



**UNIVERSIDAD DE CHILE**  
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**English for Specific Purposes: A Qualitative Analysis of MINEDUC  
Documents and an Application of Theory for the Creation of Guidelines for the  
Learning and Teaching of English Vocabulary in Vocational High Schools in Chile.**

Informe Final de Seminario de Grado para Optar al Grado de Licenciado en Lengua y Literatura Inglesas

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Santiago de Chile

Enero 2017

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Quisiéramos agradecer profunda y cariñosamente a nuestra profesora guía Rosa Bahamondes, por su constante apoyo, ayuda y dedicación con este grupo y el trabajo realizado a lo largo de este proceso. Muchas gracias por tener fe en nosotras, incluso cuando nosotras no la tuvimos, por enseñarnos y compartirnos su vocación con respecto a la educación y motivarnos a intentar ser un aporte a la lingüística aplicada y a la educación de nuestro país.

Estimada profesora, gracias por hacer que cualquier sala donde estuviéramos haciendo sesión de seminario se sintiera un lugar cómodo y resguardado dentro de la universidad, por apoyarnos tanto en lo grupal como en lo personal y siempre tener respeto por nuestras ideas y opiniones, por guiarnos en este camino que a veces se nos hizo tan complicado, por exigir el máximo de nosotras, pero al mismo tiempo enseñarnos cuán importante es cuidar de uno mismo.

Por último, gracias por todos los momentos alegres que nos permitió compartir, este trabajo no sería el mismo sin usted. Por todo lo mencionado y más, es que respetuosa y afectuosamente le dedicamos este trabajo.

Seminario de Adquisición de Vocabulario y Política Pública, 2016

Primero que todo, quiero agradecer a mi Tata por todo su apoyo, tanto en lo emocional como en lo educacional, que, aunque ya no esté conmigo, ha sido una de las personas más importantes en mi vida y que más he querido. A mi hermana Bárbara, que siempre ha sido uno de mis pilares en todo sentido, que con sus locuras y pesadeces me ha levantado el ánimo cuando ni siquiera quería salir de mi cama. También quiero agradecer a mi tía Elsy y mis tíos Francisco y Hugo, que fueron los que me inculcaron el amor por la

lectura y el conocimiento en general. Finalmente, a mis padres, Georgina y Marco. Gracias mamá por ayudarme a elegir la carrera y soportar mis llantos cuando no sabía qué hacer con mi vida, dándome todo tu apoyo y confianza. Gracias papá, por ayudarme a desarrollar las herramientas necesarias para desenvolverme en la vida como una persona fuerte y con carácter. Gracias a toda mi familia por aguantarme durante todos mis años, siempre entregándome todo su cariño y comprensión.

Al mismo tiempo, quiero agradecer a todos los profesores del programa que, aunque no estén al tanto, dejaron su huella, como la profesora Javiera Adaros, que ha sido la mejor profesora de práctica que he tenido y el profesor Andrés Ferrada, que hizo que me volviera a encantar con la literatura. Pero especialmente, doy mis más sinceras gracias a la profe Rosa, que desde la primera clase que tuve con ella me hizo ver lo interesante que son la lingüística aplicada y la educación tan solo con verla enseñar, jamás tuve las mejores notas, pero de cada uno de sus ramos salí aprendiendo un montón. Gracias porque desde el seminario de lingüística, hasta ahora en el seminario de grado, me ayudó a superar gran parte de la timidez e inseguridades que tanto me han costado dejar atrás.

Agradezco a todas mis compañeras de seminario, sé que tuvimos muchos altos y unos pocos bajos, pero siempre supimos sobrellevar todo y aprendimos mucho una de la otra, trabajando, hablando y riendo al mismo tiempo. Finalmente agradezco a todos los amigos que he hecho durante la carrera, que me han hecho la vida más llevadera y me han ayudado en todo, a la Paula, que seguimos siendo amigas incluso después de este año y todo este arduo trabajo, y a la Nenys, que ha sido mi amiga desde que yo era una cabra chica amante de los libros y del inglés, y que ha estado en todas para mí.

Francisca Constanza Aguilar Toro

Quisiera aprovechar esta instancia para agradecer a todas las personas que estuvieron conmigo y que fueron parte importante en este proceso. Primero, a mis padres Humberto y Orfidelia, a mis hermanos Ricardo y Enrique, y a mi sobrina Carolina. Les agradezco su apoyo, comprensión y la fuerza que me dieron para seguir adelante y no rendirme. Cada palabra de aliento significó una arenga para mantenerme en pie y continuar el camino para alcanzar mi sueño. Son un pilar fundamental en mi vida, los amo, y les dedico este éxito.

Segundo, a mis amigos y amigas. Los quiero mucho, gracias por aguantarme y por hacerme ver que los problemas no son el fin del mundo, y que debo aprender a confiar más en mi misma. Gracias por compartir tantos buenos momentos, por levantarme el ánimo, por escucharme y hacerme salir de la rutina. Tercero, quiero agradecerle a mi grupo de tesis y a mi profe guía, Rosa Bahamondes. Chiquillas ustedes fueron un gran apoyo durante todo el año, me enseñaron que entre tanto trabajo siempre hay tiempo para echar la talla, reírse de tonteras, y hablar de la vida; agradezco haberlas tenido como compañeras. Todas sabemos que pese a todas las complicaciones que tuvimos, nos sobre pusimos a todo y lo logramos, junto con la guía de la profe. Cada una de ustedes es una gran persona, les deseo éxito y lo mejor para el futuro. Profe le agradezco por sus consejos, transparencia, responsabilidad y compromiso con nosotras y con el trabajo que realizamos. Usted hizo de cada clase una oportunidad para discutir los contenidos, pero también para hablar sobre nosotras mismas, creando un ambiente de confianza y de aprendizaje mutuo. Gracias por creer en nosotras y exigirnos más sabiendo que éramos capaces de ir más allá de lo que creíamos. Además, le agradezco a los demás profes que me apoyaron en momentos complejos de mi experiencia académica. “Nobody said it was easy” dice Coldplay (2002) y concuerdo, nadie dijo que sería fácil terminar la carrera después de seis años, pero lo hice. Aprendí a respetar, tolerar, y confiar en mi misma y en mi equipo. Lo que veía como una ilusión de estudiar en la Universidad de Chile se convirtió en realidad, y por fin culmina una etapa en mi vida, siendo

el comienzo de un camino que recorreré sin miedo porque “Anything is possible” (Coldplay, 2014). Gracias totales.

“*Dream on little dreamer, this is how it all begins*” (Above and Beyond, 2011)

Erika Yoana Carrillo Romero

Mi colaboración en esta tesis fue posible gracias al apoyo de muchas personas. Entre ellas, quiero mencionar a la familia escogida, a la familia no escogida, y a varios de mis profesores y amigos que conocí en la Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades. Me siento tremendamente afortunada de haber pasado por el lugar donde pude conocer y desarrollar mi amor por la lingüística. Sin embargo, lo que más valoro, lejos, es a las personas que pude conocer. Agradezco, entonces:

A la familia escogida: *Tomás, Danilo, Kathy, Connie, Wins, Victoria, Javi, Jochibi, Luchibi, Dani*. Cabres, son red de apoyo y red de abrazos. Que tengamos muchas onces más.

A la familia no escogida: Mi hermana *Miranda*, mi primo *Martín* y mi tía *Marisol*.

A los profesores que tuve el gusto de conocer, en particular a las profesoras *Rosa Bahamondes, Pascuala Infante* y a Miss *Coty Vivanco*, junto con *Francesca Bonfanti*, por su excepcional y muchas veces vital apoyo.

A mis compañeras de tesis: Fran, Erika, Pau, Cami. A la Pau y a la Cami por poner las casas; a todas por aguantar mis chistes fomes y pesados; por la comprensión y la terapia grupal durante los campamentos de trabajo; por el buen humor, y por respetarnos, aguantarnos y entendernos todos los TOCs y/o mañas (salgamos a celebrar, porfa?).

Special thanks to Sci-Hub and Library Genesis for easily granting us access to about 90% of the references used in this dissertation. To remove all barriers in the way of science.

Dedico esta tesina a mi mamá, *Ana Quintana Peña*. Sin ella me habría sido imposible entrar a la u, y sin ella casi se me hace imposible salir de la u. Gracias por enseñarme de

resiliencia y política pública, de amor y de humor, de paciencia y de esfuerzo, de cáncer, de vida y de muerte. A aprender, amar y crecer. Me costó encontrarte, pero ya te llevo conmigo. (*Mira mamá, me estoy graduando*).

Amanda Gabriela Hernández Quintana

Luego de este arduo proceso en el que puse sangre sudor y lágrimas, siento la necesidad de dar gracias. Primero, a mis padres y hermanos, por aguantar mis rabietas, mis quejas, mis horas de gritar y gruñir frente al computador, por decirme siempre “Ya Cami, es tu último año”, “Ya Cami, queda poquito”, “Ya Cami, aguanta”. A ellos, gracias, porque sin sus palabras hubiese tirado la toalla, hubiese roto en llanto, hubiese dejado todo en el suelo en las últimas semanas cuando la falta de sueño y el calor ya no me dejaban en paz. Papis, pollos, los amo con el alma, gracias.

Dar gracias también a mis amigas, las que me tuvieron la paciencia suficiente como para escuchar mis audios de dos minutos, llorando porque la ansiedad me superaba. Maru (y tus shinkis maravillosos), Isi, Vane, las amo con locura. Y Vale, que te fuiste de Chile y que aun así me mandaste ánimos y fuerza desde allá tan lejos. Mil gracias monas de mi corazón, son las mejores, fueron mi inyección de energía todo el año y por eso les debo demasiado.

A mis amigos, a mi grupo de gente maravillosa, a la Elena que se volvió mi ídolo este año, a la Javi y a la Clau que me han acompañado desde primero y que siempre me saludan con una sonrisa, al Khrii que me hace reír hasta cuando estoy molesta y al Jose que siempre tiene temas interesantes que discutir, que hacen que me olvide un poquito de los problemas. Gracias por reírse conmigo, por sentarse junto a mí con una cerveza y transformar las horas en minutos. Los quiero.

Quiero agradecer a mis compañeras de tesis, por soportar mis gritos y ruidos raros cuando me ganaba un poquito el estrés, por reírse de mis bromas infantiles, por darme ánimos

cuando lo necesitaba y por mostrarme tanto cariño, a pesar de conocernos tan poco. De verdad gracias, a pesar del estrés, la ansiedad y las personalidades tan diferentes, este trabajo no hubiese salido como ahora sin ustedes. Me siento orgullosa de formar parte de este grupo.

Finalmente, agradecerle a miss Rosa, que nos guio, nos aconsejó, nos dio ánimos y aliento, gracias por darnos la oportunidad de hacer un trabajo como el que hemos hecho, por entregarnos tanto en este año lleno de locuras, gracias por ofrecernos un espacio para discutir nuestras ideas, para respirar de las presiones del resto de los ramos, gracias por el apoyo y las sonrisas.

Camila Francisca Núñez Julio

Primeramente me gustaría agradecer a la profesora Ximena Tabilo, en quien siempre encontré una palabra afectuosa y preocupación, gracias por mostrarme que la universidad es más que notas y competencia. También a la profesora Pascuala Infante, en quien durante este largo camino siempre pude encontrar un consejo, una palabra de aliento y tantas cosas más, mil gracias por tener fe en mí, por convencerme de que me la puedo, por dejar esa apretada agenda y regalarme cinco minutos que siempre eran horas de conversación, y por nunca dejarme bajar los brazos. Además también me gustaría agradecer a la profesora Rosa Bahamondes por todo lo que nos entregó en este proceso más allá del conocimiento, por enseñarnos el compromiso con lo que uno hace, por la fe, el respeto, la exigencia, y por los muchos buenos momentos de este año.

Además a mis amigos en general los de siempre, y los que conocí hace no tanto, pero en especial a mi querida amiga Jocelyn, amiga mía gracias por estar siempre ahí, ser mi apoyo y mantenerme en pie, por ser mi compañera en aventuras y sobre todo en desventuras, por nunca alejarte de mí, por ser esa hermana cariñosa que eligió ser mi familia y por quererme tanto como yo te quiero.

También a mi gran amigo Pablo, te debo más de lo que puedo recordar, y aunque me sacas de quicio como nadie, si no fuera por ti quizás donde andaríamos pos oshe. Y mi Frani, nos conocimos al final, pero como dicen por ahí lo bueno tarda en llegar, y pucha que ha sido buena esta amistad, gracias por todo tu apoyo y por odiar y mañosear conmigo la vida entera.

A Diego, mi compañero en este andar, no sé dónde nos lleve la vida, pero gracias infinitas por tu cariño y compañía, por estar conmigo en las buenas o en las malas, hasta tarde o desde temprano, por cuidarme incluso cuando no es necesario, pero por sobre todo por caminar conmigo para hacer más dulce lo que sea que dure este ratito.

Finalmente a mis padres, a papá donde sea que estés, gracias por darme todo y más de lo que quise, por enseñarme el valor de las cosas, gracias por intentar hacer de mi alguien grande, sin importar que ya no estés en este plano físico, estás en cada esfuerzo, en cada pequeño logro, espero que en cualquier rincón del universo en que te encuentres te sientas orgulloso de mí. Y a mi mamá, no existe espacio en este mundo para agradecerte todo lo que has sacrificado y dado por mí, gracias por tu amor incondicional, por tomarme la mano en este camino que nos tocó seguir solas, por tus abrazos y tu amor infinito. Mamá gracias por todo, porque sin tu complemento yo no podría lograr nada.

Paula Sofia Tello Ibarra



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**ABSTRACT**

English education has been the focal point of several studies since the Ministry of Education set the goal of making Chile a bilingual country. In this guise, many of the documents pertaining English education in Chile have been studied, with the purpose of analysing the characteristics of English teaching in the schools of the country. Following this, the present research focused on the analysis of several documents dealing with English education in Chile, including the textbooks for 3rd and 4th year of high school, the English programmes, and the fundamental objectives for both regular and vocational schools. The aim of this study was to determine the suitability of these documents for the teaching of English in Chilean vocational schools. The results show that there is a disconnection between the demands and goals set by the Ministry for vocational students, and the information the official documents and textbooks provide for their education. From this disconnection stemmed the proposal for a set of guidelines focused on ESP vocabulary teaching.

*Keywords:* Vocational Education, ESP, Vocabulary Acquisition, English Teaching, Language Planning and Policy, English as a Foreign Language, Student's Textbooks, Curricula, English Programmes.

## INTRODUCTION

Since 2003, the Chilean Ministry of Education has constantly focused its efforts to make Chile a bilingual country (Bachelet, 2009 in Améstica, 2013; Bitar, 2003 in “Lanzan Plan”, 2003 in Aravena et. al 2015). However, based on the results from the two nation-wide English SIMCE tests<sup>1</sup> carried out in 2010 and 2012, the country is still far from reaching this goal, in spite of the programmes and updates the Ministry has implemented to the teaching of English (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación, 2012).

English teaching in Chile is structured according to a set of documents that organise contents, objectives and purposes for every level of education. These documents are the Curricular bases, the English Programmes and the Fundamental objectives. These will be the documents that will be analysed in this research.

The purpose of the present investigation is, first, to carry out a qualitative content analysis of the documents that rule the teaching of English in vocational high schools in Chile, in order to determine the suitability of the English curricula, programmes and textbooks to the reality and needs of VS students. The second purpose is to propose a set of guidelines that teachers and material creators can follow to make their teaching practices more effective and better adjusted to the aforementioned students’ reality and needs, especially centred in the area of vocabulary teaching and learning.

Finally, with the aim of achieving this purpose, this investigation was structured as follows: Firstly, a Literature Review including the topics Language Planning and Policy, Second Language Acquisition Theory, Vocabulary in Second Language Acquisition, and English for Specific Purposes so as to provide background information in regard to the main

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<sup>1</sup> Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación

features of this research. Secondly, the Methodology, focused on the qualitative analysis of the different documents provided by MINEDUC, followed by the Results, from which a guideline proposal was generated. Finally, the Conclusions were presented along with sections where Further Research and Limitations were addressed.

In order to contextualize this research, considering that it focused on secondary education, a description of the system of English in Chilean high schools will be presented before all the sections mentioned above.

### Secondary Education in Chile

Secondary education in Chile consists of the last four years of mandatory schooling, and it is divided in two types: vocational<sup>2</sup> and regular school<sup>3</sup>. The purpose of vocational education (VE) is to form specialists in technical fields, while regular schools are oriented towards preparing students in general areas of knowledge so that they can pursue further studies (Ley General de Educación). As mentioned above, the present investigation focuses on vocational education.

VE is a two-year specialization created to keep up with the national productive development, and to promote social mobility and equity for the lowest social stratum of the country. Thus, the aim was for students to acquire the necessary skills to start working after graduation (Pinela, 2016). Vocational instruction is directly linked with two economic related factors, the job-market demand, and the areas of economic development of the country. In order to cope with those aspects, VE is divided into thirty-four different specialties, with a total of seventeen majors available for students in the last two years of high school.

According to MINEDUC, 46% of high school students opts for this type of academic training, and a 60% of vocational students belongs to the poorest families of the country.

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<sup>2</sup> Técnico Profesional

<sup>3</sup> Científico Humanista

Nonetheless, despite of the main purpose of the VE programme of immediate insertion in the labour market, almost a 50% of students continue pursuing further education (Microdatos, 2010 in Carrasco & Farias, 2012). Thus, how they are taught and the quality of the education they receive, are factors in which TP students rely at the moment of deciding their future careers. Students who come from low-income middle-class families opt for studying under the TP system because it guarantees them to find a job in a relatively short time and gain money out of the specialty they studied.

Learning English is an asset, since it provides a higher status to the people who speak it (Acosta et al. 2015) and knowing English would offer improved job opportunities for vocational schools' (VS) graduates. It is this notion that triggers this enquiry. Additionally, this group has the desire to apply the knowledge acquired as students of English Language and Literature to change the reality of Chilean education for the better, using the tools given by our field of study.



## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Language Planning and Policy**

#### **2.1.1. Definitions and purposes of Language Planning and Policy.**

The present section will provide a historical overview of the definitions of Language Planning and Policy (LPP), presenting the different purposes served by the field, along with revising its mission and areas of action. LPP is a fairly young discipline, considered as the result of contextual needs to describe linguistic phenomena (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). The area has progressed considerably in a short span of time, which makes it rather difficult to define with absolute precision. As Ricento (2006) mentions, the difficulty in having an all-embracing definition of LPP is given by the social nature of language. The field began only as ‘language planning’, and later on the concept was expanded to include language policy (Johnson & Ricento, 2013).

Language planning was created soon after World War II, and it was first used by Haugen (1959). Its scope was the exercise of elaborating a standard grammar and orthography presented in dictionaries (Haugen, 1959 as cited in Johnson & Ricento, 2013), and to help establish a specific language for emerging societies (Ricento, 2006). The creation of this field of study contributed to the challenges that many newly formed and independent countries were facing. However, there was no clarity about what a language plan might have looked like (Spolsky, 2012), since it was the first time scholars attempted such an undertaking. Successive developments in the field of language planning and applied linguistics in general, led to its growth and expansion into language planning and policy. In this stage, language was considered a valuable means to fulfil specific purposes, which ranged from the unification of territories and social groups, to desires of modernisation, efficiency and democratisation.

The following phase (1970-1980), called the intermediary stage of LPP development (Johnson & Ricento, 2013), was characterized by three main processes. First, the language planning activity ceased to be conceived as a top-down activity and began to be understood as an activity with multiple actors, contexts and layers of language planning and policy (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Secondly, language planning for schools was developed, which later on progressed into acquisition planning (Cooper, 1989), a concept further explained. And third, the ideological and socio-political reality of language planning and policy began to be questioned, and the previous language planning models began to be characterised as inadequate (Johnson & Ricento, 2013). The second and third developments characterised the purposes of this stage, while scholarly efforts focused on start criticising the positivistic mind-set of the first stage. These efforts eventually led to the following stage of critical LPP.

In the third stage, critical language planning and policy, the previous efforts in questioning led to the development of various perspectives that acknowledged the complex and multifactorial reality of language planning and policies (Johnson & Ricento, 2013). Critical language policy locates LPP as one of the many activities that can perpetuate social inequality, hence this stage has helped identifying underlying ideologies entangled in language attitudes and language policies (Johnson & Ricento, 2013). This approach has helped to disclose unspoken ideologies, contributing to the understanding of how languages work within sociocultural contexts, and why some policies collaborate with the existing social conditions even when they are prone to inequality (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

One of the perspectives developed in this stage is related to the possibilities the field has for perpetuating or challenging the status quo. Accordingly, language policy has an explicit political and ideological dimension (Tollefson, 1991 as cited in Johnson & Ricento, 2013), meaning that LPP could be a mechanism that the dominant groups use to maintain

their interests and power. The goal of language policy is social change (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), implying that opinions and decisions intend to modify inherent practices or influence behaviours at various levels, agreeing with Cooper (1989, in *Language Planning & Policy*, 2016) who states that one of the goals of language planning is to alter the linguistic behaviour of individuals.

