

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT VOCABULARY TEACHING METHODS IN EFL CLASSROOMS

Masters' Final Project

Post-graduate Masters' Degree in Education – EFL Teacher

Student: Itsaso Fagoaga Echarte

Tutor: Amparo Lázaro

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Key words: Vocabulary, Teaching methods, Flashcards, Word lists, EFL.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to compare the effectiveness of three different vocabulary teaching methods (word lists with Target Language definitions; word lists with L1 translations; and flashcards) in EFL classrooms. To this end 30 words from three different topics (10 words from each topic) have been selected to teach to the students using one different method for each topic. Three sessions have been used for the instruction of the vocabulary items, using one session for each method and topic. After the instruction of each topic an immediate post-test composed by three different exercises has been administered to the students in order to see the effectiveness of each method. One week after the third session a delayed post-test dealing with the 30 words has been delivered to compare the results with the immediate post-tests. This delayed post-test was composed by three matching activities (one for each method and topic). The analysis of the cross-sectional written data shows that (1) students performed better with flashcards and translation than with definitions; (2) they obtained slightly better results with flashcards than with translation; and (3) the results in the immediate post-test were better than in the delayed post-test with the three methods, but students still performed better with flashcards and translations than with definitions, and slightly better with flashcards than with translation.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio es comparar la eficacia de tres diferentes métodos de enseñar vocabulario (listas de palabras con definiciones en la lengua objeto; listas de palabras con traducciones en la lengua materna; y tarjetas) en aulas de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera. Para ello, 30 palabras de tres temas diferentes (10 palabras de cada tema) han sido seleccionadas para enseñar al alumnado, utilizando un método diferente para cada tema. Se han empleado tres sesiones para la enseñanza del vocabulario, empleando una sesión para cada método y tema. Después de haber enseñado cada tema, el alumnado ha realizado un test inmediato compuesto por tres ejercicios diferentes para comprobar la eficacia de cada método. Una semana después de la tercera sesión, se ha pasado un segundo test sobre las 30 palabras para comparar los resultados este con los obtenidos en el test inmediato. Este segundo test estaba compuesto por tres ejercicios de unir (uno para cada método y tema). El análisis de los resultados muestran que (1) el

alumnado rindió mejor con el método de las tarjetas y con la traducción que con definiciones; (2) los resultados obtenidos fueron algo mejores con el método de las tarjetas que con la traducción; y (3) los resultados fueron mejores en el test inmediato que en el segundo test con todos los métodos, pero aún así, los/las estudiantes rindieron mejor con el método de las tarjetas y con la traducción que con definiciones, y algo mejor con el método de las tarjetas que con la traducción.

LABURPENA

Ikerlan honen helburua Atzerriko Hizkuntza Ingeleseko ikasgeletan hiztegia erakusteko hiru metodo ezberdinek (helburu den hizkuntzako definizioekin osatutako hitz-zerrendak; ama hizkuntzako itzulpenekin osatutako hitz-zerrendak; eta txartelak) duten eraginkortasuna konparatzea da. Horretarako, ikasleei erakusteko hiru gai ezberdinetako 30 hitz aukeratu dira (10 hitz gai bakoitzeko) gai bakoitzarentzat metodo ezberdin bat erabiliz. Hiztegia erakusteko 3 saio erabili dira, metodo eta gai bakoitzarentzako bat erabiliz. Gai bakoitza erakutsi ondoren, ikasleek hiru ariketa ezberdinez osatutako berehalako test bat egin dute, metodo bakoitzaren eraginkortasuna egiaztatzeko. Hirugarren saioa bukatu eta aste betera, 30 hitzei buruzko bigarren test bat osatu behar izan dute ikasleek, honetan lortutako emaitzak berehalako testean lortutakoekin konparatzeko. Bigarren test hau elkartzeko hiru ariketaz osatuta zegoen (metodo eta gai bakoitzeko bat). Emaitzen analisiak honako hau adierazten du: (1) ikasleek, txartelekin eta itzulpenekin definizioekin baino errendimendu hobea izan dute; (2) txartelekin lortutako emaitzak, itzulpenekin lortutakoak baino zertxobait hobeak izan ziren; eta (3) berehalako testean lortutako emaitzak, bigarren testean lortutakoak baino hobeak izan dira metodo guztiekin; baina, hala ere, ikasleek txartelekin eta itzulpenekin definizioekin baino errendimendu hobea izan dute, eta zertxobait hobea txartelekin itzulpenekin baino.

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning vocabulary is a crucial issue when learning a language because it is essential for communication. When we want to communicate something or with someone if we don't have the needed vocabulary we will be unable to achieve our goal.

Many different methods or strategies have been used throughout history for the instruction of vocabulary. There is a plethora of studies on the acquisition of

vocabulary, however, there is very little research about the effectiveness of vocabulary teaching methods (Baleghizadeh and Ashoori, 2011).

The aim of this study is to compare three different vocabulary teaching methods and to analyze their effectiveness in order to determine which of them is the most effective one in EFL classrooms. The methods which are compared and analyzed in this study are the following: (1) word lists with definitions in the target language (henceforth TL); (2) word lists with L1 definitions; and (3) flashcards.

A word list is a list of vocabulary items, usually L2 words, which are accompanied by either TL or L1 definitions, or by L1 translations or by the combination of any of them. This technique is usually utilized by EFL students when learning vocabulary on their own; they write a list of unknown words and they complete the list with the L1 translations of the vocabulary items. In this study two different word list techniques have been used. On the one hand, word lists with TL definitions in which the L2 words are accompanied by their English definition has been one of the methods. And on the other hand, word lists with L1 translations has been applied as another vocabulary teaching method. In this case, taking into account that the students are Basque/Spanish bilinguals, the L1 translations have been given both in Basque and in Spanish.

On the other hand, a flashcards is a cardboard which consists of a word, a sentence or a picture which can be used for different purposes. In the case of vocabulary teaching flashcards usually consist of words or pictures. In this study pictures have been used. This technique is good for students who learn better visually. In addition, as flashcards usually have colours and are more attractive, students tend to pay more attention.

The paper is organised as follows: Section 1 briefly offers the theoretical background. The second section presents the research questions. Section 3 deals with the methodology and in this section we will focus on the design of the present study, the subjects, the instruments and the procedure. Finally, in section 4 we will present the main results and section four is devoted to general conclusions and discussion.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to provide the theoretical framework for the present project three studies have been analyzed.

According to Mehta (2009) in his theoretical study about effective methodologies for teaching English vocabulary, a teacher has to be innovative when choosing the methodology to be used for the teaching of vocabulary. Concerning the methods applied in our study, Mehta (2009) says that translation is the most applied method when teaching vocabulary, but in his opinion it isn't an effective methodology because it can be confusing for the learner. However, he refers to TL definitions and pictures or drawings as effective methodologies for vocabulary teaching.

