ESCUELA SUPERIOR POLITÉCNICA DEL LITORAL

Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Humanísticas

"READING TO LEARN: UNDERSTANDING READING WITHIN INTEGRATED VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION IN A1 EFL LEARNERS"

PROYECTO DE TITULACIÓN

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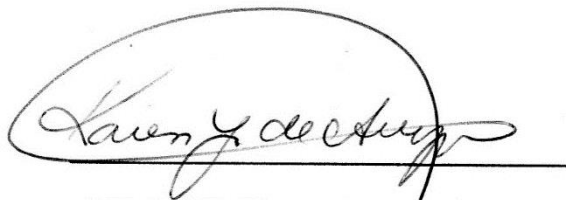GABRIELA JACQUELINE GALEAS ARBOLEDA

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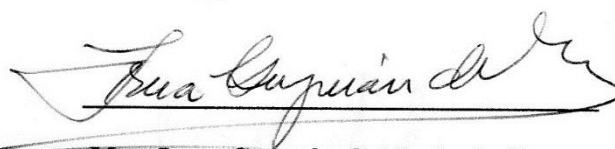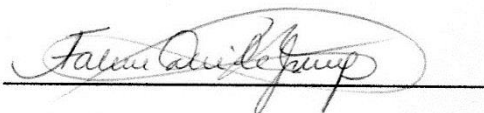
Gabriela Galeas

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GABRIELA JACQUELINE GALEAS ARBOLEDA

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ABSTRACT

This research study tried to explore the effects of an integrated vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension performance of A1 EFL learners in a rural public school in Ecuador. The participants of this study were students between 15 and 17 years old in their first baccalaureate year, all of them were selected by convenience sampling. The participants were divided into two groups (traditional and integrated) and asked to participate in eight reading lessons with their designated vocabulary instruction. After each class, they took part in a reading comprehension test based on literal comprehension questions. Moreover, the perceptions from the experimental group were gathered by a questionnaire. Additionally, a vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS) was used three times to measure previous knowledge, learning, and retention of words. This study found that an integrated vocabulary instruction improves learners´ reading comprehension, and it is beneficial for vocabulary learning and retention. Moreover, this research work proposes a further study on the benefits of an integrated instruction by working with upper levels of proficiency.

Keywords: reading, vocabulary instruction, reading comprehension, perceptions.

RESUMEN

El presente estudio de investigación trató de explorar los efectos de la instrucción de vocabulario integrado en el desempeño de la comprensión lectora de los estudiantes de nivel A1 de inglés como idioma extranjero en un colegio público rural en Ecuador. Los participantes fueron estudiantes entre 15 y 17 años en su primer año de bachillerato, todos ellos fueron seleccionados por un muestreo a conveniencia. Los participantes estuvieron divididos en dos grupos (tradicional e integrado) y se les solicitó participar en ocho lecciones de lectura. Después de cada clase, los estudiantes participaron en una prueba de comprensión de lectura basada en preguntas de comprensión literal. Además, las percepciones del grupo experimental se recogieron mediante un cuestionario. Adicionalmente, se utilizó una escala de conocimientos de vocabulario (VKS) tres veces para medir el conocimiento previo, el aprendizaje y la retención de palabras. Este estudio encontró que la instrucción de vocabulario integrado mejora la comprensión de lectura de los estudiantes, y es beneficiosa para el aprendizaje y retención de vocabulario. Por otra parte, este trabajo de investigación propone un estudio adicional sobre los beneficios de una instrucción integrada al trabajar con niveles superiores de competencia.

Palabras claves: lectura, instrucción de vocabulario, comprensión lectora, percepciones.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference

CI: Confidence Interval

CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning

CVI: Contextualized Vocabulary Instruction

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

IVI$_1$: Integrated Vocabulary Instruction

IVI$_2$: Intensified Vocabulary Instruction

MinEduc: Ministerio de Educación de Ecuador

TVI: Traditional Vocabulary Instruction

VKS: Vocabulary Knowledge Scale

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (MinEduc) has designed a new curriculum focused on improving the English language acquisition in Ecuador. Innovation in the new curriculum are the implementation of eight elements, they are Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Approach, Learner-Centered, Common European Framework of Reference, Culture, The Arts, four Skills, Communicative Language Approach, Thinking Skills. CLIL Aproach is an element that enables to teach with a dual-focused aim.

1.2 Aims and Rationale

Taking into consideration the CLIL approach, teachers and students can experience an integrated instruction where vocabulary and reading are interrelated to increase vocabulary and understand a text, teaching/learning simultaneously. At the same time, it is necessary not to diminish isolated instruction benefits depending on the aims of the language.

Since literature shows the benefits of an integrated or isolated approach depending on the specific aims, the purpose of this investigation is to describe the effects of integrated vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension activities by examining A1 EFL first-year baccalaureate learners´ performance. Thus, after exploring the data, it will be possible to find out the effects of Integrated Vocabulary Instruction (IVI) on reading comprehension outcomes of the learners.

At the same time, other intended objectives are:

1. To test vocabulary recognition before and after an intervention.

2. To apply an Integrated Vocabulary Instruction to an experimental group.

3. To measure students´ performance regarding reading comprehension.

4. To know students´ perceptions toward an Integrated Vocabulary Instruction.

5. To help students increasing their reading comprehension.

1.2.1   Research Questions.

In the present research study, the researcher pretends to answer the following principal question: How does integrated vocabulary instruction promote reading comprehension performance of A1 EFL first-year baccalaureate students of a public school?; as well as the following sub-research questions:

1. Is there a variation in reading comprehension performance regarding an experimental and control group of A1 EFL first-year baccalaureate students of a public school?

2. What are learners´ perceptions of the experimental group toward the integrated vocabulary instruction?

3. Is integrated vocabulary instruction significantly beneficial for vocabulary retention?

1.3 Overview

Chapter 1 displays an introduction to the problem, aim, and overview, as well as the research questions that shape this study. Chapter 2 defines the context of the study, its participants and the justification for developing it. Chapter 3 contains a full review of the relevant literature regarding vocabulary instruction, intensive reading, integrated instructions, and other related topics. The methods employed in the study are then described in chapter 4 as well as the researcher´s position. After that, the findings are presented in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 provides a brief and organized

discussion of the findings. Finally, Chapter 7 outlines a summary of the research

questions with the findings, limitations of the study, and further research.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents ethnographical information of the institution, teachers, and students as well as a supported justification for developing this study.

2.2 The institution, its students, and its instructors

A millennium school in a rural area

One of the many Unidades Educativas del Milenio has been built in a rural area to provide high-quality education to a targeted benefitted population. It is a school with high technological resources such as projectors in each classroom, two laboratories for languages (not in use now), and other laboratories with smart boards. Free Wi-Fi connection is available in each area of the school. Therefore, due to the many mentioned facilities, English has been implemented for young learners since early years of education even though English was not officially at primary level in the educational Ecuadorian curriculum.

The school runs two shifts. The first shift starts at seven in the morning. This section covers Preschool (4 years old) to ninth year. In the afternoon, activities start at 12:10, so students who come from far places can have lunch in the school in the free food court. Students from the tenth year to the third baccalaureate are who attend in the afternoon. Furthermore, due to the demand of students, there is a first-grade class in the afternoon.

Students

The school operates with more than one thousand students, from the pre-kindergarten to ninth year in the morning, and tenth to third high school in the afternoon. Most of the students belong to surrounding areas to the school. Some of

them come to school from outlying farms, so they must leave school at a particular time to take the bus that takes them back home. Some teenagers help their parents in farm works, and that is why some of them see the school in the afternoon as an opportunity to progress and learn. A considerable number of them belong to a medium and low social class.

Teachers

The school has 48 teachers, where three of them make the English area, one of them is the coordinator. Despite their professional degrees or area of knowledge, all English teachers have academic English qualifications. The coordinator is a well-trained professional from the Go Teacher Program, she holds a master´s degree in education, and the other two teachers have degrees in teaching languages. The teachers in charge of the English area have vast experience in the field of English language teaching.

The number of English teachers is adequate for the small number of students in comparison with other public schools in the area. Each teacher has a workload of 30 class hours a week (each class hour lasts 40 minutes), except the teacher for primary, who spends 20 class hours in eighth and ninth and the other 10 hours are distributed from third to the seventh year. After the end of every term, the school staff has meetings called "Juntas de Curso," where teachers can discuss objectives, scores and workable solutions to attitudinal and performance issues. Most teachers of the institution are from the school surrounding towns.

2.3 The need for this research project

As Nation (2009) mentioned in his book, two of the focuses of intensive reading are *Comprehension* which looks for understanding a text and *Vocabulary*

where learner´s attention focuses on useful words as well as their meaning and use. Thus, an integrated vocabulary instruction could encompass the Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach proposed by new Ecuadorian curriculum. The EFL curriculum considers CLIL as a method to access and learn English in an authentic and meaningful context, focusing on language in use, rather than knowledge of context.

One of the three top goals set in the English Curriculum is to develop the social, intellectual and personal, skills to achieve learners´ potential to contribute productively in a progressively globalized world that functions in English. Therefore, teaching reading is one of the meaning-focused input strands (Nation, 2009) that deserves much attention to devote in class and outside. Furthermore, learners could experience learning unfamiliar words by engaging in reading, instead of giving attention to separate bits of information.

2.4 Conclusion

Comprehension*, and *vocabulary* as two of the focuses in intensive reading (Nation, 2009) and the inclusion of CLIL will guide teachers to understand how to improve their methodology regarding reading comprehension in intensive reading. It also will break a tradition for vocabulary instruction as an isolated instruction.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Introduction

This section examines and exposes the existing literature as well as related studies to guide the research. It also provides information to discuss the findings. There is plenty information about reading and vocabulary, as well as, how these two features are intrinsically interrelated to succeed in the language. It begins exposing the importance of reading in another language, intensive reading, reading comprehension, and the levels of reading comprehension to focus on instruction. It also recalls the advantages of scaffolding reading comprehension to make learners improve their performance on questions tasks or comprehension tasks.

Then, the literature goes to explore vocabulary, its importance on reading comprehension and methods for teaching intensive reading. Moreover, this chapter describes the tiers of utility which are a guide to choosing proper words to be explained or taught in a reading lesson. The chapter concludes by exposing two related studies of integrated vocabulary instruction. All the literature comes from scientific studies and well-documented books to support this investigation.

3.2 Reading in another language

As reading is useful for language acquisition (Harmer, 2007), comprehension of a text involves language knowledge and recognition of main ideas (Grabe, 2004). However, Nation (2009) highlighted that apart from *comprehension* which means understanding a text in intensive reading, the *vocabulary* emphasizes on drawing learners' attention to useful words, their meaning and use. Both comprehension and vocabulary are part of the features of intensive reading.

Learning to read in another language can be as meaningful as learning to read in native language due to the alphabetic principles, reading strategies, and positive attitudes toward reading and phonetic awareness that learners can bring in second language reading. The principles for teaching reading proposed by Nation (2009) involve *meaning-focused input*, where reading can be set for different purposes, with an appropriate language level and used as a tactic to improve communication skills. *Language-focused Output*, relating reading to various skills such as listening, writing and speaking. *Language-focused learning* points out on developing sub-skills of reading, training learners with different reading strategies, giving them training and practice regarding integration of a range of tasks, as well as making students get familiar with various text structures. Finally, *fluency development* can encourage learners on getting fluency in reading, enjoy reading and read as much as possible (Nation, 2009).

3.3 Intensive Reading

Harmer (2007) said that intensive reading focuses on details explored in class in most of the cases. Intensive reading is a way of increasing learners' knowledge on features of the language and reading strategies, improving their reading abilities, and focusing on comprehension of a text (Nation, 2009). However, the literature also encourages to look for evidence that supports instructional practices, so teachers can minimize adverse effects or consequences on applying new strategies (Grabe, 2004).

Intensive reading concentrates on comprehension of a text even though the features studied in the text will not be useful at reading others. Thus, goals of intensive reading may be understanding of the text, and determining what language

features will get attention in the course. Intensive Reading can be good preparation for subsequent writing activities.

Some grammatical forms and vocabulary are considered as features for teaching in intensive reading. The topic of a passage helps to determine what features to learn, so they cannot be useful in other texts. However, those chosen features or items often occur in a varied range of texts. Therefore, intensive reading meets with things that will often be encountered in the language, as well as strategies that can be applied to numerous documents (Nation, 2009).

