Observing before Learning: Visual Material for the Learning of English as a Foreign Language

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This article is a report of the findings of a research project developed in a Colombian school, Academia La Salle San Benildo, as a requirement for the B.A. degree in Modern Languages at La Salle University. The goal of this project is to describe the impact of working with visual material with the students of fifth and third grades. The data collected throughout the process include an interview, a survey, students' work, and journals kept by the student teachers. The results of the analysis of the research show the importance of the application of visual material in the teaching process.

Key words: visual, literacy, aids, advantages, material, materials, teaching, language, pictures.

Este artículo reporta los resultados de un proyecto de investigación desarrollado en un Colegio Colombiano "Academia La Salle San Benildo" como requisito para el grado de Lenguas Modernas en la Universidad de la Salle. El objetivo de este proyecto es describir el impacto que causa en los estudiantes de grados quinto y tercero el trabajar con material visual. Los datos se recolectaron mediante una entrevista, una encuesta, trabajos de los estudiantes y diarios de campo realizados por los Estudiantes Practicantes. Los resultados del análisis del proyecto muestran la importancia de la aplicación de material visual en el proceso de enseñanza.

Palabras clave: Alfabetización visual, ayudas visuales, ventajas del uso de material visual, enseñar lengua con imágenes

Introduction

This research was developed at Academia La Salle San Benildo School through the implementation of action research. It consists of a systematic process that was carried out in a classroom to understand and to improve the teaching practice of the teacher and at the same time the learning process of students, with the additional purpose of finding possible solutions that support the learning process in the English class.

Due to this research, a better environment was created inside the classroom and it helped teachers as well as students in the development of visual material to enrich the teacher's profession and the learning of scholars taking into account the needs of the population.

The procedure of this research counted on the selection of the topics based on what the school proposed. The material was adapted according to those topics. The physical features of the images included characteristics such as size, color, length, etc., in order to provide successful material with which students could learn in a different way.

The focus of the project is addressing the answers to the following questions:

- What is the impact of the use of visual material in the learning process of students of third and fifth grade at San Benildo School?
- What kind of visual material causes more impact in the learning process?
- What are the advantages of using visual material in the English teaching practice?

At the end of the research project students showed an evidential progress through the use of visual material in the teaching and learning process of a foreign language. Student teachers could notice that by applying visual material in the classroom, the teaching process was more effective and they obtained better results from the students in the learning of the foreign language.

Theoretical Background

This project will examine the meanings of different terms that are related to the use of visual material in English classes. It will review the theory using different authors' perspectives. These authors have been working on terms such as origins of

visual literacy, visual images, visual aids, advantages of using visual material and finding and showing visuals. Moreover, the project will also examine how these terms can help to facilitate the research to clarify previous interpretations. This theory is described in terms of detailed affirmations about how visuals and images can cause impact in the area of second language learning.

Visual Literacy

The term "visual literacy" is known as the process of keeping communication through images that reinforce the learning process of people. But the educational community began to talk about this topic with John Debes in 1969. Since then, there are many authors who have been working on the topic giving similar interpretations. For instance, Braden and Hortin (1982) consider that visual literacy is an ability to understand and to learn through the use of images. Additionally, Wileman (1993) states that visual literacy is the ability to interpret and to understand information presented in pictorial images.

On the other hand, Fransecky and Debes (1972) made reference to the definition offered by the National Conference on Visual Literacy: "Visual literacy refers to a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences" (p. 9). Following this statement, visual material is very important in human life because students can have different experiences and share different points of view according to the interpretation of each one of the learners. The authors argue that "students in visual literacy projects suddenly sense a new power, a new language facility that they haven't felt with words" (Fransecky & Debes, 1972, p. 7). Similarly, Braden and Hortin (1982) and Wileman (1993) explain the concept of visual literacy as an ability to understand and comprehend, and a set of competencies related to a sensory experience that is different from words.