Pishghadam, Khodadady and Khoshsabk (2010) compared the impact of visual and verbal intelligences-based teaching in Iranian Intermediate EFL learners. The subjects were divided in three different groups: a visual experimental group which was taught by using pictures; a verbal experimental group which was instructed by using meanings, synonyms and antonyms; and a control group which was taught by translations and sentences. The results showed that the visual experimental group was the one who

performed best; the second best group was the control group; and finally, the students who were instructed by meanings, synonyms and antonyms were the ones who performed worst. Thus, according to Pishghadam, Khodadady and Khoshabk (2010), visual intelligences and translation are more effective methods than verbal intelligences for vocabulary teaching.

More recently, Baleghizadeh and Ashoori (2011) analyzed flashcards and word lists as vocabulary teaching methods and showed that regarding their effectiveness, there wasn't a significant difference between both methods.

Thus, the present study sets off to complete the existing literature in several ways: On the one hand, its main purpose is to analyze the effectiveness of three different vocabulary teaching methods; on the other hand, time has also been taken into account and apart from the immediate post-test a delayed post-test has been delivered in order to see whether there is any difference between both of them.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the present study we are comparing three methods for vocabulary teaching with EFL students. Accordingly, the research question is the following:

Which vocabulary teaching method (word lists with TL definitions, word lists with translation or flashcards) is more effective in an EFL classroom?

Based on Pishghadam, Khodadady and Khoshabk (2010), our hypothesis is that flashcards and word lists with translation are more effective than word lists with TL definitions.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. DESIGN

This is a cross-sectional study as data was collected on a short term basis (three weeks). As it will be explained later, the tasks used are outcome-oriented and obtrusive. On the other hand, this study is a quantitative one; there is a hypothesis and the study has been developed with a controlled measurement and confirmatory and verification-oriented data. Due to the number of subjects that participated in the study, the data is reliable as well as generalizable. Two variables have been taken into account: the method used for the instruction and time. Thus, the dependent variable would be the English Proficiency and the independent variables would be the method used and time.

4.2. SUBJECTS

There were 33 participants in this research study; 16 female and 17 male. They were students from the 1st year of Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE)¹ who had Basque or Spanish as their first language and lived in the Basque Country. All the participants had Basque as the language of instruction (D model) whereas English and Spanish are only taught as school subjects (3 hours a week).

English is taught as a third language at school, but the recent increased interest has led to its early introduction in kindergarten to four year old children.

¹ The Basque/Spanish educational system is structured as follows: Primary Education: ages 6-12; Compulsory Secondary Education: ages 12-16 (CSE1, CSE2, CSE3 and CSE4) and Optional Secondary Education: ages 16-18 (BATX1 and BATX2). 1st year CSE students are 12-13 years old.

All the participants attend the same CSE School (*IESO Pedro de Atarrabia DBHI*) but they have attended different Primary Education Schools. Nevertheless, all of them had the first English exposure when they were 4-5 years old.

Table (1) displays the characteristics of the students (number, sex, age, L1, onset/mean age and mean time of exposure to English).

	Number	Sex		Age	L1	Onset/ Mean age	Exposure to English
		Female	Male				
Subjects	33	16	17	12-13	Basque or Spanish	4-5	9 years

Table 1. Characteristics of the sample.

4.3. INSTRUMENTS

Four different types of instruments have been used in this study: a pre-test, immediate post-tests, a delayed post-test and a questionnaire. As it will be explained now, each of these instruments has a different aim.

First a pre-test was administered. The pre-test (see Appendix 1) was a list of words about three different topics (illnesses, cookery and sports) and students had to write the meaning of the words they already knew. The purpose of this test was to see which words were unknown to the students to choose the vocabulary for the study. After doing the test 10 words from each topic were selected to be used in the research study. As there were three different topics and three different methods, one method was applied to each topic. Thus, for the illnesses topic word lists with TL definitions was applied (see Appendix 2); for the cookery topic word lists with L1 translations was applied (see Appendix 3); and finally, the flashcards method was used for the sports topic (see Appendix 4).

The next instrument delivered was the immediate post-test. As three different topics and methods were used, three different immediate post-tests were utilized (see Appendixes 5-7); one for each topic and method. The structure and the activities were the same in the three tests but the method and the topic changed. Each test was composed by three different exercises. The first exercise was a matching activity in which students had to match the words with the corresponding TL definitions, L1 translations or pictures; the aim was to see if they had learnt the words as they have been instructed. The second exercise was a fill in the blanks activity in which students had to complete sentences using the words given; the purpose of this activity was to see if they understood the meaning of the taught words and whether they know how to use them in context. Finally, the last exercise was an activity to check if the students have acquired the spelling of the words. To this end, in the case of the topics which were instructed applying the TL definitions and flashcards methods (illnesses and sports) students were given the words in their L1 (Spanish and Basque) and they had to translate it into English. However, in the case of the cookery topic, as it was instructed using the translation method and we didn't want to use the same method in the exercise, students had to give the word from a picture instead of from an L1 translation. The aim of these immediate post-tests was to determine the effectiveness of each method; to see with which method students acquire more and perform better.

Another instrument used in the study has been a delayed post-test (see Appendix 8). This test was composed by three matching activities; one for each method and topic. The first exercise was about the illnesses topic and students had to match the words with the corresponding TL definitions. The second exercise was about the cookery vocabulary in which students had to match the words with the L1 translations. And

finally, the last activity was about sports and they had to match the words with the corresponding pictures. The purpose of this delayed post-test was to check the effectiveness of each method.

Finally, the last instrument administered was a questionnaire to collect students' opinions about the methods and topics used in the study (see Appendix 9). As students feel more comfortable and give their opinion better writing in Basque than in English due to their low English Proficiency, this questionnaire was delivered in Basque in order to achieve better results. This questionnaire was composed by four questions. The aim of these questions was to know (1) which of the methods applied in the study they prefer; which had been the most helpful and which the least; (2) if any of the topics was easier than the others; (3) if any of the topics was more interesting than the others; and (4) if they usually use any of these three methods when they have to learn English vocabulary on their own.

4.4. PROCEDURE

The study took 5 sessions divided into three weeks to be completed. The first week was devoted to complete the pre-test; in the second week the needed instructions and the immediate post-tests took place; and the third week was for the delayed post-test and the questionnaire.

In the first session (week 1) students were asked to complete the pre-test. They were given 30 minutes to write the meaning of the words they already knew.

One week after (week 2), the instruction sessions took place. In session 2 students received the first vocabulary items' instruction; 10 words about illnesses were taught

using the word lists with TL definitions method and then students were asked to complete the first immediate post-test. In session 3, 10 vocabulary items about cookery were instructed applying the translation method (word lists with L1 translations) and after that, the second immediate post-test was administered. Finally, the last session in week 2 (session 4) was devoted to the instruction of the sports' topic in which students were taught 10 words about this topic by using flashcards and then, they had to complete the third immediate post-test.

