

Semiotics at the Basis for Effective Vocabulary Teaching

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TEACHING INNOVATION PROPOSAL:

SEMIOTICS AS THE BASIS FOR EFFECTIVE VOCABULARY TEACHING.

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ABSTRACT

Vocasemiotics is a teaching innovation proposal available as a booklet. It aims to introduce semiotics in the process of vocabulary teaching-learning in the subject of English as a Second Language (ESL). The primary resources used for the development of *Vocasemiotics* are semiotically analysed images. According to their visual salience, they are the most effective ones for facilitating students' vocabulary acquisition in both short and long-term memory.

In this document, I present *Vocasemiotics*, preceded by a thorough revision of the literature in support of the use of semiotics in the classroom. Then, the proposal itself offers basic terms that help teachers understand and apply edusemiotics in the vocabulary teaching process. Edusemiotics is an emerging branch of semiotics that studies the signs "in the context of education broadly understood as encompassing the whole of human experience, which can never be taken in isolation from the environing" (Stables & Semetsky, 2014, p. 6). Besides, *Vocasemiotics* explains different semiotic criteria to select images through a mind-map and a table that keeps the teacher guided during image selection and visual analysis. *Vocasemiotics* also presents an example of the visual analysis of an image according to its compositional level. Finally, it develops two lesson plans for face to face and online teaching that focus on vocabulary and show how teachers can use semiotically analysed images in both ways of teaching.

Lastly, I have put part of the teaching innovation proposal into practice and passed a questionnaire to 108 students of Lower and Upper Secondary Education to know their impressions about the lesson and vocabulary teaching in general. Most of the students have declared that they acquired vocabulary quickly and for a longer time using semiotically analysed images.

Keywords: Vocabulary Acquisition, Semiotically Analysed Images, Edusemiotics, Visual Design.

RESUMEN

Vocasemiotics es una propuesta de innovación docente disponible en forma de folleto. Su objetivo es introducir la semiótica en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de vocabulario en la asignatura de Inglés como Segunda Lengua (ESL). Los principales recursos utilizados para el desarrollo de *Vocasemiotics* son imágenes analizadas semióticamente. De acuerdo con su prominencia visual, son las más efectivas para facilitar la adquisición de vocabulario de los estudiantes tanto en la memoria a corto como a largo plazo.

En este documento presento *Vocasemiotics*, precedida por una revisión exhaustiva de la literatura que apoya el uso de la semiótica en el aula. Después, la propuesta en sí presenta términos básicos que ayudan a los profesores a comprender y aplicar la edusemiótica en el proceso de enseñanza del vocabulario. La edusemiótica es una rama emergente de la semiótica que estudia los signos "en el contexto de la educación, que es entendida ampliamente como aquella que abarca la totalidad de la experiencia humana, y que nunca puede ser interpretada aisladamente del entorno" (Stables & Semetsky, 2014, p. 6). Además, *Vocasemiotics* explica diferentes criterios semióticos para seleccionar imágenes a través de un mapa mental y una tabla que mantiene al profesor guiado durante la selección de imágenes y el análisis visual de las mismas. *Vocasemiotics* también presenta un ejemplo de análisis visual de una imagen según su nivel composicional. Por último, desarrolla dos planes de lección para la enseñanza presencial y en línea que se centran en el vocabulario y muestran cómo los profesores pueden utilizar imágenes analizadas semióticamente en ambas formas de enseñanza.

Por último, he puesto en práctica parte de la propuesta de innovación docente y he pasado un cuestionario a 108 alumnos de Educación Secundaria y Bachillerato para conocer sus impresiones sobre la lección y la enseñanza del vocabulario en general. La mayoría de los estudiantes han declarado que adquirieron vocabulario rápidamente y durante más tiempo utilizando imágenes analizadas semióticamente.

Palabras clave: Adquisición de Vocabulario, Imágenes Analizadas Semióticamente, Edusemiótica, Diseño Visual.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Acquiring vocabulary is one of the most complex tasks in teaching and learning a Second Language (L2). However, it is also one of the most necessary to develop different communication skills. One can express very little without grammar, but nothing can be transmitted without vocabulary (Wilkins, 1972). Both teachers and students wonder what they can do to facilitate vocabulary acquisition.

Vocasemiotics is the answer to teachers' need to evolve, and students' need to acquire vocabulary in a simple way that lasts over time. *Vocasemiotics* is based on one of the newest branches of theoretical semiotics: edusemiotics. This branch considers that humans have to experience the potentially meaningful signs that surround them to learn something new. In other words, "human experience is marked by signs, and all thinking and living proceeds in signs" (Stables & Semetsky, 2014, p. 2).

Edusemiotics focuses on learning experiences that comprise a process of growth and evolution of signs in which both teachers and students can find meaning in what they are experiencing. In many studies, it has been proved that visual learning style is the most effective way for many students to perceive, interpret, and incorporate meaning. Some of these studies carried out by Dunn and Dunn (1978); Barbe and Milone (1981); Carbo (1983); Price, Dunn, and Sanders (1980); Kia, Alipour, and Ghaderi (2009) and Kassaian (2007) are further explained in the theoretical background.

On the other hand, *Vocasemiotics* can be applied in the subject of ESL in Secondary Education Teaching. More specifically, the Organic Law 8/2013, of December 9, for the Improvement of Educational Quality (LOMCE), allows for the application of edusemiotics in the classrooms as it can supplement the contents of the English subject and works as the basis of a new didactic methodology for educational high schools. Besides, the Decree 48/2015, of May 14, and the Decree 52/2015, of May 21, from Madrid's Regional Authorities, which establish the Lower and Upper Secondary Education's curriculums for the Community of Madrid, allows the implementation of a block for comprehension and production of semiotically analysed images. Just as specific comprehension, execution, and evaluation strategies are developed to understand certain types of text, semiotics could be the axis that guides the understanding of images through the same practices.

Vocasemiotics presents a vocabulary teaching model for a specific context. During the time I have been a teacher-in-practice in the Bilingual Education High School La Senda (Getafe), I have thought about the students of the second course of Lower Secondary Education, and the third course of Upper Secondary Education to design *Vocasemiotics*. In my experience with these students during my first internship period, I detected that these students were taught vocabulary mainly through lists of vocabulary, that this was not engaging for them, and that they tended to forget the vocabulary that they were exposed to very quickly. On the other hand, as an undergraduate student of English Studies, I had been able to learn about semiotics and its possibilities because I did a socio-semiotic analysis of the murals of Belfast (Northern Ireland) from the period of the Troubles (1968-1998) onwards for my dissertation. All this gave me the idea to apply semiotics to the analysis of images for learning vocabulary and develop *Vocasemiotics*.

Then I have put *Vocasemiotics* into practice in online teaching, and I have checked through a questionnaire if this approach has helped them more than the strategy they were used to using: word lists. According to Taka (2008), learning vocabulary from bilingual word lists is a standard learning technique that is still in use in many secondary classrooms around the world. It facilitates vocabulary acquisition for some students, but it appears difficult for others that prefer to make associations between new lexical items and images, for example, instead of the translation to their mother tongue (L1).

The present paper delves into research about different cognitive (Riding & Rayner, 2013) and learning styles (Reid, 1995) and effective learning strategies (Dörnyei & Shekan, 2003) that work as the basis for the development of *Vocasemiotics*. These aspects are covered in the first part of the theoretical background, with another subsection dealing with vocabulary teaching strategies (Hatch & Brown, 2000; Nation, 2001; Sökmen, 1997; Thornbury, 2002). The semiotic field and the edusemiotic branch appear in the second section of the theoretical background from, mainly, Ferdinand de Saussure (1983), Charles Sanders Peirce (1991) and Semetsky's (2017) perspectives.

