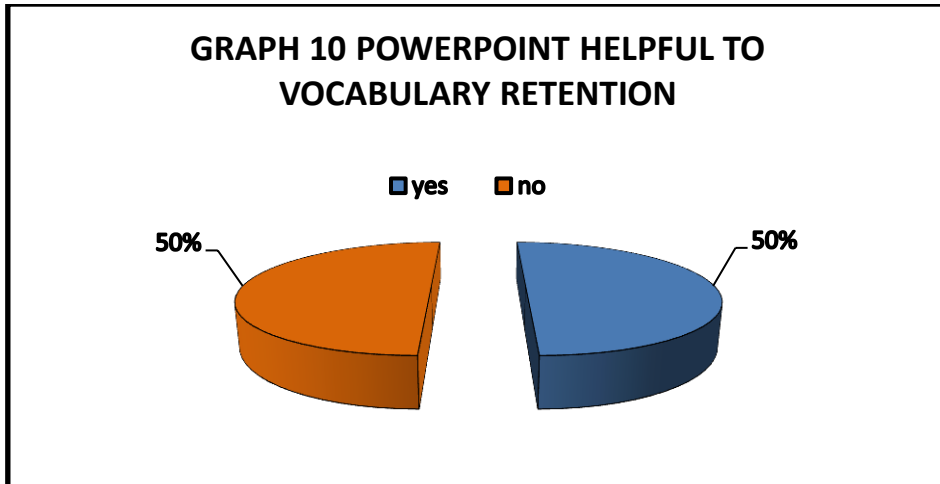
In graph 10 a 50% of the teachers thinks that PowerPoint presentations are helpful to retain vocabulary. On the other hand, 50% of the teachers think that it is not possible to use this tool as a technique to retain vocabulary.

**GRAPH 11 COMMON USE OF POWERPOINT
PRESENTATIONS AT THE FLD**

0%
0%
33%
67%

■ grammar
■ vocabulary
■ writing
■ other
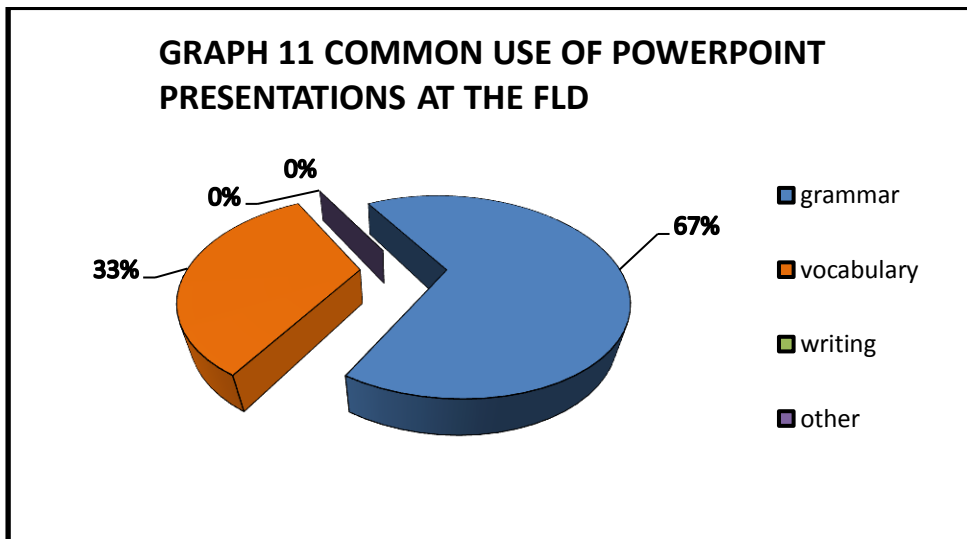
Graph 11 shows that a 67% of the teachers use PowerPoint to teach grammar and a 33% use it to teach vocabulary.