In all the instruction sessions 15-20 minutes were devoted to teach the words (instruction + some oral exercises to help students memorize the words); after that students had 5 minutes to revise and learn the words, and finally, the immediate post-test regarding the instructed words was delivered; first, they were given a sheet with the first two exercises, and when they finished completing that, we collect that sheet and gave them the third exercise in order that they couldn't see in the previous exercises how the words are written. Students were given 30 minutes to complete the whole test.

One week after the last instruction, the fifth and last session took place. In this session students were asked to complete the delayed post-test and the questionnaire. As the students weren't told before that they were going to do a delayed post-test, they were given 7 minutes at the beginning of the session to revise all the vocabulary items before doing the test. After that, they had 20 minutes to complete the test and when they finished it they were given another 20 minutes to fill in the questionnaire.

All the sessions took place during class time and the students did not receive any kind of help either from their instructor, or from us while completing the test.

Table (2) displays the distribution and structure of the sessions.

WEEK 1	WEEK 2			WEEK 3
Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5
Pre-test	Instruction (Topic: Illnesses; Method: Word list with TL definitions) + Immediate post-test	Instruction (Topic: Cookery; Method: Word list with L1 translations) + Immediate post-test	Instruction (Topic: Sports; Method: Flashcards) + Immediate post-test	Delayed post-test + Questionnaire

Table 2. Distribution of the procedure.

5. RESULTS

This section will deal with the results we obtained from the instruments administered.

First, we will deal with the results obtained in the immediate post-tests (IPT). These tests consisted of three different exercises with ten gaps each to be answered by the students. Consequently, students had to give 30 answers in each IPT. Taking into account all the subjects (n= 33), we should have 330 answers in each activity and a total amount of 990 answers per IPT. Table (3) shows the number of correct and incorrect answers that students obtained in each exercise of each IPT and the number of correct and incorrect answers they obtained in total in each IPT.

	IPT 1		IPT 2		IPT 3	
	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect
Exercise 1	223	107	272	58	311	19
Exercise 2	188	142	248	82	291	39
Exercise 3	157	173	226	104	258	72
Total	568/990 57.37%	422/990 42.63%	746/990 75.35%	244/990 24.65%	860/990 86.87%	130/990 13.13%

Table 3. General results of the IPTs.

Table (3) displays the general results of the three immediate post-tests carried out in week 2 after the instruction of the different vocabulary items by using different

methods. In IPT 1² students obtained a total amount of 568 correct answers (57.37%) and 422 incorrect answers (42.63%) out of 990. As for IPT 2³, they obtained 746 correct answers (75.35%) and 244 incorrect answers (24.65%) out of 990. Finally, in IPT 3⁴, they achieved 860 correct answers (86.87%) and 130 incorrect answers (13.13%) out of 990. We can observe that students performed best with flashcards and worst with TL definitions.

It has to be taken into account that in table (3) the gaps which were left in blank by the students have been considered as incorrect answers. Table (4) illustrates the amount of gaps which were answered and the number of gaps which were left in blank in each IPT.

	IPT 1		IPT 2		IPT 3	
	Gaps left in blank	Gaps answered	Gaps left in blank	Gaps answered	Gaps left in blank	Gaps answered
Exercise 1	3	327	6	324	0	330
Exercise 2	30	300	7	323	1	329
Exercise 3	108	222	64	266	48	282
Total	141/990 14.24%	849/990 85.76%	77/990 7.78%	913/990 92.22%	49/990 4.95%	941/990 95.05%

Table 4. Gaps left in blank and gaps answered in the IPTs.

Out of 990 gaps which should be answered by the students, 141 were left in blank in IPT 1 (14.24%) and 849 were answered (85.76%). As for IPT 2, 77 gaps were left in blank (7.78%) and 913 were answered (92.22%). And in IPT 3, 49 were left in blank (4.95%) whereas 941 were answered (95.05%). We can see that students answered more gaps with L1 translations and flashcards than with TL definitions.

² IPT 1: it was about the topic of illnesses and the method of word lists with TL definitions was used.

³ IPT 2: it was about the topic of cookery and the method of word lists with L1 translations was used.

⁴ IPT 3: it was about the topic of sports and the method of flashcards was used.

In addition, we can observe that the most difficult exercise for the students and the one in which they performed worst was the third exercise in which they had to give the English word from an L1 translation or from a picture. In fact, most of the gaps they left in blank were left in the third exercise; the 76.60% in IPT 1, the 83.12% in IPT 2 and the 97.96% in IPT 3. This can mean that they didn't completely acquire the meaning of the words or that they didn't know how they are written. More probably, they didn't know how the words were written, because we have seen in exercise 2 that they were capable to use the words in context; and to this end, they have to know the meaning of the words.

Thus, if we only take into account the answered gaps, the percentages of the correct answers change. Table (5) shows the correct answers' percentages only taking into account the answered gaps.

	Answered gaps	Correct answers	
		No.	%
IPT 1	849	568	66.90% 568/849
IPT 2	913	746	81.71% 746/913
IPT 3	941	860	91.39% 860/941

Table 5. Percentages taking into account the answered gaps in the IPTs.

Table (5) displays the percentages of the correct answers only taking into account the answered gaps. In IPT 1, 66.90% of the answered gaps were correct (568/849); in IPT 2, 81.71% of the answered gaps were correct (746/913); and in IPT 3, 91.39% of the students' answers were correct (860/941). Figure (1) illustrates better the difference between the IPTs.

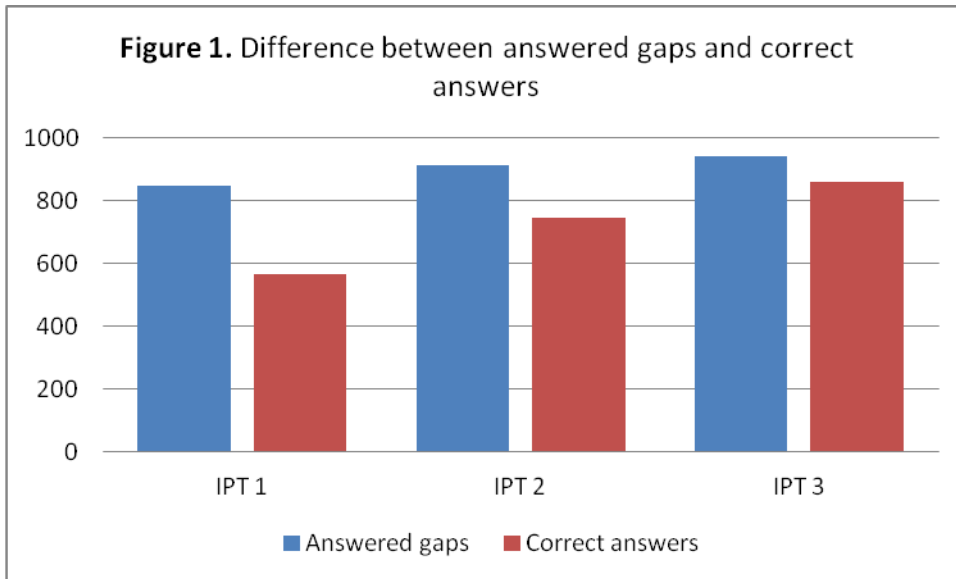


Figure (1) displays the difference between the answered gaps and the correct answers in each IPT. We can observe that in IPT 1 there is quite a big difference between the answered gaps and the correct answers whereas in IPT 2 and IPT 3 this difference is smaller. This shows that students performed better with L1 translations and with flashcards than with TL definitions, and slightly better with flashcards than with L1 translations.