Then, *Vocasemiotics* is presented in three parts. The first explains how to apply edusemiotics in L2 vocabulary teaching and shows the concepts of the theoretical background that teachers need to know to develop *Vocasemiotics* correctly. The second part helps the teacher to select a topic and an image or a group of images for its consequent visual salience analysis. This part

provides a list with the main topics proposed by the Royal Decree 1041/2017, of December 23, which establishes the basic curriculum for Lower and Upper Secondary Education, and a mind-map to explain how to choose an image in face to face and online teaching. This part also presents an example of the visual analysis of an image according to the features of the compositional level proposed by Kress & Van Leeuwen's (2006 [1996]) Grammar of Visual Design. The third and last part develops two lesson plans designed for two particular contexts (the second course of Lower Secondary Education and the third course of Upper Secondary Education) and two ways of teaching: face to face and online. Both lesson plans are divided into preparation, pre-task, task-phase, post-task, and assessment, and can be easily applied to other courses. In fact, I believe that the whole proposal can be easily extrapolated to other teaching contexts.

Finally, the present paper exposes the implementation of *Vocasemiotics* in online teaching and the analysis and evaluation of a questionnaire that collects students' impressions about the lesson plan development and vocabulary teaching in general. It concludes recapitulating the most relevant results obtained during the research as well as about what *Vocasemiotics* has brought new to the academic community. Lastly, it presents a reflection on the pros and cons of *Vocasemiotics* for future intended research.

I would like to finish by saying that my first idea was implementing the face to face teaching lesson plan of *Vocasemiotics* in the third course of Upper Secondary Education during my internship in the Bilingual Education High School La Senda. Due to the coronavirus lockdown that started on March 14, 2020, the only way to put *Vocasemiotics* in practice was through online teaching. At the same time, my first idea was to make a questionnaire to see if *Vocasemiotics* works or not. I would have liked to see how students retain class vocabulary in short and long memory and try to discover how they learn easier: through wordlists or semiotically analysed images.

To conclude, I would like to thank my mentors Maria Fernández Agüero and Beatriz Sánchez Garrido, for all the knowledge that they have provided me during the last few months; my family, for their love and patience; and my friends, for trusting me until the very end. I could not have done this paper without the support of any of them, just in the same way as *Vocasemiotics* could not work without semiotically analysed images.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Vocabulary learning and teaching process

This section is based on the following quotation: "Good teaching is teaching that proceeds in accordance with how learners learn" (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p. 27). It exhibits three predictors of success in L2 learning and some vocabulary teaching strategies that explain the basis that I have used to develop *Vocasemiotics*. The three predictors of success in L2 learning are cognitive and learning styles and effective learning strategies. The vocabulary teaching strategies fall into these two categories: presentation, and review and consolidation of new lexical items.

2.1.1. *Predictors of success in L2 learning*

Examining cognitive and learning styles, and effective learning strategies, as predictors of success in L2 learning, can help to recognize and understand "the links between cognitive abilities and language learning" that "help teachers and learners to adjust their teaching methods and learning environment in ways that are beneficial to individual learners." (Kempe, 2011, Abstract).

Some of these predictors are concerned with personality, intelligence, aptitude, motivation, self-regulation, gender, cognitive styles, learning styles, and effective learning strategies. *Vocasemiotics* focuses on the last three because they are the ones that most contribute to the enhancement of students' learning process. This subsection will explain each of them and presents its different types:

2.1.1.1. *Cognitive styles*

A cognitive style is a "predisposition" that students have "to process information in a characteristic manner" (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003, p. 602). They emerge from four areas of psychology that, according to Riding & Rayner (2013), are:

- Perception.
- Cognitive controls and cognitive processes.
- Mental imagery.
- Personality constructs.

This subsection will give an overview of these four areas as follows:

Perception

The first area of psychology I am going to present is perception. Witkin and Goodenough (1981) suggest that experimental work, through perception, led to the early development of students' style construct and classification in the dependent or the independent field of cognitive styles. These fields recognize the cognitive styles that students use when processing information or interpreting signs. They demonstrate that perception helps in this process.

In the independent field of cognitive styles, students:

- See figures as discrete from the background.
- Tend to analyse information into its parts.
- Distinguish the essential from the anecdotal.
- Promote intrinsic motivation.
- Are less influenced by social context.

In the dependent field of cognitive styles, students:

- Are less likely to distinguish figures from background.
- Are more likely to deal with information structures as wholes, or "gestalts."
- May mix up essential and inessential.
- May tend to be sociable and work well in groups.

Vocasemiotics tries to mix aspects of both fields to cover different students' needs and achieve an entire interpretation of signs. For example, when interpreting a sign, students should distinguish the essential from the anecdotal or analyse information into its parts. Students should also be friendly and work well in groups because they can enrich their learning

experience with their peers' interpretations of the sign. In this way, students will develop Witkin and Goodenough's proposal of experimental work through perception.

Cognitive processes and cognitive controls

Cognitive processes and individual's adaptations to the environment are promoted by Gardner, Holzman, Klein, Linton, and Spence (1959) and influenced by psychoanalytic ego psychology's theories. According to these theories, cognitive processes include perceptual and cognitive attitudes, and cognitive controls support general notions of cognitive styles.

Mental imagery

According to Galton (1883) and James (1890), some students prefer to represent information verbally in their thoughts, and others prefer to do it visually. Paivio (1971) goes beyond and suggest a dual coding between the verbal and the visual way of students' representation of information. Riding and Taylor (1976) agree with Paivio (1971) and state that the mental imagery dimension of a cognitive style is fundamental to students' construct of cognitive style and effectiveness.

Personality constructs

Personality constructs suggest a style model that promotes a psychodynamic perspective of individuality. It is based on Jung's (1923) typology of personality constructs and psychoanalytic ego psychology.

According to Riding and Cheema (1991), cognitive styles also have two families:

- a wholistic-analytic group (related to the cognitive organisation)
- verbaliser-imager group (referred to mental representation).

Teachers' vocabulary teaching strategies should be based on the four areas of psychology that I have mentioned because they are the ones that determine how students process information. In this section, I have presented perception in more detail because, as we will see, it seems to be the most effective to develop *Vocasemiotics*.

2.1.1.2. *Learning styles*

A learning style is "a typical preference for approaching learning in general" (Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003, p. 602). According to Reid (1995), learning styles go beyond the cognitive domain and include three main areas of sensory students' preference and personality. These are:

- Visual preference.
- Auditory preference.
- Kinaesthetic and tactile preferences.

In this subsection, I will indicate which is, to my knowledge, the most effective one and why, especially for *Vocasemiotics*' development.

Visual preference

Visual learners think about pictures and learn best through visual images. They depend on "the instructor's or facilitator's non-verbal cues" (Gilakjani, 2012, p. 105), such as semiotically analysed images, because they help them with understanding. This kind of learners sit in front of the class and take descriptive notes over the teachers' presented materials. They also tend to create visual maps to review and consolidate new lexical items.

An important number of studies affirm that students' preferred learning style is visual, and that is why *Vocasemiotics* promotes visual preference. Dunn and Dunn (1978) state that most of the school-age children are visual learners. A smaller percentage of students have tactile/kinaesthetic or visual/tactile preference, and the minority are auditory learners. Barbe and Milone (1981) agree that most students are visual, but in contrast, they think that there are more auditory than kinaesthetic learners. In the case of very young children, Price, Dunn, and Sanders (1980) position that they are mostly tactile/kinaesthetic, but they strengthen the visual preference through elementary grades. Finally, in the latest courses, students promote the auditory sense. Carbo (1983) makes a distinction between good and poor readers. Good readers are more visual and auditory learners, and poor readers are more tactile and kinaesthetic ones. Although "students with visual learning style have the greatest academic achievement" (Kia, Alipour, and Ghaderi, 2009, p. 24) and "retained vocabulary items they had

learned visually better than the items they had learned aurally" (Kassaian, 2007, p. 53), *Vocasemiotics* considers all type of students, whatever their sensory preference is.