Another perspective proposes LPP as the management of the linguistic choices available to individuals, where the aim of a language policy theory is to elucidate the speakers' decisions based on patterns recognized by the speech community (Spolsky, 2009 as cited by Williams, 2012). In other words, since language policy consists of the actual practice of a particular language plan, its purpose in this particular focus is to establish the functioning parameters of a determined language in a community. In this guise, the relationship between language planning and policies is thus an interactive one, where both areas depend on decisions taken by individuals and speech communities. Therefore, language policy can be understood as a product of language planning, constituted by linguistic rules for the use and form of a language within a territory, where those rules stand as measures and procedures to solve linguistic problems (Spolsky, 2012; Rubin, 1971 in Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

Summarising, LPP will be conceptualised following Ricento & Hornberger's (1996) interpretation. The authors offer an updated definition of language planning by adding language policies as procedures rooted in broader social policies, which reflect the values and traditions of a nation that are also entrenched in the individuals' mindset. In this manner, language policies articulate decisions made by a community, becoming an instrument of power. Consequently, policies have changed to act as a device through which the ruling groups maintain their dominance, being the basis for new policies operationalized by social institutions for the administration of language education (Grin, 2006; Haugen, 1959 as cited in Johnson & Ricento, 2013; McGroarty, 1997 as cited in Lo Bianco, 2004; Ricento &

Hornberger, 1996; Ricento, 2006; Spolsky, 2012). Additionally, LPP will be seen as a field dedicated to organizing and directing linguistic changes, and government's involvement in these transformations (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Ricento, 2006; Spolsky, 2012; Johnson & Ricento, 2013).

**2.1.2. Layers of Language Planning and Policy.** Language planning and policy are practices created through various steps, compared by Hornberger and Ricento (1996) to the structure of an onion. This is because LPP and onions are composed by layers that as a whole make up one macro structure dedicated to many different areas. Using this onion-like structure, the authors present four different steps related to the creation and implementation of LPP. The first one, called 'legislation and political processes' refers to the implementations applied by a government to decide the official language and which languages should be taught within a community. A general consensus is needed before the application of any law related to language, since their application affects the government, schools and other social gatherings. During this step, organizations may take decisions regarding the use of the language chosen to be made official, especially in terms of how broad its native-like usage will be (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

The second step, 'states and supranational agencies', refers to the 'macro enterprises' of language, such as national, institutional and interpersonal agencies, and their level of engagement in LPP development. State-supported policies, guidelines, legislation and court rulings can affect policy development, and a state-supported language almost often puts another language in a disadvantageous situation. Supranational agencies issue international directives that when ratified by states, should be converted into laws (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Education is considered one of the main expansionary actors of a state where LPPs can be directly instated (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

In this sense, supranational agencies benefit from the implementation of official languages in classrooms. Hornberger and Ricento (1996) refer to ‘institutions’ —schools, places of worship and the media (amongst others)— as the third step. These are described as the places in which people gain identity, transmit values and culture, and attend to their social needs. Language policies need to be part of these institutions, so that their implementation is linked to the areas and their inhabitants (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). These places focus on the same language ideologies, thus the community spreads language policies evenly covering the geographical area the policy is intended to reach. The last step, ‘classroom practitioners’, is described as the very centre of this onion structure (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). It is presented as the most important section in the implementation of language policy, on the one hand, as schools are the institutions that reach a higher percentage of the community and as, on the other hand, educational institutions are responsible for spreading ideologies and plans from the early stages of society.

In this way, decisions concerning LPP are made worldwide on a daily basis, in a formal and informal fashion by government institutions, and by specialists and social leaders respectively. This decision-making activity brings with it consequences concerning the vitality of linguistic varieties or even human and social rights (Language Planning & Policy, 2016). The impact might be positive, resulting in the representation of non-formal or unofficial practices. In this way, ill-designed and unclear language policies may have unfavourable results on the communities in which they are applied (“Language Planning & Policy”, 2016).

Finally, several things can go wrong when planning is applied (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), hence it is possible to summarize the consequences for the implementation of the aforementioned steps in social settings as follows. First, as policy and planning tend to be unrelated and unsystematic, it is probable that not all steps are considered, being developed at

different rates. Second, decisions taken at a macro level may not tackle the real needs of micro settings. Third, as it was explained earlier, it is almost certain that linguistic ideology influences the processes and goals of planning. In this regard, it so happens that curricular guidelines are given to teachers in several settings, often with secret agendas (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Here, the last social institutions, i.e. schools, have to deal with policies containing implicit interests that may have a negative effect on pedagogical decisions. And fourthly, language planning can be an inadequate investment if the benefits, but also the costs of policies are not identified (Grin, 2006), this constitutes an important factor at the time of evaluating the consequences of language policy implementation.

### **2.1.3. Language ideology and its relationship with Language Planning and Policy.**

Language ideology can be defined as the ideas and assumptions that shape and influence most aspects of language use (McGroarty, 2010). Spolsky (2012) and Hornberger (2006) define language ideology as the set of ideas and beliefs that drive a group of individuals to influence decision-making processes to fulfil their objectives. However, the influence of these ideas and beliefs is not always evident, but inferred from the actions of individuals and groups (McGroarty, 2010). In most cases, language ideologies reflect the attitudes and opinions of powerful social elites which pervade policies and language planning goals in both the micro and macro perspectives (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

Language policy is determined by ‘language practices’, referring to individual and institutional attitudes related to language; ‘language management’, associated with the official and unofficial precepts regarding the selection and elaboration of linguistic codes; and ‘language ideologies’, characterised as the most abstract dimension related to the comprehension of beliefs and aspirations (Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; 2009). Under this perspective, ideologies about language have considerable effects generally and specifically in both policy making and planning (Ricento, 2006). Thus, they are embedded in language

policy and planning; this is illustrated by finding language ideology inserted in both corpus planning (language focused activities) and status planning (socially focused activities) — which were thought to be unbiased and ideologically neutral activities (Ricento, 2000 as cited in Johnson & Ricento, 2013)— as it relates to the set of values and beliefs of speakers regarding a specific language or variety (Baldauf & Kaplan, 1997). However, ideologies are often ignored by language planners and theorists, whether because they cannot identify them, or because they do not want to acknowledge them (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), causing misinformation of how this authoritative mechanism operates.

Non-overt ideologies pervade programmes' aims, destination of economic resources, and linguistic behaviours so as to believe in a 'hierarchy of languages' (Johnson & Ricento, 2013) that determines which language(s) will be developed and supported over other less prestigious ones. Furthermore, ideologies influence the decisions made about the languages that are to be maintained as official or important; the ones considered not good enough to be maintained; and the foreign languages that are going to be taught (McGroarty, 2010). Along these lines, Tollefson (2006 in Johnson & Ricento, 2013) argues that language policy aims might be twofold. On the one hand, to promote the beliefs of dominant groups, creating and sustaining inequality by promoting the use of the dominant language, or on the other hand, to produce policies reflecting democracy, helping minority languages to survive and in doing so, reducing inequality depending on the policy makers' orientations.

Decisions taken regarding LPP creation and development will constantly serve politics, but these will seldom respond to the needs or goals of the speaking community (Williams, 2012). Furthermore, almost every social policy functions in a dynamic context, whether or not it is related with areas of language and pedagogy (McGroarty, 2010; Williams, 2012). This dynamic flux makes policies, official decisions and everyday educational activities likely to be influenced by social transformations from socioeconomic and

psychological realms. Consequently, it is this flux that may lead some languages to end up being isolated, affecting a specific community of speakers within society (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

In sum, language policies and language planning are influenced by underlying ideologies. As it was previously mentioned, the interaction among these activities became apparent as researchers began to question the ‘ideology-free’ characteristics and principles that supported the classical language planning efforts. And in the case of language policy, it is constantly linked to political matters, with varying aims and it might or might not encourage the fulfilment of the goals of a language community (Williams, 2012).

**2.1.3.1. Discourse planning.** Discourse planning is a subtype of language planning and policy, as another of the activities that generate language change. It is defined as the use of discourse, either written or oral, as a means of persuasion or self-expression (Lo Bianco, 2004; 2010). In this sense, discourse planning is an individual activity (Lo Bianco, 2004; 2010). However, there is a ‘darker’ and collective use of the term, similar to propaganda. In this regard, persuasive language is used to “modify or reinforce worldview and attitudes” (Lo Bianco, 2010, p. 149). An example of this second type of discourse planning is the attachment of a particular angle or perspective to a piece of information in order to foster a particular interpretation of the facts. This is a strategy commonly used by politicians and political movements to persuade the public to adopt certain political philosophy or to accept a particular policy (Lo Bianco, 2010) but it is also used by institutions, interest groups and policy makers (Lo Bianco, 2004). As such, discourse planning is used to disguise socially constructed views as natural ones, and therefore make these ideas appear incontestable or uninteresting. It is an ideological type of LPP activity that can be directed at language itself, affecting how languages are valued, how they are thought of, and how the public behaves towards them (Lo Bianco, 2004).



Discourse planning can also be found at the inception of language policies. The process of determining which linguistic issues will be allocated policy efforts is an ideological and discursively construed one (Lo Bianco, 2004). Focusing policy efforts in one particular language problem always entails the silencing of alternative solutions to the problem, or even alternative definitions of what is a language problem that needs to be addressed with policies (Lo Bianco, 2004).

Another aspect is the ‘invisible discourse’ introduced by Hirvela (1997 in Basturkmen, 2006) which contains information about the way discourse communities think and by having this knowledge, students would be better equipped to work within a field.

**2.1.3.2. Acquisition Planning.** Acquisition planning corresponds to the third type of LPP along with corpus and status planning. It was created by Cooper in 1989, and it is defined as the attempts to influence the distribution of users, languages and literacies by motivating or providing opportunities for their learning (Hornberger, 2006).

According to the integrative framework of LPP goals by Hornberger (2006) and Hornberger and McKay (2010), the objectives of acquisition planning can be classified under two approaches. Firstly, under the policy planning approach, which deals with the form of language, the goals correspond to the locations that provide users with the chance of learning the language: group, education/school, literature, religion, mass media, and work. And secondly, under the cultivation planning approach, which focuses on language functions, the goals can be reacquisition, maintenance, foreign-language/second-language acquisition, or shift (the last one was added by Hornberger in 2006). In this sense, acquisition planning would be linked with the third and fourth layers of the LPP onion (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). It interacts with social institutions with which people identify, expressing their values and cultures; and with the most inner layer, classroom practitioners, where language policies

implemented in educational institutions influence users on how and when they receive language instruction, being more associated with people.

By introducing acquisition planning as a third core category of language planning, Cooper (1989) adds this new sphere to the domain of language planning to indicate explicitly the way applied linguistics deals with language teaching and learning (Jernudd & Nekvapil, 2012), and to outline the policies implemented on those activities (Lo Bianco, 2010). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) affirm that among the ways of implementing language planning, acquisition planning (also called language-in-education planning) is usually considered a robust resource for causing language change. It is an essential procedure in the implementation of language policy and planning, also a ‘formal mechanism’ for the spread of a particular language, a phenomenon described by Cooper (1982 as cited in Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997) as an increase in the ‘communicative network’ made by a language or variety for certain communicative function. The authors clarify the difference between language planning, which is an operation of the government intended to reach various social sectors, and language-in-education planning which influences only the education sector. Its objective is to produce adequate and practical plans to modify the behaviour along with dealing with the hindrances this activity entails.

#### **2.1.4. Language policy without planning and the influence of contextual factors.**

The relationship between language planning and policy gives rise to two main issues, the disconnection between both dimensions, and the impact of contextual factors in the creation of policies.

The first issue points out that language planning and language policy can be connected, however, they are not necessarily linked (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). The relationship between the two spheres of LPP can be seen as collaborative but not causative, since in most cases language policy can exist without any previous language planning, and

vice versa. In this sense, a number of policies are made regardless of planning objectives, and some others are not committed to social change (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Hornberger, 2006), also government's intervention in areas involving language usually do not have linguistic goals, thus confirming the disconnection between both areas (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). These institutional instances of language planning designed without a language policy present particular dangers such as unexpected results, incomplete or inappropriate implementation, and insufficient or non-existent evaluation (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Therefore, weak links between language policy and planning endanger the effectiveness of said policies, and a strong relationship between them tends to assure a positive outcome (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Also, language policies should be subjected to reevaluations and renegotiations regularly, since society and community are in constant change and re-planning is essential to keep up with reality and avoid failures (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

The second issue has to do with the influence that external factors can have over the formulation of policies. These factors can be economic, political or linguistic ideologies that can suggest the need for changing, restricting or maintaining a particular reality of language (Ricento, 2006; Tollefson, 2002; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). This will in turn create and shape language policies so that they are implemented without linguistic planning. Hornberger (2006) warns that language planning approaches and types do not carry any political orientation in themselves, it is the LPP goal the one that gives it its political inclination and the type of change it envisions.

These external forces that can frame policies also exist at the administrative and legislative levels (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). The ideological differences that can exist between one administration and the next one, or between different branches of the legislative system may endanger the implementation of policies, creating tension in the approval and

application of language policies. In other cases, when there is a change of administration the proposed ideas of the former government may not be implemented in the new one, again, because of dissimilar ideologies or due to the lack of monitoring of the process (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

The present section has shown the two main issues regarding the planning and implementation of LPP. Some examples of the following section will address this topic because, as stated above, the establishment of language policies can create tension within a territory. For this reason, successful and unsuccessful examples of the implementation of LPP in Latin American countries will be presented.

**2.1.5. Examples of Language Planning and Policy in Latin America.** The application of language policies and plans has been described throughout the last sections, yet, to better understand how these policies work, some examples are needed. In this case a number of policies applied in Latin America will be presented.

Some language policies implemented in Latin America have to do with indigenous languages, Aymara and Quechua in countries like Peru and Bolivia, and Guarani in Paraguay (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Hornberger, 2002; Spolsky, 2004). As explained by Hornberger (2002), many of these policies have failed, including the cases of Aymara and Quechua, due to the coexistence between these languages and Spanish, because the latter is considered a dominant language and a source of power.

In the case of Peru, the main reason for the failure of a Quechua related language policy was that the institutions in charge of applying the policy were not capable of putting this language at the same ideological level as Spanish (Hornberger, 2002). For instance, in the case of Lima, where speakers mainly use Spanish, the implementation did not work as expected. This situation changed the Peruvian government's decision for the implementation

of the language and the new policy was to be applied only in the areas where Quechua was used as the first language (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

A largely successful case of the implementation of LPP in Latin America is Paraguay. Spolsky (2004) explains that after several years of on and off usage of indigenous Guaraní in educational contexts, it was declared national language in 1967, and an official part of the curriculum in the 1970's. Additionally, since the 1990's the teaching of both Guaraní and Spanish has been mandatory in all levels. Although the original language educational policy dictates that Guaraní should only be used for listening and speaking, whereas Spanish is to be used for all skills, several recent efforts have tried to encourage Guaraní literacy. According to Corvalán (1988 as cited in Spolsky, 2004) it is quite exceptional that an indigenous language in Latin America has been able to achieve equal status to that of Spanish.

The aforementioned examples illustrated language policies implemented for indigenous languages in a number of neighbouring Latin American countries. Nevertheless, another case of policy implementation takes place in Chile, where language policies have been implemented in order to make Chile a bilingual country (Cenoz & Gorter, 2012). Cenoz and Gorter (2012) refer to the function of English in the teaching curriculum of Chile. In it, the purpose is not to learn English as a foreign language, but as a tool to develop bilingualism. According to Graddol (2006) there has been a change in the attitude toward the learning of English, reflected in the creation of educational projects such as English for Young Learners (EYL) having political and economic inclinations. The author argues that numerous countries express not just a need of learning a foreign language, but an 'ambition' for bilingualism. Therefore, the Chilean government has developed a programme to make the Chilean population bilingual in a period of a generation, alluding to the aim of the Programme English Opens Door (Programa Inglés Abre Puertas PIAP).

In conclusion, the implementation of a language policy in a particular country depends on the aims that the government has regarding the speech community. However, despite of the objectives of the authorities, as in the Peruvian example, the successful implementation of language policies also depends on their reciprocal relationship of influence.

As it was explored through this first part of the literature review, language policies are organized into many layers, aiming at applying a particular language within a country. This is part of the main concern of this research, as it relates with the way in which English language is planned, organized and applied in Chilean education. Language planning and policy is, therefore, a field that holds many keys towards achieving the objective of the present investigation.

## **2.2. Second Language Acquisition theory**

**2.2.1. Constructivism.** Constructivism is a theory concerned with knowledge and learning (Brown, 2000; Fosnot, 2005), and proposes an approach to teaching according to two principles. The first, knowledge, is considered as emergent and constructed accounts of individuals who take part in the process of meaning-making within discourse communities. Whereas learning has to do with the construction of representations of reality as part of the creation of meaning, by using cultural tools and symbols, Therefore, meanings are negotiated in cooperative activities and discourses.

Concepts have to be taught in context, as learners are given the chance of living a “concrete, contextually meaningful experience” (Fosnot, 2005, p. 8) alluding to a significant instruction from which they can extract useful patterns, interpret and inquire. Classrooms resemble ‘mini-societies’ where learners interact and reflect on social practices, and “the traditional hierarchy of teacher as the autocratic knower, and learner as the unknowing, controlled subject” (Fosnot, 2005, p. 08) is diminished; now the teacher is a facilitator and

learners are responsible of their beliefs. Therefore, the goals of this theory are autonomy, social cooperation, and empowerment (Fosnot, 2005).

### **2.2.1.1. Sociocultural Theory**

*2.2.1.1.1. Definition.* Sociocultural theory (SCT) stems from Constructivism, and it is defined as an approach focused on learning and cognitive development (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Aimin, 2013). It was created from the works of the Russian psychologist L.S. Vygotsky in the 1920s and early 1930s, which started to be translated and disseminated in the 1960s. It has to do with the amalgamation of social, cultural, and biological aspects within the learning process, emphasizing the importance of socio-cultural events in the cognitive development. It claims that human mental activity is a ‘mediated process’ organized by cultural tools which aim at regulating the biological and behavioural activity, and that development occurs via participation in cultural, historical and linguistic contexts e.g. family gatherings, group interplay, and institutions such as school and workplace. The interaction in these social settings permits the development of essential cognitive components and high mental functions. This theory has a series of constructs, the most salient are: mediation, regulation, internalization, and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Aimin, 2013).

*2.2.1.1.2. Constructs.* Mediation is the central construct of SCT (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Aimin, 2013). It is based on the assumption that humans do not perform in the world directly, instead their cognitive and material actions are mediated by the use of physical and symbolic tools. On the one hand, physical tools are externally directed and help to control and transform the surroundings, and on the other hand, symbolic tools are internally directed and are ancillary resources to reorganize and control psychological processes which have a biological origin. Aimin (2013) claims that language is the most ‘pervasive and powerful’ symbolic artefact that humans employ to mediate their relation to the world, to others, and to

themselves. Vygotsky also refers to language as one of the ‘higher-level cultural tools’ utilised by the human mind to control biology and to intercede in the relation of individuals with the environment and the social world (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Accordingly, regulation is a form of mediation concerned with children’s ability to regulate their actions by using language in physical or mental activities, where their actions are subordinated or regulated by others (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). There are three stages to develop self-regulation in SCT. Firstly, object-regulation, when children manipulate objects from the context to think, secondly, other-regulation, it refers to the mediation made by peers, teachers, relatives, etc. explicitly and implicitly by assisting, directing or scaffolding. Thirdly, self-regulation which is the capacity to fulfil activities with small or no external help. This last stage is achieved by internalization.

Internalization is the process of transforming external collaboration into an internally-available resource for the future, regarded as the mechanism that allows individuals to get control of their brains (Yaroshevsky, 1989 as cited in Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Aimin, 2013). In other words, it is the way in which cultural artifacts e.g. language, acquire a physiological function, restructuring the relation of humans with their social context (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The principal means that permits internalization to be accomplished is imitation. Following Vygotsky’s thought, imitation, the ability to reproduce the activity of others, is not the result of ‘mindless mimicking’ but a goal-directed process whose outcome can produce creative changes from the inter to the intra-psychological level (Aimin, 2013).

The next construct is ZPD, which has had an impact on areas such as education and applied linguistics. Vygotsky defines it as the distance between the ‘actual’ and the ‘potential’ developmental level (1978 as cited in Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The first level refers to the independent performance reached by children, and the second one is the potential progress children can attain through the assistance of ‘more capable peers’ such as instructors. The



‘zo-ped’ takes part in children’s conceptual development. Here learners comprehend the logic of scientific concept developed by adults, thus the zone or place of this process accounts for the comprehension of a more complex reasoning, and it varies among learners (Fosnot, 2005).

The ZPD points to the fact that what individuals can do with collaboration, shows what they will be able to perform independently later on. The ZPD has its origin in Vygotsky’s genetic law of cultural development which states that functions in cultural development emerge twice, first on the social plane and then on the psychological plane. This means that social relationships are the basis of intrapersonal functioning and cognitive development, where functions and structures of this process are changed by internalization (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Lantolf and Thorne (2006) refer to Vygotsky’s key finding in relation to the impact school experience has on cognitive development. It indicates that development is shaped by learning collaboratively in pedagogical settings, this suggests that context designed for learning activates developmental transformations.

*2.2.1.1.3. SCT and SLA.* Aimin (2013) hints at the relationship between the SCT and SLA saying that this theory yields a new perspective on the second language acquisition process, where learners need to think and speak in the target language. This implies a strong link between language and thought, which has its basis on social communication activities. This associates with the principle of SCT that social interaction and cooperative learning are central for the production of mental and sensitive images of the world. In this sense, learning is built from the relation of cognitive, behavioural, and contextual factors (Ehrich, 2006 in Aimin, 2013).