To finish with the results of the IPTs, we want to focus on exercise 3, which was made to check whether the students had acquired the spelling of the words. We have seen that this is the exercise in which students had answered less gaps and in which they had performed worst. The main reason of that could be that they hadn't acquired the spelling of the words. Moreover, some of the words given in this exercise that have been considered as correct weren't correctly spelled. Table (6) shows the number of gaps which were answered correctly in this exercise in each IPT and how many of these correct answered word had been correctly and incorrectly spelled.

	Correct answers	Correct spelling		Incorrect spelling	
		No.	%	No.	%
IPT 1	157	121	77.07% 121/157	36	22.93% 36/157
IPT 2	226	195	86.28% 195/226	31	13.72% 31/226
IPT 3	258	221	85.66% 221/258	37	14.34% 37/258

Table 6. Spelling results from the correct answers in exercise 3 in the IPTs.

Table (6) illustrates the amount of correct and incorrect spelled words students obtained in exercise 3 in each IPT taking into account the answers which were considered as correct. In IPT 1, 121 words were correctly spelled (77.07%) and 36 were incorrectly spelled (22.93%) out of 157 correct answers. As for IPT2, 195 were the correctly spelled answers (86.28%) and 31 the incorrect spelled ones (13.72%) from the 226 which were considered as correct. Finally, in IPT 3, 221 were the words with correct spelling (85.66%) and 37 the ones with incorrect spelling (14.34%) out of 258 correct answers. We can see that although not all the words were correctly spelled students performed quite well as most of the words were written in the proper form.

The most common spelling mistakes in this exercise were the following: drop of a letter/syllable (they omitted one letter or syllable in the word); change of a letter/syllable (they use an incorrect letter or syllable instead of the correct one); change of place of letters (one of more letter in the word were changed to a different place in word); and giving an extra letter (they gave an extra letter). Although these words contained a spelling mistake, they were taken as correct answers because it was understood what they wanted to mean. Table (7) shows some examples of these spelling mistakes.

	Drop of a letter/syllable	Change of a letter/syllable	Change of place of letters	Extra letter
IPT 1	brise→ bruise ; blidness→ blindness ; sticking plaste→ sticking plaster ; undernorishment→ under nourishment ; stin→ sting ; blindnes→ blindness	desease→ disease ; broise→ bruise	bil ndness→ blindness	estrain → strain ; greaze → graze
IPT 2	try→ tray ; squeez→ squeeze	squize→ squeeze ; milt → melt ; cooking hood→ cooker hood; tin opening→ tin opener; seave→ sieve		stink → sink ; tin oppener →tin opener; coo cker hood→cooker hood
IPT 3	refree→ referee ; weighlifting→ weight lifting ; pich→ pitch ; sadle→ saddle ; joggin→ jogging	paragliting→ parag liding	par ad liding→ parag liding ; handeblar→ hand le bar; refeere→ referee	hinking → hiking ; parag laiding → parag liding ; hicking → hiking

Table 7. Examples of each type of mistake.

Secondly, we will deal with the delayed post-test (DPT) results. This test consisted of three matching activities, each of them concerning one different method and topic. These activities were taken from the IPTs, being them the first exercise of each IPT. In these activities students had to match the ten vocabulary items of each topic with the corresponding TL definition, L1 translation or picture. Consequently, students had to give 30 answers in the DPT. Taking into account all the subjects (n= 33), we should have 330 answers in each activity and a total amount of 990 answers. Table (8) shows the amount of correct and incorrect answers students obtained in the DPT.

	Exercise 1		Exercise 2		Exercise 3	
	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect	Correct	Incorrect
DPT	207	123	276	54	287	43

Table 8. General results of the DPT.

Table (8) displays the general results of the DPT carried out in week 3, one week after doing IPT3. In the first exercise which was about the topic of illnesses instructed by TL definitions students obtained 207 correct (62.73%) and 123 incorrect answers (37.27%) out of 330. As for exercise 2, which was about the cookery topic instructed by L1 translations, they achieve 276 correct answers (83.64%) and 54 incorrect answers (16.36%) out of 330. Finally, the correct answers in exercise 3, which was about the sports topic instructed by flashcards, were 287 (86.97%) and 43 answers were incorrect (13.03%). We can observe that even though time passed, students still performed best with flashcards and worst with TL definitions, as in the IPTs.

It has to be taken into account that in table (8) the gaps which were left in blank by the students have been considered as incorrect answers, as it happened in table (3). Table (9) shows the amount of gaps which were answered and the number of gaps which were left in blank in the DPT.

	Exercise 1		Exercise 2		Exercise 3	
	Gaps left in blank	Gaps answered	Gaps left in blank	Gaps answered	Gaps left in blank	Gaps answered
DPT	21	309	6	324	7	323

Table 9. Gaps left in blank and gaps answered in the DPT.

Out of 330 gaps that should be answered by the students in exercise 1, 21 were left in blank (6.36%) and 309 were answered (93.64%); in IPT 1 99.09% of the gaps were answered in this activity. In exercise 2, 6 gaps were left in blank (1.81%) and 324 were answered (98.19%), the same as in this exercise in IPT 2. And, in IPT3, 7 gaps were left in blank (2.12%) and 323 were answered (97.88%), compared to the 100% answered gaps in this exercise in IPT 3. Again, we can see that students answered more gaps with L1 translations and flashcards than with TL definitions.

Thus, if we only take into account the answered gaps, the percentages of the correct answers change. Table (10) shows the correct answers' percentages only taking into account the answered gaps in these exercises in both, the first exercise in the IPTs and the DPT in order to make a comparison.