Auditory preference

Auditory learners are natural listeners and linear thinkers. They discover information through listening and interpret information through pitch, emphasis, and speed. They prefer explanations rather than texts because they may not have a full understanding of written information (LdPride, 2009). They can learn from reading aloud in the classroom or from teachers' verbalisations.

Kinaesthetic and tactile preferences

Kinaesthetic and tactile learners favour interaction with the physical world. They usually have difficulties in keeping their attention and can become unfocused quickly (LdPride, 2009). They do and solve because they learn through trial and error. They learn best through an active "hands-on" approach, although they use all their senses and demonstration skills to engage in learning.

Students use all their senses to take in information, but also have preferences to learn visually, auditorily, and kinaesthetically. Students can prefer one, two, or three learning styles, so teachers should consider this fact when teaching vocabulary. Teachers have to make the classroom environment as stimulating and interactive as possible, to awake students' senses and facilitate their L2 vocabulary acquisition. *Vocasemiotics* further develops visual preference because it is the preference that best fits with the proposal's development.

2.1.1.3. *Effective learning strategies*

Learning strategies are "special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.1). They are developed in one way or another depending on the learning style of the student. Learning styles and learning strategies seem to be very similar, but one depends on the other. According to Dörnyei & Skehan (2003), there are four types of learning strategies:

- Cognitive learning strategies manipulate or transform learning materials or input through repetition, summarizing, or using images.
- Metacognitive learning strategies aim to analyse, monitor, evaluate, plan, and organize students' learning process.
- Social learning strategies are interpersonal behaviours that aim to improve L2 communication and practice through interaction with native speakers or cooperation with peers in the classrooms.
- Affective learning strategies take control of the emotional conditions and experiences that shape students' subjective involvement in learning.

Teachers must know that there are different types of effective learning strategies to adapt their vocabulary teaching to students as much as possible. *Vocasemiotics* focuses on cognitive and metacognitive effective learning styles because they are essential to understand the visual analysis of different semiotically analysed images that teachers use to present vocabulary in the classroom.

2.1.2. Vocabulary learning strategies

This section covers some effective and non-effective vocabulary learning strategies that have helped to design *Vocasemiotics*. Vocabulary learning strategies activate explicit learning and involve significant efforts to observe new lexical items, attend selectively, implicate the context, and store them into long-term memory (Ellis, 1994). The previously seen predictors of success in L2 learning can also influence the development of these strategies.

Vocabulary learning strategies can be developed for four different purposes:

- Memorize new words, for example, by making a mental image or depicting the meaning of these words.
- Review vocabulary, by refreshing students' memories about words previously learned.
- Recall vocabulary, by trying to remember the situation where the word was seen or written.
- Make use of new vocabulary, by putting the words just learned into practice through interaction or through informal tasks that students enjoy doing.

The majority of studies on vocabulary learning "have focused on strategies for a particular stage of vocabulary learning, for example, initial handling, consolidation, or activation and use" (Nation & Gu, 2007, p.85). For instance, some initial handling and consolidation stages' strategies are represented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Examples of Vocabulary Learning Strategies in the initial handling and consolidation stages.

In the next subsection, I explain these two types of vocabulary learning strategies because they are the strategies fostered by *Vocasemiotics*. Initial handling strategies are based on guessing and the use of dictionaries. Consolidation strategies are varied and based on repetition or encoding mainly.

2.1.2.1. *Initial handling strategies*

Guessing strategies

Guessing strategies indicate that "incidental vocabulary learning through reading and listening is a plausible strategy for vocabulary development" (Nation & Gu, 2007, p. 86). Even so, "it requires a great deal of prior training in basic vocabulary, word recognition, metacognition, and subject matter." (Huckin & Coady, 1999, p. 189-190). Researchers, as Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) suggests that the best is to combine incidental and intentional learning as a vocabulary learning strategy.

Dictionary strategies

Dictionary strategies can contribute to vocabulary growth and be useful for reading comprehension. According to Knight (1994), "learners who used a dictionary and guessed through context not only learned more words immediately after reading but also remembered more after two weeks" (Nation & Gu, 2007, p.88).

2.1.2.2. Consolidation strategies

Repetition strategies

Repetition strategies are considered as the easiest ones to retain large amounts of L2 words to memory. They consist of students repeating new words until they recognise them (Nation & Gu, 2007, p. 88). One of the most common repetition strategies, particularly in the initial stages of vocabulary learning, is word lists. They tend to include L2 words and their corresponding L1 translations. Carter (1987) stands that "quantities of initial vocabulary can be learned both efficiently and quickly by methods such as rote learning" (p. 153). Taka (2008) thinks that wordlists are "unfashionable and simple but a standard learning technique" (p.229) that result easy for some students and difficult for others.

Encoding strategies

Encoding strategies aim to relate new lexical items to learners' minds existing knowledge. They create a meaningful connection between what the learner knows and what the learner is learning. Some examples of encoding strategies involve the creation of essential links or the contextualization of new words. Encoding strategies encourage students to process deeper than with repetition. Encoding strategies are based on memory, meaning, form, and context as follows:

Memory strategies

Memory or mnemonic techniques use an image or a sentence as a mediator to connect with a new word in learners' minds. They aim to facilitate students' memorization of difficult items "by establishing a bridge between the target item and a meaningful, colourful, interesting, vivid, sensational or even bizarre and ridiculous mediator" (Nation & Gu, 2007, p. 90).

Meaning-based strategies

Meaning-based strategies "aim to remember words in meaningful groups, and to present and organise interrelated lexical meanings" (Nation & Gu, 2007, p. 91). Many learners consider them very helpful, although some studies (Higa, 1963; Crow & Quigley, 1985) debate their effectiveness and consequences when presenting new words that are closely related simultaneously

Form-based and context-based strategies

Form-based strategies include the use of word-formation information and context-based strategies, such as remembering words in sentences. Some studies carried out by Gu (2003) try to corroborate if using a new lexical item is useful in incorporating the new word into a learner's lexicon (Nation & Gu, 2007, p. 92).

2.1.3. *Vocabulary teaching strategies*

Teaching strategies denote what teachers do or should do to help their learners to learn (Hatch & Brown, 2000). Teachers selection depends on:

- The time available.
- The content that students have to acquire
- The value that students give to this content.

There are two different main types of teaching strategies: planned and unplanned (Seal, 1991).

Unplanned vocabulary teaching strategies involve teachers' spontaneous reactions. When a need arises in a student, the teacher improvises to help him. Seal (1991) suggests that in this type of teaching, teachers use a three-step procedure called "the three C's," where the teacher conveys, check, and consolidates meaning in students' memory. They can check meaning by asking questions and consolidate by relating the meaning to the context or personal experience.

Planned vocabulary teaching strategies are explicit and clearly defined and directed. Teachers use this type of teaching strategy to present the meaning and form of new lexical items and boost learners to review and practice them. Teachers also monitor and evaluate the level of acquisition of various components of lexical knowledge. They deal with vocabulary for specific amounts of time, explore different aspects of lexical knowledge, and encourage learners to process lexical items actively. (Nation, 2001).

A review of the literature (Hatch & Brown, 2000; Nation, 2001; Sökmen, 1997; Thornbury, 2002) has produced the list of teaching strategies showed in Figure 2 and explained in the following section. They fall into:

- Presentation of meaning and form of new lexical items.
- Review and consolidation of presented lexical items.