Along these lines, language is a cultural tool that mediates individuals socially and psychologically. Hence second language learning involves three processes of mediation. Firstly, other-mediation between expert and novice or students and ‘more capable peers’. This

contributes to reach the potential development of students in the ZPD by working cooperatively. Second, self-mediation mainly through private speech. Private speech is the act of talking with oneself for regulate or guide the behaviour. Third, the mediation carried out by cultural tools that involves socio-cultural context and first language—which serves to mediate L2 learning—; thus, learners should consider these aspects to acquire a target language (Aimin, 2013).

ZPD and scaffolding are terms usually associated, but they are not the same (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Scaffolding refers to collaborative instances between adult-child or expert-novice whose aim is to carry out a task often by other-regulation. Whereas ZPD has to do with interactions whose objective is to collaborate with individuals' development and it is supposed to finish when the novice has the knowledge to perform independently (self-regulated). Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994 in Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) propose two mechanisms to provide effective help to learners in the ZPD framework. Firstly, collaboration should be 'calibrated', meaning that the student has to be given the necessary and minimum help only, to avoid hindering the process of self-regulation. Secondly, assistance should be 'contingent' attending current needs, and finished when learners act for themselves. And as for assessment in the ZPD, Vygotsky emphasizes that it is crucial to evaluate learners' potential developmental level, because if only their current level is assessed, it could be implied from test results that, for instance, two learners are at the same phase when in fact they might be on dissimilar stages of development. This alludes to the variability present in the process of L2 acquisition, where learners acquire linguistic subsystems at different rates depending on the kind of mediation they had and the goals for using the language (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

*2.2.1.1.4. Pedagogical Implications.* As stated previously, SCT considers contextual, behavioural, and cognitive factors as an important part of the learning process. Hence, when

applied to pedagogy, it is a viable option to foment learning through social interaction and cooperation considering as well the student's social background.

Lantolf and Thorne (2006) relate the principles of SCT with second language acquisition; this supports the idea of adding aspects of social interaction and learner's background into the English classroom to allow cognitive development, and as an aid for acquiring the language. Aimin (2013) states that one of the most important aspects of language is to use it to communicate, and as communication is of primary importance to SCT, the author gives some examples of activities based on SCT that are helpful for strengthening communicative skills for SLA students.

Along these lines, some of the activities that conform to the main characteristics of sociocultural theory aim at interaction between a learner and a native speaker, which help students to use the language in real life situations. Others refer to exercises that encourage students to make decisions when put in hypothetical situations. Aimin (2013) states that these activities encourage the resolution of problems when using the language. The use of realistic situations for encouraging language use help the learner to overcome nervousness and anxiety, as it requires for them to speak out loud. In this way, the learner is able to use the language communicatively and, at the same time, use personal experiences to make decisions and solve problems.

Using language in a social way is one of SCT's main ideas, thus these activities encourage this notion. In order to conclude with the topic of pedagogical implications and SCT in SLA, Aimin (2013) suggests that SCT is a theory that works for both students and teachers; accordingly, teachers can discover and create ways to manage tasks and exercises that will facilitate the learning process. In other words, SCT collaborates not only with students to develop their communicative abilities, but also helps teachers to set up new

activities that will allow them to offer better classes, and have a thorough understanding of how useful social interaction may be while learning a second language.

In conclusion, SCT theory states that acquisition is first social and then individual, and the input for acquiring a language comes from the social world. Learning occurs by participating in socio-cultural activities such as mutual interaction, imitation through private speech, or by using tools e.g. written texts. Lantolf and Thorne (2006) argue that “learning is always an active engagement” (p. 214), this means that it is a process that entails a relation with others and with oneself. Mediation is central for humans to interact with the social world using symbolic and material tools to mediate their mental and material activities. Then the internalization process changes cognitive functions, and imitation encourages learning.

Furthermore, the ZPD model suggests to distinguish between actual and potential development, where the latter is evident through social interaction. Consequently, the SCT model is “an applied methodology that can be used to improve educational processes and environments” (Thorne, 2004; 2005 in Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 216), this means that SCT can be considered a conceptual and methodological instrument that teachers can employ to comprehend students’ developmental stages, or that may encourage the creation of material and other symbolic artefacts. Additionally, this theory has pedagogical implications regarding the design of contextualized teaching activities; all these aspects are useful to make positive changes (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Aimin, 2013).

*2.2.1.1.5. Application to vocabulary teaching and learning*

*2.2.1.1.5.1. Methods and approaches associated to SCT.* The sociocultural theory can be applied through several methods and approaches. In this case the ones selected were the most representative and pertinent for the study: the lexical approach, task-based language teaching, and cooperative learning.

As the name implies, the lexical approach considers that vocabulary should be the focus of foreign language teaching. In particular, lexicon should be taught directly and in collocations rather than as individual words (Lewis, 1993; Norland & Pruettt-Said, 2006). The strategy for teaching using this approach is threefold. Firstly, students are familiarised with the concept of collocations. Secondly, students improve their knowledge by keeping a notebook where they write down collocations they encounter in class, in readings or listening activities. And thirdly, students can apply their knowledge in written assignments where they can produce or recognise collocations.

Woolard's (2000) definition of collocation in the lexical approach goes beyond the traditional definitions of the term. The author proposes that the traditional definition of 'a sequence of words that re-occurs' does not help students understand the concept or finding instances of collocations in texts. Instead, he defines collocation as those "co-occurrences of words which I think my students will not expect to find together" (p. 29). The argument is that in this way it will be easier for learners to identify and pay attention to those lexical structures. Woolard's definition also narrows collocations down to combinations of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, thus excluding phrases using prepositions.

Usually learning more vocabulary means learning new ways to combine known words (Woolard, 2000). This becomes more relevant in specialized fields such as medicine, commerce, or science since becoming proficient is highly dependent on mastering the

specific collocations used in those fields. Therefore, collocations should be the main priorities of Business English or EAP courses (Woolard, 2000)

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is an approach that uses tasks as the central element of language instruction and language teaching planning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). TBLT is said to mimic the naturalistic settings of language learning contrary to traditional, formal grammar-based language learning carried out in a classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Task work provides learners better circumstances of language learning activation than form-focused activities (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Consequently, during task work, learners must negotiate meaning and participate in naturalistic, meaningful communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Tasks in TBLT are the foundational element upon which planning and teaching are built on. A basic definition of ‘tasks’ is those activities or goals that are performed or completed using language. In general, what is understood as task in TBLT presents the following elements. First, tasks happen in the classroom. Second, in tasks learners are involved in “comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language” (Nunan, 2004, p. 4) while they focus their attention in expressing meaning through the use of their grammatical knowledge, with the intention of conveying meaning instead of manipulating form. Third, tasks are complete communicative acts (Nunan, 2004). The difference between a task and a grammar exercise is that in tasks there is no predetermined and specific language form or grammar structure to be practised; students are free to use any language structure (Willis & Willis, 2001; Nunan, 2004). Experiential learning represents a key element of task work, which states that learning begins with the learner’s immediate personal experience, meaning that the learner’s active involvement in their own learning challenges the traditional teacher-student hierarchy (Nunan, 2004).

Cooperative learning is an interactive approach where the goal is that students develop fluency through meaningful, interactive learning experiences (Norland & Pruett-Said, 2006). Students participate in non-competitive groups of peers, carrying out a task, activity or project.

The strategy is as follows: first, the teacher has to decide if cooperative activities are appropriate for the class goal, and then choose the type of activity and the cooperative technique to use. Types of activities are peer tutoring, information jigsaw activities, or group projects; types of cooperative techniques are games, role-play, projects, interviews, information gap activities, or opinion exchange. The second step is to sort students into groups. Then, the teacher has to give the instructions and assign the roles in the groups (if any). After this, students may begin working, while the teacher monitors them and is available to answer any doubts. Finally, after the group is finished, they should present a final product or discussion. The final product is usually shared with the whole class.

### **2.3. Vocabulary in Second Language Acquisition**

For a long time, vocabulary was seen as a secondary concern in comparison to grammar, which was considered for years as the most important focus in second language teaching. Laufer (1986 as cited by Chacón-Beltrán, Abello-Contesse & Torreblanca-López, 2010) mentions that linguists preferred closed systems describable by rules, justifying their predilection for grammar. Perhaps it was the open-ended nature of vocabulary the reason for its evident neglect (Chacón-Beltrán et al., 2010). However, in the last twenty years, progress in this area of linguistics has been substantial, providing diverse resources for the field of second language acquisition (Schmitt, 2010a). In recent decades, vocabulary has been one of the foci in SLA. Many studies have been published that place vocabulary as a key element in the process of learning a language. Schmitt (1997; 2010a), Nation (2001; 2006a, 2006b),

amongst others have emphasised the importance of vocabulary, recommending different ways to teach it and learn it appropriately.

This review of literature will present a series of definitions of vocabulary, together with its characteristics, and features of its acquisition. The concept of word will be presented as well, to emphasise its relevance to the notion and understanding of vocabulary.

Additionally, its main characteristics will be outlined in relation to Second Language Acquisition, teaching and learning.

**2.3.1. Definition of vocabulary.** From a social perspective, an appropriate vocabulary knowledge can determine an individual's status within a particular community (Llamas & Stockwell, 2010), while in the case of second language learning, vocabulary is the cornerstone of communication (Lewis, 1993a); in both cases, it is essential for achieving oral and written proficiency and accuracy (Cummins, 2003). Furthermore, vocabulary is also referred to as the number of words that constitute the speech of a person, including chunks, idioms, single words and lexical phrases, and fixed combinations of words with a specific meaning (Lessard-Clouston, 2013). Along the same lines, it is the lexical component that leads to the acquisition of competence applicable in numerous settings and registers (Chacón-Beltrán et al., 2010). In turn, Nation (2001) points out the importance of being able to use and recognize a vast amount of vocabulary to understand a significant percentage of discourse, either written or oral, in the target language. Yet, he argues that not every word is useful in the same way, making distinctions between high and low frequency words, concepts that will be explained in further sections.

**2.3.1.1. What is a word?** Koda (2000) explains that there is no universal conception of the concept of word, therefore, it can be defined from several points of view. For instance, for the layman, a word can be a group of letters with an empty space on either side and a meaning attached to it (Schmitt, 2010a). Yet, this definition is hardly useful, because it does



not address the importance or depth of this notion. For this reason, various definitions of ‘word’ will be provided so as to establish a context for the conceptualisation used for the purpose of this research.

From a grammatical point of view, Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985) defined word as a constituent of a sentence, a grammatical unit, or one or more morphemes. The authors refer to the concept of word by dividing it into parts (stem, suffixes, prefixes, etc.); they categorize it according to the hierarchical order inside grammar —words that form phrases, clauses and sentences— and referred to it as the unit that relates the grammar of a language to its lexicon.

Respecting a Second Language Acquisition (SLA) point of view, words can be approached according to importance, frequency, register, and usefulness. Laufer and Nation (2012) indicate that for a second language learner, an important word is the one that is frequent in the target language. Yet learners can also consider infrequent words as important, useful terms that may help them solve certain needs in specialized fields (Nation, 2001). The number of words acquired by a learner is one of the most important aspects that facilitate communication (Schmitt, 2010a).

For the purpose of this investigation, ‘word’ can be conceptualised in two ways. Firstly, by using Milton’s (2009) conceptualisation, which refers to words as types, tokens, lemmas and word families —all of these are different methods for counting and classifying words, defined further on— common and uncommon words, constituent units of larger structures and key factors within written and spoken language.

Secondly, ‘lexical item’ proposed and defined by Schmitt (2010a; 2010b). A lexical item is an element in language that can hold meaning in itself, without taking into account if it is one word or more. As such, the concept of lexical item applies to both single orthographic words and multiword elements (Schmitt, 2010a). Word as a concept holds

different meanings that can be selected to emphasise its importance when writing about vocabulary (Schmitt, 2010a).

As it was shown, words and word knowledge are central aspects in the acquisition of a second language. Accordingly, the following sections will delve into the main characteristics of vocabulary as part of second language acquisition.

**2.3.1.2. Main characteristics.** Considering the aforementioned definition, vocabulary can be classified semantically, by topic or field and word families, or morphologically, by tokens, types or lemmas, and analysed through the constitutive elements of word knowledge: form, meaning and use. Firstly, the continuous updating of vocabulary gives rise to a variety of terms that can be classified according to topic or field, making vocabulary an innovative endless resource creating a wide spectrum of vocabularies depending on topics e.g. technical, academic, general, as well as others associated with fields and areas of specialty such as medicine, law, business, sciences, etc. (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010a) proving that the concept of vocabulary is a comprehensive one. A word family corresponds to a group of words inflected or derived from a basic term or headword (Nation, 2001), resulting in terms that share a common origin. It is considered a counting unit, and its learning develops over time as students augment their knowledge of prefixes and suffixes and general language proficiency (Nation, 2001).

Secondly, tokens or running words are the number of word forms that occur in a text, even if two or more lexical items share the same structure. This counting system is useful for calculating the number of words in a text and for determining reading and speaking speed. Types are similar, as they count the number of words in a text, but they only count repeated word forms as one e.g. the word *the*, which is counted as one type, no matter how many times it appears. Word types are useful for determining the size of a speaker's vocabulary and the number of words needed to understand a written or spoken text (Nation, 2001).

Following with the counting units of vocabulary, the concept of lemma arises. It is a headword plus its inflected and reduced forms, and its components are classified as the same parts of speech (Francis & Kučera, 1982 as cited by Nation, 2001). Lemmas are characterized as holders of semantic and grammatical knowledge i.e. they hold knowledge of the meaning and syntactic categories of a word (Levelt, 1989 as cited by Nation, 2001). Alongside this, lemmas hold grammatical functions and restrictions of words, and they might contain information regarding appropriateness, style and other constraints (Nation, 2001). Although the concept of lemma is mentioned as a good method for counting family words, there are some discrepancies among the different testing parameters for this kind of vocabulary acquisition, making difficult to determine its overall effectiveness (Nation, 2001).

Laufer and Nation (2012) explain that vocabulary can be analysed based on word knowledge, which requires proficiency in numerous word features such as form, meaning and use, elements which will be explained in depth subsequently.

In sum, vocabulary can be characterized according to different aspects. Firstly, as it is a resource that is always evolving and increasing, it can be divided according to topic or field (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010a). Secondly, it can be described regarding the size of the speakers' vocabulary in terms of the amount of words they master (token, lemma, and type) and how many derivational forms of a word they know (word families). And thirdly, it can be analysed in terms of vocabulary knowledge, representing a range of knowledge that a speaker must possess in order to know a word thoroughly (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010a). Hence, characterizing vocabulary is a complex undertaking, since it comprises multiple elements, and learners need a wide spectrum of knowledge to be proficient in the target language. The following sections will provide other important aspects of vocabulary within second language acquisition, the relevance of the concept, and the different categories and layers of what vocabulary knowledge entails.

**2.3.2. Relevance of vocabulary for second language acquisition.** The real difficulty in learning and teaching a foreign language is that of mastering its vocabulary (Sweet, 1899 as cited by Laufer & Nation, 2012). Regardless of the usefulness of grammar, communication and adequate acquisition of the target language are not going to be achieved without a proper amount of vocabulary (Laufer & Nation, 2012). Furthermore, learning vocabulary is not only useful for acquiring a second language, but skills such as the ones involved in vocabulary acquisition that can be transferred from one language to another (August, Calderon & Carlo, 2002). This means that vocabulary skills, either in the L1 or L2, may help students improve their proficiency in both languages.

Along these lines, vocabulary should be the main concern when learning a language (Vermeer, 1992 as cited in Chacón-Beltrán et al., 2010) just as it is relevant for L2 teaching, because it is a core aspect in second language acquisition (Schmitt, 2010a). Managing enough aspects of vocabulary is essential to succeed, as it is used academically, professionally, for communicative purposes, or for enjoyment. Without grammar, there is scant possibility of communication, whereas without vocabulary, there is no communication at all (Lewis, 1993b; Wilkins, 1972). Hence, knowing many grammatical structures becomes useful in learning a language when the learner possesses enough vocabulary to use it accordingly. Then, as vocabulary helps to acquire proficiency and competence in various registers and contexts (Schmitt, 2010a), in one way or another it allows partial or complete communication among speakers. Laufer (1998 in Chacón-Beltrán et al., 2010) states that the main difference between native and non-native speakers is their lexical competence—the amount of knowledge about a lexical item that someone possesses (Meara, 1996)—highlighting the important role vocabulary has in acquiring a language.

Throughout the previous paragraphs, vocabulary has been presented as a relevant feature within second language learning, as it helps in terms of proficiency and competence,

it is crucial in terms of communication and academic use, and it is an essential part of any language (Schmitt, 2010a; 2010b; Lewis, 1993b; Wilkins, 1972). Overall, this section has intended to introduce vocabulary as one of the most studied aspects of applied linguistics and second language teaching of the past twenty years. The following sections will further discuss certain aspects of vocabulary knowledge, learning and teaching in second language providing support to the larger purpose of this investigation.

**2.3.3. Construct of vocabulary.** For the purpose of this research, vocabulary will be understood as the words of a language—including single lexical items and lexical phrases—and as a key element of language that allows interaction and communication among individuals (Chacón-Beltrán et al., 2010; Lessard-Clouston, 2013; Nation, 2001; 2006a, 2006b; Schmitt, 2010a; 2010b). Likewise, it will be referred to as an open-ended system, where new words are constantly being created and/or their meanings expanded to fulfil communicative needs of the language users (Schmitt, 2010a). Thus, considering vocabulary as one of the most important parts in the acquisition of a second language, since it enhances communication and it is significant in the social positioning of individuals (Llamas & Stockwell, 2010).

#### **2.3.4. Acquisition of word knowledge.**

**2.3.4.1. Depth and Breadth.** There are two dimensions that quantify and characterize the ‘multidimensional construct’ of vocabulary knowledge. They are breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge. The former refers to the number of words an individual is familiarised with (Nation, 2001; Anderson & Freebody, 1981), whereas the latter is defined as the quality or degrees of mastery of lexical knowledge to use items appropriately (Hatami & Tavakoli, 2012). This aspect along with a substantial vocabulary size are essential to be functional in a language (Schmitt, 2010a; 2010b). In simpler terms, breadth is related to the

number of words known by a person, and depth, how well the speaker knows the different aspects of those words (Milton, 2009; Schmitt, 2012).

Various tools have been implemented to assess both dimensions of word knowledge. For instance, the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) developed by Nation in 1983 is regarded by L2 researchers as a suitable measure of vocabulary size (Laufer & Paribakht, 1998), and the most similar to a standard vocabulary test (Hatami & Tavakoli, 2012). It measures the size of learners' receptive vocabulary knowledge by matching words with their respective definitions. And the Word-Associates Test (WAT) (Read, 1993), for estimating the depth of lexical knowledge through associating synonyms and collocations with an item.

It is possible to conceive depth from three main approaches: precision of meaning, comprehensive word knowledge and network knowledge (Read, 2004). The first approach establishes a contrast between having a restricted and an extensive semantic knowledge of words. In this respect, words differ in how precise their meanings are, for example some are polysemous e.g. *break*, *proper*, *vague*, which have different meanings depending on the contexts in which they appear, or have ordinary and technical definitions e.g. *reaction*, *dialect*. Actually, the comprehension of specialized low-frequency vocabulary reveals much more information such as educational level, users' sociocultural background, occupation, personal interests, etc. Read (2004) emphasises that a functional lexical knowledge would be the outcome of several exposures to the item in various settings, and that a broad account of meaning does not embody the knowledge of proficient users of the language.

The second approach refers to a thorough understanding of word knowledge components i.e. orthographic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, collocational and pragmatic features, where the most prominent description is Nation's (2001) which is described afterwards in section 2.3.4.2.1. Layers v/s continuum. This framework details the dimensions involved in knowing a word comprehensively, aspects that should be dominated

by L2 learners. And the last approach consists of a network constructed among words in the mental lexicon. This sort of web expands progressively as more items are added and adjusted to the old ones; in this case learners identify words with similar meanings and connect them. According to Henriksen (1999) the network approach is conceived as depth of vocabulary knowledge.

Consequently, both notions have been treated as separate aspects of vocabulary knowledge, however they could be linked (Read, 2004; Qian, 1999 as cited in Hatami & Tavakoli, 2012). As Read (2004) argues, if the size of known words augments, the learning of aspects of words usually encountered also increases. In other terms, when learners increase their vocabulary, they know more about the words they know. Therefore, the development would occur in a parallel way with depth and breadth interacting with each other. This notion is held under the network approach to depth in the sense that vocabulary increases, and with it the quantity and quality of connections within the mental lexicon (Read, 2004).

Nevertheless, teaching experience reveals that breadth and depth are often considered as separate constructs, which is reflected in the use of multiple learning strategies that yield diverse results (Schmitt, 2014). In second language classrooms, there might be some students who manage a small number of words but effective word knowledge. This situation might be the consequence of a determined approach such as a delayed progression of words taught, but deep in terms of knowledge and rehearsal. Also some learners may possess a large amount of words, but be familiar with few of their characteristics, as a result of studying words in isolation lacking contextual information, leading to superficial learning (Schmitt, 2014). In this way, the author uses these examples to state that depth and breadth do not necessarily grow alongside, nevertheless speakers need to complement both concepts when learning a language.

Apart from their centrality as word knowledge dimensions, breadth helps to anticipate success in L2 vocabulary inferencing while depth would predict L2 reading comprehension. Consequently, both notions should be included in L2 course plans by language teachers, creators of material and designers of curricula (Qian, 1998; Qian, 1999 in Hatami & Tavakoli, 2012). A way of implementing this view is to devise programmes that aim at developing intentional and incidental vocabulary learning. This means that an explicit instruction is regarded as tool to set the first lexical learning stage, the form-meaning linkage, followed by incidental learning fomented through extensive exposure to reading and listening (Schmitt, 2008).