	Answered gaps	Correct answers	
		No.	%
Exercise 1 in IPT 1	327	223	68.20% 223/327
Exercise 1 in DTP	309	207	66.99% 207/309
Exercise 1 in IPT 2	324	272	83.95% 272/324
Exercise 2 in DTP	324	276	85.18% 276/324
Exercise 1 in IPT 3	330	311	94.24% 311/330
Exercise 3 in DTP	323	287	88.85% 287/323

Table 10. Percentages taking into account the answered gaps.

Table (10) displays the percentages of the correct answers only taking into account the answered gaps in both, the first exercise in the IPTs and the DPT in order to make a comparison. We can observe that although students performed a little bit better in the IPT, they obtained similar results in the first exercises of IPT 1 and the DPT; in IPT 1 the 68.20% of the answers were correct and in the DPT the 66.99% of the answers were correct. Regarding the topic of cookery and the method of L1 translation, though there isn't a huge difference, students performed slightly better in the DPT than in the ITP; the 83.95% of the answers were correct in IPT 2 compared to the 85.18% in the DPT. Finally, the largest difference between the IPT and the DPT was in the sports topic instructed by flashcards. In this case, in IPT3 the 94.24% of the answers were correct

and in the DPT the 88.85% of the answers were correct. Figure (2) shows better the difference between the IPTs and the DPT.

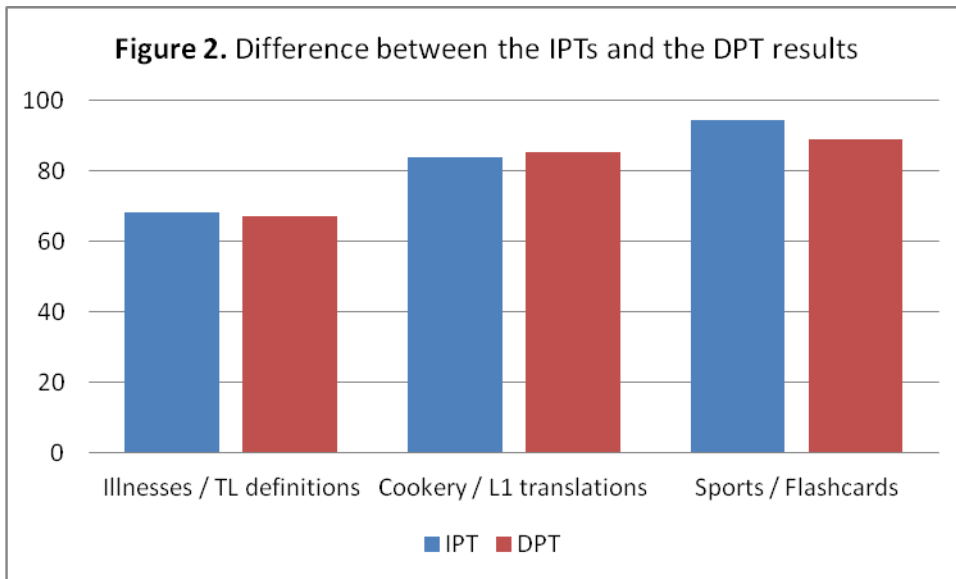


Figure (2) illustrates the difference between the percentages of the correct answers in these activities in the IPTs and the DPT. We can see that students obtained similar results in both the IPTs and the DPT. In addition, we can see that they performed better with flashcards and with L1 translations than with TL definitions and slightly better with flashcards than with L1 translations.

Finally, the results of the questionnaire in which students had to give their opinions about the methods will be presented. This questionnaire consisted of four questions and the aim was to obtain students opinions about the different topics and methodologies used in the study. The first question was to obtain the students' opinion about the efficacy of the methods used in the study; students had to say which had been the most and least helpful method for them. Table (11) shows the amount of students who chose each method as the most or the least helpful methodology for learning new vocabulary.

	Most helpful	Least helpful
Word lists with TL definitions	0	30
Word lists with L1 translations	13	2
Flashcards	20	1

Table 11. Most and least helpful methods according to the students.

Table (11) displays the amount of students who chose each method as the most or least effective or helpful for learning vocabulary. Regarding the most helpful methodology, no student (0%) chose the method of word lists with TL definitions; 13 students (39.39%) chose word lists with L1 translations; and 20 students (60.61%) chose flashcards as the most helpful methodology. On the other hand, concerning the least helpful method, 30 students (90.91%) chose word lists with TL definitions; 2 students (6.06%) chose word lists with L1 translations; and only one student (3.03%) chose flashcards. We can observe that the most helpful method for most of the students is the flashcards method; but there are also many students who think that the most helpful one is the L1 translation method. These two methods are the ones with which students performed best in both the IPTs and the DPT. However, for almost all the students the least helpful method is the TL definitions method; which is the method with which they performed worst.

Questions two and three were devoted to obtain the student's opinions about the topics. In the second question they were asked which topic was the easiest for them; and in the third question they were asked which topic was the most interesting one. Table (12) shows the amount of students who chose each topic as the easiest and as the most interesting one.

	Easiest	Most interesting
Illnesses	1	2
Cookery	8	4
Sports	22	22
All/none of them	2	5

Table 12. Easiest and most interesting topics according to the students.

Table (12) illustrates the amount of students who chose each topic as the easiest and as the most interesting one. Concerning the easiest topic, only one student (3.03%) chose illnesses; 8 students (24.24%) thought that cookery was the easiest one; 22 (66.67%) chose sports; and there were two students (6.06%) who said that all or none of them were easy. On the other hand, regarding the most interesting topic, 2 students (6.06%) thought that the illnesses topic was the most interesting one; 4 students (12.12%) chose cookery; 22 of them (66.67%) chose sports; and 5 students (15.15%) said that all or none of them were interesting. We can observe that both the easiest and the most interesting topic for the students was the sports topic. And it has to be said that this is the topic with which students performed best in all the instruments administered.

In addition, in the third question students were asked to give reasons for their choice.

These were the two main reasons they gave:

- a. *For me the most interesting topic was _____ because I didn't know this vocabulary before.*
- b. *For me the most interesting topic was _____ because I like it.*

Finally, the last question was to know which of these methods they usually use when they have to learn vocabulary on their own. Moreover, they were also asked to say why they use that method. Table (13) shows the amount of students that usually use each topic.

	Amount of students
TL definitions	5
L1 translations	26
Pictures	2

Table 13. Method students usually use.