Visual Aids

Visual aids are any materials that teachers can use to help their explanations in the lessons, material such as wall boards, textbooks or real objects in games and play acting which "may stimulate the imagination and encourage fuller student participation" (Finocchiaro & Bonomo, 1973, p. 162).

Other visual aids are the 'picture file' which can be used to give interesting, meaningful practice in the sounds, structures, and vocabulary of the foreign language. "The file should contain three kinds of pictures, first there are pictures of individual people and of individual objects; second, there are pictures of situations in which people are 'doing something' and third a series pictures (six to ten) on one chart" (Finocchiaro & Bonomo 1973, p. 165). This means that using the picture file will be extremely helpful in giving extensive practice for learning vocabulary in English classes.

Charts are other visual aids which can be permanently displayed in the classroom. This means that charts can help students to reinforce their pronunciation comparing the picture; as a result, they will learn to improve their communication. Flash cards, word cards and number cards are other visual aids that "can help the learners to gain instant recognition of the written symbols and practice of this type is helpful in the beginning stages" (Finocchiaro & Bonomo 1973, p. 165). In addition, "Students understand and retain the meaning of a word better when they have seen some object associated with it" (Ernestová, 1981, p. 5). According to this, for students it is easier to learn if the new knowledge is associated with images.

As the students keep their knowledge through images, it is necessary to distinguish the different ways of perceiving the messages. So, these differences are characteristic of the human being and were relevant in the development of this project.

Each person has different modes of perceiving a message by merely seeing a visual image; for example, Tieman (as cited in Fransecky & Debes, 1972) states that there are some factors that are relevant for teachers:

The precedents of the individual. Concerns the previous experience that students have when they see visuals; for that reason, it is important to keep many styles of visualization in order to maintain the students' attention, including new things and avoiding boring visual material.

The power of stimuli. This is to stimulate the interests of the students by accepting the visual as a stimulus; for that reason, the designer of visual material might include and take reference from the students' needs and their goals.

Symbols in the visual aids. Visual aids have some features that are relevant to mention such as their physical characteristics, useful at the moment to create the material.

Pictorial symbols. Constitute the combination of lines, forms, colors and textures to make the appearance of the object represented.

Language symbols. These are the letters, numbers and characters that form the written language.

Graphic symbols. This is an adaptation that uses pictorial symbols and language to transmit large messages or a lot of information rapidly.

Balance. It is the combination of the elements generating an artistic composition, which means the position of the symbols in the visual aid, the balance with graphics, language, and pictorial symbols.

Unit. It is the space to employ the visual aid. It is important to keep enough space to control the students' interest, and learning, therefore improving comprehension.

Movement. This is the students' direction to read the visual, according to the direction of figures, but normally the direction comes from left to right, up and down; this is the normal direction of the eye.

Clarity. All the visual aids should be easy to understand and should facilitate interpreting the message, including the position of the elements, creative messages, clear pictures and a good font size.

According to Vale and Feunteun (1995), visual aids are significant for those students who want to learn English as a second language or another language. For these authors, a teacher can use visual aids to:

- Support understanding when the children are listening
- Put across the meaning of vocabulary
- Prompt and support reading
- Provide a topic or focus to prompt speaking or writing
- Provide a visual link between L1 and English or another language
- Provide support and motivation for early reading and writing in English
- Provide ways to have better communication

Hyerle (2004) states that visuals are not only powerful retention aids but also serve to increase understanding. The students can benefit from using visual materials to transform thoughts into images; this is often viewed as a "test of true understanding".

Also Hyerle (2004) shows that many students demonstrated the facilitating effect of visual representations on learning and memory. This means that not only the teachers can benefit from using visual aids but also the students are able to understand and memorize 'the thing' rather than relating it to a specific word in their own language.