In sum, according to the literature reviewed, depth (quantity) and breadth (quality) are dimensions of vocabulary knowledge that aid learners to become functional in the target language (Schmitt, 2014). Although these might not be developed equally in students, the idea is to emphasise the relevance of both within the process of lexical acquisition, together with their presence in teaching plans and instruction. Thus, instead of considering them as opposing elements of a dichotomy, they relate to each other in language acquisition and learning (Read, 2004; Hatami & Tavakoli, 2012).

*2.3.4.1.1. Learners' vocabulary size in SLA.* A large vocabulary is needed to properly acquire and function in an L2 (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010a; 2010b). However, a second language learner is unable to acquire as much vocabulary as an educated native speaker (Schmitt, 2010a). Cook (2010) discusses the inadequacy of comparing the language knowledge of native speakers to that of non-native speakers and argues that language teaching goals should not be based on L1-L2 comparisons but on SLA studies. Nonetheless, it is far more adequate to establish attainable goals concerning the number of words a learner is expected to acquire (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010a).



The average amount of words a student needs to acquire to be proficient enough to communicate in academic and social contexts varies depending on the student's goals and communicative purposes. For the most basic tasks, such as holding a daily conversation, the vocabulary requirement is placed between 2,000-3,000 and 6,000-7,000 word families (Schonell, Meddleton & Shaw, 1956; Adolphs & Schmitt, 2003; Nation, 2006c). For reading authentic texts without external help or guidance, the requirement is at 8,000-9,000 word families; a general vocabulary would be composed of 5,000 word families (Nation, 2006c), and a wide vocabulary that would allow using English in various contexts is set at 10,000 word families (Hazenberg & Hulstijn, 1996 as cited in Schmitt, 2010a), excluding the specialized vocabulary that would allow the learner to perform in professional fields. Nevertheless, attaining a large vocabulary is useful as a long-term goal for learners (Nation, 2001).

There are certain words that are more helpful for learners than others (Nation, 2001). Those are high frequency words, specialised vocabulary, and low frequency words. High frequency words allow students to understand the core of the texts and basic conversations. The high-frequency group is composed of 2,000 words, where the first 1,000 comprise about 77% of the running words in academic texts, and the second 1,000 represent about 5% of the running words in academic texts. These words are of such importance due to their frequency, coverage and range, that the time spent teaching and learning them is more than justified, and they are a significant tool that can help students overcome the first hurdles of learning English as a second language (Nation, 2001). High frequency words are usually function and content words such as *for, the, of, etc.*, or *forest, government etc.*, respectively. This group covers an 80% of spoken and written words in a language and appear indistinctly in all contexts. The amount of words that should be considered as high frequency words depend on the text that is being analysed (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010a).

Nation (2001) suggests four ways of teaching and learning high frequency words: direct teaching, direct learning, incidental learning, and planned encounters. The first involves activities of direct explanation from the teacher or peer teaching. The second is based on the learner's efforts at acquiring high frequency words by using word cards or dictionaries. The third way of learning these words is guessing from context or by their use in communicative activities. Finally, vocabulary exercises and graded readings are also considered good options. Knowing the first 2,000 most frequent words, plus words from the academic word list augments the coverage of a text from 76.1% to 86.1% (Nation, 2006c). What teachers have to pay attention to is that a small amount of well-chosen vocabulary permits learners to work considerably (Nation, 2010). As such, after teaching the first 2,000 frequent words —also called 'core vocabulary'— it is best to continue by teaching items from the academic word list rather than to continue teaching high frequency ones (Nation, 2006c).

Low frequency words are defined as a large group of words that do not cover a large part of a text. Some of them are items of moderate frequency, and even boundary words, ones that were close to being high frequency list but did not get to be part of it. Others are simple low frequency words such as *eponymous*, *ploy*, etc. that are rarely used, and they probably have synonyms that belong to the high frequency words list. Low frequency words can be considered as extremely formal, or they may belong to a determined dialect, or a foreign language (Nation, 2001). Therefore, a short time should be spent on teaching them given that these words do not appear often in a corpus (Nation, 2006c; 2001).

Teaching high-frequency words means that the vocabulary taught will be relevant and connected with the students' needs, generating opportunities for meaningful learning (Georgieva, 2010). This idea obeys the learner-centred paradigm discussed by Georgieva (2010), according to which learning is successful if the subject is related to the students'

reality because then it becomes significant. Some strategies that can be applied for this process are, for instance, providing synonyms, define the words or forming associations among them (Nation, 2001; Georgieva, 2010).

**2.3.4.2. Types of vocabulary knowledge.** There are many divergent definitions of what it means to know a word (Koda, 2000; Nation, 2001; Thornbury, 2002; Browne, 2013). A simple approach to vocabulary knowledge is the conceptualisation provided by average people who understand it as having to do with words' meaning and spelling (Schmitt, 2010a). This would be a fair approximation, however knowing what a word means and the way to spell it represents only initial aspects of lexical knowledge, despite the fact that these aspects would allow a basic word usage (Schmitt, 2010a; 2010b). Nevertheless, vocabulary knowledge involves several aspects (Nation, 2006c; Schmitt, 2010a; 2010b 2012; Batty, 2012), and learners should consider the link established between form and meaning as just the beginning (Schmitt, 2010a; 2010b). For instance, Henriksen (1999) argues that to know a word entails the building of a semantic network i.e. learners consciously create associations among concepts that are being acquired with the ones they already know. In order to do this, similarities in morphology, syntax and collocations can be identified and used.

Along these lines, knowing a word completely is the result of a gradual learning process (Schmitt, 2010a). Particularly, guidance is required for acquiring the remaining aspects of word knowledge and going beyond the mastering of its form and meaning. Therefore, to fully grasp a concept and know its contexts of use, grammatical characteristics, collocations, register, frequency and associations, some particular form of teaching is needed (for instance, intentional or implicit strategies). While learning the full meaning and form of a large amount of words seems hard, most second language learners already know many concepts from their L1, apart from some general knowledge of the word (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010a; 2010b). Another author that makes reference to the different aspects involved

in knowing lexical items is Nation (2001) who argues that there are several types of word knowledge. Hence there are two main ways of organizing and explaining vocabulary knowledge. One is Henriksen (1999) and the other is Nation (2001), both of which will be described in the following section.

*2.3.4.2.1. Layers v/s continuum.* The notion of word knowledge has been debated in the field of second language acquisition with no clear-cut definition of what knowing a word means. Thus it is a complex notion consisting of various types of knowledge that underlie its understanding (Henriksen, 1999).

The acquisition of lexical knowledge can be characterized considering two models: as a process developed along a continuum, or as a phenomenon that develops in layers. On the one hand, the continuum model of lexical knowledge acquisition is based on Henriksen's (1999) proposal. The author designed a model of lexical competence, which identified a need for accounting for the relationship among the various aspects of lexical knowledge described. Thus when referring to lexical competence, Henriksen (1999) pointed out different levels of a word, understanding that they are gradually operationalized throughout the dimension of, for example, partial to precise knowledge of an item. Accordingly, vocabulary develops along three dimensions: partial to precise knowledge, depth of knowledge, and receptive to productive usability.

The first phase of the continuum, called 'partial to precise knowledge', has to do with the precision of word meaning and with the development of lexical items advancing in a continuum from a vague organization to a more precise categorisation of the layers of meaning (Henriksen, 1999). Therefore, a more accurate lexical meaning is developed through phases. The author emphasises that it is neither attainable nor necessary to master the full knowledge of all words to figure out the meaning of a message, as individuals may use inferential strategies to communicate. Consequently, the process goes from recognition of the

word as part of the language, then partial knowledge and finally, precise comprehension. In brief, the first dimension deals with the process of mapping and extensional connections (Henriksen, 1999).

The second stage denominated ‘depth of knowledge’ relates to the creation of networks and semantization processes that interact along both dimensions. The author refers to ‘semantization’ as the acquisition of the meaning of a word realised through the processes of labelling, packaging and network building. In a nutshell, labelling is the act of assigning a string of sounds to name a particular object or entity, packaging is the process of evaluating the things that are possible to group under a label, and network building corresponds to finding out the semantic links among words (Aitchison, 1994). From the first two processes—labelling and packaging—the learner will be able to develop paradigmatic relations and start building networks, and with them, a general understanding of items alongside the fundamental sign-referent linkage will be established.

Finally, the last stage of the continuum, ‘receptive to productive use ability’, refers to the progression of certain words from an initial receptive state to productive use. This does not represent a dichotomy because there is no visible distinction as to when reception ends and production of a word begins (Henriksen, 1999). In sum, the first and second dimensions are classified as ‘knowledge continua’, because they deal with the acquisition of word meaning and semantic relations presented in levels of lexical comprehension, and the third dimension is ‘control continuum’ associated with degrees of use presented in receptive and productive activities. Thus lexical competence is a gradual process constituted by interrelated dimensions that represent three continua of vocabulary learning.

On the other hand, the model based on layers is created by Nation (2001), whose attempt is considered comprehensive and precise (Milton, 2009). He describes around 20 aspects of word knowledge operating in receptive and productive dimensions with three main

axes or layers: form, meaning and use. This complex model is more clearly illustrated in the following table:

Table 1

## Types of word knowledge

Form	spoken	R P	What does the word sound like? How is the word pronounced?
	written	R P	What does the word look like? How is the word written and spelled?
	word parts	R P	What parts are recognizable in this word? What word are needed to express the meaning?
Meaning	form and meaning	R P	What meaning does this words form signal? What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	concept and referents	R P	What is included in the concept? What items can the concept refer to?
	associations	R P	What other words does this make us think of? What other words could we use instead of this one?
Use	grammatical functions	R P	In what patterns does the word occur? In what patterns must we use this word?
	collocations	R P	What words or types of words occur with this one? What words or types of words must we use with this one?
	constraints on use	R P	Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet this word? Where, when, and how often can we use this word?

*Note.* R = receptive; P = Productive. Taken from “*Learning vocabulary in another language,*” by P. Nation, 2001, pp. 40-41.

Essentially, Nation (2001) illustrates lexical knowledge acquisition through layers constituted by subunits displayed in receptive and productive abilities. Firstly, form is subdivided into spoken form, written form and word parts. Spoken form entails the receptive capacity of recognizing how the word sounds, while the productive ability refers to its correct pronunciation. Written form refers to the receptive capacity of recognizing the appearance of the word, and the productive ability implies its writing and spelling. The word parts dimension is associated with the receptive capacity of recognizing the parts that make up a word, for instance, affixes and roots, while productive ability is concerned with the utilization of those parts to communicate a specific meaning.

Secondly, word meaning is subdivided into form and meaning, concepts and referents, and associations. Form and meaning is related to the receptive capacity of comprehending what the word form summons, whereas its productive counterpart has to do with the use of the form for transmitting a message. The label 'concepts and referents' involves the receptive capacity of knowing what the concept encompasses, and the productive ability involves the concepts that can be referred to by the word. 'Association' includes the receptive capacity of thinking about related words, while the productive ability relates to the possibility of using words other than the target that mean similar things.

The final layer of Nation's model is word use. This aspect is subdivided into grammatical functions, collocations and constraints of use. The grammatical functions dimension refers to the receptive ability to comprehend the grammatical patterns in which the word takes place, whereas the productive ability entails the correct use of such patterns. The collocations aspect alludes to the receptive capacity of knowing the words that are put together with the main one, and the productive ability of a correct production in written or spoken discourse of those items. Constraints of use include the receptive capacity of understanding where, when and how often the word is expected to be met, whilst productive

ability corresponds to the appropriate use, where, when and how it is supposed to be employed (Browne, 2013).

Schmitt (2010a) characterises Nation's word knowledge types as being determined by form and meaning, or by context. The features determined by form and meaning are written and spoken form, word parts, form and meaning and concepts and referents. Then the features determined by context are collocations, associations, frequency and register constraints. These last three elements are the main divergence that Schmitt's (2010a) list presents from Nation's (2001) table. Schmitt's list is based on earlier work by Nation (1990), where 'associations' was divided into 'associations' and 'grammatical functions' in Nation (2001), and 'frequency' and 'register constraints' were unified into 'constraints on use' in Nation (2001). Schmitt's (2010a) contribution to the understanding of word knowledge types is his clarification that different word knowledges are acquired through different learning activities. This will be further explained in section 2.3.5. Vocabulary teaching.

To exemplify Nation's framework, the word 'disrespectful' will be used. Firstly, from the point of view of receptive knowledge, this lexical item is known when the learner listens to it and is able to recognize it. Then, when he/she demonstrates to be acquainted with its written form and is able to identify it while reading. Afterwards he/she is able to recognize the parts that constitute the item, in this case *dis-*, *-respect-*, *-ful* and link these parts to the words' meaning to understand that 'disrespectful' indicates a specific meaning. The learner has to know the meaning of the word in the context it takes place, along with its underlying concept to have a broader comprehension of the item in various settings. Also he/she has to be aware of associated terms such as *respectful*, *impolite*, *uncivil*, and verify the correct use of the word in a sentence. Finally, students know the word 'disrespectful' when they acknowledge that the words 'treatment' and 'way' collocate with it, and that it is neither unusual or pejorative.



Secondly, from the perspective of productive knowledge the word ‘disrespectful’ is considered known when learners are able to say it orally with an appropriate pronunciation, and to write it correctly. Hence they can build the word by employing its parts in their correct form, and then produce the item to communicate the meaning it contains. Thus students would be able to produce the word in various contexts expressing its multiple meanings, using the word accurately in a new sentence. Lastly, students know the word when they are capable of producing the items that usually collocate with it, and when choosing if using the word or not considering the circumstances e.g. *disrespectful* is more formal than *rude*.

As it was previously mentioned, each dimension in Table 1 entails a receptive and a productive ability, which, in turn, entails the difference between recognising a word when encountering it, and being able to produce it. In this case, productive use requires knowledge that extends beyond L2 learners’ receptive ability, and as such, it is harder for learners to use the words they study productively, even though they might be able to understand their meanings (Read, 2000). In this respect, all features of lexical knowledge are necessary for achieving higher proficiency or the ability to use it in various contexts (Schmitt, 2010a). Learners must consider this as well as the fact that previous knowledge plays a crucial role, where acquiring new words relies heavily on the knowledge from their L1, as it can be reflected in their L2 and any other language they acquire (Nation, 2006c).

Consequently, taking into account the descriptions above, the model chosen for illustrating lexical acquisition will be Nation’s (2001) framework of word types since it is the most suitable for our investigation.

**2.3.4.3. L1-L2 relationship.** Schmitt (2010b) says that there is an interplay between first and second language, which leads to concluding that in teaching and learning vocabulary, the first and foreign languages are not independent units but systems that interact throughout the acquisition process. The author states that vocabulary is not only essential for

the acquisition of an L2, but it is a central element in the L1. Depending on the learner's L1 proficiency level, the proficiency in the L2 will attain a similar level, as Jiang (2011) claimed, the access to more specific and complex vocabulary will reach the learner's proficiency in the target language. She explains that when referring to the influence that the L1 has on the learning process of an L2, there are two possible explanations that can be used to support this idea, the 'linguistic interdependence hypothesis', and the 'linguistic threshold hypothesis'. In general terms, the former proposes that the skills developed in language activities—such as reading and writing—in the L1 can be transferred when performing these tasks in the L2. The latter refers to the development of language proficiency in the target language to permit the subsequent transfer of L1 reading skills to the enhancement of L2 reading comprehension.

As stated previously, the acquisition of L2 vocabulary represents a clear benefit not only in terms of proficiency improvement, but also it can collaborate with students' learning both their native and foreign languages. Additionally, transferable skills are significant in language teaching as well as in the expansion of vocabulary knowledge in students' L1 and L2 (August et al., 2002).

**2.3.4.4. Morphological awareness.** Morphological awareness (MA) is defined as a teaching strategy or metalinguistic skill associated with the impressions formulated by competent readers about morphological components of words, and the capacity of using those cues in removing and managing that information while recognizing lexical items (Koda, 2000; Oz, 2014). In other words, it is the comprehension of the morphological structure of a language by identifying its morphemes, the process these undergo to form words, and the learner's capacity of using the knowledge in morphological analysis. It is closely related to metalinguistic awareness, characterized as the capacity of focusing on linguistic forms, and changing attention from meaning to form and vice versa. Students who develop this kind of

awareness can classify words into parts of speech, can pay attention to the aspects of form, function, and meaning, and discuss the functions of words (Jessner, 2008).

Morphological awareness is a constituent part of English along with phonological awareness, both forming the ‘morphophonemic nature’ of its orthography. Research in the area concludes that morphological awareness is relevant because it adds to alphabetic literacy, it allows to assess errors of beginners in the use of inflectional and derivational morphemes in speaking and writing, it allows to classify students by their use of morphological information—which facilitates orthographic processing—, it would promote reading and spelling learning, and facilitates lexical acquisition and processing (Koda, 2000). MA would allow a close interaction with the writing system of the language in its spoken and written forms, and a readiness for learning the target language because by knowing the frequent roots, then learners would split the word into more comprehensible parts.

Morphological processing is based on two procedures. First, a systematic analysis of intraword structure for distinguishing morphological elements, and second, the addition of morphological information in a linear manner. Based on previous findings, Koda (2000) emphasises that readers ‘decompose’ morphologically while they process lexical items. She states that L1 influences L2 morphological awareness in that both L1 and L2 processing improve lexical processing competence in the second or foreign language.

This phenomenon has a series of implications for the teaching and learning of English. For instance, awareness of derivational morphemes would contribute to developing grammatical accuracy, and enhance listening and speaking skills, whereas awareness of inflectional morphemes would facilitate lexical knowledge. For example, it would be possible to guess the meaning of 60% of unknown words in a text from knowing the morphemes that constitute them (Nagy & Anderson, 1984), as well as helping learners identifying irregularities associated with meaning.

Oz (2014) outlines a number of strategies to implement MA in language classrooms. First, teaching morphology independent from vocabulary; second, encouraging MA as a cognitive strategy that has developmental stages: 1) realise that a word is unknown, 2) analyse word parts or morphemes, 3) guess the meaning, 4) verify the word meaning; third, teaching how to identify affixes and word roots and the way items are modified; and fourth, teaching ‘true cognates’, which correspond to words which spellings and meanings are alike in the native and target languages, to aid reading comprehension. In this way learners will be able to apply their morphological knowledge to understand new items or words they know but that are set in novel contexts.

To conclude, MA is a relevant aspect of linguistic knowledge because the basic units of analysis, morphemes, contain information about semantic, phonological and syntactic features that determine the function of words in context (Karimi, 2012). It involves the perception of morphology—which corresponds to the analysis of words’ internal structures and the rule-governed system of word formation (Celik, 2007 in Oz 2014; Yule, 2010)—along with a series of abilities: knowing that it is possible to parcel words into smaller elements characterized by their functions, representing those elements in graphic symbols, bringing together and splitting ‘segmental intraword information’ (Koda, 2000) having a decisive role in the effective acquisition of vocabulary.

**2.3.5. Vocabulary teaching.** The teaching of vocabulary is bound to contextual factors due to the absence of an absolute methodology (Schmitt, 2010a). First, the type of words taught that will require the use of special methods or strategies e.g. definition, examples, synonyms/antonyms, etc. (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2007; 2010a; Georgieva, 2010). Second, learners will use different approaches to deal with vocabulary as in the case of well-employed strategies oriented to fulfil the learning goal. Third, the kind of approach implemented in the course will have an impact on learning.

As it will be explained in section 2.3.5.2. Implicit/explicit teaching and intentional/incidental learning, intentional and incidental learning complement each other. The former generates a stronger and accelerated learning, where extensive engagement allows greater retention in the students and teachers can choose to focus in essential vocabulary (high or low frequency, for special purposes or technical, etc.). The latter targets items that cannot be revised in class, provides contextual information, permits the recycling of words taught in an explicit way, and the parallel development of other skills e.g. learning vocabulary through extensive reading (Chacón-Beltrán, 2010; Schmitt, 2010a). In this manner, instruction should present a variety of words and check them repeatedly taking into account the aforementioned assumptions. No matter which vocabulary teaching method is chosen, a student's rate of learning —the pace at which L2 knowledge is acquired— will vary depending on the learner (Myles, 2002). This is not the case of the route of development, or path of language learning, which is the same for all L2 learners, independent of their L1 or learning contexts (Myles, 2002). Rate of learning has been one of the concerns on the field of language teaching, because if it is known the factor that helps learners acquire L2 knowledge faster, teachers and students can perform better and advance further in the learning process (Myles, 2002).

**2.3.5.1. Nation's four strands.** Nation's (1996, 2006b, 2007) 'four strands' correspond to principles and activities oriented to fulfilling the learning goals, and developing useful knowledge through the practical management of contents. Thus these correspond to types of activities for learning a language: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. The metaphor 'strands' refers to an extended consecutive set of learning conditions (Nation, 2007) that should be distributed evenly throughout a class plan for designing a balanced language course.

The first strand is meaning-focused input. It involves learning through listening and reading skills where students use their receptive knowledge to understand a message contained in an oral or written text. It occurs under certain conditions: the input is mostly familiar for learners, most language features are known and the ones unknown can be guessed from context, and large amounts of interesting and understandable input are presented. Part of the activities that can be implemented in this strand are listening to stories and conversations, watching television, reading graded readers, etc. (Palmer, 1980 in Nation, 1996; Nation, 2000; 2001).