GRAPH 12 STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE USE OF MULTIMEDIA TOOLS IN THE CLASSROOM

- interest
- apathy
- indifference
- other

0%
17%
0%
83%
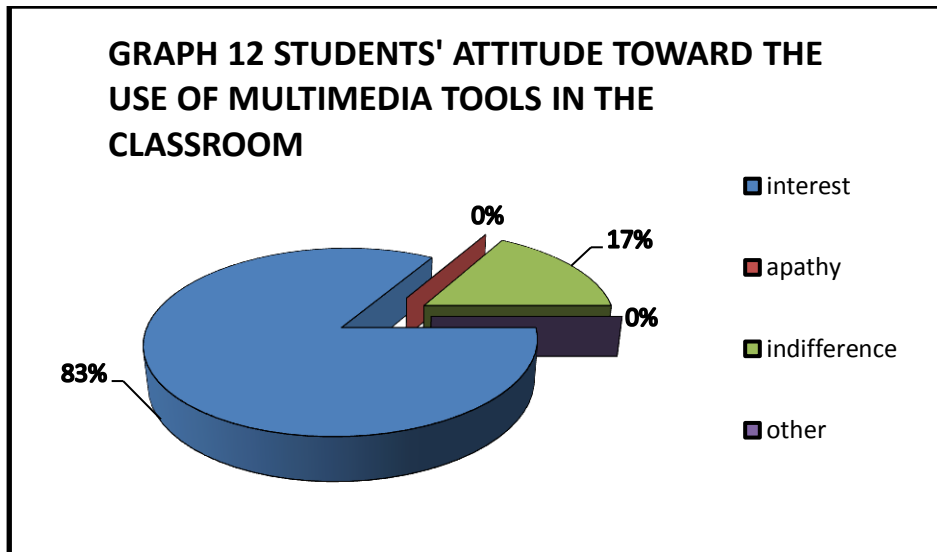
In graph 12 83% of the teachers expressed they have seen in the students' attitude an interest toward the use of multimedia tools in the classroom and only a 17% of the teachers have observed indifference.

GRAPH 13 POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES OF THE USE OF POWERPOINT

- vocabulary retention
- motivated students
- increase the vocabulary
- accuracy in the use of vocabulary
- other

33%
33%
33%
0%
0%
34%
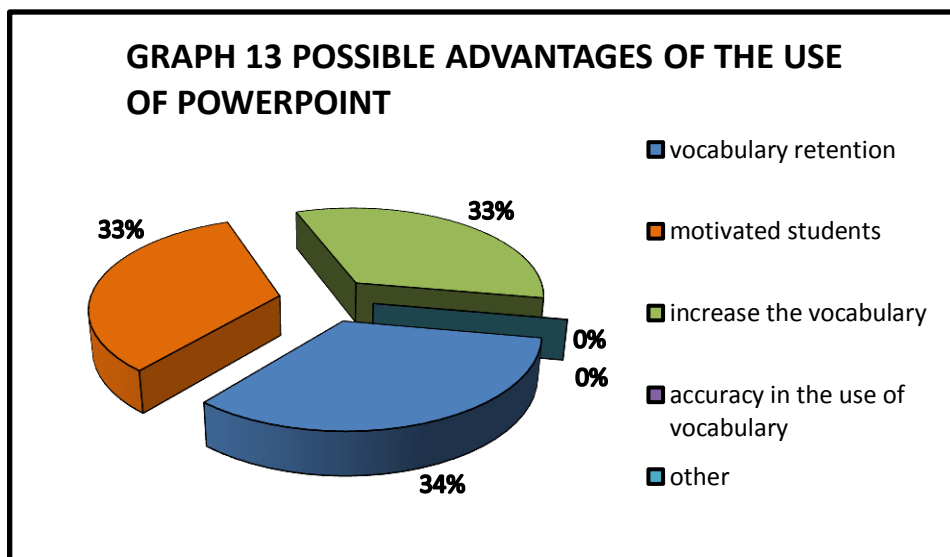
Among the possible advantages that PowerPoint offers, the teachers chose three of them as the most important: vocabulary retention with a 34%, motivated students with a 33% and an increase of the vocabulary knowledge with a 33%.