2.1.3.1. Presentation of meaning and form of new lexical items

Presentation of meaning and form of new lexical items involves "the teaching of preselected lexical items in the planned stage of a lesson" (Taka, 2008, p.19). Learners are mainly passive recipients of linguistic facts, although some procedures may involve learners' active participation. For example, when teachers present both the meaning and form of the lexical item, the meaning can be given verbally or non-verbally, or not be presented. Therefore, the meaning is expected to be provided by students' interpretation and requires the student's participation.

The most frequent vocabulary teaching strategies of presentation are:

- *Connecting an L2 item with its L1 equivalent* is mostly used for checking comprehension or pointing out similarities or differences between L2 and L1. In this way, it is easier to prevent linguistic errors such as the creation of false pairs or wrong word choice.
- *Defining meaning* help to lexical development and long-term retention of lexical items. Definitions can be a synonym or an antonym; be analytic or taxonomic; give examples or the superordinate term; describe the function; be grammatical; be made by connection or by classification; or be full, as in monolingual dictionaries (Taka, 2008).

- *Presentation of an item through context.* Teachers create a situation to contextualize lexical items in sentences or images where words appear or are represented. Then, learners used to guess the meaning "on the basis of the cumulative effect of the sentences" (Taka, 2008, p.20).
- *Direct connection between meaning and real objects* is mostly used with learners that do not have enough linguistic knowledge, as the younger ones. Students make "deliberate attempts at learning lexical items often connected to a synonym, definition, translation into the mother tongue, or an illustration" (Taka, 2008, p.20). Direct connection between meaning and real objects use demonstration and visual aids as cues for students to remember lexical items. If a verbal definition supplements the visual aids, they appear more effective because they reduce the possibility of incorrect guessing. Nation (2001) states that to connect the meaning with a real object promotes dual encoding between linguistic and visual storing of information.
- *Active involvement of learners in a presentation* encourages students "to discover the word's meaning from its parts or by elicitation" (Taka, 2008, p.20). Teachers tend to show pictures and invite students to provide meaning. They also tend to present the lexical item and encourage students to give their definition or a synonym, as in "defining the meaning" vocabulary teaching strategy, to enhance students' memory.

2.1.3.2. *Review and consolidation of presented lexical items*

Review and consolidation of presented lexical items are necessary to incorporate words in students' long-term memory. Teachers should provide opportunities for practising and connecting concepts in various ways and encourage students "to retrieve words from memory" (Taka, 2008, p. 21) and use them to communicate.

The vocabulary teaching strategies used for these tasks and activities are:

- *Mechanical repetition of words* contributes to a more effective memorization of words in long-term memory.

- *Copying words* can aid memory if it is accompanied, for example, by loud repetition or visualisation of its meaning.
- *Word manipulation* consists of matching words and definitions, grouping words, or finding the odd one out.
- *Integrating new words with the already known* by creating links between them, activates linguistic pre-knowledge and knowledge of the world. It transforms new words into more meaningful, organised and easy to learn ones.
- *Semantic elaboration* "facilitates the creation of links and semantic networks, as well as deep level of processing" (Taka, 2008, p.22). According to Sökmen (1997), the following procedures, based on semantic elaboration, are suitable for presenting and revising new lexical items:
 - Semantic feature analysis.
 - Semantic mapping.
 - Ordering or classifying words.
 - Pictorial schemata.
- *Creating mental images* by drawing, for example, diagrams or illustrations of meaning.
- *Personalisation* "makes the learning material psychologically 'real'" (Taka, 2008, p.22) by connecting new lexical items to real events or personal experiences.
- *Tasks for word identification* aim students to recognize specific lexical items' forms by finding words in a text or solving anagrams.
- *Tasks for recalling words from memory.* Students remember words' form based on a given meaning while they activate knowledge and enhance memory. These tasks are realised by "acting the word out, replacing the word with its synonym or antonym, giving a definition or a translation, or reading and listening activities stimulate word identification" (Taka, 2008, p.22).

- *Tasks for expanding lexical knowledge* provide additional information about the new lexical items presented "to cover as many components of lexical knowledge as possible" (Taka, 2008, p.23). Some examples are word formation, grammar categories, or forms analysis.
- *Productive use of words* can be developed by completing sentences or texts, with words offered or not, using words in sentences, conversations, or stories. In short, by promoting all types of speaking and writing activities.
- *Multiple encounters with the word* cover various aspects of lexical knowledge for students to build up an adequate one. They help to consolidate lexical knowledge in long-term memory.

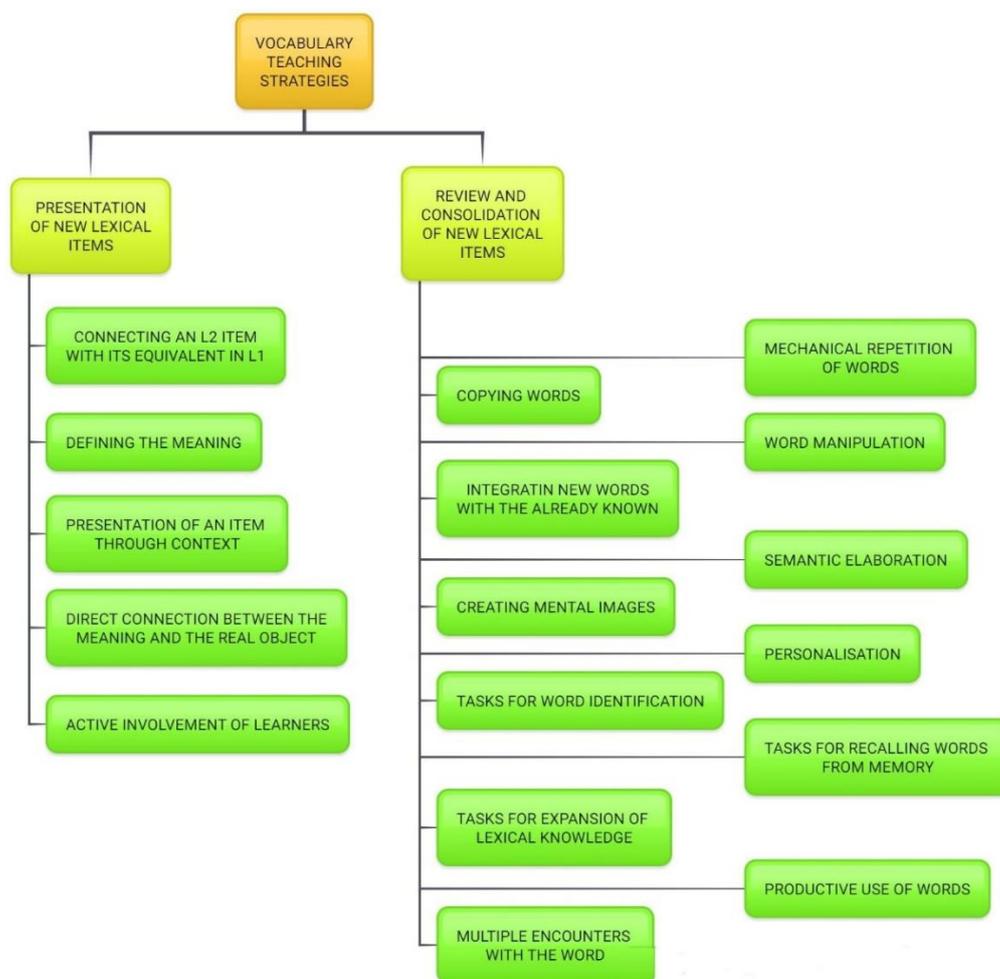


Figure 2. Examples of Vocabulary Teaching Strategies for presentation and consolidation of new lexical items.