The second strand corresponds to meaning-focused output. It relates to learning via speaking and writing using productive linguistic knowledge. The conditions for its presence are that learners speak and write about familiar topics, their goal is to communicate a message to a listener or reader, little of the language is unknown being able to use strategies to cope with possible gaps in their output, and learners have several chances of practising. This goes hand in hand with pushed output, the exercise of actually producing language features which helps learners to focus on how grammar is used in productive instances.

Swain (1995 in Nation, 2007) presents three functions of output: 1) noticing/triggering, 2) hypothesis testing, and 3) the metalinguistic or reflective. In general terms, the first function refers to becoming aware of the gaps in knowledge while producing the forms of a second language system. At this point, the author argues that productive learning leads to larger and greater knowledge than receptive, because it requires the searching and production of forms not the mere finding of their meaning, and also because it allows to use previously known items generatively. The second function has to do with the learner trying out a form and then receiving feedback, helping to improve his/her performance. And the third function refers to collaborative instances of spoken output to deal with language difficulties, thus language is used to solve problems related with itself. Some

activities to carry out under this strand are role play, problem solving, reading, and split information tasks.

The third strand is language-focused learning. It makes reference to the deliberate learning of language components: pronunciation, spelling, vocabulary, grammar and discourse (Nation, 2007), their form, meaning, patterns and appropriate use. Its conditions are that learners attend and process the features of the language deeply and deliberately, those elements should be simple and revisited several times, and take part in the rest of the strands. It has a series of effects: contributing to implicit knowledge, fostering awareness for further learning, highlighting language systematicity, developing strategies, accelerate the rate of SL acquisition, give meaning-focused input, and above all, to provide substantial amounts of usable knowledge to be retained (Nation, 1996; 2001 in Nation, 2007). Some activities are using word cards, translation, memorisation of dialogues, and intensive reading.

Finally, the last strand of fluency development intends to help learners using the knowledge they acquired through all skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing. It focuses on the transmission and reception of meaning, and it works under these conditions: language is largely familiar, students keep attention to message, they are encouraged to communicate faster, and they are exposed to lots of input or output. This strand should not be ignored because it is not focused on the learning of new elements, on the contrary, all four strands should have the same time to work with receptive and productive language skills.

In conclusion, the four strands can be classified as meaning-focused (meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, and fluency development), and form-focused (language-focused learning). The former deals with the transmission of meaning, pushing learners to go beyond their current knowledge, developing incidental learning, while the latter, as it is deliberate, would provide more learning. Thus, according to Nation (2007) the strands can work continuously where language-focused learning guides to meaning-focused

input/output and this directs to the development of fluency. Additionally, the author emphasises the use of the strands in the teaching and learning of high-frequency words, items of great importance for their occurrence.

Nation argues that instead of associating to one teaching method, it is more fruitful to be informed about the teaching and learning principles and adjust them to suit students, teaching conditions, and teachers' abilities (Nation, 1996). Accordingly, the author presents a list of 10 principles that take into account the four strands to orient pedagogical practices and guide language teachers (Nation, 2007). Some of them are related to helping and training learners to assimilate learning strategies and language items such as vocabulary, sounds and spellings. Others suggest planning the repeated coverage of useful words and monitoring students so as to address any communicative needs the learners may have and the proper introduction of instances of cooperative interaction between students. These principles, as said before, are intended to guide language teachers for them to ensure a better acquisition of the L2.

Additionally, Nation (2006b) also mentions 5 principles specially focused on vocabulary learning and teaching. First, learning should progress from high frequency and special purpose vocabulary to low frequency. Second, high frequency and lexis for special purposes should be considered along the four strands. Third, teachers should encourage the use of strategies to cope with low frequency words. Fourth, learning activities should aim at a deep lexical processing through procedures of retrieval and generative use. And fifth, learners should be encouraged to become autonomous and be responsible of their learning e.g. designing a negotiated syllabus by the teacher and students. The learning of words as a 'cumulative process' where knowledge grows stronger and richer as the word is encountered in receptive and productive instances (Nation, 2006c).



**2.3.5.2. *Implicit/explicit teaching and intentional/incidental learning.*** Implicit and explicit teaching, and intentional and incidental learning represent different but complementary ways of looking at two language related phenomena. The implicit teaching approach is based on recognizing and producing linguistic forms (Ellis, 1994; 1995). It is influenced by repetition, and the sole conscious activity in this approach is attention to stimuli. In contrast, explicit teaching entails a more conscious experience. For instance, learners can augment their word stock by doing implicit learning tasks such as listening to songs, watching films in the target language, et cetera, while when learners formulate hypotheses as to which structures and rules serve the purpose of the task, or for linking form and meaning, they are using an incidental learning strategy (Ellis, 1994). From the area of psychology, incidental learning argues for a lack of conscious processes as the ones just described (Milton, 2009); however, research reveals that there would be a conscious effort for acquiring words in an indirect way.

These different teaching strategies should be employed for the teaching of the different components of lexical knowledge. As it was already mentioned, the four last elements in Nation's (2001) list of types of vocabulary knowledge —collocations, register constraints, frequency and associations— are highly dictated by context unlike the first four, which are related to meaning, form and morphology.

As explained in the previous paragraphs, the implicit approach then is more suitable for learners that have moved beyond the basic form-meaning linkage, and one of the main techniques for incidental vocabulary acquisition is the extended reading task (Chacón-Beltrán et al., 2010). The incidental learning of new words using this technique represents three main advantages over intentional strategies. First, words provide more information about their meaning and use, and they result more internalized and interconnected in the student's' mind. Second, previously acquired vocabulary is reinforced becoming consolidated, and third, it

promotes autonomous L2 learning, giving opportunities for students to learn at their own pace (Chacón-Beltrán et al., 2010).

When learning intentionally or incidentally, both explicit and implicit strategies should be implemented, since each one has its own benefits that compensate the drawbacks of the other (Chacón-Beltrán et al., 2010). Therefore, intentional learning is focused and effective, but results to be limited because it cannot offer a large coverage of words neither of word types, while incidental learning is dilatory and with no determined objective, but it fills in contextually-related types of word knowledge, and it is used as a method for recycling words learned only partially (Schmitt, 2010a). In other words, the former has the benefit of being targeted and efficient, but it has the drawback of being limited in vocabulary breadth and depth, while the latter can contribute to fill the gaps left by intentional learning, as well as providing recycling.

### **2.3.6. How to learn a word?**

**2.3.6.1. Conditions for a word to be learned.** As mentioned above, the most basic form of word knowledge is the form-meaning association i.e. recognising a word's spoken and written forms, and linking them with a meaning. The strength of the form-meaning linkage determines the learner's meaning retrieval whenever seeing or hearing a word form, and the learner's word form retrieval when they want to convey its meaning. Each successful meaning or form retrieval reinforces the link between them, and so several opportunities of contact with a word are required to learn and master the basic form-meaning connection (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010a). However, vocabulary knowledge entails several areas and layers, as it was illustrated in Nation's (2001) framework presented in Table 1. In order to acquire this great deal of information, especially the more contextual layers of vocabulary knowledge, many encounters are needed (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010a). Furthermore, Nation (2001) proposes that there are three steps or processes involved in word learning:

noticing, retrieval and generative or creative use. Each of these steps builds on and encompasses the steps that preceded it. The next subsection will explain in further detail Nation's three processes that lead to remembering a word. Following this, the next section will be devoted to examining word repetition, encountering, and the difficulties of determining a set number of encounters needed for vocabulary acquisition to occur.

*2.3.6.1.1. Processes that lead to word learning.* Nation (2001) proposes that there are certain psychological conditions that are required for acquiring vocabulary and learning a language. These conditions can be set up and used in the teaching or learning activity so that language learning is effective. The author claims that there are three of these psychological conditions: noticing, retrieval, and generative or creative use.

The first process, noticing, means that the learners notice the lexical item and pay attention to it and its usefulness in the L2. Noticing is enabled and affected by the learner's motivation and interest (Nation, 2001). A key component of noticing is decontextualisation (Nation, 2001), focusing on a word as a linguistic item rather than as a part of a message. Decontextualisation does not refer to sentence context, neither does it mean that new terms must be taught in isolation. It means that the learner's attention shifts from the context of the sentence and focuses on the word itself, either for a brief or a long period of time (Nation, 2001). An example of a type of decontextualisation is the negotiation of the meaning of a term with classmates or other learners. Research findings agree that while negotiation helps word learning, it takes too much time, and that it can only account for up to 20% of a vocabulary learning task because too much negotiation can interfere with communication between learners (Ellis, Tanaka & Yamazaki, 1994; Newton, 1995). Another example of decontextualisation is definition. Several studies find that providing a definition of new words helps learners remember new lexical items, especially if the definition is simple, or a

translation to the students' L1 (Chaudron, 1982; Brett, Rothlein & Hurley, 1996; Elley, 1989; Ellis, 1995; Knight, 1994, Nation, 2001).

The second process that helps learning words is retrieval (Baddeley, 1990; Nation, 2001), referring to the process of strengthening the memory of a word and its meaning. It is, therefore, a process that happens after the learner has noticed a word and has understood its meaning. Re-encountering a word during a subsequent learning task will result in retrieval. There are two kinds of retrieval: receptive and productive. Receptive retrieval means the learner reads or hears the word form and is able to retrieve its meaning. Productive retrieval means the learner wants to communicate the word's meaning and is able to retrieve its word form in order to write it or utter it (Nation, 2001).

The third process helpful for word learning is generation or creative use. Generative processing is what happens when the learner encounters or produces already known words in new contexts, or in ways that differ from the learner's first contacts with the term. As such, there are receptive and productive dimensions in this process as well. Receptive generation is encountering (listening or reading) a word being used in a new way. These novel uses could be new metaphorical uses of a known lexical item, inflections, collocations or a new grammatical context. Productive generation is uttering a known word in a new way or in new contexts. Generation of words in new contexts is key to word learning because it comprehends the three processes already described, and it leads to better vocabulary learning rates (Nation, 2001).

These three processes can be correlated with Stahl's (1985, as cited in Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986) scale for describing depth of vocabulary processing. What Stahl calls association, comprehension and generation correspond to Nation's steps of noticing, retrieving and generation. The deeper the vocabulary processing, the greater the involvement load, which leads to more effective learning (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001). Teaching and learning

activities can be designed to set up and meet the aforementioned psychological conditions, varying the degree of processing and involvement according to the learners' level of proficiency in order to encourage learning. For example, students that are first presented with new vocabulary will make the most of learning activities that promote noticing.

*2.3.6.1.2. Repetition and encountering.* As it was already stated, it is not easy to assert the number of repeated encounters that a learner must engage in in order to learn a word, due to a variety of factors. In this sense Schmitt (2010a) agrees with the difficulty of determining how many word exposures are needed, but there have been attempts at establishing said number. Nation (2001) cites studies with findings ranging from five to seven word repetitions to over twenty encounters needed by some learners (Kachroo, 1962; Crothes & Suppes, 1967; Tinkham, 1993) while Webb's studies (2007; 2008) found that ten encounters were appropriate for acquiring knowledge of word forms. Nonetheless, these statistics are most useful when learning core words i.e. the first 2,000 (Nation, 2010).

Repetition seems to be a minor factor in learning word meanings compared to the contextual quality of the encounters, and some evidence suggests that there is only a moderate correlation between repetition and word learning (Nation, 2001; Webb, 2007; 2008). This contradiction could be explained by the different methods and the particular characteristics of each exposure to novel words (Nation, 2001), since determining the amount of encounters needed for word learning depends on the type of exposure, the similarity between L1 and L2 forms, and the student's level of engagement to the task, also known as cognitive load or mental effort (Schmitt, 2010a).

The cognitive load theory refers to the capacity of a person's memory. The cognitive load of a task depends on its learning burden, its complexity, and on the learner's abilities and their personal characteristics. Learning strategies that require a high level of engagement to the task—and therefore that are of a high cognitive load—offer higher rates of vocabulary

uptake (Schmitt, 2010a). Pairing high-engagement teaching or learning activities with repetition in diverse contexts, then, seems to be the way to ensure vocabulary acquisition (Nation, 2001; 2006c; Webb, 2007; 2008). Finding words only in written or spoken form is not enough, since it is necessary to encounter the term in several other contexts, along with some knowledge of the target word in the learner's L1 (Schmitt, 2010a). Forgetting a new concept happens easily right after it is first met, reason why its immediate consolidation is essential to avoid its forgetting (Schmitt, 2010a). This is less likely to occur when some time has passed since the class has finished, than in the recent moments following the lesson, because the rate of forgetting diminishes from that point onwards.

Repeated encounters of words in varying contexts are an indispensable part of vocabulary learning because of the enormous amount of information that is needed in order to know a term well, as it is illustrated in Nation's (2001) model of lexical knowledge. This great amount of information must also be internalised by learners so that they can access it effortlessly and continuously. Repeated encounters, then, improve the quality and quantity of the learner's word knowledge, moreover six to sixteen encounters are suggested so as to assure word retention (Nation, 1990; 2001).

Baddeley (1990) and Pimsleur (1967) allude to the idea that in order to reap the full rewards of repeated encounters, the process must be done the right way. Bearing in mind the way memory works in the human brain, the repetitions must be spaced over a long period of time. The authors state that new information is more prone to be forgotten immediately after it is first acquired. Moreover, this loss is major compared to the lesser forgetting that happens afterwards, slowly over longer periods of time.

Taking this into consideration means that it is more effective to carry out spaced repetitions than massed ones. In other words, it is better to have several brief study sessions than one long revision. An 'expanding rehearsal' schedule can be created to improve

vocabulary consolidation, where the intervals between practice sessions are dictated by the learners' self-evaluation of how much they can remember. Ideally these are carried out whenever the learner has forgotten some aspects, so as to justify revision, but not to the point that he or she has begun to lose the form-meaning link (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010a). The first revision should occur soon after the first lesson and continue at intervals that augment gradually, for instance some minutes after the end of the class, then after a day, a week, a month and various months later (Baddeley, 1990; Pimsleur, 1967; Schmitt, 2010a).

A similar principle is addressed by Nation (2006a) when comparing massed learning to spaced learning. On the one hand, massed learning refers to the intense studying of a set of words in one long time span. On the other hand, spaced learning means studying the words several times during shorter periods of time, and with each repetition being spaced further apart from the previous one. These principles can also be applied in curriculums and teaching materials, through the recycling of previously introduced vocabulary (Schmitt, 2010a).

Another term that is related to recycling is the enhancement of partial knowledge. It refers to the recycling of word knowledge and how necessary it becomes to deepen the understanding of the concept by periodically revisiting it (Schmitt, 2010a). Similarly to the previously explained factor of repetition, recycling is essential for learning vocabulary because meeting a word once does not guarantee its remembrance, so individuals need to encounter a word many times to acquire it (Schmitt, 2010a). Likewise, the author illustrates the way word knowledge aspects are improved when moving from an initial to an advanced comprehension, achieved only by recycling and revisiting an item already consolidated.

There is a five step method for recycling words that involves (1) pre-teaching of vocabulary, (2) oral reading of a text containing the vocabulary with discussion of the meaning of the text, (3) deliberate word study, (4) vocabulary puzzles, quizzes, or tests, and finally, (5) writing making use of the vocabulary (Blake & Majors, 1995). These steps aim at

encouraging learners to move from receptive to productive language use by employing the new vocabulary in real world situations, furthermore, they are supposed to focus on deliberate learning, making a conscious effort to acquire the new concepts.

Attention must also be paid to the type of repetition strategies used, since some methods are more effective at strengthening the form-meaning connection than others. In the first encounter it is better to present students with the word form and its meaning simultaneously, but in subsequent presentations it is better to give students the chance to make an effort to guess or recall the word. These efforts at recalling or retrieval strengthen the retrieval route and could help learners in performing more fluently (Baddeley, 1990; Landauer & Bjork, 1978; Nation, 2001).

Vocabulary learning is an incremental process and it requires consolidation to be properly acquired (Schmitt, 2010a; 2010b). On the one hand, incremental refers to the number of times a student needs to encounter a word in order to add it to their vocabulary range. On the other hand, consolidation is the act of fully acquiring newly learned vocabulary through association with previously learned concepts, as well as through social interaction in the target language (Schmitt, 1997).

This incremental nature of vocabulary learning compels teaching programmes to incorporate recycling of previously taught vocabulary if they want to be successful, being also important for vocabulary consolidation. Thus, if a piece of information is old enough, forgetting it will be less likely to occur, arguing that information acquired in the past is definitely more entrenched in memory, hence the possibilities of forgetting it are lower than with new knowledge. Another technique that contributes to vocabulary consolidation is attaching new information to already existing knowledge, for instance, by grouping the new word with already known ones that have some similarities in semantic, phonological, or morphological terms (Schmitt, 2010a). However, this technique possesses the risk of



crossassociation when teaching two or more similar words, which translates into students learning the meaning and word forms but associating them incorrectly. Words that are typically prone to be crossassociated are antonyms, synonyms and other words that usually occur together (Schmitt, 2010a).

**2.3.6.2. Learning burden.** As there is plenty to learn, Schmitt (2010a) emphasises the idea of trying to minimize the mental exertion of learning vocabulary. This mental effort is called learning burden defined as the amount of energy put into learning new words which depends on learners' different linguistic backgrounds (Nation, 2001). To fully know a word, learners must cover several aspects of form, meaning and use; these will or will not be difficult to learn depending on the learner's background knowledge of the target language, of other languages or their mother tongue (Nation, 2006a). The effort is greater if the word contains patterns and knowledge that are unknown or unfamiliar for the student, and it diminishes the more familiar those characteristics become (Nation, 2001; 2006a).

For instance, words from languages with similar sound systems to the student's L1 will be easier to learn in terms of pronunciation. The same thing happens with the syntactic and morphological systems, and if two languages have vocabulary that is similar in form. In the case of Spanish speakers, it is easier to learn English than Russian as the former shares the same alphabet with Spanish and thus, the burden is lower. Furthermore, if both languages share cognates, the learning burden is going to be even lighter, as shared forms and meaning make the acquisition more manageable. According to what was mentioned earlier Nation (2006a) suggests that before learning new vocabulary there should be a quick analysis of the learning burden. This would provide teachers with the information to focus on the main aspects needed to guarantee a better teaching of vocabulary.

**2.3.6.3. Learning strategies.** There are two different ways to categorise learning skills (Cohen, 2010). On the one hand, there are four main categories in which learning strategies are organised: cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social (Chamot, 1987; Oxford, 1990 in Cohen, 2010). And on the other hand, these strategies can be divided by the skills they relate to.

Firstly, cognitive strategies refer to the learner's mental manipulation of the target language (Oxford, 1990 in Schmitt, 1997). This involves learning strategies such as identification, grouping, and storage of the acquired information (Cohen, 2010). Secondly, metacognitive strategies are the ones consciously used by the learner to oversee their learning by planning, checking, and by evaluating the ways they study, here the learners are able to control their cognition (Cohen, 2010; Schmitt, 1997). Thirdly, affective strategies are used to regulate the learner's attitudes, motivations or emotions before or at the moment of using the language. Finally, social strategies refer to the actions that learners choose to interact with other learners and native speakers, so as to improve language learning by exposure to communication in the second language (Cohen, 2010; Schmitt, 1997).

While this division of learning strategies is generally suitable, there are some inconsistencies at the moment of production, as learners use these strategies in a number of contexts, and so their classification can be affected by several factors depending on the learner's intended use (Schmitt, 1997). For example, there are strategies that could be placed into different categories, as it is the interaction of a learner with native speakers. This is clearly a social strategy, but it can fit into the category of metacognitive strategies if it is part of a bigger learning plan (Schmitt, 1997).

Besides the previously mentioned classification, there is another way to characterise them. This is by grouping them with the basic four skills the learning strategies are related to (listening, reading, writing, and speaking), plus some other pertinent skills associated with

vocabulary learning, grammar, translation, etc., which correlate with the aforementioned skills (Cohen, 2010).

Cohen (2010) exemplifies different strategies to learn vocabulary, which relate to the steps in the learning process. These are obtaining, storing, retrieving, and using the new information (Rubin, 1987 in Schmitt, 1997). For instance, trying to identify the meaning, structure or other parts of a word, to memorize vocabulary. Another strategy is going over newly acquired words to assure they are learned and to review vocabulary. Also, making an effort to remember the context in which the words were written or heard is a strategy used to recall vocabulary. And finally, a strategy to use vocabulary is to form sentences with familiar words in different combinations.

**2.3.6.4. Motivation.** In earlier years, motivation was seen as a dynamic factor and as a process (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998). However, in the last years this concept has been examined and described thoroughly as a ‘self-system’ (Dörnyei, 2010) divided into three components: ideal L2 self, the characteristics that someone would like to have; ought-to L2 self, the properties that someone thinks that ought to have in order to meet expectations; and L2 learning experience, the motives related to the learning context and experience. This approach can be seen as an expansion of the term in the SLA field, where motivation is referred as a made up concept that converges into a L2 motivational self-system.

Additionally, Gass and Selinker (2001) referred to motivation as a social-psychological component that is part of a social background and of the mind of an L2 learner that accounts for success when learning an L2. Motivation can also be perceived as a secondary element that might determine success, though the primary element that limits success extensively is aptitude (Skehan, 1989).