Findings

The present study compared the effectiveness of PowerPoint presentations as an innovative technique and the traditional techniques to teach vocabulary to increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill in the Intermediate Intensive English level I. Results have indicated that students who were taught vocabulary through PowerPoint presentations were significantly more superior to the results obtained by students in the traditional techniques condition. As it can be noticed, word and image association improved students' vocabulary competence under PowerPoint presentations condition. Images were directly linked to their corresponding meaning without using the translation of the word. While students were listening, repeating, observing the images and the text of the target word, they were able to make the necessary mental connections that led them to memorize the vocabulary and have a better performance in the posttest. Moreover, it helps them to improve their scores during the rest of the course. Therefore, pictures do impact in students' comprehension when they are presented with a written text in English (Omaggio, 1979).

Besides, the results of this study have showed that words are better memorized and comprehended when they are associated with images than just with a simple text (Oxford & Crockall, 1990). As those students under PowerPoint condition were able to memorize vocabulary, they showed a positive attitude toward the learning process. That has been confirmed by the teachers at the Foreign Language Department when they expressed in a questionnaire that

students' reaction toward the use of the multimedia tools increases interest and motivation as a result. In conclusion, those results are not surprising taking into consideration the fact that those students nowadays are influenced by technological devices that increase the use of visual means. Another fact observed through this study is that the experimental group was a large class. For most of the teachers having a large class represent a challenge. Because it is difficult for them determine the need of each student. However, as it can be noticed, teaching vocabulary via PowerPoint presentations works with crowded classrooms as well. Finally, according to the findings, most of the teachers are not taking advantage of PowerPoint presentations as an innovative, alternative and effective technique to teach vocabulary to increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill. In this way, English language teachers have to take advantage of the different tools that technology provides.

Conclusions

Vocabulary is an essential component of language learning, which plays an important role in the development of the reading skill (Nation, 2006). Due to the importance of vocabulary teaching to increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill, it can be concluded that:

✓ Many researchers have studied the effect produced by PowerPoint presentations in the development of the subsidiary skills and macro skills of the English language such as grammar, writing and listening; but in this research project, researchers have focused on the use of this multimedia tool as an innovative technique to teach vocabulary and increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill. This multimedia tool has been scarcely explored as an alternative and innovative technique to teach vocabulary and improve the students' vocabulary knowledge and retention.

✓ The use of PowerPoint presentations to teach vocabulary has helped students of the Intermediate Intensive English I of semester II – 2011, of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador to improve both their performance in their reading skill and their course scores.

✓ According to the finding in this study, the students were positively affected not only in their scores but also in their learning attitude by showing interest and motivation during the experimental process with the PowerPoint presentations.

✓ Teaching vocabulary through PowerPoint presentations works with large classes. Hence, teachers can take into consideration this advantage to adopt this innovative and alternative technique.

✓ Current and future language teachers and future researchers can find this study beneficial as soon as they become concerned about the effectiveness of the use of PowerPoint presentations as an innovative and alternative technique for teaching vocabulary, to increase the vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill of students in basic and intermediate levels of English language learning.

✓ To make use of this software program does not mean to be an expert in multimedia tools. It only requires having basic skills in the use of Microsoft Office and/or getting acquaintance with the tool by taking lessons from the information available in the Internet.

Recommendations

The findings of this research have confirmed the value of PowerPoint as a tool in the English Language Teaching and its effectiveness to teach vocabulary in an alternative way. Based on the finding collected in this research, the following recommendations are made:

For teachers

- Even though PowerPoint is not the solution to all needs in the classroom, the researchers suggest to include this software program as a source to teach vocabulary to develop the reading skill and reduce the use of text books or flashcards, as part of traditional techniques.

- To employ and include gradually more technology devices or multimedia tools such as PowerPoint to develop vocabulary instruction in order to raise students' motivation, and interest to improve their vocabulary retention, and knowledge as an important contribution to develop their reading skill which is such an important macro skill.

For future research

- Further study is suggested to demonstrate other side effect produced by PowerPoint presentations in the students' reading skill.
- In order to determine and make a deep analysis of the students' attitude, it is suggested to use other methods and data collection instruments.