2.2. The semiotic field

This section defines essential concepts for the understanding and development of *Vocasemiotics*. Some of these concepts are "sign," "semiotics," and "edusemiotics."

Semiotics is the field that studies the sign as an entity and participates in the phenomenon of semiosis (Eco, 1979). Semiology is assumed to be a synonymous word with semiotics. The only difference is in their respective precursors. Charles Sanders Peirce (1991) founded semiotics, and Ferdinand de Saussure (1983) founded semiology. "Semiotics comes from the Greek (σῆμα-ἰον-) that means "sign" and the suffix (-techné) that means "art" or "technique."" (Nöth, 1995, p. 13). Semiology also comes from the Greek (σῆμα-ἰον-), and (logos) that means "discourse" or "treatise." Both aim to study the sign but differ in their sign's interpretations.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1983) understands the sign as a dual mechanism that results from the conventional association of a signifier and the signified. Charles Sanders Peirce (1991) affirms that the sign establishes a triadic model between the representamen (the form that takes the sign) an interpretant (the sense made of the sign), and an object (to which the sign refers), as Figure 3 represents.

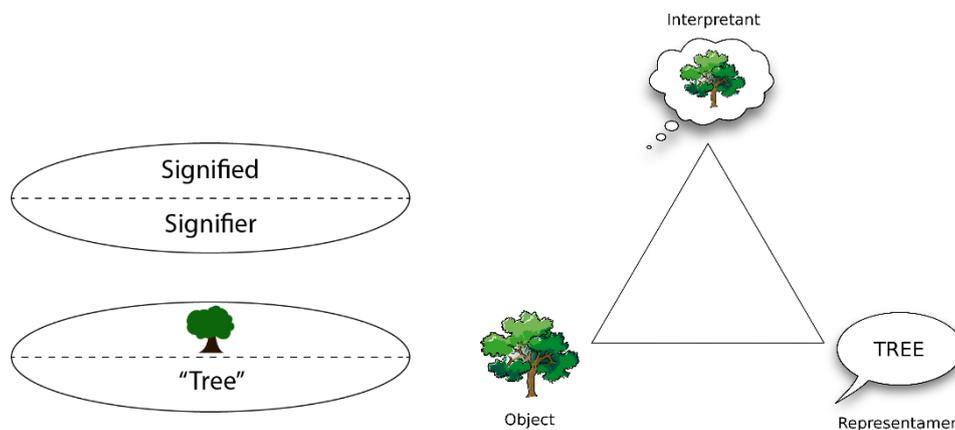


Figure 3: Ferdinand de Saussure's sign on the left side (source: Honours Project¹) and Charles S. Peirce's sign on the right (source: PNG icons²).

¹ <https://callumhonoursproject.wordpress.com/2015/11/04/review-semiotics-the-basics/>

² <https://www.iconspng.com/images/charles-s-peirces-sign/charles-s-peirces-sign.jpg>

Ferdinand de Saussure (1983) classifies signs according to users' purposes and viewers' experiences of the sign instead of its objective qualities. Students should learn the relationship between the signifier and signified. In a symbol, the signifier does not resemble the signified, but it is arbitrary or purely conventional. In an icon, the signifier resembles the signified, so it possesses some of its qualities and is easily recognized. In an index, the signifier is not arbitrary but directly connected physically or casually to the signified (Figure 4).

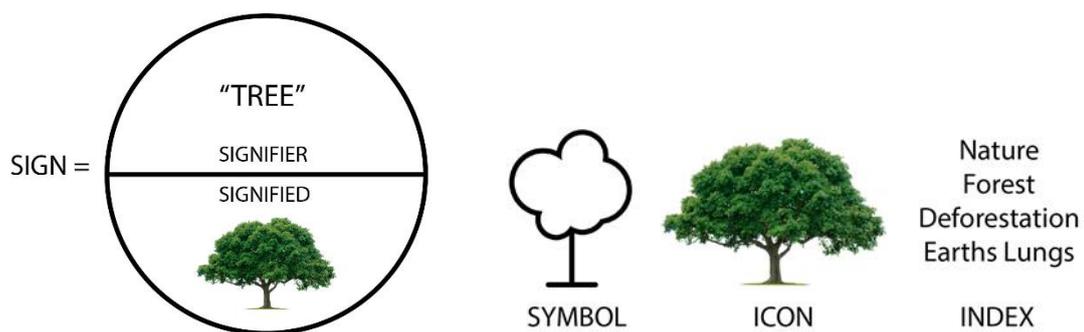


Figure 4: Classification of signs, according to Saussure (source: Tinycards³).

There is a theoretical difference between Saussure's and Peirce's semiotic proposals. Saussure's semiology is the product of a dichotomous view from linguistics. It equates the study of signs with the study of language, with an emphasis on the linguistic perspective. Peirce's theory is the product of a pragmatic and triadic vision of logic and mathematics: trichotomic thinking. Semiotics is a broader study than linguistics since it covers all kinds of signs through semiosis.

According to Saussure (1983), semiosis is the inference process that allows "the understanding of reality through representamen, object, and interpretant" (Nöth, 1995, p. 42). The representamen is the perceptible object that works as a sign and that, being individual, is an idea that replaces another idea. The object, which has two types, represents an idea of reality understood through the sign. The immediate object, as its name indicates, is an immediate representation of the sign that is within the sign. The dynamic object is outside the sign and does not represent the sign fully.

³ <https://tinycards.duolingo.com/decks/9fgQi37L/semiotics>

There is an example of a star as an object in Figure 5. The representation of the immediate object is on the left and the dynamic on the right.

IMMEDIATE OBJECT	DYNAMIC OBJECT
	

Figure 5. Representation of the two types of objects (source: the author).

According to Peirce (1991), the interpreter, which is the image produced in the mind of a person based on the sign, has three different types: the immediate interpreter is the quality of the impression that the sign provides in the student's mind. The dynamic interpreter is the effect that the sign produces on the subject, that is, the reaction. The final interpreter is the interaction that could occur and the result of the interpretation (Nöth, 1995).

For example, if someone starts to feel a "toothache," the immediate interpreter is the idea that the subject has when he begins to feel the pain, that is, this interpreter is closely related to the senses as it can be seen, heard, tasted or smelled. The dynamic interpreter is the effect produced in the subject by the "toothache" that, in this case, could be the realization of a filling. The final interpreter will be the result of the interpretation: what the subject has learned from that experience, in this case, take care of teeth. The three types of interpreters are represented with an image in Figure 6.

Peirce's semiotics establishes three categorical foundations for three sign relations: sign in itself, sign and object, and sign and interpretant. These are "firstness (the possible), secondness (the actual), and thirdness (the would-be)" (Merrel, 1997, p. 27). They promote the ability to describe and understand learning and cognition beyond what is actually (that is, materially) manifest. As I have mentioned before, when presenting new lexical items, teachers should give a concrete form and let students get their meaning. The three categorial

underpinnings of Peirce help students to interpret the form manifested (new lexical item), extract its meaning and incorporate it into their memories.

IMMEDIATE INTERPRETER	DYNAMIC INTERPRETER	FINAL INTERPRETER
		

Figure 6. Representation of the three types of interpreters (source: the author).

Firstness - this is, the sign in itself - subdivides the sign into the *qualisign*, which is the quality of the same sign that does not represent a complete concept but the possibility of becoming something; the *sinsign*, which is the real thing or event; and the *legisign*, which is the norm or model of the sign. (Zecchetto, Marro & Vicente, 2013a).