Gardner (1985) and Ellis (1994) divided motivation into ‘integrative motivation’ and ‘instrumental motivation’. On the one hand, the authors indicate that, integrative motivation

takes place when students feel the desire to join a certain group and therefore, learn about its culture as well. On the other hand, they point out that, instrumental motivation appears suddenly when students predict diverse benefits and advantages that they expected to have at the time of learning a specific language.

Additionally, Gardner (2007) adds two types of motivation, 'language learning motivation' and 'classroom learning motivation'. The first one is defined by the author as the intention or impulse of learning and acquiring an L2. This impulse allows the learners to benefit from every opportunity of learning and practising their L2. It is considered to be relatively permanent, but it can present variations under certain contexts. Whereas classroom learning motivation is referred to as a broadly state-oriented motivation in the classroom or in any specific situation that involves a learning context. Here the focus is on the student's perception of the task. This means that, while the first refers to the pure intention of learning without any specific context, the second makes reference to how does the learner perceives the realization of any second language learning task in the classroom; this can generate a positive or a negative motivation.

In sum, this part of the literature review has provided different aspects of vocabulary learning and teaching, emphasizing their main role in second language acquisition and in the achievement of effective communication. Along with this, lexical knowledge constituents are essential to reach proficiency and use words in many instances (Schmitt, 2010a). Also, there are relevant aspects that play a role in vocabulary acquisition and language teaching. These are related to the learner's mother tongue (Nation, 2006c), as it helps to increase word knowledge; and morphological awareness, allowing to predict and at some point to know the functions and structures of word formation. Then, vocabulary teaching is determined by the context. Hence, the circumstances determine the words that will be taught and the methods and strategies to teach them; learners will deal with words in different ways aiming at

fulfilling their learning goals, and the kind of teaching approaches will impact learning (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2007; 2010a; Georgieva, 2010).

Teaching activities for language learning such as Nation's (1996, 2006b, 2007) 'four strands' contribute to the fulfilment of learning objectives and an effective use of contents. Furthermore, as learning will occur intentionally or incidentally, teaching can be conducted implicitly or explicitly, thus both strategies should be considered for teaching distinct word knowledge aspects. Learning a word involves noticing, retrieval, and generative or creative use (Nation, 2001), and teaching activities can be created to develop these processes. Other core dimensions of vocabulary learning are repetition of words, the encountering of them in various contexts, and the recycling of items through time to guarantee acquisition to obey the incremental nature of vocabulary (Schmitt, 2010a). Learning strategies show students how to relate with the language and their own learning process, and motivation hints the level of engagement and impulses that drive students' learning.

Finally, vocabulary represents a significant element as it facilitates proficiency and competence development, and it is considered essential in communicative and academic usage (Schmitt, 2010a; 2010b; Lewis, 1993b; Wilkins, 1972). For this reason, vocabulary should be viewed as the main concern when learning and teaching any language as it is a core element in the development of oral and written proficiency and accuracy (Cummins, 2003; Schmitt, 2010a; Vermeer, 1992 as cited in Chacón-Beltrán et al., 2010).

## **2.4. English for Specific Purposes**

**2.4.1. Context of origin.** The field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has undergone a series of transformations from its origin in the late 1960s until today. Accordingly, this section will describe its history and foundational trends. There are three reasons that explain the emergence of ESP: the demands of what has been called a Brave

New World, a revolution in linguistics, and a focus on the learner (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

After WWII, technological and commercial relations intensified, and this provoked a gradual necessity of a language for international communication. English was chosen for this purpose as it was the language of a world power, the United States. Due to this, the number of individuals learning English increased (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). During the 1970's, English was acknowledged as an international language or lingua franca (Flowerdew, 2013). It started to be spread as a medium of communication among speakers of diverse languages, to establish socio-economic relations and to potentiate the production of scientific and technological knowledge. It was this boom in the use of English that provoked a body of research and approaches to its teaching and learning, being ESP one of them (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Moving along, the changes in the objects of study of linguistics also represented a reason for ESP exploration. First it was grammar and rules for language use. Then the emphasis was located in analysing language used in real contexts, leading to perspectives that recognized linguistic variation. Hence it was assumed that the kind of English taught in ESP courses was determined by the specific linguistic features identified in a determined context or field.

Finally, the influence of educational psychology focusing on learners. It was essential for an effective learning and teaching to know the students' interests and attitudes, resulting in courses based on learners' needs and relevant contents to increase their motivation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

**2.4.2. Definition.** English for Specific Purposes is a research area concerned with English learning and teaching as a second or foreign language, oriented to students who use

the language for a particular domain, occupation or productive sector (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). Therefore, its objective is to teach learners the skills to communicate effectively in a specific field, acquiring the knowledge to access and participate as members of a community. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define ESP as an approach used in language teaching where choices about content and method are grounded on the students' learning goals for the language, considering their motives as central for the area's design; hence ESP is not a product, a particular type of language, methodology, or teaching material (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Georgieva (2010) while presenting vocabulary teaching in ESP claims that the term 'specific' alludes to the intention or objective for learning the language, and where or how it is going to be used. The answers to these questions are strictly related to learners' needs, a cornerstone element of ESP according to the author.

In order to characterize this dynamic area, information from several authors was gathered. To begin with, Dudley-Evans (2001) refers to ESP as an independent section from English language teaching (ELT) that has particular methods and approaches to design lessons and materials, but is still connected with applied linguistics. The author defines ESP a classroom based activity associated with practical outcomes, and driven by the materials used by professors, where the results are creative products and adequate performances of learners in a specific domain using the skills and knowledge acquired. Dudley-Evans and St John distinguish absolute and variable characteristics of ESP (1998 in Dudley-Evans, 2001).

On the one hand, absolute characteristics are the transcendental and constant features of the field: ESP is created to meet learners' needs, it employs methods and activities belonging to the discipline it is based on, and the teaching focuses on grammar, vocabulary, register, language skills, and discourse genres. On the other hand, variable characteristics change depending on the context: ESP might be linked with or created for a determined profession, it might use distinct methods in contrast with general English, courses can be

designed for adults in tertiary education or in workplaces but it can also be oriented to the teaching of high school students, and despite the fact that ESP requires an intermediate-advanced level it is possible to adapt it to beginners.

In other words, ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners, it uses an underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves, and it is focused on the language relevant to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, etc. (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998 in Miller, 2014). The variable characteristics indicate that ESP may be related to specific disciplines, uses a different methodology from General English (GE), is likely to be designed for adult learners, and most ESP courses assume that there is a basic knowledge of the English language system. These characteristics are really helpful to frame ESP as it is a large concept with many different branches such as English for occupational purposes (EOP), English for Vocational Purposes (EVP), English for Professional Purposes (EPP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

Nowadays, the focus of ESP resides in genre as an important aspect to approach language teaching and learning, because it provides information of the target community (Johns, 2013). Regarding the future directions of ESP, three main orientations were picked out of five described by Johns (2013): researcher roles, methodologies and triangulation, and varied locales. The first one alludes to the functions of practitioners in identifying the students' needs, researching the discourse and background of their students' target community. In doing so, these specialists play the roles of teacher, course designer and materials provider, also of collaborator —working in tandem with vocational experts—, researcher and evaluator. In this way, it is possible to link research findings and classroom activity.

The second orientation involves two spheres. The first is the mixing of approaches — for example sociological and multi-methodological— to study genres, corpus, and learners'



needs. The second concerns the growth of a critical movement in ESP, rooted in applied linguistics and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (Starfield, 2013), whose purpose is to question the decisions of social institutions regarding linguistic and pedagogical practices, and the effects of power relations on equity.

The last orientation argues for doing research in classrooms, stating that some of the classrooms mentioned should be part of vocational or professional schools, as well as in secondary classrooms (Johns, 2013). More information is needed to work in those environments, which might benefit in the future from the development of pedagogical approaches, such as content and language integrated learning (CLIL), where linguistic knowledge is embedded while learning a subject (Flowerdew, 2013).

Lastly, there are two other aspects that characterise the future of ESP (Dudley-Evans, 2001). First, the relevance of the heterogeneous identities of learners while analysing their needs, supporting learner-centred approaches. And second, the growing awareness of students' background experience and how contexts affect the learning of English. Johns (2013) sums up the future of ESP with four words: variety (of research themes), context (setting variation), complexity and critique (of researchers' work and personal practices).

**2.4.3. Teaching objectives of ESP.** Basturkmen (2006) outlines five objectives in teaching ESP: (1) to reveal subject-specific language use, (2) to develop target performance competencies, (3) to teach underlying knowledge, (4) to develop strategic competence, and (5) to foster critical awareness. The first objective has to do with the teaching of linguistics aspects of the target setting focused on the kind of English used. In the second objective, the author introduces the term 'competency-based occupational education', which refers to a teaching approach aiming at the cultivation of abilities for occupational activities, and at acquiring linguistic skills to fit into the discourse community.

The third goal aims at integrating the teaching of language with what Hutchinson and Waters (1985 in Basturkmen, 2006) called ‘underlying competencies’ or background knowledge, which are the crucial concepts of a discipline for the understanding of its elements. The fourth objective of ESP teaching is focused on strategic competence, the connection between situational context and language knowledge (Basturkmen, 2006). It allows communicating using the language system and content information that students may already master. And the last goal is to encourage critical awareness. Critical approaches question the function of ESP to make students ‘fit’ into target contexts, and claim that students’ behaviours and thoughts are (accidentally) modified by ESP, as it may be partly responsible for the preservation of norms and practices which are not necessarily beneficial (Basturkmen, 2006). Therefore, critical perspectives promote the analysis of those norms and practices in class, and teach students to alter the situation if necessary to better ‘position’ themselves in it.

**2.4.4. Procedures for the application of ESP.** There are core procedures and techniques for the application of ESP: needs analysis, target situation analysis (TSA), present situation analysis (PSA), and discourse community.

Needs analysis, a central characteristic of ESP (Dudley-Evans, 2001) provides the bases for material design, teaching implementation, and it is the first stage in the development of ESP courses (Flowerdew, 2013). Dudley-Evans (2001) presents three guiding questions for developing a course based on the identification of needs: “What do students need to do with English? Which of the skills do they need to master and how well? Which genres do they need to master, either for comprehension or production purposes?” (p. 131). These are related with the purpose of learning English —targeting at language use—, the skills and the level of proficiency that should be developed, and knowledge of genres for comprehension or

production purposes. Therefore, specific needs are determined by the ‘occupational situation’ in which students will be immersed, addressing components and discourses of that situation.

Target and present situation analyses are similar to a certain extent. The difference lies in how they identify the needs perceived in ESP. The former refers to activities learners will have to perform in specific settings by using English, and the latter deals with aspects that students are currently weaker at or lacking. After conducting the analyses, the next step is for teachers to work with genres, explaining the relevant features and internal structure of texts to be understood and then replicated by students. These needs-based materials can be available on the corresponding literature, adapted from previous versions or created from scratch by ESP teachers (Bocanegra-Valle, 2010). Likewise, each course is going to have distinctive characteristics or ‘specific needs’ for L2 use (Flowerdew, 2013), as well as students’ own learning styles, teachers’ and students’ ideologies, beliefs, and interests, etc. (Littlewood, 2014).

In the case of ‘discourse community’, it is seen as the target of language teaching. Critical studies have declared that communities in most cases are thought to have a homogeneous and pacific agreement on norms and values (Starfield, 2013). This proves to be misleading because each context has its own socio-political manifestations and ways to deal with broader influencing ideologies, power and social inequality. Hence, to reach a full understanding of this discipline community, ESP teachers and field experts should engage in collaborative work to search for strategies and implement theoretical and practical activities for students (Hirvela, 2013).

**2.4.5. ESP and Vocabulary.** Georgieva (2010) points out the relevance of ESP and vocabulary together with its effective teaching in a context where students learn the L2 while studying the specialty they are interested in. The types of vocabulary taught should obey the

needs of students, and from that, they should build a productive instruction including approaches to language learning (Littlewood, 2014). In this way, teaching contributes to the development of the abilities students need for communicating successfully in an occupational context (Georgieva, 2010) starting from vocabulary knowledge as part of the language learning process. Nation (2001) defines this technical vocabulary as a set of words notably useful for learners with particular goals in language use, for instance, secondary students learning administration need a specific vocabulary to achieve the goal of understand and/or communicate appropriately within the field.

Technical words can be classified in four groups depending on their ‘technicalness’ or ‘range’: 1) a word that hardly ever occurs in other contexts apart from the discipline itself e.g. ‘jactitation’ in Law, 2) a word used in a field and elsewhere but holding a different meaning e.g. ‘terminal’ in Electronics, 3) a term whose specialized meaning is possible to infer from its use outside the discipline e.g. ‘memory’ in Computing, 4) terms with a low level of specialization in regular use but with a more specialized use in a discipline, e.g. ‘word’ in Applied Linguistics (Coxhead, 2013). Hence, as Nation (2001) claims, the ESP teacher collaborates with the learning of technical vocabulary selecting the most relevant items, using strategies to deal with new specialized words, encouraging students not to avoid them as they contain pivotal information about topics from the area. The author says that the reason why vocabulary is taught as an isolated aspect is to facilitate the process of teaching and learning planning, so for instance frequent words can be taught first, constituting the basis of students’ knowledge, and then add less frequent but still relevant items.

In this respect, Coxhead (2013) outlines three main reasons that sustain the importance of vocabulary in ESP. Firstly, language needs have to be fulfilled within brief class time, thus material should contain relevant information to be used (vocabulary, grammar, genre traits). Secondly, by mastering the vocabulary students show their

membership to a community, and by using the language they are able to construct meaning and engage with disciplinary knowledge (Woodward-Kron, 2008 as cited in Coxhead, 2013). Lastly, specialized vocabulary size ranges approximately in 1,000-5,000 words, thus students should make a big effort in this task to understand and then use the vocabulary in the classroom or the workplace. Here the author advises to consider Nations' types of word knowledge as an approach to deal with vocabulary learning to practise and develop receptive and productive skills. In contrast with general purpose English (GPE), Hirvela (2013) states that ESP specialized vocabulary learning is more complex, hence its difficulty can be reduced by using five strategies: inferring from context, identifying lexical familiarization, synonym search and word analysis. In this way it would be easier to acquire a general vocabulary of about 2,000 word families and then add to it a specialized English corpus.

To conclude, ESP is an area that has grown aware of the roles played by the teacher as a 'gateway' to approximate the language and the power it represents for students (Starfield, 2013). These professionals assume the responsibility for teaching English as a foreign or second language as a useful resource for individuals interested in a field. As Johns (2013) points out ESP is a 'practitioners' movement' meaning that experts —teachers or instructors— are responsible for investigating the needs of learners to help them fulfil their aims, not focusing only on *target needs* (theory and language elements) but on *learning needs* to develop useful competencies and cover their lacks and wants. This supports the emphasis on learner-centred approaches developed in ESP, as researchers and teachers look for methods to deal with 'cognitive and learning processes' and particular knowledge of students (Littlewood, 2014).

### 3. Methodology

This section provides an account of the materials used and steps that were taken to carry out this research. The first part elaborates on the motivations that drove this group to investigate English teaching and learning in vocational high schools. After that, this section presents the research questions, objectives, corpus, materials, procedures and analyses. Given that the objective of this study is to focus on vocational schools and the social group that is generally associated with them, this work is framed within the advocacy and participatory worldview (Creswell, 2009).

The worldview selected advocates for minority groups and social problems that have to be highlighted. It states that the research inquiry ought to be entangled with politics, hence the research includes an agenda of transformative actions that might change the reality and practices of individuals. In this case, the research is advocating for vocational schools' students, because even though they represent a high percentage of learners in the country, students from VS are considered a minority group because they do not have the same opportunities—for instance in the level of preparation to pursue further studies— (Pinela, 2016). Furthermore, in order to deal with the socio-political nature of this study, the research design chosen is text or content analysis, which was supported by qualitative analysis.

### **3.1. Motivations**

There are four main arguments that motivated the investigators to select this issue, firstly, according to Pinela (2016) and Acosta et al. (2015) it is apparent that the Ministry of Education has had some difficulty fulfilling the objectives of vocational high schools (VS), as evidenced by the statistical data presented in the introduction to this work. Secondly, the motivation arose from the personal experience of a member of this group who attended a vocational high school, and from the accounts of former students who received vocational instruction. The third argument has to do with the Ministry's goals for VS and for the efforts

of making Chile a bilingual country. And lastly, the research gap found in the Ministry's curriculum and teaching materials that stems from the investigation by Acosta et al. (2016).

The first argument derives from the aforementioned context. Pinela (2016) in her monograph states that the main purpose for the creation of VS is not fulfilled, since most of its graduates are not joining the workforce immediately, neither are they continuing further studies when compared to their peers from regular high schools. This situation forces VS graduates to search for different options in order to access higher education, most of them outside their area of expertise. A deeper contextualization will be provided further on.

Regarding the second argument, there is a general concern in relation to vocational schools. This awareness has arisen from the following experiences. Due to the involvement of one of the members of this group who studied in a VS, and experienced the different dimensions of this particular educational system. After graduating, the group member evidenced the lack of content related to the different fields of specialization in the teaching of English. These limitations could translate into disadvantages in the access to better job opportunities that a proper understanding of English may be able to provide. Additionally, another member was acquainted with former vocational school students. Their personal accounts also contributed to support the claim that this kind of instruction is not oriented to the specialties and it is disconnected from the students' needs. Likewise, it was the member's realization that the Ministry of Education did not provide differentiated materials for VS.

The third argument that motivated this research has to do with the goals allocated by MINEDUC for VS. As it was indicated, the purpose of VS is to make education accessible to the poorest social groups, and to provide them with equal opportunities for improving their life quality (Pinela, 2016). However, as Pinela (2016) argues, questions arise immediately about the effectiveness of VS in fulfilling its stated purposes, as well as doubts about the capacity of the educational system to successfully insert its graduates into the workplace.

The fourth and final argument that motivated this investigation is based on the findings that emerged from the thesis written by Acosta et al. (2016). In this study, the authors conclude that there is no section dedicated to VS within the curriculum. Along the same lines, there is no place in the textbooks analysed by Acosta et. al's group that addresses the specific and technical vocabulary used in the specialties provided by these educational establishments. This gap in the materials and curriculum provided by the Ministry proved to be a significant matter that has to be addressed, because it has theoretical and practical implications regarding education in our country. This is the final reason that encouraged this group to lead an investigation specifically dedicated to the needs of VS and their students.

### **3.2. Research Questions**

After presenting the motivations that justify the choice of topic of this investigation, the researchers formulated the following list of questions that guide the current research. These questions help to direct the methods, results, and validity of this research. They are the following:

1. Is there an area in the curriculum oriented to the teaching of English in vocational high schools?
  - a. If so, what are the principles and objectives of the MINEDUC in implementing the teaching of English in vocational high schools?
  - b. Do they consider the students' profile, and therefore, their needs in the curriculum?
  
2. What elements from Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition can be used to generate or determine a set of guidelines for the teaching of English in vocational high schools?



### 3.3. Objectives

The following section will provide the objectives of this research, divided into general and specific objectives.

#### 3.3.1. General objectives.

- The first general objective is to explore the historical and social contexts of the teaching activity in Chilean vocational high schools. The historical context intends to give a concise background of the history of vocational instruction from its origins to the present. And the social setting aims at presenting the economic, cultural, and educational circumstances that surround VS students based on prior research findings.
- The second objective is to propose an alternative methodology for English teaching in Vocational high schools, based on the students' profile determined previously.

**3.3.2. Specific objectives.** The specific objective is to propose a set of methodological guidelines for the creation of teaching materials, specifically textbooks or units, oriented to the specialties taught in vocational high schools.

### 3.4. Corpus Selection and Corpus Selection Criteria

The corpus for this research was selected by applying the following criterion. The group of investigators decided to use the curriculum and programmes for English teaching

given the fact that these are documents provided by the Ministry of Education, thus used universally and obligatorily in all pedagogical institutions of the country, regardless of their type (vocational or regular) and nature (private, public, or semi-public schools). Therefore, the selection of these official documents yielded insights of the current situation of all students including vocational high schools' ones, which are the focus of the present inquiry.

**3.4.1. Materials.** The following section is devoted to present the materials used in this investigation. The documents correspond to the current English programmes for 3rd and 4th year of high school, the curricular basis of English for the last two years of high school that pertain both regular and vocational high schools, and which are provided by the Ministry of Education. Additionally, the textbooks for 3rd and 4th year were analysed—which are the same for both regular and vocational high schools as well— and the document containing the fundamental objectives and basic obligatory contents for primary and secondary school<sup>4</sup>

**3.4.2. Data Collection.** The official documents used in this research were downloaded from the Ministry of Education's webpage *Currículum en línea*. Additionally, the researchers used some data gathered in the investigation of Acosta et al. (2016). The information extracted from that study corresponds to the results. These demonstrate that the contents of the curriculum are not aligned with textbook's contents. Hence the current study will be based in part on those results, but they will serve a different purpose.

In the case of the textbooks, the official MINEDUC web site offers an image of the textbook used, however, they do not offer any version available for downloading. For this reason, the texts were drawn from [www.cra.liceoexperimental.cl](http://www.cra.liceoexperimental.cl), a school website that offers PDF versions of the same textbooks provided by the MINEDUC.

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<sup>4</sup> Objetivos Fundamentales y Contenidos Mínimos Obligatorios de la Educación Básica y Media. (OFCMO)

**3.4.3. The Ministry of Education.** The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) is the institution in charge of promoting the educational development in every level, from primary to higher education. It also encourages scientific and technologic investigation, the arts, and the protection and increase of cultural resources. Along the same lines, this institution is in charge of protecting the rights of every student, either from private or public institutions (Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 2016). For this reason, this institution is of the utmost importance for this research since its concerns are directly connected with the goals of this investigation. Additionally, some of the documents necessary for the corpus and analysis are created by this same organism.