Learning a second language through the use of visual aids has an important function. As Ur (1984, p. 57) states: "Visuals have an important function as aids to learning, simply because they attract students' attention and help and encourage them to focus on the subject at hand". Using visual aids as materials to teach and, at the same time, to learn is an effective way for using students' understanding, memorization and attention to the new language. According to Ur (1984), "it is relatively difficult to concentrate on spoken materials that are heard 'blind'; it is far easier if there is something that is conspicuous, colorful, and humorous. Drama and motion are much better. Striking and stimulating visual aids are likely to heighten students' motivation and concentration". For this reason learning to use visual aids can motivate the students to pay attention and to be more focused in class.

Advantages of Using Visual Material

It is important to use visuals in the classroom because this material signifies an important step in the development of a class. As a main tool, the teacher might help students' comprehension using visuals because of the following:

- Visuals present the message to the most developed sense in humans.
- Visuals concentrate the interest and students' attention.
- Visuals might communicate the message visually when it is not possible to use words.
- Teachers and students can express messages using visuals.
- An image is worth a thousand words.
- Using visuals could develop longer memory when learning a second language.

The use of visual material has more advantages than disadvantages in all the academic process to acquire illustrative ways to learn the language. For instance, Gower, Philips and Walters (1995) state that "they have a variety of uses: for example, the illustration of colours; placed to show and word stress" (p. 70). Visuals offer thousands of possibilities to improve students' learning. The use of visual exercises allows eliciting information from the students, giving them the

opportunity to travel for a moment to the imaginary world that a picture involves if it is well employed.

There are many sources for finding visuals or other alternatives that might be produced by oneself using different techniques to collect all the pictures that teachers or students create. Therefore, visual images can be used by students and teachers to produce new and different material in order to have better learning and teaching processes in English classes.

Gower et al. (1995) mention the advantages of using visual materials that are more developed in teaching English classes:

They often illustrate meaning more directly and quickly than through verbal explanation…; it means that the use of images in the teaching of a language can help students to increase their vocabulary and acquire knowledge of a language through the visual aids.

They attract the students' attention and aid concentration. When a class is given with visual images, students feel that learning is more appealing and the teacher can catch the concentration of students because the images attract the mind of students and facilitate their learning.

They help make the associated language memorable. The images are more significant to students because through those kinds of aids they can associate meanings and memorize easily.

Gower et al. (1995) argue that the use of posters, charts, etc. can help make a classroom a stimulating and attractive place in which students can work. If the environment in which students are learning contains a lot of visuals, they can feel motivated to learn a language and become comfortable in the space in which they are working. It also motivates students to create their visual materials to decorate their own space. The authors that talk about visual literacy share the idea that using visual images helps students to build successful educational outcomes and knowledge.

According to Wright (1990), "images can play a key role in motivating students, contextualising the language they are using, giving them a reference and helping to discipline the activity" (p. 45). This means that the use of images as material help teachers not only to teach English, but in the organization of students in the classroom or in the activity that is developed in class. Also, Wright (1990) proposes

that "images can motivate the students and make him or her want to pay attention and want to take part" (p. 45). In this case, using images becomes a tool to make the class more comprehensible and, at the same time, to motivate the learner to participate in the activities that were developed in practice classes. Wright (1990) also proposes that "the images contribute to the context in which the language is being used. They bring the world into the classroom (a street scene or a particular object, for example, a train" (p. 54). It is valuable to count on making the teaching of a foreign language more comprehensible. For this reason, these classes used images as material to teach English in order to create more security on the students' part when they had to participate or to do an activity. Finally, Wright (1990) states that the images can be described in two different ways: objectively or subjectively, depending on the interpretation students and teachers want to give. For example, a picture of a train could be interpreted according to diverse perspectives; learners could say, "That is a train" or "I like travelling by train". It means that one of the advantages of using images to teach learners is that they can interpret, describe in an objective and subjective way the English language, but the teacher can address that direction.