Furthermore, two important features in intensive reading are *comprehension and vocabulary*. Comprehension aims at understanding a text, and vocabulary on drawing learner´s attention to useful words and their corresponding meaning, form, and use. Regarding vocabulary instruction, the chosen words can be assigned or later and further study.

Nation (2009) emphasizes that even though the explanation of a text should not employ the first language, its use can enhance its understanding. Instructors should direct learners to learn features, so they can recognize them in future texts and extend its learning later. The language-focused learning can fall with high intensity in intensive reading led by a teacher and written activities (pronominal questions) to boost texts comprehension.

Concerning a full exploration of a text in class, Harmer (2007) stated that all the activities to exploit a text depend exclusively on the teachers. It does not make sense to read a text and drop it to do simply a different thing. A good instructor should integrate reading into an exciting lesson sequence using pre, during and after activities with a range of activities to make the reading class more significant and motivating.

3.4 Reading Comprehension

In L1, reading comprehension includes factors such as learners´ proficiency, age, student motivation or a correlation between L1 and L2. Less able readers in L1 are in disadvantage comparing with those students who are proficient in L1 regarding comprehension skills such as L2 grammar, vocabulary, phonological awareness and others (Olmez, 2016). However, Olmez (2016) does not show a correlation between reading comprehension in various levels of understanding with vocabulary.

Profound and richer inference may lead to making learners more independent of the text (Saadatnia, Ketabi, & Tavakoli, 2017). The literature collected by Olmez (2016) also explains that reading comprehension encircles low and high levels of processing. As lower levels work for decoding, higher levels go beyond recognition.

3.4.1   Levels of comprehension

It exists three levels of reading comprehension: literal, inferring, and evaluating. Firstly, the readers work on literal comprehension that requires taking explicit information from a text, then, subsequently, these tasks help the readers get immerse in a deeper interaction such as inferring and evaluating (Basaraba, Yovanoff, Alonzo, & Tindal, 2012)

Literal Comprehension. A study from Saadatnia, Ketabi, and Tavakoli (2017) explains that literal comprehension requires a full engagement in extracting accurate information from a full displayed text. This level depends exclusively upon reader´s word-level processing capacity, so they can absorb a meaning creating a combination of words including sequences, context, and facts. These three components imply mental integration which is pivotal in literal comprehension.

Inferential Comprehension. In an inferential level, readers should go beyond the literal meaning of the passage to understand it fully. Inferring consists of a knowledge-driven process, in other words, the learner might summarize, synthesize or generalize a text to extract information that requires further reasoning because the needed information is not explicitly stated in the text. A profound and richer inference making may help learners to be more independent with texts (Saadatnia, Ketabi, & Tavakoli, 2017).

Inferencing does not only mean reading between lines, or decoding a hidden message; it also draws on background knowledge and conclusions. There are three types of inferencing: *elaborative inferences* which refers to elaborating propositions not essential to facilitate comprehension; *bridging inferences* are necessary understanding for comprehension and written coherence for readers. Finally, *causal bridging inferences* that are conversational causal relations visible from texts (Cheung, 2013).

Evaluation Level. This level implies a high degree of thinking; learners work on activities such as synthesizing, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating a text (Gülhiz, 2010). Evaluative comprehension requires the students analyze and critically interpret the passage recalling their background knowledge and experiences. Evaluative understanding is the most sophisticated level of comprehension because it demands an extension of knowledge. To reach an evaluative level the reader should understand the text in a literal meaning, then interpret what the text says, and finally, analyze and evaluate the information (Basaraba, Yovanoff, Alonzo, & Tindal, 2012).

3.4.2   Analysis of the levels

Inference making on expository texts becomes harder for the readers because they could be experiencing a lack of enough exposure to authentic material or scientific resources. Consequently, these issues influence negatively at processing a passage at an inferential level (Saadatnia, Ketabi, & Tavakoli, 2017). A better inference making can be possible after a strong literal comprehension of a text. Furthermore, there is a facility in inference making for narratives due to an advantageous dependence on background knowledge.

When working with narrative texts, learners lie heavily in their background knowledge that most of the readers naturally possess. As the readers make use of a preexisting world knowledge structures, more work seems to be devoted by teachers on inference-making skills in class (Saadatnia, Ketabi, & Tavakoli, 2017). Saadatnia, Ketabi, and Tavacoli (2017) suggest working on exploratory studies that include the mechanisms and processes of comprehension at diverse levels, both on expository and narrative texts to provide a more accurate view of the mental processes readers employ to comprehend a piece of text.

3.5 Scaffolding Reading Comprehension

Many teachers argue what the best practices to promote reading comprehension are, and what instruments can be useful to gauge, which teaching methods can be used to scaffold reading comprehension. Smit, Grift, Bot, and Jansen (2017) developed an instrument to help learners to move from learning to read to reading to learn (Smit, Grift, Bot, & Jansen, 2017). Scaffolding enables teachers to focus on a whole, while learners absorb a text by parts and concentrate on challenges. Implementing scaffolding strategies may take students to upgrade their reading comprehension (Ali

& Ghanbari, 2011). Scaffolding abilities are associated with the three periods of before, during and after in a reading session.

The instrument designed by Smit, Grift, Bot, and Jansen (2016) can explore what scaffolding strategies a teacher is using in EFL reading lessons, with the aim of fostering critical literacy in EFL. The researchers observed in their study what an instructor did concerning instruction, explaining, hints, modeling, feedback, and questioning in a reading session. The authors described that a crucial first step for teachers in the scaffolding process is assessing the actual level and learning needs of the readers.

Smit, Grift, Bot, and Jansen (2016) stressed that scaffolding is a complicated process, but if teachers need to acquire a better approach to scaffold their learners' process of becoming skilled and critical EFL readers, it is an urge to start a diagnosis to evaluate the current teaching strategies. Therefore, a well-developed observation list based on certain strategies such as asking questions, modeling learning, giving feedback, hints, and instructions might make the lesson more student-centered.

One of the six principles of reading recalled by Harmer (2007) is that after the text chosen meets the requisites based on learners´ level, the topic, linguistic features or activation potential, the teacher needs to choose eloquent reading tasks. In other words, essential reading tasks mean right questions and proper activities to immerse students in a smooth transition in the readings stages (before, during and after a text). Imaginative and challenging activities can make a text exciting, the more appropriate they are for learners, the most successful the task will be.

3.6 Reading Comprehension Activities

According to Nation (2009), a skilled reading exercise focuses on items or strategies that apply to any text for dealing with any passage. A well-developed reading task directs the learners' attention to the text or a part of it so students can successfully fulfill the task or exercise. A proficient reading practice offers useful evidence regarding students´ performance and teachers´ ability on judging the value of the activity for teaching reading.

As most of the reading exercises are easy to develop, teachers must choose or adapt texts to the specific needs of their learners. However, elaborating reading activities requires a certain amount of skill and time. One of the teacher´s role is preparing material to teach the language so that they can increase their flexibility for successful language teaching. Thus, a well-developed reading exercise that focuses on strategies or items applicable to any texts gets the students to read the passage, provide useful feedback for helping to improve the learning and teaching, and it is easy to develop.

Comprehension questions in one form or another are one of the language teaching techniques most frequently used to train learners in reading. Comprehension questions can take many forms, namely pronominal questions; yes/no questions, true/false statements, multiple-choice items and blank-filling or completion exercises. However, although comprehension questions may have a role to play in *practicing* reading, the various forms of reading comprehension questions are not valuable for *teaching* learners to read.

One of the main worries about comprehension questions is that a simple question form can play many roles such as checking vocabulary, sentence structure, making inferences, or only checking the ability to comprehend the interrogation itself. On

another hand, comprehension questions tend to be local rather than general. Most of the questions draw attention to the message of the text, and according to George (1972:11, as in Nation, 2009) direct motivation to language feature is completely different to the motivation of a message.

Comprehension questions can query whether the students understand what they are reading, while a well-designed reading exercise can say "Can you deal with the same language features in other passages?" Commonly, comprehension questions draw students' attention to texts. It is a frequent practice to pre-test comprehension questions in standardized tests to make sure that learners are not able to answer the questions without reading the text. However, it can be difficult to design good comprehension questions because it takes substantial effort, skill and time. Nevertheless, comprehension questions are very suitable for *practicing* reading and getting students enjoy reading, regardless of the disadvantages.

A considerable time of the reading practice in class should belong to tasks and activities that develop a consciousness of text characteristics in students and help them to boost their reading skills. Indeed, text difficulty examination may be based on features such as readability or interest, and the type and structure of the text. People who are immersed in material development can design reading tasks focused on text typical features and activities that deal with sentence relationships, main ideas or supporting sentences in both narrative and expository texts ignoring the meaning of each ambiguous word (Saadatnia, Ketabi, & Tavakoli, 2017).

3.6.1 Focusing on Comprehension Questions

Some discussions presented in Nation´s book say that the literal comprehension of a text involves understanding what a passage exposes. For instance,

the readers can answer the questions by quoting parts of the text such as in sentence completion, and it is not a very demanding task unless the learners were not allowed to look at the passage for the response. Additionally, Bloom taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956) can be considered to increase the level of challenge at designing comprehension questions (pronominal questions). Engku and Sarudin and Muhamad (2016) suggest including gradually critical reading strategies to enhance critical thinking skills.

In fact, Kamgar and Jadidi (2016) investigated the relationship of critical reflection and self-regulation with learners´ reading comprehension, and they discovered that it does exist a significant association between critical thinking and reading comprehension. The researchers also concluded that readers with less critical thinking performed poor on reading comprehension. Consequently, the previous finding reflects a positive influence on critical thinking on reading comprehension skills. Therefore, EFL teachers ought to be trained on critical thinking reading to simplify reading comprehension (Kamgar & Jadidi, 2016).

Question forms. The reading questions can take many forms, but some of the first illustrated by Nation (2009) are pronominal questions, yes/no questions, and sentence completion. The pronominal questions are those that use wh-questions words. This kind of exercise is linked with the writing ability because it gets learners to write an answer. Yes/no questions include short alternatives for solving them, so it does not involve complicated writing skills. Finally, sentence completion includes completing sentences by filling the blanks to demonstrate whether learners understood the passage.

It exists four forms in sentence completion. The first when the sentences are exactly from the text. Second, when the words to fill the blanks can be found in the

text. Third, when the words are not the same as in the passage, but comprises the same idea. Lastly, when the needed words are not in the passage, so the students should take words from their vocabulary bank to complete the sentence.

3.7 Vocabulary

Intensive reading represents a significant opportunity for working with vocabulary. The following principles should direct attention to vocabulary. First, high-frequency words devote considerable attention. Second, low-frequency words are quickly presented or ignored. Third, the strategies used with vocabularies such as guessing, analysis of words parts or dictionary use; deserve a constant training with proper time. Guessing and analyzing words can be practiced with high or low-frequency words.

At examining the relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary size, there is a great achievement in reading comprehension tests when there is a high performance in vocabulary tests. In a few words, the more words a learner acquires the more he can understand a reading (Engku, Sarudin, & Muhamad, 2016). However, a chosen text used in class should embrace two considerations such as the unknown words to be tolerated and the necessary vocabulary size that the students need.

Vocabulary is primary for communication and a prerequisite for reading comprehension. Chall (1987 as cited in Naeimi & Chow, 2015) exposed that an adequate knowledge of words contributes on reading comprehension, and reading abilities can promote vocabulary enhancement. According to Naeimi and Chow (2015), there are direct and indirect learning strategies. Direct strategies emphasize on strategies where the learner can use tools such as dictionaries, and indirect strategies

enhance learning indirectly, in other words with not special intention on words (Naeimi & Chow, 2015).

3.7.1   Vocabulary knowledge in Reading Comprehension

A review by Hamzehlou, Zainal and Ghaderpour (2012) to expand our understanding of the intricate relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension highlights the importance of vocabulary knowledge in language acquisition. For instance, learners can experience difficulties with unknown words while they are reading. Thus, students and teachers may recognize that one of the most significant obstacles in reading comprehension is word recognition or lexical access. Nevertheless, many EFL teachers challenge their students´ capacity to deal with no familiar words in a text. Moreover, there is an important consideration that knowledge depth, vocabulary knowledge breadth, and reading comprehension are thoroughly interrelated (Hamzehlou, Zainal, & Ghaderpour, 2012).