Secondness establishes the relationship between the sign and its object, which can be indexical, iconic, and symbolical (Figure 7):

- Indexical: the relationship between form and meaning is contiguous.
- Iconical: the relationship between form and meaning is similar.
- Symbolical: the relationship between form and meaning is conventional.

Thirdness is the category that underlines "the process of semiosis in its full estimation" (Strand, 2013, p. 795). The relation between the sign and its interpretant can be:

- Thematic: if the sign establishes a relationship with its interpretant raising an idea.
- Propositional: if the sign addresses its interpretant as a statement of fact.
- Argumentative: if a sign addresses its interpretant as a relation of reason.

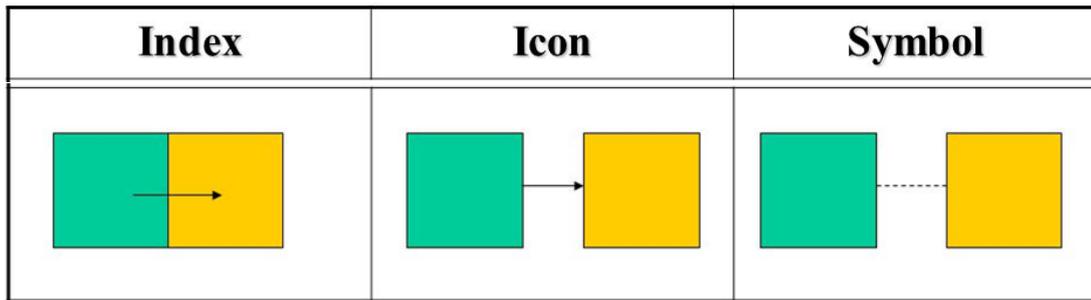


Figure 7. Relations between form and meaning (source: SlidePlayer⁴)

In short, thirdness contains firstness and secondness, but it is not reducible to the two. Thirdness acts as a bridge that enables the interpretation of the sign (firstness) and the object (secondness). For example, when someone sees a beam of light, someone may see just a beam of light (firstness) or perceive the beam of light as 'God's creation' (secondness) and interpret it as such (thirdness). Thirdness "occurs in perceptual learning to mediate between the processes of qualification (firstness) and sense-impression (secondness), or to put it more directly, to mediate the potential becoming actual in experience" (Olteanu & Campbell, 2018, p. 251).

The tripartite conception of experience offered by Peirce's categories goes beyond the substance dualism, and "the principle of non-contradiction (this is this because it is not that)" (Semetsky & Campbell, 2018, p.124), defended by Ferdinand de Saussure. This fact does not mean that what was exposed by Saussure was wrong, but from Peirce's perspective, just incomplete.

To conclude, Peirce's studies were the ones that founded current semiotics. These approaches extended the semiotic vision in practical and logical academic areas, making it possible for the sign to be seen as an essential aspect to investigate and apply today. The semiotic approaches regarding its divisions and subdivisions of the sign promoted various investigations and contributed significantly to linguistics. Furthermore, this theoretical review on Peirce's signs provides the research that will help to find contributions in current teaching models and future proposals for the inclusion of the sign in education.

⁴ <https://slideplayer.com/slide/5324916/>

2.3. The edusemiotic branch

Semiotics is part of all human interactions, and education is one of the most significant interactions in human life to achieve cognitive and social development. Edusemiotics is a "branch that provides a new direction in educational theory and philosophy based on the theory of signs" (Stables & Semetsky, 2014, p. 155). It is the basis of *Vocasemiotics* because promotes interaction between students and learners through semiosis.

Charles Sanders Peirce (1991) was the first to approach the semiotic perspective in society with his definition of semiosis. Through this semiosis, signs are not only intentionally produced for communicative purposes but also to make, manifest, and incorporate meaning in students' minds.

Edusemiotics emerges in 2010, after the publication of a book called: *"Semiotics Education Experience"* edited by Inna Semetsky. The background to edusemiotics comes from Marcel Danesi's statement in the foreword of the same book, where he states that "semiotics is the ideal tool for understanding learning in its corporeal and experiential totality." (Semetsky, 2010, p. 8). In the same book, he also exposes that Lev S. Vygotsky (1978), a psychologist that argued that children develop their learning through social interaction, thinks that the "very essence of human memory is that human beings actively remember with the help of signs" (p.51).

Edusemiotics does not mean "semiotics applied to education as a pedagogical aid or teaching/research tool but is rather a growing global research project that thinks semiotic as the foundation for educational theory and practice at large." (Olteanu & Campbell, 2018, p. 245). It focuses on learning experiences that comprise a process of growth and evolution of signs in which both teachers and students can find meaning in what they are experiencing.

Philosophically, edusemiotics offers a form of educational understanding where its defining characteristics are:

- The ontological process.
- The logic of ethics.
- Verbal and non-verbal communicative interactions.
- The existential and post-human dimensions.

- The role of practical experience for both the student as the student.
- The emphasis on interpretation.
- The conception of language widely understood.
- Embodied cognition.
- The problem of self-training.

According to Nöth (2010), edusemiotics offers analysis tools in the teaching process of the verbal, non-verbal, and visual languages and the teaching of semiotics itself in classes, courses, and study programs. Edusemiotics seeks to analyse teaching processes and present a new form of education, where teachers use signs for materials' design and study programs' structure.

In conclusion, the purpose of edusemiotics is not only to complain about the usual approach of teacher training but also to influence the entire educational range, especially in making educational policies. Edusemiotics seeks to transform the current educational reality by incorporating signs and meaning when teaching and learning. Edusemiotics transforms the teaching and learning of many subjects (mathematics, arts, sciences, and history) with not only theoretical approaches but practical applications in specific environments.

I believe that *Vocasemiotics*, the teaching innovation proposal that this paper presents, is a good example of how edusemiotics changes the teaching-learning process of L2 vocabulary entirely. It mixes theory and practice in particular contexts and can be easily applied to other courses and subjects.

2.4. The grammar of visual design

Visual communication conveys information and ideas through visual means (Stoian, 2015) that have been studied from the following perspectives:

- content analysis (Bell, 2001).
- cultural dimensions (Stoian, 2015).

- anthropological studies (Collier & Collier, 1986).
- psychoanalysis (Diem-Ville, 2001).
- film and television (Price, 2015).
- social semiotics (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001).

The perspective that most attracts teachers is the socio-semiotic one because it involves "the description of semiotic resources, what can be said and done with images (and other visual means of communication) and how the things people say and do with images can be interpreted" (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p.134). Semiotic resources have a theoretical semiotic potential constituted by all the past uses that were considered relevant by the users of the resource, based on students' needs and teachers' interests in secondary classrooms. Semiotic resources can be used in the teaching-learning field to present, review, and consolidate new lexical items within students and analysed to facilitate students' interpretations of the signs.

Kress and van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design (2006 [1996]) is "one of the most important theories and models of visual social semiotics" (Stoian, 2015, p. 24) that can be applied to the teaching-learning field. According to Halliday's theory of metafunctions (1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), semiotic resources perform three different metafunctions simultaneously to convey meaning, which are ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) have renamed them as representational, interactive, and compositional levels. Each of these levels has a function in the image. These functions are:

- The representational level studies the semantic content of the image as a multimodal text.
- The interactive level studies how the student is expected to engage and interact with the image.
- The compositional level relates the representational and interactive meanings of the picture to each other through three interrelated systems: framing, visual salience, and information value.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006 [1996]) state that visual salience is an essential system for the semiotic analysis of images because "it establishes the way and the different degrees in which the elements in a visual composition are going to be made to attract the viewer's attention"

(p. 183). Visual salience will determine how students see, interpret, and retain the new lexical items presented by these semiotic resources.