Teaching Language with Pictures

According to Giddan and Giddan (1984), another way to teach a language is through the use of Visual Cues. "Visual cues are a set of pictorial representations of common places, objects, events, and interactions developed to assist in the teaching and learning of language. Those pictures are usually joined with words" (p. 4). Taking this idea into account, the material implemented in this research, such as the images, was accompanied by printed words, visual cue cards, and phrase markers showing how many words are in the phrase. "When needed, visual materials can be easily highlighted for emphasis, including color cueing, size enlargement, bolder print, stress markers, and underlining" (Giddan & Giddan, 1984, p. 17). For instance, if students are able to identify what the picture says, it is because the implementation of material was meaningful and comfortable for them because it had the previously mentioned characteristics. Additionally, this kind of material produces a stimulus in students and in the teaching and learning process as well.

However, it is relevant for teachers to take into account that using this material is a challenging task because it is necessary to structure each section very well and have a

relationship between topics and activities when using images. But at the same time, this material improves efficiency and effectiveness in the teaching process.

Population and Context

The school at which this research was conducted was Academia La Salle San Benildo. This is a school that has primary and secondary education. The school is managed by *Congregación de los Hermanos de las Escuelas Cristianas Distrito Lasallista de Bogotá [a community of Catholic sisters]*. This institution is composed of students from social strata one and two because it is both a private and public school, as it receives some help from the state. The emphasis of the school is placed on the creation of companies among the students and each grade has its own company.

The participants were selected according to the grades that were assigned for the teaching practice in the school. They were two fifth grade groups which consisted of 37 and 32 students and one third grade group with 30 students. The participants were girls and boys between 8-12 years old. Their knowledge of English was at the A1 level, according to the Common European Framework of Reference.

The researchers of this project are three student teachers from Universidad de la Salle. They were working with each one of the grades already mentioned, following the same process to come up with the analysis of the project.

Type of Study

This study corresponds to an action research in the field of qualitative research, with the purpose that the student teachers realized the need of the visual material for the students and described the impact with the application of the visual material. This field of action helped the student teachers to answer the questions that emerged at the beginning of the project. The stages that followed during the project are presented in two cycles that will be explained.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

In order to collect all the information, the student teachers followed two cycles of action research. To understand the process, the student teachers developed two cycles. Kolb's "Experiential Learning Cycle" classic model (as found in Neill, 2004) was adapted in order to offer the comprehension of the steps that they developed in

the cycles. Nevertheless, they modified the model according to their project. During the two cycles of the action research, the instruments that were used to analyze and support the project were documents and students' work, journals, interviews, and surveys.

First, through observations, a problem in the classroom was identified during one semester of teaching practice at the school. During this period, the student teachers identified the necessity of looking for tools for the students and teachers, thereby making the learning and teaching of English easier. In that process, the researchers presented the problem identified and a possible solution to be applied in the following semesters of the teaching practice. There were discussions around the topic, around the findings of why some students did not like the class, and why they did not understand or pay attention in the English class.

Once a problem was detected with a possible solution, there were dialogues around the best form to establish the action plan that could group what the teacher researchers wanted to apply in order to guide the project (see Figure 1). In this step there is a research question and sub questions that could help answer the main question and define the area of exploration.

After that, the teacher researchers planned what kind of data should be collected, how they should be collected, and how often. Student teachers were looking for the instruments and how they would be presented to the students in order to get the data needed to show results and findings. The instruments to collect these data were a pre-test and a post-test, among others previously mentioned.

The pre-test was presented to them with the intention of seeing if they could work better while looking at pictures and working on some strategies that help students to comprehend the language. With the results of the first test, the student teachers found some strategies in which they could work for the next step. The first cycle took six weeks and an analysis was made in order to identify which activities and materials worked best and showed a relevant impact on the students.

The second cycle implemented activities similar to those of the first cycle and other new ones related to the use of images. The idea was to make some changes from the first cycle and implement new and effective activities in the second cycle. This cycle took five weeks during which a survey and an interview were applied.

From both cycles the student teachers gathered information from teaching journals and at the end of both the information was analyzed.

The interview was prepared with five questions in which the students were asked to express their experience with visual materials. This instrument was applied to four students of fifth and third grades.