Vocabulary is a strong predictor when reading a text because can enhance reading comprehension (Engku, Sarudin, & Muhamad, 2016). A study (Li & Kirby, 2014) examined the relationship between two dimensions of vocabulary (breadth and depth) and their effects on reading comprehension which brought to light that there is a close connection between vocabulary knowledge and reading skills. Literature suggests that traditional methods of measuring vocabulary evaluate with more intensity breadth of vocabulary; however, they do not capture a broad view of uses, form, and meaning of that word, in other words, how well that word is known (Wesche & Paribakht, 1996).

Both breadth and depth strongly contribute on reading comprehension; nonetheless, breadth of vocabulary has a stronger effect. Vocabulary depth is essential on tests related to writing skills to test reading comprehension. On another view, in

practical tests, most the learners read the questions first and then look for the main words in the passage to answer the questions.

Li and Kirby (2014) also suggest paying careful attention to what skills teachers pretend to measure because the dimension of the vocabulary depend upon the type of reading comprehension. On another hand, even though some studies inform relevant themes about vocabulary instruction on improving reading comprehension, there is a lack of understanding how to develop an effective program for improving comprehension, as well as its long-term effects (Wright & Cervetti, 2016).

The reader´s level of vocabulary knowledge influences the comprehension performance in a language, and it is a predictor of reading ability (Sidek & Rahim, 2015). Having a right size of vocabulary can enhance the use of the language and be functional in target context (Schmitt, Cobb, Horst, & Schmitt, 2015). Additionally, an appropriate size and coverage cannot just help with comprehension, but also determine how many words the learners can learn from a text. Schmitt, Jian, and Grabe (2011) carried out research with advanced learners where it was possible to study the connection between percentage of words known and reading comprehension.

The previous study pointed out that the level of vocabulary depends on the degree of comprehension of a text, and data suggested that even though comprehension cannot be easy where there is more than one unknown word, the learners strive to understand as much as they can and succeed. However, the study also suggested that if a reader knows 100% of words, it is not a guarantee to understand a text. Some words may be defined as crucial for comprehension because the user can experience

problems along with reading, but if an unknown word is exposed several times, the reader may figure out the meaning of the word and understand what he is reading.

Reading and vocabulary size is a reciprocal activity where reading depends on vocabulary and vice versa. Reading comprehension is the central purpose for reading, but sometimes it is considered annoying or confusing. In other words, reading comprehension can become complicated for teaching at including its purpose, properties and reading itself. Some studies focus on the effect of vocabulary size on reading comprehension (Hamzehlou, Zainal, & Ghaderpour, 2012) while others concentrate on the consequences of reading comprehension on vocabulary size (Gungor & Yayh, 2016).

3.7.2 Teaching Vocabulary

Vocabulary plays a pivotal role in language acquisition, thus, designing practical vocabulary tasks or instructions is a crucial aspect based on learners´ needs. Vocabulary instructions should be combined with reading activities (Garner, 2015). Folse (2004, as cited in Ali, Mukundan, Baki & Mohd, 2012) asserted that vocabulary could be as important as grammar or other areas of language learning. For instance, as much as they know words can define learners´ ability to read and hear, and unlike how students learn words in their L1, in L2 the words differ in form, meaning, and usage.

Vocabulary is pivotal for communication and a pre-requisite for reading comprehension. Thus, teachers should identify and employ an effective language learning strategy that could boost learners´ vocabulary competences (Naeimi and Chow, 2015). Along similar lines, a study (Morton, 2015) explored how teachers see their responsibility for teaching vocabulary in a CLIL context. Morton (2015)

suggested that some content teachers in CLIL settings may display distinct types of knowledge in their daily practice, develop a clear understanding of the use of language and interaction and create learning opportunities in the classroom. According to Morton (2015), the higher the level of comprehension of reading is required, the more of the vocabulary is needed to understand it (Schmitt, Jiang, & Grabe,2011).

Naeimi and Chow (2015) shared an important finding regarding direct or indirect vocabulary learning strategies. They looked for measuring the effectiveness of two direct vocabulary learning strategies and two indirect ones, there, they found out that the direct form to teach vocabulary can be more successful than teaching indirectly. On the contrary, the indirect strategies for learning vocabulary require providing more assistance to the learners.

3.7.3 Choosing words: Tiers of utility

A strong connection between vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension suggests a useful framework for classifying vocabulary at the time to select the items to teach and how to teach them (Nisbet, 2010). There are several forms to choose the words to teach: (1) picking the unknown vocabulary for learners or those words that learners will come across more often in the text, (2) choosing the important words to understand a text. The second condition enlightens the idea that the vocabulary instruction should be integrated into the curriculum, focusing on word learning through language, and learning material (Bachowickz, Fisher, & Ogle, 2006).

Regarding tiers of utilities, there are three levels described by Beck, McKeown, and Linda (2002). *Tier 1* considered those words presented in a high frequency in a text and can be easily exposed using visuals or realia. *Tier 2* involves high-frequency

words, but it also includes academic vocabulary, these kinds of words are considered critical for understanding a text, and learning them can produce a powerful and positive impact to verbal skills. On the contrary, *Tier 3* encompasses low-frequency words considered technical and associated with a discipline, but with a further utility (Beck, McKeown, & Linda, 2002).

3.7.4   Intentional learning of words

It is widely exposed that when focusing on words with meaning-based learning, it tends to be more beneficial for building proficiency, whereas vocabulary needs attention to be learned explicitly (Schmitt, 2008). Numerous studies (Andrew & Adams, 2010) (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011) have demonstrated that explicit vocabulary leads to greater gains concerning retention. Andrew and Adams (2010) said that an explicit instruction of vocabulary could enhance more vocabulary learning than incidental exposure. The researchers also stated that a clear isolated instruction focus on learning unfamiliar words, allowing teachers to teach more respecting the features of words without minimizing reading comprehension.

3.8 Integrated vocabulary instruction: related studies

Vocabulary is considered as a keystone in curriculum design and must be introduced in school with reading instruction (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008). Teacher's reflection showed that educators are aware of finding a best systematic and comprehensible instruction of vocabulary. Moreover, literature proposes that vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary instruction can work simultaneously with reading instruction (Bachowickz, Fisher, & Ogle, 2006) using a comprehensive and integrated method to teach vocabulary and reading.

To illustrate the integration of vocabulary instruction in reading, Andrew and Adams (2010) carried out a study where they developed two different classes, one with integrated vocabulary instruction and another with an isolated focus on form instruction. The previous research had the purpose of knowing which one of the instructions could be more useful for enhancing vocabulary learning. Even though the study showed benefits for both isolated and integrated instruction, the literature revised by the two researchers showed that isolated vocabulary could have greater gains than integrated instruction

3.8.1 Study One

Johnston, Mercer, and Geres-Smith (2016) developed a study in an elementary school in Vancouver to find out whether incorporating vocabulary instruction in individual reading interventions for English Language Learners could improve reading comprehension. This study measured the learners´ cognitive functioning, receptive vocabulary, oral reading fluency, passage reading comprehension and generalized reading comprehension. There were three interventions with five sessions in each one.

The results suggested that incorporating vocabulary instruction may have a small impact on the reading comprehension of some learners and that reducing time on fluency-building to include vocabulary instruction lead to a slight effect on reading fluency. In fact, the study showed that a possible exposure to vocabulary words might improve understanding information, but not to get an overall understanding of the text content (Johnson, Mercer, & Geres, 2016).

3.8.2 Study Two

A study was carried out in a suburban area in the United States to investigate to what extent two instructional frameworks vary in reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. The investigation focused on the type of explicit academic vocabulary instruction, comprehension strategies, and support given to learners to be autonomous on vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, perceptions of autonomy support and reading engagement in young students. The study was a formative experiment which consisted on investigating how an instructional intervention can set a pedagogical goal. The research collected quantitative and qualitative data to assess the vocabulary, reading comprehension, expository writings, and instructors´ support for autonomy (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011).

The data from the study indicated some high gains in academic vocabulary for students in both lower and upper learners in the intensified vocabulary instruction (IVI) group. On the other hand, although the contextualized vocabulary instruction (CVI) group showed increasing academic vocabulary in both lower and higher levels, the scores were lower than the IVI group. That means that explicit instruction in intensified vocabulary instruction group may appear to have better results regarding academic vocabulary than the contextualized vocabulary instruction group. Also, the findings showed that the more specific the words are in content, the more knowledge they get during instruction.

Regarding reading comprehension, the quantitative data showed a significant improvement in both groups of interventions, but with significant higher results in the group where the instruction encircled a reading enjoyment and attention to cognitive strategies instead of exact words teaching. The gains were significant in lower and higher readers. Indeed, the CVI group improved in literal and inferential

comprehension tasks, while the IVI groups only showed improvements in literal comprehension. The reason for this finding could be a lack of conceptual knowledge in certain items, or maybe because learners presented a lack of explicit strategy instruction which it could influence them to be more carelessly when reading (Taboada & Rutherford, 2011).

3.9 Conclusion

The integration of vocabulary in reading has been widely documented. However, the literature showed a lack of studies to find out the benefits of introducing vocabulary instruction in content to increase reading comprehension performance. Many authors have provided information about reading by recalling the importance of vocabulary, and many others have also presented vocabulary accompanying skills such as reading.

The literature review highlighted two research findings regarding the topic of the study as well as providing support for the results of this study. All the literature review focused on clarifying the importance of a dual-focused instruction to prove that an integrated vocabulary instruction contributes to improving reading comprehension performance.

The next chapter constitutes the backbone of this research. It involves the research methodology used for this study: view´s reality of the researcher, the experimental design that marked a path to follow for answering the questions, the methods for data collection, and the sampling.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Research paradigm

4.1.1 Definition and rationale

This chapter intends to present a clear understanding of how the characteristics of the study match a positivist posture and look for describing the effects of an integrated vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension activities. Therefore, the application of an integrated vocabulary teaching in one group and contrasts the results with a second group involved in a traditional (isolated) vocabulary instruction is necessary (Bryman, 2012).

4.2 Methodological stances

On an ontological level, this study responds to a positivist view which allowed the researcher to analyze the relationship or differences between groups (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The human nature of the study is determinism, in other words, teachers can provide the strategies and tools, but just learners can react and decide which position to adopt so they can accomplish what they what to accomplish. Regarding methodology, as Kaplan (1973) cited by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) explained, the aim of the methodology is to help researchers to understand the process of research, not just the product of inquiry.

Therefore, the investigator is aligned with a quantitative methodological position. A quantitative position helped the researcher on answering the research questions based on the previous ontological and epistemological positions; moreover, a quantitative design is a singular characteristic of positivism which describes learners as human beings that respond to their environment. Therefore, taking into

consideration the quantitative methodology employed in this study, the methods were tests and a questionnaire.

4.3 Experimental Design

4.3.1 Definition and rationale

An experimental design allowed the researcher to manipulate and control the conditions of the inquiry that according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) lead events to which the researcher is interested, introducing an intervention and measuring the difference arisen. Mackey and Gass (2005) claimed that a typical experimental study involves comparison to answer the research question. In this case, the researcher looked for comparing the results between a control and experimental group. This method is also known as between-group design (Creswell, 2015).

4.3.2 Quasi-Experimental Design

Even though all experiments have similar features such as manipulation of variables or group comparison, they could vary depending on the type of design to be used. In this case, the researcher used a quasi-experiment that belongs to a between-group design. One of the principal characteristics of a quasi-experiment is the absence of random assignment of the subjects for control and experimental groups, and Creswell (2015) added that due to some circumstances the researcher should take entire groups.

Quasi-experimental studies result in not artificial interventions (Bryman, 2012), but, it could introduce more threats regarding internal validity that the researcher should address at the time of designing the experiment (Creswell, 2015). A posttest- only design was suitable for the study due to the process of the intervention.

4.3.3 Researcher´s role

The researcher participated with the students all the time during the reading sessions. The researcher was who provided the instruction. Therefore, it was necessary to encourage students to work as usual. The teacher included a warm-up activity before each reading session to create a relaxing atmosphere. There was very treasured time because it allowed the researcher to get some impressions and opinions about the instruction.