Table (13) displays the amount of students that usually use each topic when learning vocabulary on their own. 5 students (15.15%) usually make use of TL definitions; 26 students (78.79%) use L1 translations; and 2 of them (6.06%) make use of pictures. We can see that most of the students usually use translation for learning vocabulary on their own. When giving reasons, these are the most common answers we have obtained:

I usually use _____ because:

- a. *It is easier.*
- b. *It is more helpful.*
- c. *In the exam they ask like that.*

In addition, many students who usually use translation said that *if they could they would use pictures because it helps more; but that it is very difficult to make drawings and that it takes a lot of time.*

In conclusion, the results show that (1) students performed better with flashcards and with L1 translations than with TL definitions; (2) they obtained slightly better results with flashcards than with L1 translations; and (3) the results in the immediate post-test were slightly better than in the delayed post-test, but students still performed better with flashcards and L1 translations than with TL definitions; and slightly better with flashcards than with L1 translations. This could be because (1) flashcards and word lists with L1 translations are more effective methods than word lists with TL definitions; (2) the vocabulary items regarding cookery and sports were easier than the ones concerning

illnesses; (3) students were more interested in cookery and sports than in illnesses. As we have seen in the questionnaire delivered to the students, the easiest and most interesting topic for the students was sports; but, according to the students, there wasn't a huge difference between the topics of illnesses and cookery regarding the difficulty and their interest. Consequently, we could say that the main reason to obtain these results in the IPTs and in the DPT is that word lists with L1 translations and flashcards are more effective methods than word lists with TL definitions.

6. DISCUSSION

Our research question for this study was the following: *Which vocabulary teaching method (word lists with TL definitions, word lists with translation or flashcards) is more effective in an EFL classroom?* And based on Pishghadam, Khodadady and Khoshabk (2010), our hypothesis was that flashcards and word lists with L1 translations are more effective than word lists with TL definitions. After having observed the gathered data, we have confirmed this hypothesis.

The data suggests that students obtained the highest scores when the vocabulary items were instructed by using flashcards; the second highest scores were obtained when the vocabulary was instructed with the method of word lists with L1 translations; and the lowest scores were achieved when they were taught with the method of word lists with TL definitions. The same results were obtained in the study by Pishghadam, Khodadady and Khoshabk (2010); the students who were instructed by pictures performed best; the second best group was the one who was taught by translations; and finally, the students

who were instructed by meanings, synonyms and antonyms were the ones who performed worst.

In addition, we could say that our data supports the results obtained by Baleghizadeh and Ashoori (2011). They analyzed the effectiveness of flashcards and word lists with L1 translations and they found that there wasn't a significant difference between the two methods. Although in our study we found a slight difference between these two methods, the difference wasn't significant. That's the reason why the results of Baleghizadeh and Ashoori (2011) are supported.

However, our data doesn't support the theory given by Mehta (2009) in his theoretical study about effective methodologies for teaching English vocabulary. According to Mehta (2009) translation isn't an effective methodology and TL definitions and drawings are effective methodologies. In the data collected for our study, we can observe that drawings are effective as Mehta (2009) says; nevertheless, contrary to what this author said, we have evidence which shows that translation is effective and that TL definitions aren't effective methods for teaching English vocabulary.

The opinions obtained in the questionnaire suggest that the methods of flashcards and word lists with L1 translations are more helpful and that the method of word lists with TL definitions is the least helpful method for learning vocabulary. These opinions support our hypothesis and the collected data.

In addition, the opinions of the questionnaire show that the easiest and most interesting topic for the students was sports and that the other two were more difficult and less interesting. However, we couldn't say that this issue had influenced in the students' performance because they performed similarly with both, the topic of sports and the

topic of cookery; and if it had influenced there would have been a huge difference between the performance with the sports topic and the performance with the other two topics.

We have also observed that most of the students usually use translations when they have to learn vocabulary on their own because it is for them easier and more helpful, and because they are usually asked by translation in the exams.

Finally, some limitations should be noted and discussed. Firstly, even though all the subjects were the same age, the group of participants wasn't homogeneous; not all the students had the same ability to learn, neither the same learning strategies. It has to be taken into account that this issue could have influenced in the results.

Secondly, the distribution of the topics and methods should be noted given than the most difficult and least interesting topic (illnesses) has been instructed with the least effective and most difficult methodology (TL definitions); and the easiest and most interesting topic (sports) has been taught by the most effective and easiest method (flashcards). This issue should be taken into account in future studies.

Finally, the order of instruction should also be noted. In the procedure of this study the first instruction session was devoted to the method of word lists with TL definitions, which is the least helpful method for the students; and the last instruction session was devoted to the flashcards method, which is the most helpful for them. We have to take into account that in the first instruction session students didn't know what they were going to do; what and how they were going to be taught and that they were supposed to do a test after the instruction. However, for the last instruction session they perfectly knew what they were going to do. Consequently, this could have influenced in the

results. For this reason, it would be interesting to do the same study but changing the order of instruction in the procedure.

For future research, it would be very interesting to conduct a longitudinal study to see the effectiveness of these methods in the long term. Moreover, additional research would also be needed to analyze the effectiveness of other vocabulary teaching methodologies. And, as it has been mentioned before, other interesting research would be to carry out a similar study but taking into account the difficulty of the topics and methods when matching them up, not pairing the most difficult topic with the most difficult method, neither the easiest topic with the easiest method; and on the other hand, changing the order of instruction of the methods in the procedure.

7. REFERENCES

Mehta, Naveen Kumar. 2009. *Vocabulary Teaching: Effective Methodologies*. In *The Internet TESL Journal*; March 2009.

Pishghadam, R., Khodadady, E. & Khoshabk, N. 2010. *The Impact of Visual and Verbal Intelligences-Based Teaching on the Vocabulary Retention and Written Production of Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners*. In *MJAL* 2:5, August 2010, 379-395.

Baleghizadeh, Sasan & Ashoori, Arezoo. 2011. *The Impact of Two Instructional Techniques on EFL Learners' Vocabulary Knowledge: Flash Cards versus Word Lists*. *MEXTESOL Journal*, Volume 35, Number 2, 2011.

8. APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1: Pre-test

VOCABULARY

ILLNESSES

Disease
Nosebleed
Sneeze
Runny nose
Cough
Sore throat
Cramp
Strain
Rash
Burn
Graze
Bruise
Sting
Blister
Mumps
Measles
Skin fungus
Varicose veins
Heartburn
Hoarse
To swell
Sticking plaster
Chickenpox
Blindness
Undernourishment
To feel sick

IN THE KITCHEN:

Cooker hood
Stove
Oven
Dishwasher
Tap
Sink
Tray

Saucepan
Sieve
Tin opener
Whisk
To bake
To beat
To boil
To chop
To curdle
To flip
To grate
To knead
To melt
To shake
To sharpen
To squeeze
To strain
To stir

SPORTS:

Archery
Bowling
Canoeing
Fencing
Diving
Hurdle race
Javelin
Jogging
Rowing
Sailing
Clay target shooting
Hunting
Weightlifting
Wrestling
Aerobatics

Bungee jumping
Skydiving
Hang gliding
Climbing
Paragliding
Parachuting
Hiking
Handlebar
Whistle
Saddle
Pitch
Viewer
Supporter
Referee
Score
Overtake

APPENDIX 2: Illnesses/Word lists with TL definitions

ILLNESSES:

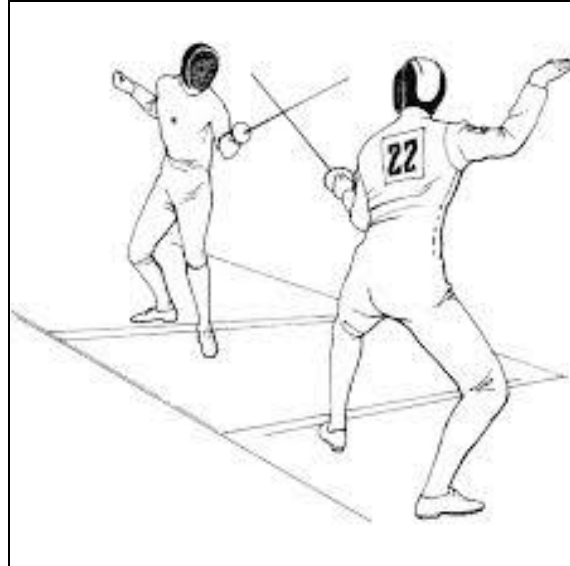
- 1. Disease:** An illness affecting humans, animals or plants often caused by infection. Synonym of illness or sickness.
- 2. Strain:** An injury to a part of your body, such as a muscle (especially the foot), that is caused by twisting it.
- 3. Graze:** A small injury where the surface of the skin has been slightly broken by rubbing against something.
- 4. Bruise:** A blue, brown or purple mark that appears on the skin after somebody has fallen, been hit or something similar.
- 5. Sting:** A wound that is made when an insect bites you.
- 6. Hoarse:** Sounding rough and harsh, typically as a result of a sore throat or of shouting.
- 7. Sticking plaster:** A material that can be stuck to the skin to protect a small wound or cut.
- 8. Chickenpox:** A disease, especially of children, that causes a slight fever and many spots on the skin.
- 9. Blindness:** The condition of being unable to see; lacking visual perception.
- 10. Undernourishment:** Bad health because of lack of food or lack of the right type of food.

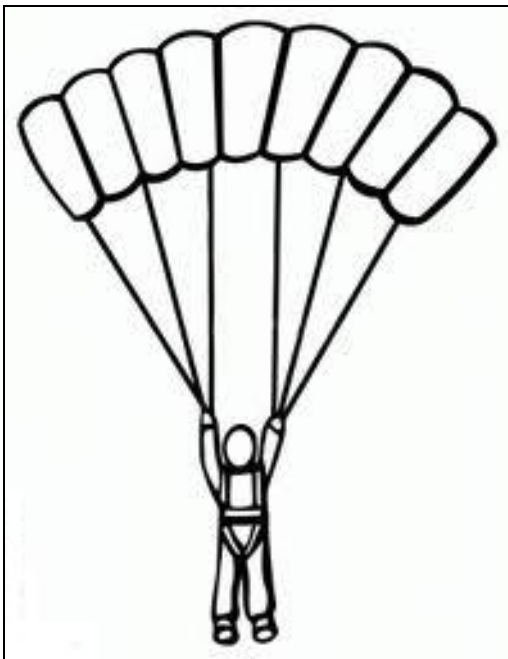
APPENDIX 3: Cookery/Word lists with L1 translation

COOKERY:

1. **Cooker hood:** Sukaldeko kanpaia / Campana de cocina.
2. **Stove:** Sukaldea (suak) / Cocina (fogones).
3. **Tap:** Txorrota, iturria / Grifo.
4. **Sink:** Harraska / Fregadera.
5. **Tray:** Erretilua / Bandeja.
6. **Sieve:** Iragazkia / Colador.
7. **Tin opener:** Poto-irekigailua / Abrelatas.
8. **To bake:** Labean egin / Hornear.
9. **To melt:** Urtu / Derretir.
10. **To squeeze:** Zukua atera / Exprimir.

APPENDIX 4: Sports/Flashcards







APPENDIX 5: Immediate Post-Test 1

TEST 1: ILLNESSES

Full name:

Age:

1. Match the words with the corresponding definitions.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Sting | a) An illness affecting humans, animals or plants, often caused by infection. Synonym of illness or sickness. |
| 2. Chickenpox | b) A wound that is made when an insect bites you. |
| 3. Undernourishment | c) Sounding rough and harsh, typically as a result of a sore throat or of shouting. |
| 4. Disease | d) A disease, especially of children, that causes a slight fever and many spots on the skin. |
| 5. Bruise | e) A small injury where the surface of the skin has been slightly broken by rubbing against something. |
| 6. Hoarse | f) An injury to a part of your body, such as a muscle (especially the foot), that is caused by twisting it. |
| 7. Blindness | g) Bad health because of lack of food or a lack of the right type of food. |
| 8. Strain | h) A material that can be stuck to the skin to protect a small wound or cut. |
| 9. Sticking plaster | i) A blue, brown or purple mark that appears on the skin after somebody has fallen, been hit... |
| 10. Graze | j) The condition of being unable to see; lacking visual perception. |

TEST 1

Full name:

2. Fill in the blanks with the words in the box.

hoarse	chickenpox	undernourishment	
disease	grazes	stings	bruise
blindness	strain	sticking plaster	

1. My grandmother died of a serious
2. My friend had a car accident yesterday but she hasn't got any big injury, only some
3. Ann has taken a to protect a small cut she has on her finger.
4. is an illness we usually suffer when we are children. It will be very painful if you suffer it when you're an adult.
5. Messi didn't play the match because he had a on his right foot.
6. Last day John banged into the wardrobe with his elbow and now he has a on it.
7. The doctor warned my uncle that if he doesn't take care of his sight he will suffer from
8. I'm allergic to insect If one bites me I will have to go to the doctor.
9. We waste a lot of food without being aware that there are many children suffering around the world.
10. Our teacher can't give us the class because she is; she has no voice.