The teacher researchers wrote a journal for every teaching class. Each journal had information of descriptions and reflections of activities, students' attitudes, the role of material and also teachers' observations about their lessons. These journals were written following the same format for the three student teachers.

Data Analysis

To analyze data collected the student teachers used the grounded theory approach. Therefore, they applied this theory to their research project. Thus, data collection, analysis and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. "One
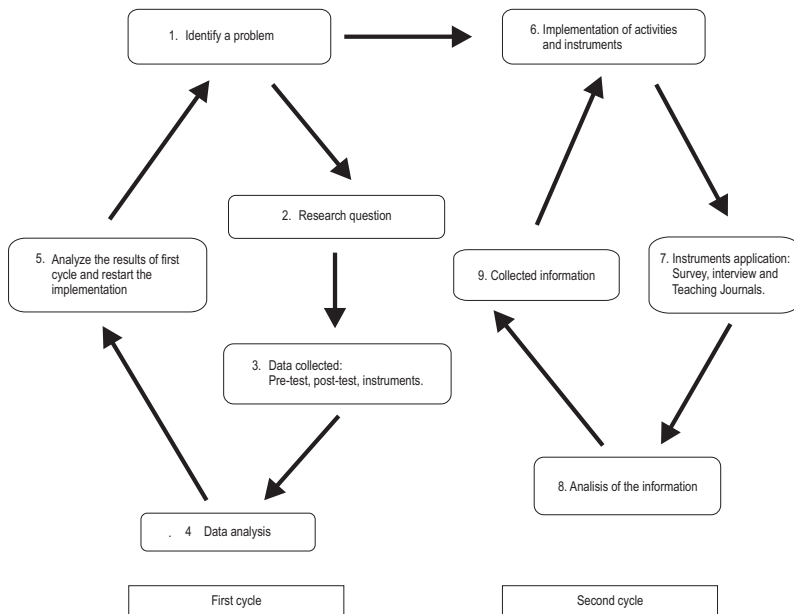

Figure 1. Research cycle

does not begin with theory and then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study that is allowed to emerge" (Burgess, Sieminski & Arthur, 2006, p. 47).

According to Freeman (1998), there are four elemental activities that make up data analysis, namely: naming, grouping, finding relationships and displaying. These stages were helpful to us for addressing the data analysis.

Findings

After collecting the data through each instrument, each one of the teacher researchers made an individual analysis of the information collected in each grade. This analysis was made at the end of the research cycle and every one of the student teachers read all the gathered information in order to make categories in which they joined all the patterns found inside them to get the answers of the inquiries that were guiding the research. For instance, they took the patterns that answered their research question and gave them as many details as possible to find answers to their sub questions. However, each analysis included the students' voices as part of the support of the findings. Those voices were translated into English because, in order to get a better perspective from the students, the instruments showed students' voices in Spanish.

Counting on the gathered information, the student teachers developed two major categories to come up with answers for their main questions. They called the first one "motivating students through visual material". This category is divided into three subcategories: the first one is called "Motivating the learning of English through visual aids"; the second one is "students' motivation through activities using visual material," and the third subcategory is "better attitude through the motivation of using visual material".

Motivating Students through Visual Material

This category is related to the motivation observed through students' feelings, attitudes and thoughts using visual material in the English class. This category was found according to the answers of the students in the survey and in the interview. Through these instruments, the learners could express those feelings. They could say what motivated them when they were working with images all the time in the English class and what their feelings and attitudes were concerning this way of learning.

In the following analysis there are some comments from the students to support the categories gathered once the analysis was done. As the teacher researchers worked on three different grades the organization was as follows:

Third grade (301): group 1

Fifth grade (501): group 2

Fifth grade (502): group 3

This classification was made to identify students' voices of each grade and each one of them was tagged with a number in order to keep their original identities. The teachers also translated the information that they gave in Spanish into English.