4.3.4 Participant researcher´s role

All the students from the First baccalaureate were willing to take part in the study and voluntarily accepted to be active learners during the reading sessions. They were asked to be punctual in the regular schedule, so they could fully participate in class. After each reading class (60 minutes), the participants answered the comprehension questions and fill in the blanks activities (reading comprehension test). Moreover, the students took part in three vocabulary knowledge scale tests and the participants in the experimental group also answered a perception´s questionnaire. Learners´ participation and collaboration were a pivotal part of the research process.

4.4 Ascertaining the warrant for the study

- *Reliability*

Bryman (2012) described reliability as the consistency of measure of a concept. Thus, to ensure reliability in this study all the questions in the comprehension tests were designed following the steps suggested in the literature (Cohen, Manion &Morrison, 2007) for developing comprehension questions. Moreover, the questions were revised by an EFL professional, modified using the feedback provided, pre-piloted with a student, reviewed and adapted following the students' difficulty, and finally piloted with 35 non-participant students. The researcher also used Cronbach´s

Alpha to measure internal consistency in the questionnaire and reading comprehension tests.

- *Validity*

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) exposed that a careful sampling can improve validity in quantitative scenarios; the use of appropriate instruments and proper statistical treatments of data, besides the literature suggests that it is impossible to get a full degree of perfection. Regarding validity, the vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS) and questionnaire were taken from the literature. The VKS has been employed in different studies to measure vocabulary learning and retention (Paribakht & Wesche, 1997; Kim, 2011; Golonka, Bowles, Kramasz, Blake & Buckwalter, 2015). The VKS and adapted questionnaire were revised and checked by EFL professionals and piloted with non-participants with similar characteristics of the participants in the study. In the case of the comprehension tests, it was a most rigorous process due to the uniqueness of the investigation.

4.5 Ethical considerations

Since ethical considerations are critical issues in a study, the researcher paid careful attention to any harms and avoided them (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The participants were given as much information as they needed to make a final decision to participate or not in the study (Bryman, 2012) using an informed consent form. Additionally, the researcher followed all the steps to protect and respect privacy.

Before starting the study, the researcher requested institutional permission to the principal, but the researcher was informed that another formal request from the university should be addressed to the school so that the principal could communicate

about the research study to the corresponding department of the Ministry of Education. The request was sent and approved by the corresponding representatives of the Ministry of Education of the district. Secondly, an informed consent form was elaborated by the researcher, so the students could read and signed it (Bryman, 2012). This document included the purpose, the data protection, confidentiality of names, and other crucial details suggested by Bryman (2012).

As most of the participants were teenagers under eighteen, the researcher also requested permission and authorization from their corresponding legal representatives (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Before signing the informed consent form, the students were given all the details of the study to clarify doubts and concerns by discussing them in a face-to-face meeting. The corresponding informed documents were extended in Spanish.

Because of the nature of the study, there was a critical ethical issue to hand it. This potential issue in experimental studies concerns about the disadvantages from the control group by not receiving a likely benefit. Thus, one strategy to counter this issue was offering the beneficial treatment after the experiment concludes. The students from the control group were invited to participate in a two-week reading course. The students attended for an hour per day, from 4 to 5 p.m. at the school.

4.6 Method

4.6.1 Definition and characteristics

Once having set the methodology and perspective from which this research was carried out, the methods and instruments used in the study are explained. The researcher used three instruments to gather all the data needed to answer the research questions. The reading tests measured the reading comprehension performance, a

vocabulary knowledge scale gauged the depth of specific words in three stages of the study, and finally, a questionnaire gathered the learner's perceptions of the experimental group regarding the integrated vocabulary instruction.

4.6.2   Methods of data collection

Placement test. The participants took an EFL placement test to get evidence of their language level. The test was taken from Four Corners series from Cambridge University Press prior authorization. The researcher was who directed the Objective placement test regarding the use of language, listening and reading as two colleagues from the same school were helping with the short interview (Placements speaking assessment). The placement speaking assessment measured student's productive skills with an approximate duration of 10 minutes. The Objective placement test comprises 50 multiple choice items that measure receptive skills such as listening, reading and grammar in approximately 40 minutes. One of the first findings of the study was the learners' level. Even though the students were in the first-year baccalaureate, the researcher found that most of the students suited on A1 English level, so the assumption that students had an A2 level was rejected.

Readings.   There were eight short texts taken from www.rong-chang.com with a similar characteristic such as word length, level (A1) and familiar context. However, the texts were adapted to fit the needs of the study, and some words were simplified into high-frequency words.

Target words. Regarding vocabulary, all the taken words were content words and were chosen in "tiers" of utility ((Beck, McKeown, & Linda, 2002) that means that the words were selected to improve reading comprehension of texts. A total of 5 or 6 words per texts (43 target words for the study) were chosen.

31

Session. The reading sessions took place over four weeks, and as it was a huge problem to carry out the study in an extracurricular time, the meeting took place in learners´ regular schedule, two sessions per week. In group A, the target vocabulary was taught following the traditional form, in other words, the target vocabulary was pre-taught. Each class started with a warm-up activity related to the short text. Following this stage, the teacher introduced the vocabulary by using flashcards focusing on its form and making sentences with the word. Then, the title was discussed or pictures used to make predictions about the reading. Finally, reading the whole texts with the teacher helped to control the pace of the reading and guaranteed that all participants were processing the text.

On a similar scenario but with a significant difference, group B started with the warm-up, then the title or pictures were discussed to get an idea of the text, after that, the researcher or a volunteer read the text aloud while the rest of the class followed along. If there was a sentence with a target word, the reader stopped at the end of the sentences, so the researcher could introduce the unknown word with a flash card, giving a synonym or translation, defining its role in the phrase and providing a new sentence with the target word. In this process, the words were taught in the content. The researcher paid careful attention to the time at teaching the words in both groups to avoid an extra exposure in class. Another key point was that learners could take notes as usual to prevent disagreements in teaching/learning traditional environment.

Reading Comprehension Tests. Following the given criteria by Nation (2009) on what a good reading exercise should do, the investigator took information from www.rong-chang.com to adapt and create eight tests. The tests allowed the researcher

to know if there was a variation in reading comprehension performance between the two groups. Each test had two parts: the first one based on pronominal and yes/no questions, and the second one on sentences completion. The comprehension questions were designed to be local with the purpose of understanding the passage and motivate learners to read. The sentence completion exercises were not exactly from the text. However, the missing words were in the reading. Also, there was not an initial letter as a clue in sentence completion. Each reading comprehension test contained five questions and five sentences completion.

Each reading and following test was piloted with 35 non-participant students with similar English level, genre, and age of group A and group B. However, before being used the tests, they were reviewed by an EFL professional, receiving feedback and making some modification to the questions. Afterwards, the questions and completion exercises were answered by a colleague from the same institution.

Questionnaire. After exploring different studies and considering the uniqueness of the study, the investigator used and adapted a closed-ended Likert-scale questionnaire on a five-point scale from two separate studies. Items 1 to 5 to know the perceptions of reading comprehension activities were from Guthrie and Lutz (2014) and elements 6-10 from Ali, Mukundan, Baki and Mohd (2012) to know the perceptions regarding learning vocabulary with reading. A guide for questionnaire construction suggested by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) was taken into consideration, afterwards, the researcher piloted the ten items with 35 non-participant students a month before the study began Moreover, the internal reliability of the questionnaire was tested with Cronbach´s Alpha coefficients (Bryman, 2012) having an internal consistency of 0.8. The administration of the survey was a day after the

last reading class to allow students to digest what they had learned in the reading class and avoid disruption on how they perceived the instruction. Students had to tick or fill the corresponding option (strongly agree to strongly disagree).

Vocabulary Test. The vocabulary test was based on an adapted *Vocabulary Knowledge Scale* (Kim, 2011; Golonka, Bowles, Kramasz, Blake & Buckwalter, 2015). The VKS had the 5-point scale to measure students´ first vocabulary knowledge, post-acquisition, and retention of the words. One of the primary reasons for using the VKS was that focuses on tracking the development of knowledge of specific words in an experimental situation (Wesche & Paribakht, 1996). After having the corresponding permission from the authors, the researcher adapted and translated the VKS into the mother tongue of the participants to avoid disruption and misunderstanding. The latest version of the VKS was piloted with 21 words from the first four readings prior its use in the study by 35 non-participant students to enhance reliability and validity of the instrument.

A week before the study began, the first VKS captured first levels of word knowledge. A second administration took place after the experiment ended to self-report the standard of word learning. Finally, a third administration took place two weeks after the instruction with the objective of measure learning and retention after a time to digest the information. Each test included the 43 target words. Before each test, the researcher gave instructions and explained how to answer it in learners´ mother tongue.

4.6.3   Selection and handling of data

An SPSS statistic program was a useful tool to code the data from the tests. An Independent Sample t-Test calculated and compare the means of reading

comprehension tests and the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) of the two groups

to answer questions one, and three. The SPSS program also coded the data from the

questionnaire, and the results were presented in different charts retrieved from the

statistic program.

4.7 Selection of the sampling

A convenient sampling allowed the researcher to select participants because they

were willing and available to take part in the study. (Creswell (2012) Therefore, the

participants for the control and experimental group were four classes from the five

groups in First Baccalaureate year. Both groups, group A, and group B were as

homogeneous as possible regarding age and gender. At the beginning of the study,

there were 23 girls and 18 boys in group A, and 22 girls and 18 boys in group B.

4.7.1   Participants

At the time of recruitment, there was a total of (N= 82) participants for this

study, 37 boys and 45 girls with ages between 15 to 18 years old. However, in the

final stage of the study, there were (N=66) students, 35 participants in the control

group and 31 in the experimental one. The participants in both groups are attending in

the afternoon and pursuing their first-year baccalaureate and have an A1 level of

English proficiency according to the CEFR.

4.7.2   Background of the participants

Most of the participants have been attending the institution since its inauguration

in 2013, all the students are Ecuadorian and live in areas around the school except a

minor part which comes from neighboring cities. A considerable number of

participants did not receive English classes in primary because they come from rural

areas where English was not part of their instruction. Moreover, English was not part

of the Ecuadorian curriculum. On the other hand, there is a small number of students who studied in primary schools where English was an extracurricular activity and thus they brought some prior knowledge of the language.

4.8 Conclusion.

This chapter presented a comprehensive view of researcher´s position, the kind of research or study, the methodology, instruments to gather the data, the process and all that represent pivotal for building a research study. The results of the data analysis are fully exposed in the following chapter, and thus it can offer the answers to the questions set in the first chapter.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Presentation of findings

After selecting the kind of information needed to answer the research questions and the appropriate instruments, tables will show a descriptive analysis of the data from the reading comprehension tests, while graphs will provide a clear understanding of the findings to compare them and know the differences between groups. Bar graphs will present the data from learner´s perception questionnaire, and the data from the three Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) will be exposed in tables and graphs. Most of the tables and graphs were retrieved from an SPSS software (PASW Statistic 18) (Bryman, 2012).

5.1.1   Characteristics of the participants

Table 1 Ethnographic information of the participants.

		Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	15	16	17
Instruction	Traditional	16	19	22	11	2
	Integrated	14	17	22	9	0

This table shows a total of 35 participants in the traditional vocabulary instruction and 31 in the integrated one. Here it shows a slight difference between the number of girls and boys. However, there is an equal quantity of learners with age of 15 in both groups, and an absence of students of 17 years old in the integrated instruction.

5.1.2   Reading Comprehension Tests

The participants took part in eight reading comprehension tests during the study. Both groups (traditional vocabulary instruction, and integrated vocabulary instruction) explored the same reading texts, two texts a week. The readings had between 95-113 words.

Table 2 Means of Readings Comprehension between TVI and IVI.

Texts	TVI		IVI	
	M	SD	M	SD
A thin man	8.66	1.16	8.61	1.38
Piano player	8.09	1.15	8.58	.89
A Fast driver	9.54	.74	9.71	.64
The Farmer	7.10	2.40	8.00	1.86
Fresh Salad	8.59	1.35	8.35	1.54
Eating Apples	7.40	1.94	8.65	1.23
Trash Day	7.77	1.86	7.94	1.46
Shining Shoes	8.60	1.06	9.16	.86

Note. TVI= traditional vocabulary instruction; IVI=integrated vocabulary instruction.