TEST 1

Full name:

3. Translate the words into English.

1. Desnutrizioa / desnutrición:
2. Gaixotasuna / enfermedad:
3. Ziztada / picadura:
4. Marranta / ronco:
5. Itsutasun / ceguera:
6. Zaintiratua / enguince:
7. Ubeldura / moratón:
8. Tirita:
9. Atzaparkada / rasguño:
10. Barizela / Varicela:

APPENDIX 6: Immediate Post-Test 2

TEST 2: IN THE KITCHEN

Full name:

1. Match the words with their meaning.

Cooker hood	Poto-irekigailua / Abrelatas
Stove	Erretilua / Bandeja
Tap	Labean egin / Hornear
Sink	Iragazkia / Colador
Tray	Harraska / Fregadera
Sieve	Zukua atera / Exprimir
Tin opener	Sukaldea (suak) / Conica (fogones)
To bake	Txorrota, iturria / Grifo
To melt	Urtu / Derretir
To squeeze	Sukaldeko kanpaia / Campana de cocina

TEST 2

Full name:

2. Fill in the blanks with the words in the box.

stove	tin opener	tap	to melt
sieve	to squeeze	cooker hood	
sink	to bake	tray	

1. Don't waste water! Remember to close the when you don't need water.
2. If you want to prepare an orange juice you will have the oranges.
3. I need the to open this can.
4. My husband didn't do the washing-up and now the is full of unwashed plates.
5. If it is a hot day and you are eating an ice-cream you will have to eat it quickly if you don't want it
6. To make a cake you have to prepare the mixture and then you have it.
7. If you don't want your kitchen to be full of smoke when you are cooking you will have to switch the on.
8. The most important electrical appliance in a kitchen is the where you cook most of your meals.
9. Waiters usually use a to take the drinks or the food to the clients.
10. If you want to drink a juice without dregs you'll have to pass it through the

TEST 2

Full name:

3. Use the words you have learnt to describe the pictures.



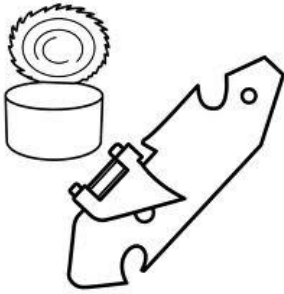
1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.

APPENDIX 7: Immediate Post-Test 3

TEST 3: SPORTS

Full name:

1. Match the names with the pictures.

1. jogging 2. weightlifting 3. fencing 4. pitch 5. paragliding
 6. saddle 7. diving 8. referee 9. handlebar 10. Hiking



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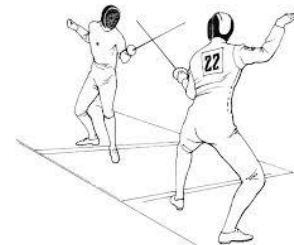
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TEST 3

Full name:

2. Fill in the blanks with the words in the box.

fencing	diving	jogging	weightlifting	paragliding
hiking	handlebar	saddle	pitch	referee

1. To ride a bike you have to sit down on the and hold with your hands onto the
2. The activity of running slowly and steadily as a form of exercise is called
3. is swimming underwater using special breathing equipment.
4. There are two goals in the football
5. Last day I went and I felt like a bird. The view from the sky was very beautiful.
6. I like going to the mountain and
7. The sport of lifting heavy weights is called
8. In they fight with long thin swords.
9. The didn't whistle the penalty.

TEST 3

Full name:

3. Translate the following words into English.

1. Eskrima / esgrima:

2. Urpean igeri egitea / buceo:

3. Footing:

4. Halterofilia:

5. Parapente:

6. Xendazaletasuna / senderismo:

7. Eskulekua / manillar:

8. Jarlekua / sillín:

9. Zelaia / campo, cancha:

10. Kirol-epailea / arbitro:

APPENDIX 8: Delayed Post-Test

POST-TEST:

Full name:

1. Match the words with the corresponding definitions.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Sting | a) An illness affecting humans, animals or plants, often caused by infection. Synonym of illness or sickness. |
| 2. Chickenpox | b) A wound that is made when an insect bites you. |
| 3. Undernourishment | c) Sounding rough and harsh, typically as a result of a sore throat or of shouting. |
| 4. Disease | d) A disease, especially of children, that causes a slight fever and many spots on the skin. |
| 5. Bruise | e) A small injury where the surface of the skin has been slightly broken by rubbing against something. |
| 6. Hoarse | f) An injury to a part of your body, such as a muscle (especially the foot), that is caused by twisting it. |
| 7. Blindness | g) Bad health because of lack of food or a lack of the right type of food. |
| 8. Strain | h) A material that can be stuck to the skin to protect a small wound or cut. |
| 9. Sticking plaster | i) A blue, brown or purple mark that appears on the skin after somebody has fallen, been hit... |
| 10. Graze | j) The condition of being unable to see; lacking visual perception. |

POST-TEST

Full name:

2. Match the words with their meaning.

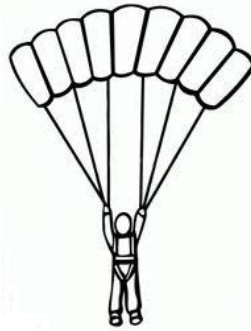
Cooker hood	Poto-irekigailua / Abrelatas
Stove	Erretilua / Bandeja
Tap	Labean egin / Hornear
Sink	Iragazkia / Colador
Tray	Harraska / Fregadera
Sieve	Zukua atera / Exprimir
Tin opener	Sukaldea (suak) / Conica (fogones)
To bake	Txorrota, iturria / Grifo
To melt	Urtu / Derretir
To squeeze	Sukaldeko kanpaia / Campana de cocina

POST-TEST

Full name:

3. Match the names with the pictures.

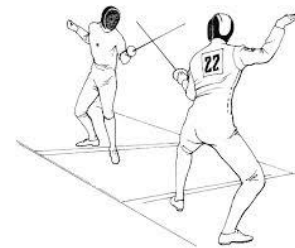
1. jogging 2. weightlifting 3. fencing 4. pitch 5. paragliding
 6. saddle 7. diving 8. referee 9. handlebar 10. Hiking



.....



.....



.....

APPENDIX 9: Questionnaire

IKASITAKO HIZTEGIARI BURUZKO IRITZIA

Full name:

Aurreko egun hauetan, hiru gairi buruzko hiztegia ikasi duzu (gaixotasunak, sukaldaritza eta kirolak). Hiztegi hori era ezberdinetan erakutsi zaizu (definizioak erabiliz; itzulpena erabiliz; eta irudiak erabiliz). Jarraian honi buruzko zure iritzia jasotzeko galdetegi bat duzu. Eskerrik asko zure laguntzagatik!

1. Zein metodo iruditu zaizu lagungarrien hiztegia ikasteko orduan?

Zenbatu 1tik 3ra (1= lagungarriena; 3= gutxien lagundu dizuna).

..... definizioak

..... itzulpena

..... irudiak

2. Hiru hitz multzo ikasi dituzu (gaixotasunak, sukaldaritza eta kirolak).

Horietako multzoren bat besteak baino errazagoa iruditu zaizu?

Zergatik?

3. Ikasitako hiztegia hiru gaien ingurukoa izan da (gaixotasunak,

sukaldaritza eta kirolak). Baduzu preferentziarik gai horien artean?

Baten bat besteak baino interesgarriagoa iruditzen zaizu? Zein, eta zergatik?

4. Zure kabuz hiztegia ikasi behar duzunean hauetako metodoren bat

erabiltzen duzu (definizioak, itzulpena edota irudiak)? Zein eta zergatik?

"We must always remember that language is learned, not because we want to talk or read or write about language, but because we want to talk, read and write about the world."

C.B. Cazden