**3.4.4. The Programmes.** The programmes used for this investigation were created by the Ministry of Education and published in 2015. These programmes are used to guide and organize the teaching of English for 3rd and 4th year of high school. They were chosen because they contain the basic notions of English teaching in terms of main objectives and the integration of knowledge in the classroom. Also, they contain the purposes of teaching and learning the language as well as the abilities students are expected to develop during the year, and finally, the units to be revised in the first and second class terms.

**3.4.5. English curricular basis and Obligatory Contents document.** In addition to the analysis of the programmes, this group also evaluated the English curricular basis, also provided by the MINEDUC. This document states the specific topics and contents necessary for the creation of the programmes. The same curriculum is used for both VS and regular schools.

Another document analysed was the fundamental objectives and basic obligatory contents for primary and secondary school. This document not only distinguishes the contents and objectives of primary and secondary education, but also between VS and regular high school.

**3.4.6. Textbooks.** This investigation focused on the textbooks used in 3rd and 4th year of high school. They are utilized both in regular schools and VS. The student's textbook for 3rd year of secondary school is called *Global English*, and the textbook for students of 4th year is titled *Tune Up*.

### 3.5. Procedures

**3.5.1. Qualitative procedures.** This research was carried out through a qualitative analysis of the aforementioned documents, all of them distributed by the Ministry of Education. In order to carry out this investigation properly, this group used Ritchie and Lewis' (2003) Thematic Framework. In it, the authors state it is important to organise the data that was analysed according to key themes, concepts and categories, which were obtained through a recursive process that allowed the researchers to find relevant terms for the analysis. Following this line, the key terms selected worked as an aid in the search of some features related with VS and ESP teaching. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) state that "this approach is felt to offer a systematic overview of the scope of the data; to aid finding themes or examples which do not appear in an orderly way in the data" (p. 203). In this guise, the key terms selected helped in categorising the information found in the analysis of the used materials.

In this case, the documents gathered from the MINEDUC's official web site were analysed by finding specific terms. These concepts were decided by the group on the basis of relevance and pertinence for the research, and were used to obtain the information from the curriculum and programmes. Additionally, part of the results drawn from the investigation of Acosta et al. (2016) were used, specifically, the information regarding VS and their role in the

English curriculum. Afterwards, and having already decided on the specific terms to search for in the documents, the researchers decided to employ a similar procedure as the one used in the investigation of Acosta et al. (2016), but focusing directly on the mentions of the following tags and related terms within the materials: ‘English for Specific Purposes’, ‘Inglés para Propósitos Específicos’, ‘ESP’, ‘Vocational Schools’, ‘Técnico Profesional’, ‘Técnico’, ‘Profesional’, ‘Regular Schools’, ‘Científico-Humanista’, ‘Científico’, ‘Humanista’, ‘Humanístico-Científica’, ‘Specialties’, ‘Especialidades’, ‘Economic areas’, ‘Sector económico’ and ‘Job’. These tags were used in the analysis of both English programmes, the curricular basis for English teaching, and the document fundamental objectives and basic obligatory contents for primary and secondary school.

In order to find those tags in the documents, the researchers used the search engine of the PDF programme. Then to ensure clarity and practicality, the investigators added comments and highlighted relevant passages in the documents they analysed. This allowed the three remaining researchers to evaluate the findings of the first two members, then compare the findings and arrive at robust and reliable results. In this way, after the independent analysis of the documents was concluded, the researchers compared their results in order to look for any missing data that someone may have overlooked, so as to comply with the characteristics of a recursive analysis. Finally, the members gathered and analysed the data obtained and presented it in the results section where the research questions were answered.

Regarding the analysis of the student textbooks, the researchers first read through their indices and took note of any units that might have a thematic link to the aforementioned tags. Content analysis, then, focused only on those chapters of the books that were thought to offer richer opportunities of analysis. The procedure carried out in these select chapters was similar to the one described in the previous paragraph. First, two researchers read through the

selected chapters, highlighted and added comments. Then the remaining researchers read through the chapters and compared their own findings and comments to those of the first two.

**3.5.1.1. Validity.** The validity of this research was achieved by using Dörnyei's (2007) two main strategies to guarantee validity in qualitative studies. These serve to get rid of or check for possible threats, and originate reliability. The first strategy is 'building up an image of researcher integrity' which means to construct an image of the investigators as working with integral and principled standards. This comprises three aspects that prove the high standards of the researchers: 'leaving an audit trail', 'contextualisation and thick description', and 'identifying potential researcher bias' (Dörnyei, 2007). The second strategy is 'validity/reliability checks' which alludes to the activity of double checking the work carried out by one or more members to secure veracity and clarity. This strategy contains the aspect of 'peer checking' which helps to assure validity.

The first aspect *leaving an audit trail* refers to the detailed and reflective account of the stages to get the results. The provision of a thorough description of the steps increases the confidence of the audience by clarifying the investigation process and showing the way to achieve the findings. In order to attain the research objectives, the methodology section contains iterative moves in data analysis and collection, which permits further replication and an exhaustive literature section. Additionally, the qualitative analysis is rendered as to explain the research process.

The second aspect is *contextualisation and thick description*. It focuses on the presentation of the research findings in context and substantial detail. This permits readers to get acquainted with the study and engage with its purpose. In this case, to fulfil the aim, the results of the qualitative analysis were described, discussed, and interpreted in detail for

establishing a correct association between the corpus and the findings announced by the investigators.

The third aspect *identifying potential researcher bias* has to do with distinguishing possible biases of the researchers that may have arisen and how to evade them, which is a core concern in the current inquiry. A particular bias was the possibility of not finding any mention of concepts like ESP, vocational schools and/or specialty-related words in the curriculum and textbooks. Considering this, a thorough revision and analysis of data complemented by the group discussion were key aspects to remove the biases keeping an open-minded perspective.

Dörnyei (2007) proposes validity/reliability checks as the second strategy to ensure validity, as a step that investigators take during the research process in order to build validity checks within the study. The strategy used in this study was ‘peer checking’. Peer checking aims to have colleagues perform reliability checks through asking them to carry out one or some of the researcher’s responsibilities, and then contrasting the results or products (Dörnyei, 2007). Considering that this is a text analysis research, peer checking was applied in the following way: first, two of the researchers analysed the texts in search of the key terms as explained above, and then the remaining three researchers carried out the same process. After this, results were compared, and whenever differences were found, the first group of researchers re-analysed the texts in order to settle any disagreements. The following stage, guidelines creation, had peer checking built into it since it was carried out as a group, and each member was constantly revising each other’s writing.

**3.5.2. Analysis.** The following section will thoroughly describe the qualitative analysis led by this group.

**3.5.2.1. Qualitative analysis.** For the purpose of this research, the analysis of the different features related to the presence of ESP in the curriculum and textbooks of vocational high schools, was done by using a qualitative research method. Nonetheless, so as to complement the information gathered, the analysis adopted a numeric aspect, as counting was done in order to produce a further characterization of the obtained results.

**3.5.2.1.1. Programme analysis.** As it was previously mentioned, part of this research was focused on the analysis of the programme for English language in order to find key terms related with ESP and ESP related activities that frame English classes for 3rd and 4th year of high school students, focusing on vocational high schools. Accordingly, a concise definition of the macro key terms used in the programme analysis will be provided, along with key terms related to each of them:

a. English for Specific Purposes (Inglés para propósitos específicos)

English for Specific Purposes is defined as the field concerned with the teaching and learning of English as a foreign or second language for a specific domain, economic or productive sector, or occupation (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013).

Related terms: ESP.

b. Vocational Schools (Técnico Profesional)

According to OCDE (2010) and Laglo (2006) in MINEDUC (2011), vocational education, which is focused on high school and college education, combines the practical and theoretical learning relevant for the specialties related to the future working environment of the students, so as to facilitate their inclusion into the job-market by enhancing the learning of abilities and knowledge that will allow them a better understanding of the areas related to their future jobs. Nonetheless, the objective of these schools is also to provide knowledge that is not exclusive of vocational education, as math and Spanish language and Communication



and some abilities associated to the development of abilities related to teamwork and effective communication among peers.

Related terms: Técnico, Profesional.

c. Regular Schools (Científico-Humanista)

According to the Ministry of Education's website, regular education is based on the General Law of Education<sup>5</sup> where its orientation depends of common grounded knowledge developed in subjects such as math, language, sciences, etc., which according to the MINEDUC represent student's general interests.

Related terms: Científico, Humanista, Humanístico-Científica.

d. Specialties (Especialidades) and Economic Areas (Sector económico)

Currently, Chilean vocational education has 46 specialties from which students can choose at the beginning of their third year of high school. These specialties are gathered into 14 groups depending on the economic areas they are related to.

Related terms: job.

## 4. Results and Analysis

The following section presents the results and analysis of the documents used in the present investigation.

### 4.1. Text Description and Analysis

Given that there is an overlap between the programmes, the textbooks, the curricular basis and the OFCMO (Objetivos Fundamentales y Contenidos Mínimos Obligatorios), we found that separating our analyses according to the source materials was redundant, since

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<sup>5</sup> Ley General de Educación

these texts communicate between and among each other. Therefore, in the following sections we will first describe the documents analysed, as well as the main findings, but the core of the analysis will be presented showing all aspects gathered together.

**4.1.1. Current English programmes for 3rd and 4th years.** The English programmes are documents that inform teachers and classroom practitioners about what contents should be taught and explained to students. Private and semi-private schools can either use the programmes issued by the Ministry of Education, or they can generate and use their own. However, municipal schools have to use the government-issued programmes. The programmes are elaborated by the MINEDUC, specifically the Department of Curricula and Evaluation<sup>6</sup>, but no individual authors are identified beyond that. Besides, the programmes must be approved by the National Education Council<sup>7</sup>.

The programmes share the same structure, differing only in the units each deals with. They start with basic notions: learning as the integration of knowledge, abilities and attitudes, fundamental objectives, and progress maps. Then they present general considerations for implementing the programmes, specifically on how to use the language. Following, the programmes outline a set of orientations for planning and assessing, and continue with a characterization of the English language considering the aspects of purpose, abilities and didactic orientations. These documents conclude with an overview of the year including the two semesters and the respective units. In the case of 3rd year programme the first semester is divided into Unit 1 ‘My first job’, and Unit 2 ‘Customs and Traditions of the World’, and the second semester is divided into Unit 3 ‘Health and Modern Life’, and Unit 4 ‘Volunteer Work and Entrepreneurship’. While in the 4th year programme, the first semester divides into Unit

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<sup>6</sup> Unidad de Currículum y Evaluación

<sup>7</sup> Consejo Nacional de Educación

1 'Rights and Duties of Youth', and Unit 2 'Recent Discoveries and Creations', and the second semester consists on Unit 3 'Dreams and Desires', and Unit 4 'Past Experiences'.

Both programmes consist of 149 pages, and as part of the appendices is attached a list of 250 frequent words for each year.

**4.1.1.1. Current English programme for third year.** From the analysis of the English programme for third year of high school stem the following results, in terms of presence or absence of the tags and related terms. To start with, there was no mention of 'English for Specific Purposes', 'ESP' or its translation. Then, there was no occurrence of tags about vocational schools, except for the tag 'Profesional' which was present in three occasions, yet unrelated with vocational instruction. In the first and second instances it was employed in the context of an activity proposal where the students may read an anecdote about a professional in the retail area, and a text related with professional experience in different work environments. The third instance alluded to an oral presentation about how to apply to a job for the first time, which emphasized the relevance of including professional information in the curriculum vitae. Then, the number of occurrences of tags related with regular schools was zero, but the term 'Científico' was found once. It was unconnected from vocational education as it appeared in the description of the purpose of English learning and teaching, as one of the dimensions that requires the use of this language to access information in the globalized reality. The tags 'Specialty', 'Economic areas' and their corresponding translations returned zero results, nevertheless, the related item 'Job' occurred thirty-one times. It was used as part of the thematic vocabulary to refer to work in general e.g. *full-time job*, *apply for a job* as part of the expected learnings, in written and oral samples of activities, in prototypical questions posed by teachers and expected answers from learners in oral exchanges or written reports, and as part of links to online resources about employment and finding a job.

Table 2

## Results Analysis English Programmes

Tags and related terms	3rd Year Curriculum	4th Year Curriculum
	Results	Results
English for Specific Purposes	0	0
Inglés para propósitos específicos	0	0
ESP	0	0
Vocational Schools	0	0
Técnico Profesional	0	0
Técnico	0	0
Profesional	3	0
Regular Schools	0	0
Científico-Humanista	0	0
Científico	1	1
Humanista	0	0
Humanístico-Científica	0	0
Specialty	0	0
Especialidad	0	0
Economic areas	0	0
Sector económico	0	0
Job	31	11

**4.1.1.2. Current English programme for fourth year.** The analysis of the current English programme for 4th year of secondary school provided the following results. First, the tag ‘English for specific purposes’, its Spanish translation, ‘inglés para propósitos específicos’ and its acronym ‘ESP’, returned zero results each. The search for vocational schools-related terms such as ‘técnico profesional’ also returned zero instances, even when the search was separated to the tags ‘técnico’ and ‘profesional’ in case the tags were used separately, but still the search returned no results. The search for terms related to regular schools all returned zero results, except for the tags ‘científico’ and ‘job’. In the first, only one instance of ‘científico’ was found, and it was in the context of explaining the relevance that the English language has in today’s globalised world, and in particular, the importance English has in understanding and communicating in scientific, commercial, technological and academic areas. The second tag, ‘job’, was found 11 times. Four of these instances belonged to one activity where it was suggested that teacher and students discuss the advantages and disadvantages of part-time jobs and what could students learn from such a type of employment. Another instance of the word belonged to the same activity, and it was a link to a webpage where teachers could find audios related to the topic of part-time jobs. Two other instances of ‘job’ were used in another activity where students had to create formal petitions for information about high school part-time jobs. In two additional instances, ‘job’ was used as an example of sentences that contain connectors like *‘even though you have a job’* so teachers could evaluate students. The last two mentions of ‘job’ were actually mentions to a quote by Steve Jobs as an example of an activity about people that inspire or motivate students.

The tags were searched to find some contributions to the learning development of vocational students who were just beginning their specializations, but no allusion was made,

and the mentions present are unrelated, decontextualized, and with no immediate and future usefulness.

**4.1.2. Curricular basis and Basic obligatory content for primary and secondary school.** The results that stem from the analyses of these two documents do not differ much from the results obtained in the previous documents. The text for basic contents was the one that showed a stronger presence of VS related terminology. For instance, as Table 3 shows, the search for the tag ‘Técnico-Profesional’ resulted in 41 instances, all of them related to contents, characteristics and information regarding VS education. Since the search of the full term presented some results, the group decided not to search for either ‘técnico’ nor ‘profesional’ since it was likely that the results obtained would replicate the results from the search of the full tag.

Along the same line, the search for the term ‘Humanístico-Científica’ resulted in 6 appearances, related with the characteristics and information in regards to regular school. Similar to the search for the full term ‘Técnico-Profesional’, the tag ‘humanístico-científica’ presented several instances within the document, and therefore the group decided not to look for its related tags, so as not to distort the results.

Continuing with the finding of tags, the search for ‘sector económico’ presented 3 instances, all of which were related with VS education, and the last term ‘especialidad’ occurred 226 times, most of them related to the various specialties offered in VS education. However, since there was an update in the number of specialties, there are several that are no longer part of VS education, but are still included in the document. Additionally, there are new specialties that do not appear in this text yet.

In regards to the Curricular Basis, the search of the tags showed no result. Firstly, the group searched for the full terms, in hopes of finding similar results from the basic contents document. However, since this search showed zero instances, the group decided to look for

related terms within the text, as Table 3 shows, but this search resulted in zero instances as well.

Table 3

## Results Analysis Curricular basis and OFCMO

Tags and related terms	Curricular Basis Results	OFCMO Results
English for Specific Purposes	0	0
Inglés para propósitos específicos	0	0
ESP	0	0
Vocational Schools	0	0
Técnico Profesional	0	41
Técnico	0	-
Profesional	0	-
Regular Schools	0	0
Científico-Humanista	0	-
Científico	0	-
Humanista	0	-
Humanístico-Científica	0	6
Specialty	0	0
Especialidad	0	226
Economic areas	0	0
Sector económico	0	3
Job	0	0

### 4.1.3. Textbooks for 3rd and 4th year.

**4.1.3.1. Third Year Students' Textbook.** The student's textbook for 3rd year of secondary school is called *Global English*. The author is Jolanta Polk Reyes, EFL teacher in Ireland, working as well in the areas of teacher training, English literature and translation in the University of Silesia, Poland. It was created in 2013, and the text employed is the reissued version of 2016 published by the editorial Ediciones Cal y Canto, consisting of 178 pages.

This textbook comprises five units: 'Advice and support' (21 pages), 'Two of the elements' (22 pages), 'Professions' (23 pages), 'Being active' (26 pages), and 'At work' (28 pages). All units have the same sections and structures. Therefore, there are two segments at the beginning 'Getting into the unit' and 'Getting ready for the unit'. Then it continues with Lesson 1 subdivided into: 'Reading', 'Language Note' and 'Application task-writing; and Lesson 2 subdivided in: 'Listening', 'Language Note' and 'Application task-speaking'. Finally, to finish the unit there are six sections: 'Consolidation activities', 'Just for fun', 'Chilean connection', 'Test your knowledge', 'Final reflection' and 'Self-evaluation'. Additionally, at the end of the book there is an appendix which comprises a language reference section, with tenses, grammatical rules and a modal and irregular verb lists.

It was found that the units' titles had no direct relation with the specialties taught in VS schools, nonetheless in the case of this book, the units 'Professions' and 'At work' were considered as job-related units, therefore their contents were analyzed with the aim of pursuing any explicit or implicit reference to ESP or VS oriented content.

In the case of the first unit mentioned — 'Professions' — the contents deal mainly with how to prepare a CV. To do this, the unit develops some activities so as to help learners to understand the different aspects of the matter. However, it was found that there was no exposition to any specific vocabulary related to the specialties or development of specialties related topics. In this regard, some professions appeared just as part of some examples or



activities that consist of identifying information related to the mayor topic of preparing a CV, rather than focusing on professions.

Later in the unit, there is a reading activity where the profession of clay artisan is presented, which could be an approximation to some of the VS specialties taught. However, this had the purpose of generating cultural awareness rather than immersing? into a specialty related topic or ESP development. The same happened with the next exercise of reading about the lighthouse keeper profession in Chile. Even though it is a job related activity, it was not associated with the actual vocational field and did not present specific vocabulary, but it was supposed to make students aware of a cultural trait instead.

In the case of the unit ‘At Work’, the contents are divided into two main axes, ‘volunteering’ and ‘job interview’. In both cases the contents are developed in terms of personality traits and considerations. In this unit, the students practise and emulate a job interview that would allow them to recognize desirable characteristics and those behaviours that should be avoided, the students are also exposed to job-application forms and dialogs.

In this unit analysis there was no development of vocabulary related to the specialties, as it was focused on personality and how to associate this to appropriate and desirable behaviour in a job interview.

**4.1.3.2. Fourth Year Students’ Textbook.** The textbook for students of 4th year is titled *Tune Up*. The authors are Eugenia Contreras Méndez, MA in EFL, Ronda Haverland, MA in TESOL, and Lisa Huck, certified in TESOL. It was published in 2014 by Richmond Publishing, consisting of 215 pages. The textbook contains eight units, each one including 12 pages. The first unit corresponds to ‘People and our beliefs’ divided in four lessons ‘First impressions and stereotypes’, ‘Are we different?’, ‘Urban legends’ and ‘Myths and legends’. The second unit is ‘The arts and their influence’ subdivided into ‘Music is here to stay’, ‘Urban art’, ‘What’s in a story’, and ‘Social networking across culture’. Unit 3 denominated

‘What’s on?’ includes the subsections of ‘Are reality shows real?’, ‘Making changes’, ‘Advertising’ and ‘Lucky escapes’. The fourth unit ‘Keeping up with technology’ is subdivided into ‘Effects of social media’, ‘What are gadgets’, ‘Addicted to technology’ and ‘Visions of a near future’. The fifth unit called ‘Part-time or full-time?’ comprises four subunits ‘Future jobs?’, ‘Mixing fun with work’, ‘Positive and successful’ and ‘Excellence is an attitude’. Unit 6 titled ‘Spending time together’ comprises the subsections of ‘Going out with friends’, ‘Free time!’, ‘Travel broadens your horizon’ and ‘We love sports’. The seventh unit ‘Moving forward’ includes the subsections ‘I feel good!’, ‘Not feeling so good?’, ‘Science in our everyday life’ and ‘As good as it gets’. Finally, unit 8 ‘The price of progress’ includes the sections ‘Chile, a country of contrasts’, ‘Global trade’, ‘Climate change’ and ‘Going green’. Each section is concluded by presenting a review with exercises to evaluate the progress, worksheets associated with the corresponding unit. Additionally, at the end of the book there is an appendix which comprises a language reference section with tenses, grammatical rules and modal and irregular verb lists.