Table 2 illustrates a compilation to compare the means of the different reading comprehension tests. The highest mean comes from the "A fast driver Reading," where those students in the integrated vocabulary instruction got 9,71 while the traditional teaching got 9,54. On another hand, the reading "The farmer" got the lowest mean. For instance, the traditional teaching got 7,10 and the integrated instruction group 8. 63% of the participants from the traditional instruction group got between 8,09 and 9,54 while 37% got between 7,10 and 7,77. Similarly, the Integrated group obtained a 63% between 8,32 and 9,62. Moreover, 37 % a group of learners with 7,52 to 7,98.

Table 3 Summary of the total mean of Reading Comprehension Tests.

	Instruction	N	M	SD	Std. Error Mean
Performance	Traditional	35	8.22	.92	0.16
	Integrated	31	8.63	.62	0.11

Null Hypothesis: The means of both groups are equal.
Alternative Hypothesis: The mean of one of the groups is different.

According to Table 3, traditional instruction presents an average of 8.22 whereas the traditional one has 8,63. The table shows a difference between the groups.

Table 4 Independent Samples Test results from the total mean of Reading Comprehension Tests.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% CI of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	Std. Error Difference	LL	UL
Performance	Equal variances assumed	4.40	.040	-2.08	64	.042	-.41	.20	-.80	-.02
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.13	59.97	.037*	-.41	.19	-.79	-.02

Note: MD= Mean Difference; LL=lower level; UL=upper level
* p > *.05.*

Table 4 reflects the results retrieved by an independent sample t-test from IMB

SPSS statistic program to compare the means between the two groups regarding

reading comprehension tests.

Figure 1 Means from the Reading Comprehension Tests in TVI and IVI.
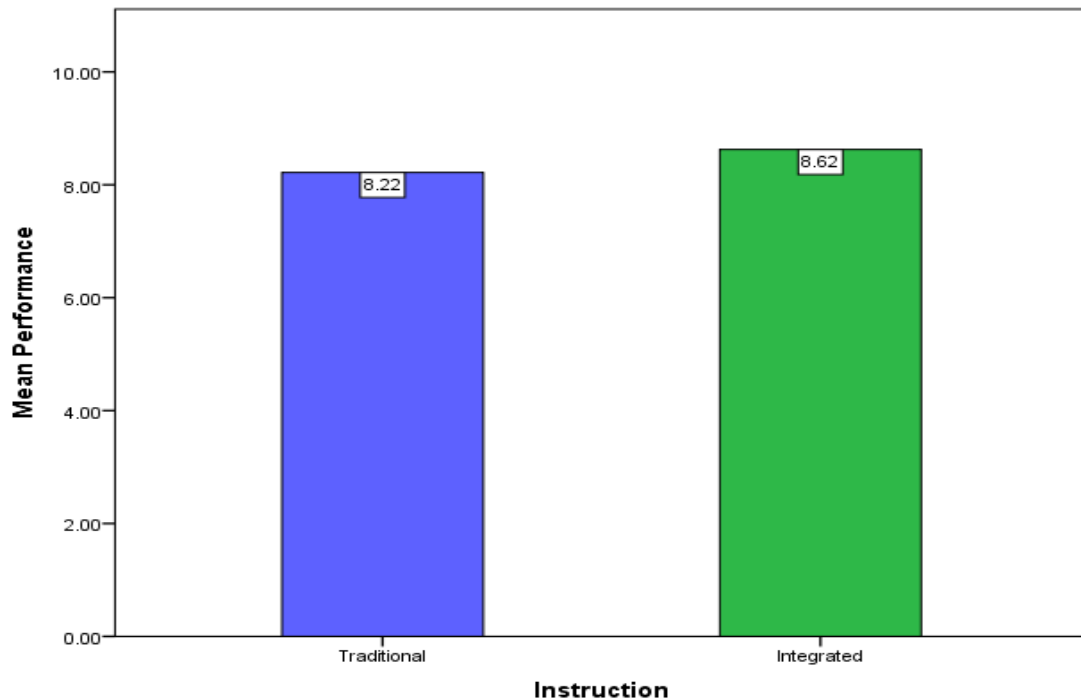
As shown in Figure 1, there is a slight difference between the two groups. The traditional group got 8,22, whereas, the integrated instruction group reached a mean of 8,62.

5.1.3 Perception Questionnaire

Table 5 Reliability Statistics of perception questionnaire.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.79	0.80	10

Figure 5 displays that Cronbach's alpha is 0.79, which indicates an acceptable level of internal consistency.

Figure 2 Understanding of the readings.
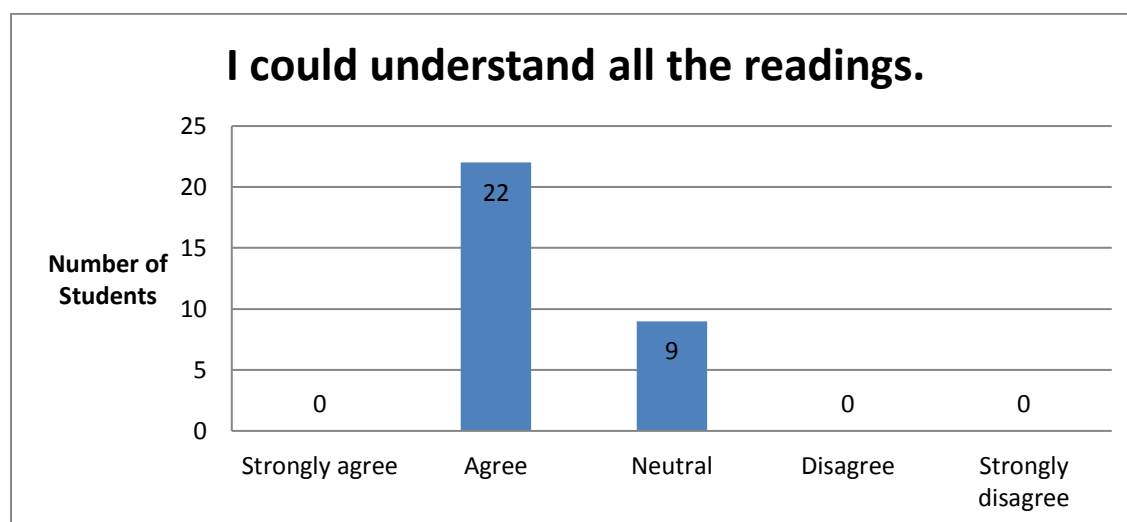
As is seen in Figure 2, we can observe just two kinds of perceptions regarding the understanding of the readings along the session. As noted, most of the students agree on having understood the readings while a minority of students did not have a clear perception if they understood or not.

Figure 3 Answering the questions about the readings.

I could correctly answer questions about the readings.

Number of Students

Category	Value
Strongly agree	5
Agree	8
Neutral	18
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
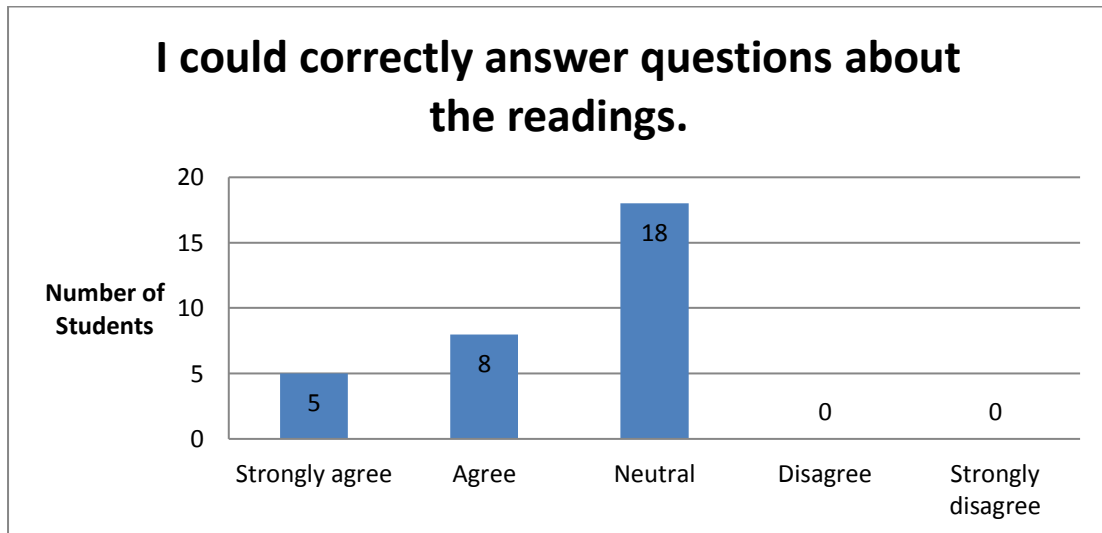
Figure 3 indicates that most of the students from the integrated instruction were unsure on answering whether they could correctly respond the questions about the readings. However, there is a small difference between the number of students who answered agree and strongly agree regarding their performance on the reading comprehension activities. It is stated that nobody disagrees or strongly disagree.

Figure 4 Clear key points.

The key points in the text were clear to me.

Number of Students

Category	Value
Strongly agree	14
Agree	12
Neutral	4
Disagree	1
Strongly agree	0
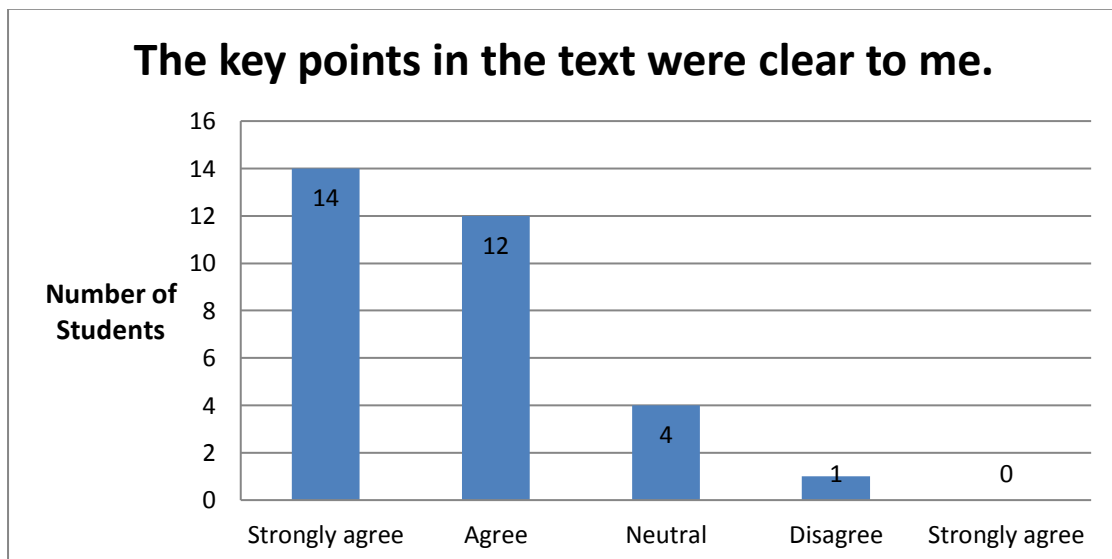
According to the results, a suitable number of students strongly agree on perceiving an easy identification of the key points of the readings, followed by those who only agree. Very few students felt uncertain at sharing their perception. There was one student among the group who had a minor problem with identifying the principal key points, and no one strongly disagrees.