The following subsections will cover the representational and interactive levels very briefly and the compositional level in detail. The reason for this is that teachers will have to consider mainly those features explained in the compositional level because there are essential for the visual analysis of the images presented in *Vocasemiotics*.

2.4.1. Representational level

The representational level "has to do with the way experience is encoded visually" (Stoian, 2015, p.24). It involves narrative and conceptual structures that establish the participants' and vectors' modes of representation of the image.

Narrative structures involve different processes (action, reactional, speech, mental and conversion processes), "depending on the types of vectors and participants included" (Stoian, 2015, p. 24). Conceptual structures do not focus on types of vectors and participants. Still, they represent them "in terms of their class, structure or meaning" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 59) and can be classificational, analytical and symbolical. A vector is a "depicted element" that forms "an oblique line" and indicate "directionality" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 59).

2.4.2. Interactive level

The interactive level makes interactive meanings from the interactions that exist between participants through three different dimensions: image act, social distance, and point of view.

The dimension of the image act depends on "the gaze direction of the represented participants" (Stoian, 2015, p. 26). The participant can address the viewer if it demands something from the viewer or not if the image just offers information. The dimension of social distance varies according to the different sizes of the elements represented in the image and establishes close-up, medium, or long relationships between image's participants. The dimension of point of view also called perspective, stands that images can be subjective if the

purpose of the image is not very clear or objective if the purpose of the image is clearly seen. Perspective also determines the relationship that exists between the image's participants from horizontal and vertical angles. At the same time, the horizontal angle can indicate more or fewer participants' involvement from frontal or oblique perspectives; and the vertical angle can assign more or less power to participants from high, low, or eye-level perspectives.

2.4.3. Compositional level

The compositional level relates how "representations and communicative acts cohere into the kind of meaningful whole we call 'text'" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.181). Texts can be multimodal and take the form of an image. Three interrelated systems build meaning: information value, visual salience, and framing, which are explained as follows:

2.4.3.1. Information value

Information value has to do with the placement of information in different areas of the image. Information can be aligned in:

- *Left and right.* The information is along the horizontal axis. The best example of the left-right alignment of information is a mind-map.
 - The left side presents information that has to be familiar to the viewer.
 - The right side presents new information that requires more attention from the viewer.
- *Top and bottom.* The information is along the vertical axis. The best example of the top-bottom alignment of information is a newspaper article. The heading is on the top and the article on the bottom.
 - The information on the top of the image is essential or ideal.
 - The information on the bottom of the image is practical or real.
- *Centre and margin.* The information follows a centre-margin alignment.
 - The centre is the primary source of information.

- The margins are secondary sources of information.

2.4.3.2. *Visual salience*

Visual salience attracts viewers' attention to different degrees using visual clues that indicate more or less salience. These visual clues are:

- *Size* is different for every element in a visual field. This feature creates attractive visual patterns about the relevance of the depicted concept. Elements can be:
 - Big.
 - Medium.
 - Small.
- *Sharpness of focus* varies depending on the level of abstraction or representation of detail of the image. Images can be:
 - Hyperreal if the articulation of detail is high.
 - Distant if the articulation of detail is low.
- *Tonal contrast* can be high or low between the different areas of an image. It concerns to light and dark colours. The best example of tonal contrast happens between the colour white and the colour black.
- Strong or soft saturated colours make *colour contrasts*. It concerns warm and cold colours. The best example of colour contrast happens between the colour red and the colour blue.
- *Placement in the visual field* establishes that the relevance of an element in a visual field depends on its location. Elements become more substantial as they are on the top and the left, "due to an asymmetry in the visual field" (Stoian, 2015, p. 202).
- *Perspective* stands that foreground objects are more salient than background objects because they tend to overlap one another.
- *Specific cultural factors* can appear in human figures of the layout or potent cultural symbols, such as flags, company logos, or others.

2.4.3.3. *Framing*

Framing connects or disconnects elements of the image by "frame lines, discontinuity of shape or empty space between elements" (Stoian, 2015, p. 28). It also establishes a sense of belonging between the elements of the image or not. If the framing is strong, the information is separated. If the framing is low, the information stands as a unit. According to this system, the elements of the image can be:

- Segregated or separated.
- Integrated or overlapped.
- Rhymed or contrasted.

Visual analysis of images involves the three levels explained above: representational, interactive, and compositional. However, as I have said, this section has focused specially on the compositional level because it is the basis for the analysis that teachers have to make before applying *Vocasemiotics* in their classrooms. The compositional level is also the most relevant in the learning-teaching field because it is the image's metafunction that most attract viewers' attention; in this case, students' one.



3. *VOCASEMIOTICS*: A VOCABULARY TEACHING PROPOSAL FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION.

Vocasemiotics is a booklet for teachers that presents a model to apply edusemiotics in Second Language (L2) vocabulary teaching. It can be applied to face to face and online teaching. On the one hand, it works with different cognitive and learning styles, and effective learning and teaching strategies. On the other hand, it is based on edusemiotics, which is a very recent branch of semiotics that studies the signs in the context of education.

Vocasemiotics has three sections:

I. How to apply Edusemiotics to the teaching of vocabulary?

In this section, I summarize the most relevant theoretical concepts that you need to know to apply edusemiotics in a secondary classroom. First, I cover the concepts of **sign**, **semiosis**, **semiotics**, and **edusemiotics**. Second, I define the compositional level of Kress and Van Leeuwen's **Grammar of Visual Design**. Third, I identify the three interrelated systems of the compositional level: **information value**, **visual salience**, and **framing**. Then, I explain why the compositional level is the most important one for *Vocasemiotics* development. Finally, I focus on visual salience and its **visual clues** to attract students' attention in a table that helps you easily identify these features.

II. How to choose an image?

In this section, I describe how to select the **topic** and the **image** or group of images that you need to present **new lexical items** in face to face and online teaching. You can select a topic

for your images in the **Royal Decree**⁵ and select or design images in different ways, depending on the modality of teaching. I review the **semiotic criteria** that you need to consider when selecting and analysing an image or a group of images according to its compositional level in a table. Finally, I show an example of the **visual analysis** that I made of an image that I am going to use in section III of this proposal: *how to use the images?*

III. How to use the images?

In this section, I present two models to teach vocabulary with semiotically analysed images. The first model is for the second course of **Lower Secondary Education** in **face to face teaching**. The second one is for the third course of **Upper Secondary Education** in **online teaching**. Before moving into the lessons' procedure, I present a summary with the topic and the objective of the lesson, the target students involved, the vocabulary and the other contents that you have to work, and the materials that you have to use for its development. Each model is divided into **preparation, pre-task, task-phase, post-task, and assessment**. You can use these models directly or adapt them according to your students' course, level, or needs.

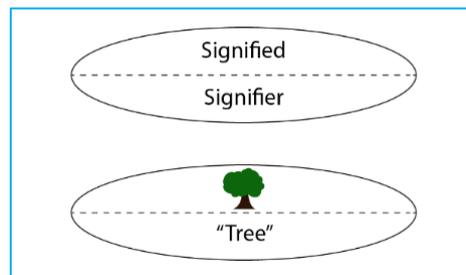
⁵ the Royal Decree 1041/2017, of December 23, which establishes the basic curriculum for Lower and Upper Secondary Education.

I. How to apply Edusemiotics to the teaching of vocabulary?

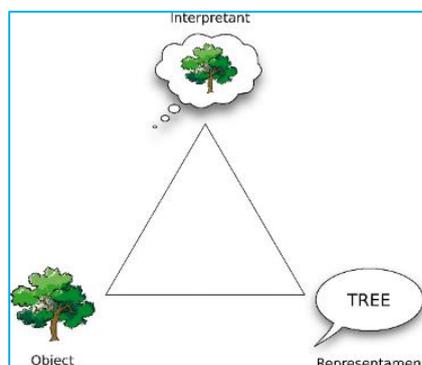
You need to know the following theoretical principles to apply edusemiotics effectively in a secondary classroom.