In addition, this category is about the students' motivation with respect to visual material in the English classes. The teacher researchers understand the concept of motivation as a way of making things with enthusiasm and showing interest in what human beings do. In this case, students felt a high interest to participate in class and felt motivated to learn the language using visual images. As Baker and Westrup (2000) state, "students need to be motivated, because learning is a long and sometimes difficult process. Seeing, touching and smelling real objects (or drawings or photos if you cannot find the real object or if the real object is too big or too expensive) is very motivating" (p. 141). For this reason, at the beginning of the teaching classes, the student teachers observed that the students were not motivated in the class, but during the use of visual images in every lesson, students' motivation increased.

Motivating students to learn English through the use of visual aids. At the beginning of the practice classes, the groups had discipline problems and low participation in class. As a result of these issues, the importance of using visual material was considered to help students develop a higher motivation in the learning of English as a foreign language. For instance, teacher researchers found that the students perceived the use of images as a way to help the discipline in class.

Using visual aids can play an important role in motivating students; "they can use images to contextualize the situations that they are evolving and to help the class organization" (Wright, 1990, p.37). That was one of the advantages of using visual images in the classrooms; in this case, to organize the class and manage the group. They were more disciplined when they saw images to explain or introduce the activities. For that reason, the activities developed in English classes were easier and

had more creativity than the first activities that were developed at the beginning of the practice English classes; in this way, the students were more motivated to observe discipline in class because they saw a different classroom environment. According to that, the students wanted to participate because they could see that English classes were not boring, they could have more material to use in class and at the same time to practice in class, so there was no time to be disorderly.

When the lessons were planned to include activities using images, the student teachers observed that students wanted to be encouraged in the development of the activity; they wanted to concentrate on completing the activities appropriately because the images facilitated their understanding the language. For instance, some of the students showed that they were motivated to learn by using images in the English class.

Students' motivation through activities incorporating visual material. Students were more determined when they saw visual aids in the activities or games. Student teachers observed that the students were motivated using many types of visual material in the activities. Materials like posters, wall charts, flashcards and still pictures were used.

Students felt motivated doing the activities and games that were developed with images. For instance, some of the activities that were the most common in students' answers were to create a story, puzzle a crossword with images, or creating your own poster, those activities caused a positive impact on students. In the case of games, the students answered that they wanted Concentration, lottery with images and board games.

Posters were used as a tool to explain a topic of every lesson. The teacher researchers saw that students enjoyed seeing posters in the class in order to explain the topics. The posters were a support that allowed the student teachers to contextualize the topics worked in class. Posters were also developed to make activities in which the students could create their own poster and evidence what they had learned in the class.

Better attitudes through the motivation arising from the use of visual material. The motivation through students' attitudes as regards the use of visual material in English classes was observed. They had fun, they enjoyed themselves, they liked the material, and they were interested, enthusiastic and comfortable using images in the development of the lessons. The learners experienced more entertainment and fun using images in the classes. With the use of visual materials in English classes the

students were motivated to understand the English language as a new way to communicate their feelings. Rivers (1987) states as follows: "Language learners often have similar feelings when trying to communicate in a new language. This is especially true when they have learned some structures and have limited vocabulary" (p. 111). In this case, communicating through images emphasized meaning and function rather than elements of structure and grammar. As such, the learners had the opportunity to express their ideas not only in a grammatical but also in a significant way.

During the application of the visual material, a good attitude was identified concerning the use of images in the English class. Some of the students' answers were that they felt good working with images. They had fun in each one of the activities, exercises, and explanations when the teacher researcher made use of images. The students displayed a positive attitude when the teacher presented the topics and the exercises with visual material. The use of visual images helped the students to understand what they were learning while seeing images and graphics accompanied by explanations and words.

Improving the Learning Process by Using Visual Images

This category was found because there were many students who related images to their learning process in English teaching classes. Students saw images as a way to learn English; they perceived that because the teaching process using images made the lessons more comprehensible. Egan (2006) states that "in a world saturated with visual pictures, we tend to forget the importance of images in our learning and understanding" (p. 17). For this reason, student teachers were conscious that images were an important way to learn and understand a second language.