Figure 5 Easiness of finding the main ideas.
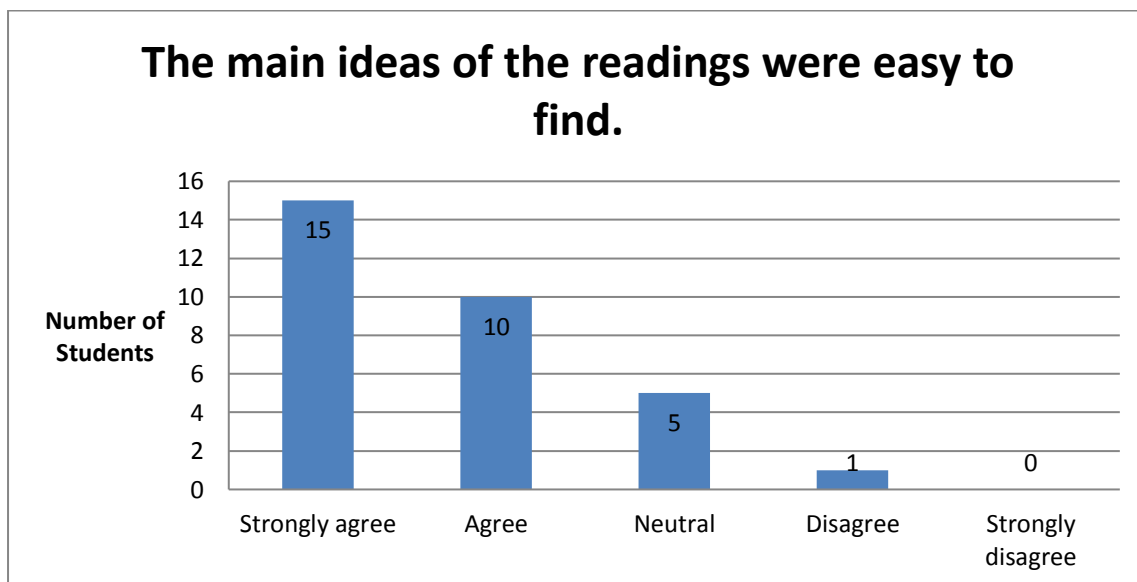
Figure 5 shows that most of the participants in this group could easily find the main ideas of the readings. However, there is a consistent difference compared to those students who just agreed. On another hand, there were a few students who could not define whether it was easy or not to find the main ideas in the texts. Moreover, only one participant disagrees on how easy it was to see the most important points, and no one participant reported a strong negative insight.

Figure 6 Reading enjoyment.

I enjoyed reading

Number of Students

21	7	3	0	0
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
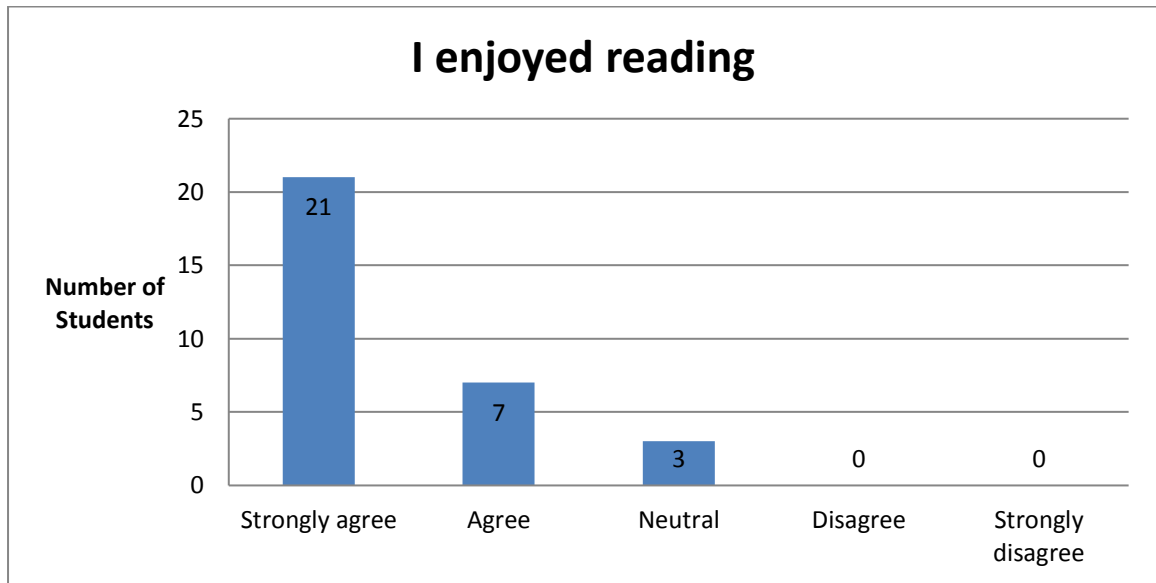
As shown in Figure 6, 21 students out of 31 perceived a great satisfaction at reading the short texts. Very few students (n=7) expressed agreement on reading pleasure, and three students presented an uncertain answer.

Figure 7 Vocabulary growth knowledge.

I could increase my knowledge about the words I learnt.

Number of Students

8	16	7	0	0
Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
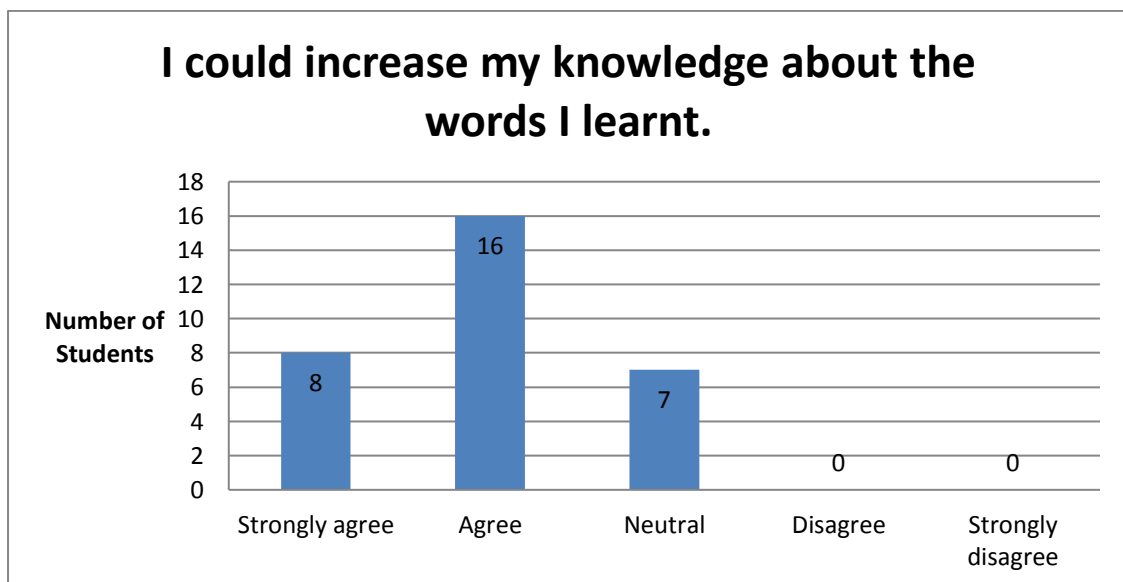
The data in this figure displays that more than 50% of the participants in the integrated instruction agree on increasing the understanding of the words they learned.

A small number of students strongly agreed (8 students) while just seven participants
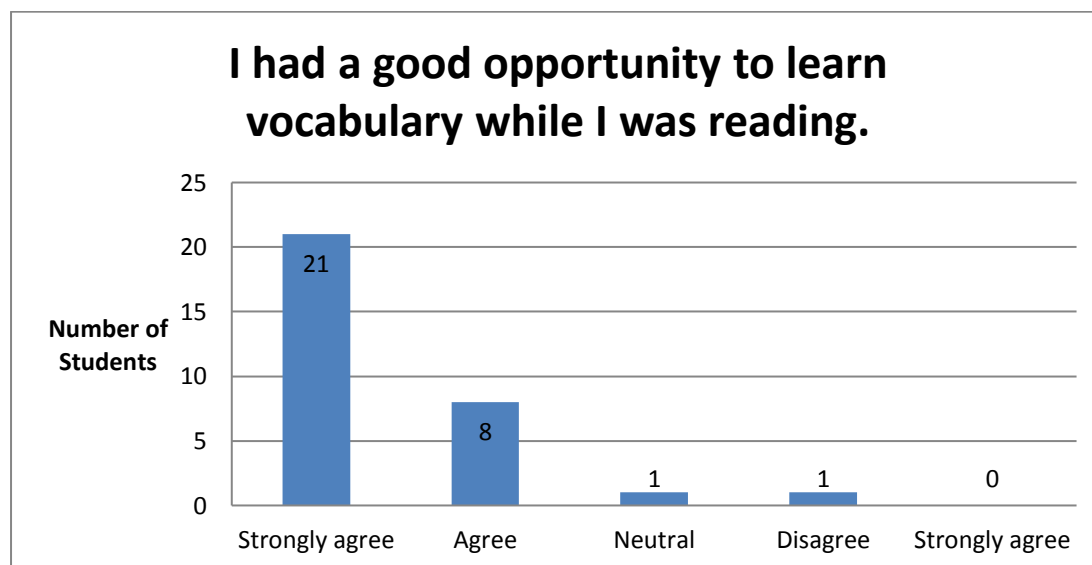
remained neutral.

Figure 8 Opportunity to learn vocabulary with reading.

I had a good opportunity to learn vocabulary while I was reading.

Number of Students

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly agree
	21	8	1	1	0

As Figure 8 shows, in item 7 most of the students (n=21) strongly agree when

answering the question. That means that more than 50% of participants perceived an

excellent opportunity for learning recent words as he/she is experiencing reading

instruction and a small number of students also (n=8) agree. On the contrary, the

minority students stayed neutral and disagreed.

Figure 9 Motivation to learn vocabulary.

I was motivated to learn vocabulary using this method

Number of Students

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	18	11	2	0	0
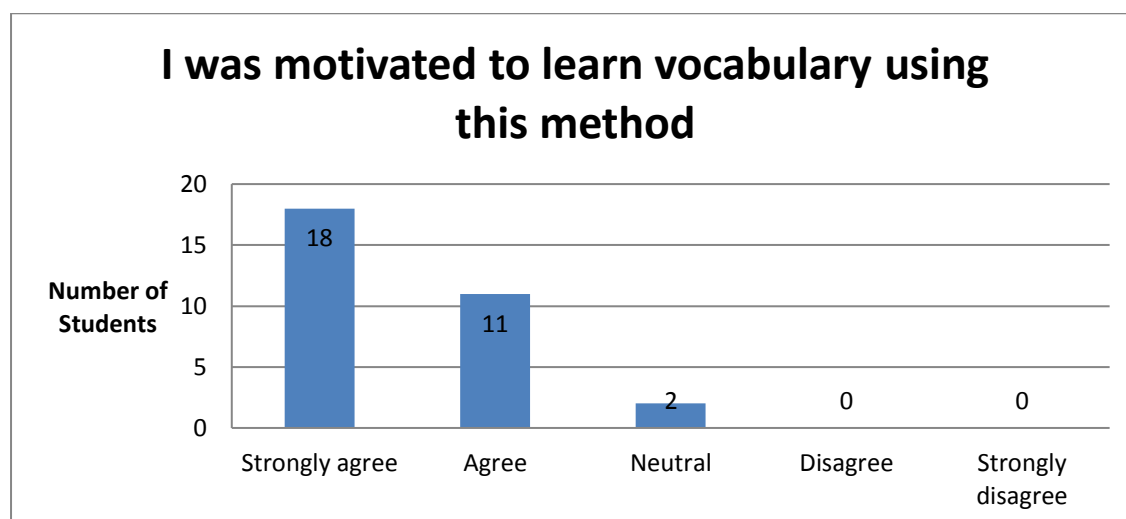
Figure 9 shows that when answering this question, most of the students felt strongly motivated to learn vocabulary while they were reading, additionally, eight students agreed on feeling motivated. Very few students (n=2) of the sample stayed neutral.