Limitations

Although the intervention of the researchers helped the students to increase their vocabulary knowledge for the reading skill, there were some limitations. First, the limited time of the researchers to implement other data collection instruments to get additional information and provide more accurate details to the research because of their secular work. A second limitation was that during the development of the semester the normal activities of the Foreign Language Department were affected by a natural disaster called "**E-12**." Because of that the government interrupted classes for a long period of time all over the country in public, private schools and Universities. It was impossible for the researchers to accomplish the Research Project a 100%. A third limitation was to get the grades obtained by the students of the control group because the professor in charge of the group denied the information. A fourth limitation of the researchers had to do with the distribution of the students. It was not possible to have the same amount of students in each group because it was a matter of the academic registration process of each student at the beginning of the semester. Although the above limitations may have affected the internal validity of the results, the researchers think that more accurate outcomes could be obtained in a future study related to the topic.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1.1

University of El Salvador
School of Sciences and Humanities   **Previous Test on Vocabulary**
Foreign Language Department
Complete the information bellow, thanks!

Age ____   English level ____

Male ___   How long have you studied

Female ___   English? ___

1. Complete the following sentences and circle one answer a, b, c.

1. Nelson Mandela was _____ for many years.

   a) jailed   b) congratulated   c) sad

2. Vandals used _____ to destroy a car.

   a) lamps   b) computers   c) canes

3. The protest march ended with a cruel ____ in front of the Casa Presidencial.

   a) battleground   b) concert   c) sneeze

4. I love painting _____.

   a) landscapes   b) sculptures   c) balloons

5. We went to an exhibition of 20th century French _____.

   a) music   b) still life   c) dogs

6. Picasso drew _____ images in his paintings.

   a) luxurious   b) stylish   c) weird

7. Ugly Betty is based on a famous _____.

   a) soap opera   b) film   c) book

8. I used to get low scores in _____.

   a) Chemistry   b) Drawings   c) experiments

9. Fernando won a _____ to The United States to study medicine.

    a) VISA   b) gold medal   c) scholarship

10. Some students _____ on the last quiz.

    a) learned   b) painted   c) cheated

11. I spent a _____ day on the beach yesterday.

    a) dangerous   b) friendly   c) lazy

12. Athletes are trained to develop their _____.

    a) legs   b) endurance   c) patience

13. I love documentaries on African _____.

    a) wildlife   b) economy   c) jungle

14. Amy Whinehouse spent her short life as a druggie and _____.

    a) drunkard   b) hippie c) stubborn

15. Prince William and Kate had a _____ wedding.

    a) horrible   b) fairytale   c) controversial

16. In El Salvador _____ has increased in the last months.

    a) happiness   b) friendship   c) mugging

17. Apopa is a city _____.

    a) touristic   b) safe   c) dangerous

18. Mariona's prisoners complain that they are subject to _____

    restrictions.

    a) political   b) petty   c) private

19. James was accused of _____ in curt.

    a) burglary   b) joker   c) hero

20. Governments around the world are struggling to eliminate _____.

a) laughing   b) kidnapping   c) shopping

21. El Salvador approved a law to _____ smokers in public areas.

   a) fine   b) congratulate   c) help

22. _____ has been abolished in many countries worldwide.

   a) drinking   b) smoking   c) death penalty

23. The old man spent his last days in a _____.

   a) bicycle   b) wheelchair   c) roof

24. Carlos' bedroom is always a _____.

   a) mess   b) darkness   c) farm

25. The new president placed her hand over the Bible and took the _____.

   a) microphone   b) oath   c) chair

2. Translate the correct letter to the correct meaning

a)   "Starvation" is a synonym of
b)   Threatened
c)   Groom
d)   Newlyweds
e)   Portrait
f)   Overtime
g)   Veil
h)   Laid back
i)   Madness
j)   Repress
k)   Reversal
l)   Admit
m)   Give up

_____ become mentally ill.
_____ not tending to get anxious about other people's behavior.
_____ hunger
_____ stop doing something.
_____ change to be the opposite
_____ one recently married.
_____ to cause damage.
_____ own up to.
_____ a man who is getting married.
_____ beyond the usual time needed for a job.
_____ a piece of thing material worn to protect or hide the face or head.
_____ a painting
_____ bottle up

ANNEX 1.2

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR   POSTTEST 1 (UNITS 4 – 5)
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES   INTERMEDIATE INTENSIVE
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT   ENGLISH 1 (C R PPT 2011)

Complete the following sentences and circle one answer a, b, c.