The learners that the student teachers observed were young children. Hedley, Hedley and Baratta (1994) argue that "boys and girls in early childhood learn through the use of images; their first contact with the language is within a visual field" (p. 116). Therefore, in this research, images were used as a way to learn a second language, as many people learned a first language, verbally and visually.

Conclusions and Implications

Based on the results of this research project, the student teachers realized that the use of visual material in the English classes is a good way to promote learning. For

instance, the impact on the students was positive and their reactions were very constructive for both students and teachers as students appropriated the learning of the foreign language through the use of different visual materials. Additionally, teachers learned new strategies for the development of a class, creativity to create their own material, and classroom management.

To answer the main research question, *What is the impact of the use of visual material in the learning process of fifth and third grade students in San Benildo School?,* most of the material applied caused a positive impact on students as some of them said that they liked to work with the variety of pieces of material proposed by teacher researchers. Accordingly, students felt motivated by the material and the activities. For example, they liked to work with different images; they worked with commitment and their language was improving little by little. In addition, students were attracted to the subject and to the learning process of a language as evidenced by their performance and their attitudes.

Moreover, student teachers also learned that each student is different and had special likes and dislikes. For that reason the student teachers applied activities in which they could involve learners as well as make them feel comfortable with the class. However, the process in relation to material management was also improved because student teachers learned how to use the material in different contexts.

Visual aids helped with the design and to create material in a creative and different way. Using these pictures, the classes changed as time passed by becoming more meaningful and comprehensible to the students and to the teachers during the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

Taking into account the second sub question*, What are the advantages of using visual material in the English teaching practice?,* we learned that one of the advantages of applying visual material in the activities that were developed in the lessons was the possibility of having a better way to understand and communicate in a foreign language through the use of the material. The image produced an impact in the production of language in the different skills. For instance, visual aids helped to support understanding when the students experienced confusion with the meaning of vocabulary and also provided ideas for the selection of the topics to focus on for writing and speaking activities. However, it is important to remember that student teachers worked with these students one semester earlier and had been able to identify their language level.

For that reason, the teaching and learning process improved as evidenced by the progress of students and their performance in every class.

The use of visual material provided the student teachers with a visual link between the first language and English. Therefore, during the development of the class, the students could be motivated to participate. For example, they were motivated to work in class when they had visual material at hand; they also improved their language because they learned new vocabulary in different contexts, and they learned through different activities that engaged them. For example, in one of the classes students in group 3 told the teacher at the end of the class that they had liked the class because they learned the verbs in past simple thanks to the activity that the teacher had proposed. Furthermore, they said that it was easy for them to relate the images to the verbs, and in the following class they were also able to remember the same verbs.

What is more, teaching is not just giving knowledge but it is providing students with the elements they need to help them find the knowledge through the elements they know. As in this case, students enjoyed more when working with visual material; they felt comfortable in the way to be able to compare things through mimicry, through drawing and matching images with texts. All those things made the classes more significant and more appreciated by the students.

Finally, as a general conclusion, the student teachers can say that during this process they constructed new meanings from their personal interaction with Action Research. They learned the importance of connecting research inside a classroom. Using Action Research, they could make a process of studying a real classroom and school situation in order to make possible interpretations of what they found in this study; in this case, about the implementation of visual materials in students of fifth and third grades of La Academia La Salle San Benildo School. Applying Action Research in the student teacher's project and their English classes helped them to reflect on the importance of being a teacher researcher.

At the beginning of the practice classes, the role of the teacher was only to give knowledge to her/his students, and when the student teachers started to do action research, they became more flexible in their thinking. They were more receptive to new ideas, and to solving problems. When they worked out a problem found in their teaching practice, they improved their teaching. For this reason, doing the Action

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Research made them think about how their future classes could be: they would have to be more research-based and reflective.

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