Figure 10 Vocabulary improvement.
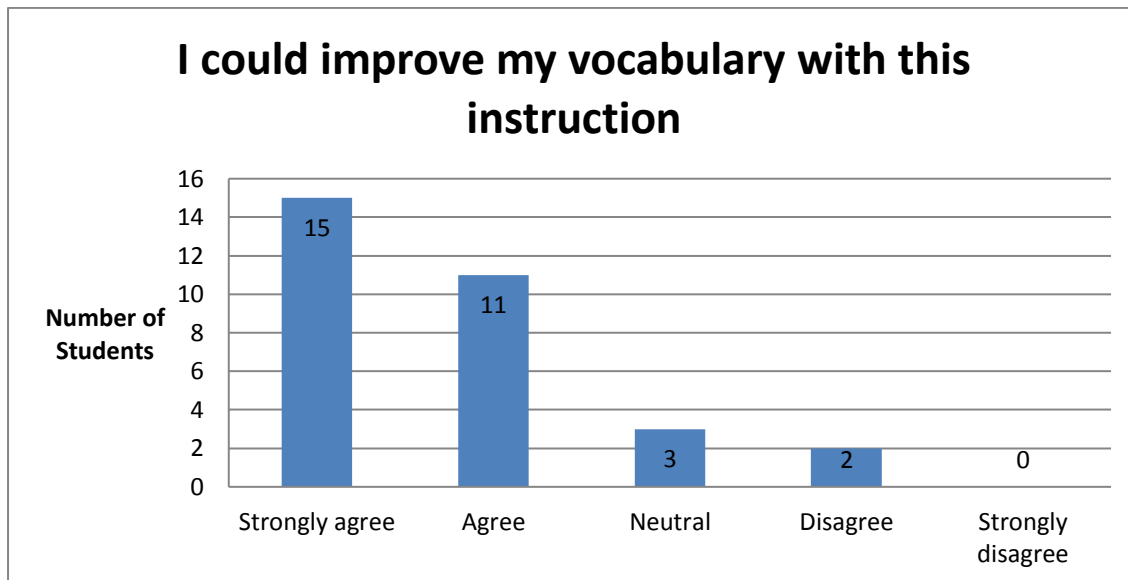
When participants showed their perceptions regarding improvements of vocabulary while working with reading, Figure 10 indicates that most of the participants claimed that they could improve their vocabulary during the reading sessions by saying they strongly agreed. This data is followed by a significant amount of learner who agreed on this question. On the opposite, three students continued neutral, and two disagreed.

Figure 11 Vocabulary learning enjoyment and reading instruction.
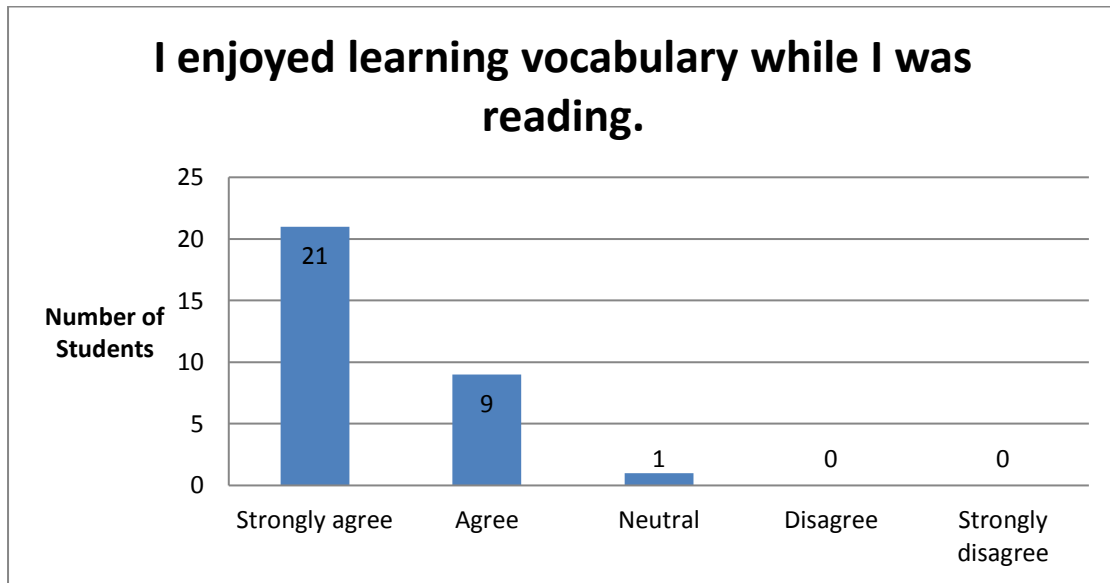
In Figure 11, we can appreciate a substantial number of students who strongly agreed with the statement of enjoying learning vocabulary while experiencing reading. The strong enjoyment represents more than a 50% of the sample. Less than 30% of the participants agreed, and one student stayed neutral.

5.1.4 Vocabulary Knowledge Scales

The vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS) was administered three times with the traditional and integrated vocabulary instruction groups. A pre-test was conducted a week before the study began to mitigate the effect of withdrawing attention on the target words to be taught in the reading sessions. Then, a post-test was run immediately after the reading session finished. Finally, the students participated in a delayed post-test after two weeks the sessions ended to check the retention and gains of learned words. For each VKS scores, the maximum to get was 215 points (5 points per word for 43). The scores were grouped by 1-2 (no word knowledge or little) and 3-5 (knowledge and use of the word) (Andrew & Adams, 2010).

Table 6 Means comparison of the three VKS in traditional and integrated instruction.

Tests	Instruction	N	M	SD	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Test	Traditional	35	68.63	14.38	2.43
	Integrated	31	68.84	9.50	1.71
Post-test	Traditional	35	94.37	18.31	3.09
	Integrated	31	93.68	10.12	1.817
Delayed Post-test	Traditional	35	108.91	21.20	3.58
	Integrated	31	113.35	14.36	2.58

Table 6 shows that all the pre-tests were scored less than 70 points (43 items multiplied by 5 points was the maximum in each test by student) which indicate that participants had little or no knowledge of the items. The information in the post-test reflects a higher score than 80 in both groups with a slight difference between the two groups being the traditional instruction with more gains than the integrated one. The data in the delayed post-test expose that both groups obtained more than 100 with a difference regarding retention between the traditional and integrated vocabulary instruction.

Table 7 Independent Samples Test results from vocabulary knowledge scales.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% C Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	Std. Error Difference	LL	UL
Pre VKS	Equal variances assumed	8.73	.004	-.069	64	.945	-.21	3.04	-6.29	5.87
	Equal variances not assumed			-.07	59.40	.944	-.21	2.97	-6.15	5.73
PostVKS	Equal variances assumed	9.99	.002	.18	64	.852	.69	3.70	-6.71	8.10
	Equal variances not assumed			.19	54.19	.847	.69	3.59	-6.50	7.89
Delayed VKS	Equal variances assumed	2.11	.151	-.98	64	.329	-4.44	4.51	-13.46	4.58
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.00	60.06	.319	-4.44	4.41	-13.27	4.39

Note: MD= Mean Difference; LL=lower level; UL=upper level.

Table 7 reflects the result from an independent sample t-test to compare the average of the three vocabulary tests between the traditional and integrated vocabulary instruction groups.

Figure 12 Comparison of groups means for Vocabulary knowledge scale scores.
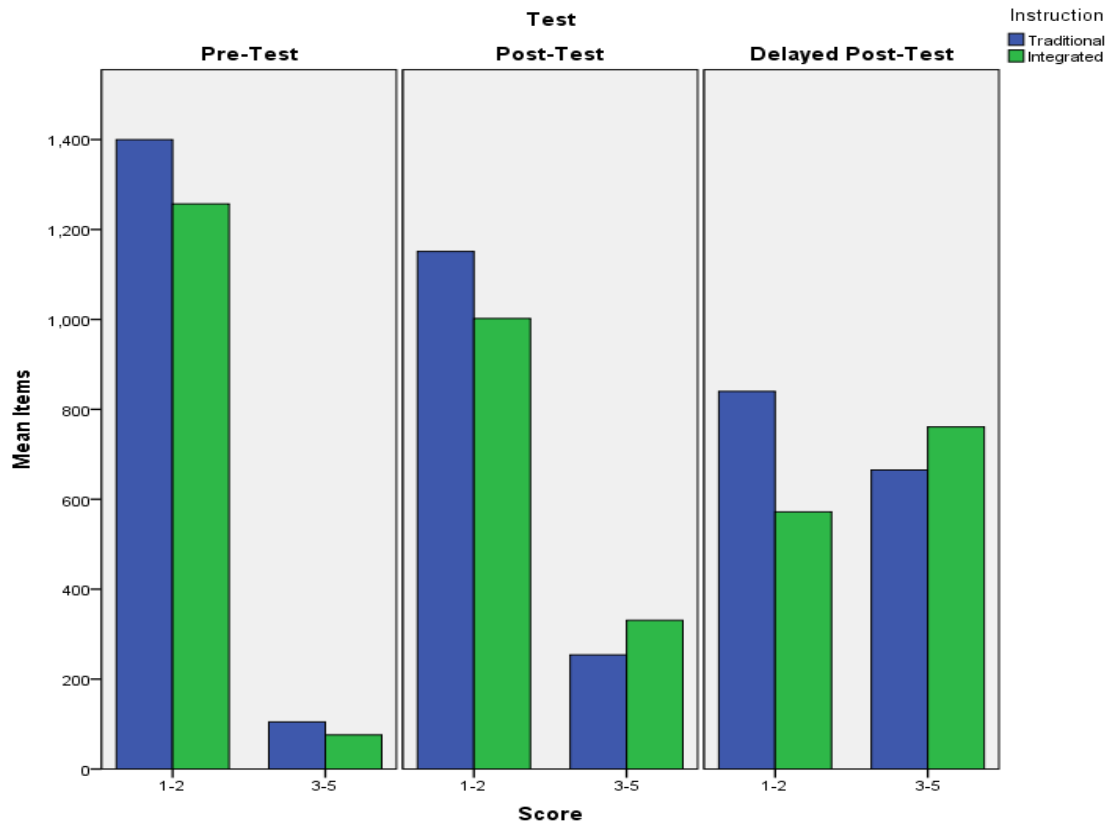

Figure 12 provides a clear visual aid to understand knowledge and gains of vocabulary. Here, scores of 1 or 2 and 3 and higher has been grouped, so one to 2 represents little or no word knowledge while 3 to 5 signifies knowledge of words and beyond. The distribution of items is 1,505 target items (35 students multiplied by 43 items) in the traditional group, and 1,333 target items in the integrated group (31 students multiplied by 43 items). Therefore, the pre-test displays that 1,400 or 93% had little or no knowledge of words in the traditional group, which is similar to the experimental group, 1,257, or 94%. By the post-test, the distribution fell to 1,151, or 77%, in the control group, and 1,002, or 75% in the experimental group for little or no word knowledge. However, by the delayed post-test, learners received scores of 3 to 5 for 665, or 44% in the control group and 761, or 57% in the experimental one.

CHAPTER 6

6.1 Discussion of findings

This section provides brief and clear information with the aim to describe the effects of integrated vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension learners´ performance. At first stance, the findings are discussed based on the literature and research questions; second, there is a statistical interpretation, and finally, a further explanation about statistical presentations.

Research Question 1: Is there a variation in reading comprehension performance regarding an experimental and control group of A1 EFL first-year baccalaureate students of a public school?

Reading comprehension is a process to produce meaning from the text, where the primary objective is gaining an overall understanding of what it is being read rather than getting an isolated sense of features included in the text (Woolley, 2011). The literal comprehension of a text involves extracting information specified in a passage, and this type of knowledge requires accurate information, sequences or context (Saadatnia, Ketabi, & Tavakoli, 2017). Thus, the literature supports the findings obtained from the readings sessions of this study.

Firstly, as there are not equal participants in each group (35 in the traditional and 31 in the integrated) Levene´ s test helped to understand whether the group variances could be treated as equal or unequal. In this case, Levene´ s test showed a p-value lower than 0.05. Consequently, the independent t-sample test with a 95% confidence interval (CI) revealed that reading comprehension scores are slightly lower for the traditional vocabulary instruction (M=8,22, DS= 0,92) than for the integrated instruction (M= 8,63, SD= 0,62), (t (59.97) = -2,13. Therefore, as the p- value was

lower than 0.05 of significance, (p- value = 0,037) it was demonstrated that it exists a difference between the groups.

To simplify the previous information, it does exist a variation between the two groups, where the students experiencing the integrated vocabulary instruction proved to have a better performance on reading comprehension tasks than the learners exposed to the traditional instruction of learning the needed vocabulary before the reading lesson. Taboada and Rutherford (2011) proposed that when students do not experience as explicit instruction while reading, they tend to be more carelessly when they do it. Also, as students increase their knowledge of words they also improve their reading comprehension performance (Naeimi and Chow, 2015). Hamzehlou and Ghaderpour (2012) recognized that one of the biggest obstacles in comprehension is word recognition and thus reading and vocabulary are reciprocal activities.

Research Question 2: What are learners´ perceptions of the experimental group toward the integrated vocabulary instruction?