Example: A car has four _____.

a) oranges   b) steering wheels   c) wheels

1.   It is difficult to deal with people who show an _____behavior.

    a) Intimidating   b) child   c) educated

2.   Even though Fred has a _____ neighbor, he is very patient.

    a) friendly   b) cute   c) nuisance

3.   Irresponsible citizens leave a _____ everywhere.

    a) clothes   b) balloons   c) dumping trash

4.   _____ makes a place unattractive.

    a)   Tourism   b) Antisocial drinking   c) gardening

5.   The postman is always _____.

    a) shocked   b) blond   c) polite

6.   I have a noisy _____ in my garden.

    a) refrigerator   b) saxophone   c) wind chime

7.   If someone is reading the newspaper do not _____, please.

    a)   Scream   b) intrude   c) fight

8.   The man was _____ when his boss dismissed him.

    a) happy   b) thankful   c) shocked

9.   Paul is _____ in Mariona.

    a) handsome   b) jailed   c) tired

10.   The mayor of San Salvador has closed several _____.

    a) factories   b) brothels   c) stadiums

11.   I love _____ paintings.

    a) fake   b) visual   c) still life

12. Picasso drew _____ images in his paintings.

   a) luxurious   b) stylish   c) weird

13. The protest march ended with a cruel _____ in front of the Casa Presidencial.

   a) battleground   b) concert   c) sneeze

14. She _____ the police officers to argue.

   a) sings   b) thanks   c) dares

15. The picture was _____ by the Ministerio del Interior

   a) censored   b) hidden   c) painted

16. Journalists are against the _____ of the press.

   a) interchange   b) shyness   c) censorship

17. All of you will receive a _____in English Teaching or Modern Languages at the end of the career.

   a) card   b) flight   c) degree

18. Bill Gates _____ the University in 1976, but he became a rich man.

   a) liked   b) went out   c) dropped out

19. I need an extra income to help my family.

   a) income   b) class   c) debt

20. Claudia is a trainee cook.

   a) selfish   b) angry   c) trainee

21. $5.71 is the lowest _____ at this university.

   a) fee   b) prize   c) payment

22. The _____ was eager at the concert.

   a) beggar   b) crowd   c) pope

23. The student is cheating on a final exam.

   a) mugging   b) kidnapping   c) cheating

ANNEX 1.3

University of El Salvador
School of Sciences and Humanities
Foreign Language Department

Objective: to collect data from teachers of the Intermediate English level at the Foreign Language Department in order to gather information to begin a research project

1. Do you use the projector in the classroom? If your answer is **yes** go to question number 4.

   Yes ☐   No ☐

2. Why you don't use the projector?

   It is not usually available ☐

   It is a waste of time ☐

   Other_____

3. What strategies do you use to teach vocabulary?

   Flashcards ☐

   Text book ☐

   Choral repetitions ☐

   CD player ☐

   Other ☐

4. Is the projector used as a tool to develop the students' abilities such as…?

   Reading ☐   Grammar ☐

   Listening ☐   Vocabulary ☐

   Writing ☐

5. What kind of software do you use in the classroom?

Word Procesor ☐

PowerPoint ☐

Others _____

6. Do you think that Word is better than Power Point to teach vocabulary in the classroom?

Yes ☐   No ☐

7. Do you use PowerPoint in order to help your students store vocabulary?

Yes ☐   No ☐

8. If you use PowerPoint. It is intended to teach:

Grammar ☐

Vocabulary ☐

Writing ☐

Other _____

9. What is the students´ reaction toward the use of the multimedia projectors?

Interest ☐

Apathy ☐

Indifference ☐

Other _____

10. Do you include:

Images ☐   Animation Production ☐
Photos ☐   Short clips ☐
                      Other _____

11. Do you consider that the use of Power Point has advantages to teach vocabulary?

Yes ☐   No ☐

12. Which are those advantages:

Vocabulary retention ☐

Motivated students ☐

Increase the vocabulary knowledge ☐

Accuracy in the use of vocabulary ☐

Other _____

13. How often do you use the projector?

Usually ☐

Often ☐

Rarely ☐