The analysis of the units’ titles did not show any direct relation with the specialties taught in VS schools. Nonetheless, in the case of this book, the unit ‘Part-time or Full-time’ was considered a job-related unit, therefore its contents were analyzed with the aim of finding any explicit or implicit reference to ESP or VS oriented content. The unit is composed by four subunits or ‘lessons’ as expressed in the book, from which two of them, ‘Future Jobs?’ and ‘Mixing fun with work’ were analysed because of their possible connection with ESP or VS oriented content.

In the case of the first subunit, students are exposed to different kind of jobs, however, none of them were related to the VS specialties. This lesson presented job opportunities that are intended to provide extra income rather than sustainable employment for students. There were two reading activities that were closer to ESP and VS oriented content, here the

advantages of VS schools were described mostly in economic terms, nevertheless, there was no deepening into the matters related to the briefly mentioned specialties —electricity and mechanics—.

Regarding the second subunit, jobs that are in line with student's hobbies were briefly presented, such as video game design; it also presented a section dedicated to unusual careers. Both of these sections had an activity where jobs and different professions were introduced, yet none of the content or vocabulary were related to any specialty. In activity number eight that focused on learning vocabulary, there was only a list of the better paid jobs in Chile that students had to place in a table of categories below. And in the case of activity number eleven, where the conversation involved a mechanic, there was no content related to that profession that learners could use to explore its characteristics, thus, there was no direct relationship with any aspect of VS specialties.

**4.1.4. Summary of interpretations.** According to MINEDUC (2009), 2 hours per week are destined to English, thus the time devoted to the English subject is lower than in regular schools, which is of four pedagogical hours. The curricular basis are the same for regular schools and VS, there is no special programme for VS, or teaching materials designed to meet the special needs related to each field of VS. This is a phenomenon that transcends secondary education, especially the last two years, where students are supposed to choose the area in which they want to specialize. The units of textbooks and curricula are not related to the occupations and concerns that exist in vocational instruction, and the different units are neither connected among them nor related to the social context to which the students are exposed on a daily basis.

The results show that activities and references about working and jobs are disconnected from the context of vocational students, focusing on the teaching of general competences rather than specific ones. Given that this is the first year students are introduced

to their specialties, there was no implementation of English to learn about the fields they are studying, or allusions to real experiences students have with the occupations. Also, there are no suggestions to guide English teachers to instruct in vocational contexts.

In general terms, the search results indicate that the English programmes for both third and fourth year of high school, do not consider or incorporate the reality, differences and challenges that vocational schools pose to English teachers, and it does not differentiate its contents, methods or approaches.

This is exemplified in the various activities that could have been used in the textbooks for discussing the reality that students will have to face once they graduate high school, and what their opportunities and expectations are as vocational-school students. However, the way these activities were presented and suggested to teachers do not help in simulating instances the students may encounter in their specialty-related jobs. Especially since vocational school students are expected to join the job market immediately after graduation.

## **5. Guidelines**

In an effort to improve the conditions of English teaching in VS, a set of guidelines has been created. This represents a practical conclusion that stemmed from the analysis of data and the literature reviewed. The guidelines consist of methodological suggestions for English teachers, material designers, policy makers or the ministry's staff to align their work with the contexts of vocational instruction. They contain essential aspects that should be considered for vocabulary teaching and material design for English instruction. Furthermore, they intend to highlight the knowledge students have about the specialties, which makes the contents useful and relevant, connected with their areas of study, and linked with their reality. In this way motivation will increase and with it, the generation of meaningful and contextualized learning.

Given the context and profile of vocational students, these guidelines are focused mainly on the development of the receptive skills, listening and reading. The aim is for students to use their receptive knowledge to understand the message in oral or written texts (meaning-focused input strand). Thus, understanding content and learning vocabulary rather than speaking and writing. These guidelines will be exemplified by a class activity design.

### Guidelines for the creation of material for Vocational High Schools

The following guidelines are designed to help teachers to improve their classroom planning, activities, and creation of materials for ESP, and more specifically, the focus is on vocabulary acquisition. These suggestions are provided considering general and particular aspects of language teaching and learning.

#### 1. Class Planning

When doing class planning there are some considerations to which you should pay attention to.

##### A. Set general goals

- Identify how much the learner **needs to know**.
- Identify what **type of vocabulary** the learner needs to improve.
- The **activities** planned should be **suitable** for the vocabulary learning goals.
- Your goals could be structured under the suggestions given below in *general and specific objectives*.

##### B. Format and Presentation

A course design should include:

- A selection of **learning and teaching techniques** and how they are to be presented in a lesson plan.

- Those learning and teaching techniques should promote the practice of language skills in an **integrated** way. Skills practised with larger communicative goals or topics in mind.

C. Content and Sequencing

Divide the course in:

- **Ideas** such as themes or topics.
- Language use situations, **tasks**.
- Introduce **new vocabulary**, taking into account frequency and range of occurrence when it comes to vocabulary centred courses.

D. Make your class interactive by:

- Modelling a **positive attitude**, when students use the target language, whether they use it correctly or not.
- Promoting **self-correction** and **peer interaction** and correction before intervening.

E. Monitoring, Assessment and Feedback

Monitoring and assessment

- Identify how well learners understand the **learning strategy** they are using, the steps involved in the application of them, and how much they need to know at each stage. In other words, how they develop **metacognition**.
- Recognize whether the learners apply the strategies known in normal use and how well they apply them.

Feedback

- Look for ways to **get feedback from your students**. Monitoring what your students understand or not will help you to set the pace and route of your class-plan.

- **Test, discussions or similar evaluations** can function as instruments to gather students' feedback and impressions.
- **Listen to what your students say** when they interact with each other and identify common mistakes.
- **Do not correct** your students **immediately** so as to avoid anxiety or any related negative reaction.

## 2. How to determine and set objectives

### A. Needs of learners

- **Identify the needs of students**, by carrying out needs, target and present situation analyses. With this you will be able to:
  - Contextualize methods and activities.
  - Make the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, and genres relevant.
  - Target teaching and contents to meet the student's need of communicating about a specific field and be part of its community.
  - Know which language skills can be developed.

### B. Collaborative work

- ESP teachers should work with **experts in the specialties**. This helps to:
  - Inform about the discourse community of the occupations.
  - Identify linguistic component and discourse features.
  - Find strategies and integrate theory and practice.
  - Link the L2 with the specialties by studying the specialties while learning the L2.

### C. Needs-based materials

- These should be grounded on **students' needs**.

- Materials have to include **important information** considering the teaching conditions and the short class time.
- You can **create, adapt, or find pre-existing material** that agrees with the course objectives and context.

D. Objectives: When establishing objectives, you should divide them into two main categories, general objectives and specific objectives. Here we present some considerations that will help you to settle them.

*To establish your general objectives, you should*

- Create lessons and activities **centred in one main** topic.
- Remember that this objective's aim is to give general context for the development of activities, exercises and later on, evaluations that will respond to the micro activities derived from it.

*In regards to establishing your specific objectives, you should:*

- Settle **micro activities** that serve the purpose of your general objective.
- State **objectives** in terms of what learners **should know** and **be able to do** by the end of the lesson or unit.
- Use linguistic functions to set what you expect learners to do and to evaluate if they have learned what you intended them to learn.
- Determine what level of complexity you want your students to reach (from the least to the most complex), you can ask your students to\*:
  1. Remember
  2. Understand
  3. Apply
  4. Analyse



5. Evaluate

6. Create

- From these, you should assure the development of the first three, as their enhancement will allow students to develop more complex tasks. The last three demand a lot of mental effort.

\* For examples of activities related to this, see the examples from *Bloom's revised taxonomy* in section 6.

### 3. Choosing Topics

#### A. Choosing Topics

- Topic selection for classroom activities should consider topics learners are familiar with in terms of background information, this will lead into:
- Learners' identification of patterns and context hints when necessary
- Remember that your topic should range from general to specific themes that stimulate reflection. Use different language elements to aid students achieve this, but do not use language elements as your main objective or topic.
- Language elements such as words, grammar, discourse types and grammatical categories will serve as a means to a **communicative end**. The language knowledge is the tool that students will use to talk about a topic.

### 4. Vocabulary learning and ESP

#### A. Meaningful and Effective vocabulary teaching

- Use **cognates** to develop core vocabulary for the specialties, and show the L1-L2 relation

- Teach **specialized vocabulary** from the specialties (ESP). It saves class-time and focuses the activities.
- Work with **pertinent language, learning methods and approaches** that fit the vocational education context.
- Select the **most relevant technical words**, and teach strategies to learn them. These are key to comprehend information about the field, and it will provide students the opportunity of become part of a community of practice.
- Foment **strategies** such as inference from context, identification of word families, and analysis of words, this reduces the difficulty of ES learning.
- Plan the lesson for the acquisition of a **general vocabulary** (ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 words) then advance to acquire specialized words.

#### B. Words you target

- Words selection for classroom instruction should be based on some basic requirements such as:
  - **Frequency of word occurrence**, words that occur the most should be taught first. This will, in time, provide access to more challenging words.
  - **Word difficulty**, there are words that may imply more time and effort for its acquisition than others, thus words that require more effort should be treated in the classroom.
- Provide contexts
  - Always **give context** when teaching vocabulary, most of the time it is provided by the reading or listening activity, but if that is not the case, hypothetical situations such as *imagine that...* or the use of pictures might help.

- Align context with content related with what students do, this increases motivation and improves learning.

### C. Recycling

- Remember that **word learning is an incremental process**, and students need to see a word **between 6 to 16 spaced encounters**, to enhance students' retention and understanding of words.
- Five steps for word recycling
  - Pre-teaching of vocabulary.
  - Oral reading of a text containing the vocabulary and discussion of the content/ideas of the text.
  - Deliberate word study.
  - Vocabulary puzzles, quizzes, or tests.
  - Writing making use of the vocabulary.

### D. Learning Strategies

- There are some actions that you can take in the classroom to help your students to apply learning strategies:
  - Make contents **meaningful**.
  - Use **ESP** for developing **reading** and **listening skills**.
  - **Trigger previous knowledge** through questions directed to use key words.
- There are other actions that must be taken by your students and you can only motivate them, but ultimately, it's up to them to:
  - Think of actions where learners choose to interact with other learners and native speakers, so as to improve language learning by exposure to communication in the second language.

- Obtain, store, retrieve, and use the new information they have learned.
- Recall the context in which vocabulary was learned or used.
- Form sentences with familiar words in different combinations.
- Self-evaluate the ways they study.
- Things that you as a teacher can do:
  - Apply strategies that help students regulate their attitudes, motivations or emotions before or at the moment of using the language. For example:
    - Motivate students by offering a preview of the contents to be seen in forthcoming classes.
    - Avoid routine by alternating activities, tasks and materials.
    - Improve student's self-confidence by promoting co-operative instead of competitive activities.

5. Which types of activities to apply?

A. When creating material:

- Analyse breaking material into its constituent parts and detecting how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose.

B. Keep in mind that it depends on the learners' command of the language:

- Non-proficient learners, i.e. beginners should be taught using activities like:
  - Non-communicative learning activities:
    - **Focusing on structures, words and sounds** of language, how they are formed and what they mean. Examples: substitution exercises, inductive discovery and awareness-raising activities.

- Pre-communicative language practice:
  - **Practising language with some attention to meaning** but not communicating new messages. Ex.: describing visuals or tables, answering questions about texts available to all the class.
- Intermediate learners will make the most from pre-communicative language practice as well as from
  - Communicative language practice
    - **Practising pre-taught language** but in a context where it communicates new information. Ex.: information gap activities, carrying out simple surveys.
- Proficient or intermediate-advanced learners will make the most of communicative language practice as well as from:
  - Structured communication activities
    - Using language to communicate in situations which elicit pre-learnt language but with some degree of unpredictability. Ex.: structured role-play, simple problem-solving.
  - Authentic communication activities
    - Using language to communicate in situations where the meanings are unpredictable. E.g. more creative role-play, more complex problem-solving, discussions, simulations, case-based learning.
- *However, advanced learners can also benefit from activities that focus more on form when they need to remedy certain areas in their language use, or when they are learning features of specialist language use.*

## 6. Bloom's revised taxonomy examples

A. To remember:

- Make students retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory through:
  - **Recalling** and **recognizing** new/recently acquired words.

B. To understand:

- Make students determine the meaning of instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication through:
  - **Interpreting** and **summarizing** texts related to their specialty.
  - **Classifying** words they know and **inferring** the meaning of words they do not know.
  - **Explaining, exemplifying** and **comparing** knowledge as an after reading activity.

C. To apply:

- Make students carry out or use a procedure in a given situation through:
  - **Executing** and/or **Implementing** a new activity based on the knowledge they acquired, for instance by:
    - i. Applying information they heard on a recording or read a text to complete a chart.
    - ii. Follow instructions or tutorials related to other areas of knowledge.

D. To analyse:

- Make students break the material into its constituent parts and detect how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose through:
  - **Differentiating** and **organizing** the main ideas from a reading or audio recording.

- **Comparing** and **contrasting** formal/informal practices in L1 and L2 to promote cultural awareness

## Class Activity Planning

This activity is an example for an introductory class for 3rd year vocational high school students of mechanics.

General objectives: To introduce students to their specialization → *Focused on one topic*

- o Specific Objectives: → *Students will be able to...*
  - To recognize words related to their specialty → *Remember*
  - To identify specific vocabulary and its definition → *Recognize*
  - To distinguish in general terms collocations linked with the items that were revised → *Understand*

**Pre-activity** → *It serves to situate students in the learning context.*

- Present a video, audio or images from which students predict the content of the lesson
- Discuss what students know about the topic → *Trigger previous knowledge*

In this case, you can present a video as the following one to help students with the identification of car parts → *Making content interactive and motivating*

Learn vocabulary about CARS in English, by English lessons with Alex

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uW3klOgdnTY&t=77s>



**Activities**

1) Match the names of the following parts of the car to the picture: → *Specific*

*Objective 1*

Mirror	Grille	Radiator	Bar absorber	Door Handle
Door	Hood/Bonnet	Side Panel	Guard	Bumper



a. Could you identify all the terms with their respective images? If not, could you name them in Spanish or relate them with another object you know?

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2) Match the word to its definition → *Specific Objective 2*

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. Bonnet           | ___ A device for cooling an internal-combustion engine, consisting of thin-walled tubes through which water passes.        |
| 2. Grille           | ___ A horizontal bar along the lower front and lower back part of a vehicle to help to protect it if there is an accident. |
| 3. Radiator support | ___ The metal cover over the part of a car where the engine is.  |
| 4. Bumper           | ___ The handle that you turn or push to open a door  |
| 5. Door handle      | ___ A frame of metal bars used to cover something  |

3) Write a sentence for each of the following collocations: → *Provide sample sentences with the corresponding collocations. This will serve as a model for students to create their own phrases.*

CAR	1. Engine	
	2. Tyre	
	3. Spares	
	4. Registration number	
	4. Repair workshop	
	5. Oil	
	6. Battery	
	7. Radiator	

**Post Activity** → *This will help students to understand the relevance of the contents that were presented and to reflect about their learning process.*

→ *Students motivation will increase as they will realize that their knowledge is valuable.*

4)

A. What did you learn from the activities? And from the lesson in general? How would you relate it with previous class contents? → *Specific Objective 3*

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B. How would you improve or complement the lesson? or what contents would you like to see next class?

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## 6. CONCLUSIONS

As it was seen throughout this investigation, the purpose of VS education in Chile in terms of English teaching presents some flaws, according to what was dealt in the review of literature and the results drawn from the analysis. For this reason, we proposed a vocabulary centred instruction for VS high schools, aimed principally at the development of receptive skills with a focus on ESP—that connects the English subject with the learners' reality making contents relevant and targeted to their needs—, in order to orient teachers in the improvement of students' abilities in the English language and relate it to their specialties.

A central procedure for implementing ESP is needs analysis, and as such, it seems the most suitable approach for VS education. In this regard, needs analysis is a continuous process in which the 'how' and 'what' of a course are established by gathering relevant information to design the course (Hyland, 2006 in Flowerdew, 2013). By doing this, it is possible to address students' needs and lacks with target situation analysis (TSA) and personal situation analysis (PSA). TSA analyses what learners will do with the new language, and PSA focuses on the difference in learners' abilities at the beginning, and what they are required to do at the end of the course (Flowerdew, 2013). These are essential conditions from which vocational students may benefit, as 46% of Chilean learners study under vocational modality, hence 3 out of every 5 of students opt for studying in vocational high schools, 60% of them belonging to low income families.

Despite the aforementioned percentages, these students' needs are overlooked by the Ministry of Education concerning English teaching and learning. This investigation found through the analyses of the MINEDUC documents and textbooks that there was no special focus regarding any of the 34 specialties, and ESP teaching methodologies are not mentioned in the curriculum, programmes, or textbooks. The contents and teaching materials are not appropriate for collaborating with the development of the abilities and competences required

from learners.

Vocational students are the ones who could benefit the most from an improvement in English teaching and learning methods. Given that the objective of vocational education is the immediate insertion of students in the job market, intermediate English proficiency would be highly rewarded. Therefore, this group considers that this lack of differentiated focus should be remedied as soon as possible, so as to improve the quality of Chilean education and the opportunities that vocational students have upon graduation.

In conclusion, although vocational education has been present in the country for several years, it is still inadequate regarding the quality of English teaching and learning. In this sense, we propose a more suitable methodology, based on the paradigm-shift that no longer regards students as passive subjects, but as active participants of their learning (Georgieva, 2010). In this way, contents, materials, activities and the language itself become relevant and meaningful, motivation increases, and successful learning is achieved.

Consequently, a pertinent English instruction would offer vocational students the chance of applying for a wider range of options in the job market and opt for higher salaries, since these seem to increase when there is some level of mastery of the language (Acosta et al. 2015), and augment their resources for personal development. Additionally, it could help these students in deepening and accessing more knowledge about their specialisations and continuing their studies using English as an asset, and becoming part of more communities of practice. Knowing English, or any second language for that matter, increases the students' cultural capital (Acosta et al. 2015), and having an improved command of an L2 could help students in their linguistic abilities in their mother tongue, because of the transferability of skills such as morphological awareness as well as offering improvements in cognition and reasoning.

Another topic dealt with in this investigation has been language planning and policy (LPP). As it was stated in the LPP section, the implementation of a language policy is grounded on the aims that the government has regarding the speech community. There should be a dialogue between the government and the people's needs to implement policies; in this particular case the dialogue should be about the way English language is planned, organized and applied in Chilean education. In the context of vocational schools, the students' needs are not particularly addressed. One way of fulfilling their needs is using the ESP approach which is grounded on students' learning necessities (Flowerdew, 2013).

The policies of the Chilean Ministry of Education in regards to the teaching of English in vocational schools are not the most successful. We base this conclusion in two ideas. Firstly, the goal assigned to VS, of preparing technicians that are able to join the workforce after graduation, would be positively affected by an effective English teaching programme, even more so when teaching ESP. Secondly, the purported goal of making Chile a bilingual country —however arguable— would be equally closer to being made a reality if the teaching of English in vocational schools were more adequate to its students. It is because of this that we argue that there is a disconnection between Chilean English teaching policies and the own goals set by the Chilean government.

Despite of the objectives of the authorities, the successful implementation of language policies also depends on the reciprocal relationship of influence between policies, governments and speech communities. The problem is that in most cases the needs of the community are not recognized, but affected by 'competing needs and vested interests' (Flowerdew, 2013) of social groups that concentrate power.

## **7. LIMITATIONS**

One of the limitation this study was given by the character of the guidelines. These might be too broad or too specific for its implementation by English teachers for vocational instruction. This was caused by the lack of information regarding vocational schools and their students, as we as investigators could not predict the English proficiency of the different levels within vocational education. Accordingly, the formulation of the set of guidelines and the subsequent development of a sample of class activity planning were not products as specific as we desired them to be.

Another limitation was the discordance between the reformed specialties and the official documents that were analysed. While in the last years there has been a reorganisation of the specialties for vocational schools, with the addition of new specialties and removal of other ones, the official documents that this group analysed were yet to be updated to include this changes. This lead to the impossibility of knowing for certain information about some specialties, which also caused the already mentioned limitation regarding the guidelines.

## **8. FURTHER RESEARCH**

This investigation was focused on the analysis of 3rd and 4th year textbooks for English teaching in regular and vocational schools, with the addition of documents designed by the MINEDUC, to build up a profile of secondary vocational education. Afterwards, it focused on the development of guidelines for the creation of materials and the teaching of specialized vocabulary to take into account the needs of vocational high school students. In this manner, there are various topics that could inspire further research within the field of ESP and vocabulary acquisition.

First and foremost, it would be fruitful for a future research to explore the application of the guidelines that originated from this investigation in the classroom, because as it was



previously mentioned, the researchers did not have enough resources or time to, firstly, confirm the educational profile of vocational students (in regards to English), and secondly, implement said guidelines in an educational context to prove their viability.

In this line, it would be advisable to develop an ethnographic exploration along with a quantitative study, to obtain first-hand information about students and teachers' needs in vocational high schools in the country. Additionally, it would serve to track the development of students after their graduation, evaluating the relevance and possible applications of English in their performance in the job-market. Moreover, a future study could also determine the viability and practicality of a specialty-oriented vocabulary teaching instruction developed in Chilean vocational schools.

Another further research idea could be to look into the suitability of teacher training programmes to English teaching in vocational schools, taking into consideration the specific requirements of English that these types of establishments have, and the socially challenging reality they pose. Finally, through the development of this research the concept of English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) arose. It represents an area of interest within the field of English teaching that aims at developing vocabulary related topics in depth. Thus it would contribute to fulfil the aspiration of providing a general ground for the improvement of Chilean education.

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