When talking about the understanding of the readings, most of the learners said that they could comprehend the short passages. However, 18 out of 31 felt unsure whether they could answer the comprehension tasks correctly or not. That is contradictory because a majority who strongly agreed and agreed perceived that the key points were clear and the main ideas were easy to find in the passages.

One of the most interesting items regarding perceptions toward reading comprehension was reading enjoyment, and regarding this issue, most of the learners showed a prominent level of satisfaction with the passages. As the readings were suitable for students´ level (Harmer, 2007) and topics were familiar, they feel engaged to participate with the texts.

The second stage of the questionnaire regarding attitudes toward learning vocabulary with reading illustrated that a considerable number of learners agreed on perceiving a rise in the knowledge of the words they learned. Moreover, most of them (n=21) strongly agreed that the integrated vocabulary instruction is a tremendous opportunity to learn unfamiliar words while they are reading. Nation (2010) also considered intensive reading as a chance for looking for other features of the language such as grammar or vocabulary.

Consequently, the findings showed that the learners felt moved to learn new words and had an impression of improving their vocabulary awareness. To be more specific, 26 students had a similar concordance in their perceptions between agree and strongly agree. Additionally, the participants in the integrated group shared a strong agreement on perceiving an enjoyment for learning vocabulary while they were exploring the passages.

Research Question 3: Is integrated vocabulary instruction significantly for vocabulary retention?

The results of this study indicated that both types of teaching (traditional and integrated) direct to a high learning and retention of words. At comparing the results of the integrated instruction from the post-delayed test (M= 113.35, SD= 14.) was similar with the traditional one (M= 108.91, SD= 21, 20); t (64) = -.98 p= 0.329 but slightly different. The Levene´s test proved that variance of the groups could be treated as equal (0. 151). These findings are supported by Andrew and Adams (2010) when they showed their gains regarding retention; they concluded that both (either isolated or integrated) lead to more retention and learning of words knowledge.

However, Schmitt, Jian, and Grabe (2011) said that when it exists one unknown word, the learners strive to understand as much as he can or figure out its meaning if it appears numerous times to understand what he is reading. Furthermore, when an unknown word appears in the passage, learners can use clues such as sentence meaning, word morphology and discourse meaning (Yin, 2013). In other words, there are significant gains in using an instruction to teach words in the content of a text because even though it requires an extra effort from learners, they could increase their retention and learning of vocabulary.

On a similar fact, apparently, there is an equal increase regarding vocabulary knowledge and retention in both traditional and integrated instruction learners at comparing the pre-vocabulary knowledge scale (traditional=115 and integrated = 76) and the post-delayed Test (traditional=354 and integrated = 331). However, at mentioning the extra efforts in an integrated vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension, it comes to be very beneficial because in an integrated instruction learners shift their focus from the meaning of the text to the meaning of a word. In fact, learners spend more time looking for distinct aspects of its forms, meaning and use (Nation, 2009).

6.2. Conclusion

The chapter presented a clear view of the effects of integrated vocabulary instruction in reading activities, and it states that an integrated vocabulary instruction is beneficial for comprehension, and retention of words. The perceptions and impressions of learners in integrated vocabulary instruction can benefit teachers/students on future reading sessions. A brief and definite conclusion from this study is found in the following section. Chapter 7 summarizes the relevant findings

and how they contribute on methodology. It also exposes the limitations of the work,

and directions for future studies.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND FUTURE DIRECTION OF RESEARCH

In a brief conclusion, this study shows four relevant issues. First, for a dual focused objective (reading comprehension and vocabulary retention) is recommended to integrate explicit vocabulary instruction during the reading stage. Second, both traditional isolated or integrated vocabulary instruction foster vocabulary retention and learning, therefore, the instructor can choose either integrated or isolated instruction depending on the learner/teacher needs or teaching/learning style. Third, to promote reading comprehension, teachers can deliver the meaning, use, and form of the unknown words along the reading, especially with A1 learners. Finally, learners´ perception reveals a comfort and familiarity in an intensive reading lesson with an integrated instruction because they can ask for clarification as they are reading. Therefore, the vocabulary instruction could be beneficial depending on the language objective and the needs of the class.

Due to the complications in attending in an extracurricular schedule, the participants were in the same group with other students´ level and age in their regular classes. Another constraint was time. A most extensive study could expose a better view of the results regarding reading comprehension and retention of words from an integrated vocabulary instruction.

This study proposes to explore the effects of an integrated vocabulary instruction with upper levels of proficiency and testing comprehension that goes beyond literal comprehension. For example, the perception toward this instruction could also vary with higher English levels of competence. The depth of vocabulary learned can also be measured by integrating writing skills.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Reading to learn: understanding reading within vocabulary instruction in A1 EFL learners.

Please indicate your position, check all that apply

       ☐   Student/ Participant

       ☐   Parents of participants under 18 years of age

       ☐   Other (please explain) _____

I _____, have been invited to participate in this research study, which has been explained to me **by Gabriela Galeas Arboleda.**

This research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master´s degree in the **Master´s Program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (MTEFL)** at ESPOL in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

The purpose of this research study is to describe the effects of integrated vocabulary instruction on reading comprehension activities by examining EFL learner's performance.

Description of research methods

The research methods and techniques to be used in this study will be from a quantitative approach. The questionnaire (perceptions) data and test scores (vocabulary and reading comprehension) will be the only data collected in the study.

Requirements of the participants

All the participants will attend to 8 sessions in their regular schedule; there will be two sessions per week. A pre-vocabulary test will be administered one week before classes start. Then one reading comprehension test will be given after each class and your scores recorded. At the end of the four weeks, students will participate in a questionnaire, a vocabulary test. Finally, after three weeks the treatment end you will take a post-vocabulary test. Participants will be tested, so they have to be fair during the tests, focusing on their papers.

Benefits for the participants

Participants will benefit from their experience in reading, increase the vocabulary size, and improve their reading comprehension in specific texts.

Risks and discomforts

The possible discomfort will be the effort required to participate in the tests and the questionnaire.

Contact person

gabrielagaleas@hotmail.com 0980680556,

Confidentiality

Any information about me obtained as a result of my participation in this research will be kept as confidential. In any publications that result from this research, neither my name nor any information from which I may be identified will be included.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. I understand, and I am free to withdraw my consent to participate in this study or any specific activities at any time. I understand that neither my employment status nor my academic status will be affected if I decide not to participate in this study. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research, and I have received answers concerning areas I did not understand. The data I provide in this study will remain anonymous. By signing this form, I demonstrate that I understand the terms associated with the study and my will to participate in this study.

_____   _____

Signature of the Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of the Researcher   Date

Adapted from Shaw, 2009

Appendix B

Overall Reading Comprehension Level Description of the Common European Framework of References for Languages

	OVERALL READING COMPREHENSION
C2	Can understand and interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings. Can understand a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning.
C1	Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not they relate to his/her own area of specialty, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.
B2	Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some complications with low-frequency idioms.
B1	Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.
A2	Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency every day or job-related language
	Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.
A1	Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words, and basic phrases and rereading as required.

**Appendix C**

Reading and Comprehension Test

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Look at the picture and circle the most appropriate title.

A thin Man   *A heavy eater*   *Big Pants*   *Light eater*

Junior is a **light** eater. He doesn't eat much. He isn't a **heavy** eater. He eats a light breakfast, a light lunch, and a light dinner. Junior is not **fat**. He is **thin**. He will always be thin because he is a light eater. He eats a **bowl** of cereal for breakfast. He eats a bowl of cereal with milk. He eats a sandwich for lunch. Sometimes it's a fish sandwich. He likes fish. He eats rice and vegetables for dinner. All he eats for dinner is rice and vegetables. He will never get fat.

Adapted from rong-chang.com
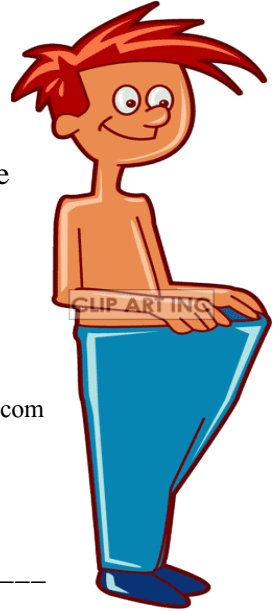
Answer the following questions

- Is Junior a heavy eater?   _____
- What does he drink for breakfast?   _____
- Does he like fish?   _____
- When does he prefer vegetables?   _____
- When will he get fat?   _____

Fill in the blanks

Junior isn't a _____ eater.

He eats cereal with _____.

He sometimes has a _____sandwich for lunch. He likes fish.

He eats _____ and vegetables for dinner.

He will _____ get fat.

Appendix D

VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE SCALE

WORD	
1 I don´t remember having seen this word before	
2 I have seen this word before, but I don´t know what it means	
3 I have seen this word before, and I *think* it means _____. (Synonym or translation)	
4 I know this word. It means _____. (write a synonym or a translation)	
5 I can use this word in a sentence. _____ (If you do section 5, please do section 4.)	

Paribakht & Wesche, 1996

QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT READING WITHIN INTEGRATED

VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION

Name: _____ Date: _____

Purpose: To know your perceptions about reading comprehension classes with Integrated Vocabulary

Reading Comprehension Activities.	**Strongly agree**	**agree**	**neutral**	**disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
I could understand all the readings.	O	O	O	O	O
I could correctly answer questions about the readings.	O	O	O	O	O
The key points in the text were clear to me.	O	O	O	O	O
The main ideas of the readings were easy to find.	O	O	O	O	O
I enjoyed reading.	O	O	O	O	O
Learning vocabulary with reading.	**Strongly agree**	**agree**	**neutral**	**disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
I could increase my knowledge about the words I learnt.	O	O	O	O	O
I had a good opportunity to learn vocabulary while I was reading.	O	O	O	O	O
I was motivated to learn vocabulary using this method	O	O	O	O	O
I could improve my vocabulary with this instruction.	O	O	O	O	O
I enjoyed learning vocabulary while I was reading.	O	O	O	O	O

Items 1-5 adapted from Guthrie and Lutz, 2014. Items 6-10 adapted from Ali, Mukundan, Baki and Mohd, 2012

Appendix F

Short Reading and Target Words (Content words)

A Thin Man
- bowl (n)
- fat (adj.)
- heavy (adj.)
- light (adj.)
- thin(adj.)

Piano Player
- shiny (adj.)
- leg (n)
- key (n)
- finger (n)
- foot (n)

A Fast driver
- catch (v)
- chase (v)
- wave (v)
- turn on (v)
- speed up (v)

The Farmer
- own (v)
- grow (v)
- seed(n)
- wheat (n)
- rain (v)
- barn (n)

Fresh Salad
- peel (v)
- chop (v)
- sharp (adj.)
- knife (n)
- pour (v)

Eating Apples
- healthy (adj.)
- wear (v)
- drink (v)
- hold (v)
- bite (v)
- teeth(n)

Trash Day
- pull (v)
- trash (n)
- truck (n)
- pick up (v)
- raise (v)
- empty (v)

Shining Shoes
- dirty (adj.)
- rag (n)
- polish (n)
- rub (v)
- brush (v)

Appendix G

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

3 January 2017		
Pre-test	Pre-test of target word VKS	Control and experimental group

9-13 January 2017		
"*A Thin Man*" 95 words "Piano Player" 109 words	Traditional Class	Control group
	Integrated Vocabulary Instruction	Experimental group
Post-test	Reading Comprehension test	Control and experimental group
16-20 January 2017		
"A Fast Driver" 104 words "A Farmer" 109 words	Traditional class	Control group
	Integrated Vocabulary Instruction	Experimental group
Post-test	Reading Comprehension test	Control and experimental group
23-27 January 2017		
"Fresh Salad" 98 words "Eating Apples" 113 words	Traditional class	Control group
	Integrated Vocabulary Instruction	Experimental group
Post-test	Reading Comprehension test	Control and experimental group
30 January- 3 February 2017		
"Trash Day" 109 words "Shining Shoes" 111 words	Traditional class	Control group
	Integrated Vocabulary Instruction	Experimental group
Post-test	Reading Comprehension test	Control and experimental group

6-10 February 2017		
Post-test	Post -test of target words.	Control and Experimental Group
Questionnaire about Reading within Integrated Vocabulary Instruction		Experimental Group

27-28 February 2017		
Delayed post-test	Retention of Words	Control and experimental group