The sign

Traditionally, the sign is a **dual mechanism** that results from the conventional association of a signifier and the signified (Saussure, 1983). The **signifier** is the image that refers to a concept (a tree). The **signified** is the meaning of the concept indicated by the signifier (the idea of a tree). Below you can find a figure that represents what are the signifier and the signified, according to **Ferdinand de Saussure**.



Charles Sanders Peirce (1991) establishes that the sign has a **triadic model** between the representamen, an interpretant, and an object. The **representamen** is a perceptible object that works as a sign. The **object** is the idea of reality understood through the sign. The **interpretant** is the image produced in the mind of a person based on the sign. The next figure visually represents what the representamen, an object, and an interpretant are.



Semiosis

Semiosis is the **process** that allows the **understanding of reality** through Pierce's triadic model of the sign. Due to semiosis, signs are not only intentionally produced for communicative purposes but also for **making, manifesting, and incorporating meaning** in students' minds.

Semiotics

Semiotics is an **interdisciplinary field** that studies the signs. It considers **signs** as entities that can be interpreted, and it participates in the phenomenon of **semiosis**. Semiotics leads to open our eyes and other senses for the richness and complexity of semiotic **production and interpretation**. It can be applied to the teaching and learning field.

Edusemiotics

Edusemiotics is a **very recent branch of semiotics** that considers semiotics as the basis for theoretical and practical education. It studies different types of **signs**, as semiotics, but in the context of **education**. It is not a pedagogical aid or a teaching tool but the **basis for effective vocabulary teaching**.

Grammar of Visual design

Kress and van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design (2006 [1996]) is one of the most relevant theories on **visual socio-semiotics**. It recognizes **three different metafunctions** that images perform to convey meaning:

- Representational.
- Interactive.
- Compositional.

Vocasemiotics focuses on the **compositional** one because it relates the representational and the interactive meanings of images. The compositional level has **three interrelated systems**:

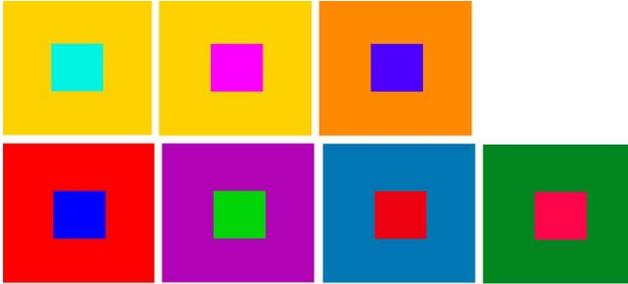
- Information value.
- Visual salience.
- Framing.

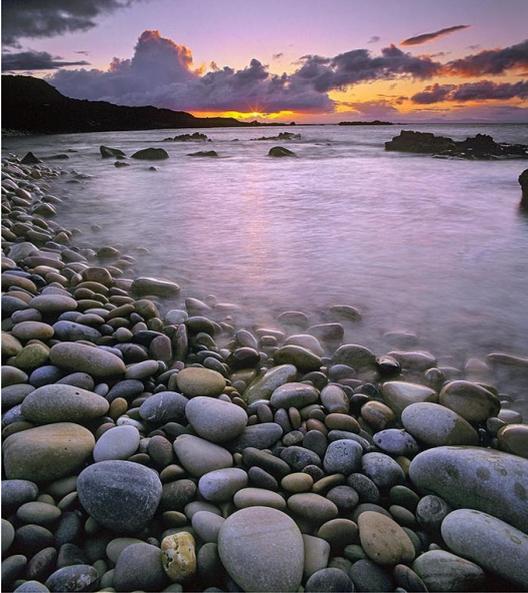
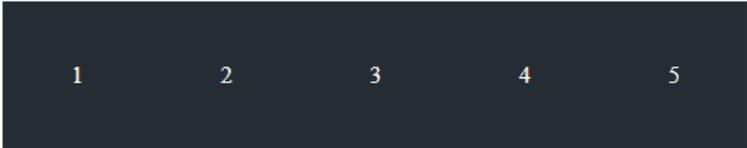
Visual salience is the most significant system for the development of *Vocasemiotics* because attracts **students' attention** to different degrees using visual clues that indicate more or less salience within images. These **visual clues** are:

- Size.
- Sharpness of focus
- Tonal contrast
- Colour contrast.
- Placement in the visual field.
- Perspective.
- Specific cultural factors.

Even so, *Vocasemiotics* refers to information value and framing to cover all the features of the compositional level. Below you have a list of the **features** (on the left-hand side) with an **example** of each one (on the right).

<p>INFORMATION VALUE</p>			
<p>SIZE</p>	<p><i>Big</i></p>	<p><i>Medium</i></p>	<p><i>Small</i></p>

<p>SHARPNESS OF FOCUS</p>										
<p>TONAL CONTRAST</p>										
<p>COLOUR CONTRAST</p>										
<p>PLACEMENT IN THE VISUAL FIELD</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="587 1496 1200 1933"> <tr> <td>Top Left</td> <td>Top Center</td> <td>Top Right</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Middle Left</td> <td>Center</td> <td>Middle Right</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bottom Left</td> <td>Bottom Center</td> <td>Bottom Right</td> </tr> </table>	Top Left	Top Center	Top Right	Middle Left	Center	Middle Right	Bottom Left	Bottom Center	Bottom Right
Top Left	Top Center	Top Right								
Middle Left	Center	Middle Right								
Bottom Left	Bottom Center	Bottom Right								

<p>PERSPECTIVE</p>	
<p>SPECIFIC CULTURAL FACTORS</p>	
<p>FRAMING</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><i>Connected elements</i></p>  <p><i>Disconnected elements</i></p> </div>

II. How to choose an image?

Vocasemiotics requires a **planned vocabulary teaching strategy** in which you have to select a topic and an image and analyse it according to the compositional level of the image and your purpose. In this section, I provide a **list of topics** that the Royal Decree proposes for teaching in Lower and Upper Secondary Education and a **mind-map** that helps teachers to select an image or a group of images before their classroom's performance. I also provide an **example of an image's visual analysis** of an image according to its compositional level.

List of topics that the Royal Decree proposes for Lower and Upper Secondary Education:

- Personal identification.
- Housing, home and environment.
- Activities of daily living.
- Family and friends.
- Human and social relationships.
- Work and occupations.
- Education and study.
- Language and communication.
- Leisure and recreation.
- Travel and holidays.
- Health and physical care.
- Shopping and business activities.
- Food and catering.
- Transport, goods and services.
- Climate and natural environment.
- Information and communication technologies.
- Politics and society.
- Relations between objects and ideas.
- Spaces and places.

Mind-map to select an image or a group of images for new lexical items' presentation.

You must select an image or a group of images to present new lexical items in the classroom. On the next page, you can see a **mind-map** that will guide you in the process of image selection in both modalities of teaching: **face to face and online**. There is no right or wrong option. You have to select images according to your **purpose** and **students' needs**.

The **first step** is identical for face to face and online teaching and consists of thinking if you need **one or more than one image** to present the lexical items that you want to teach. As you will see in the example of visual analysis presented in this section, one image can have different parts and seem to be three images in one, for example.

The **second step** is different for face to face teaching.

- In **face to face teaching**, the second step consists of **searching** for the most suitable image or group of images for your purpose in online platforms such as Google Images⁶ or Pinterest⁷.
 - **Google Images** is an online platform that contains different search tools, which serve to filter the results of the images, and is accessible to everyone.
 - **Pinterest** is an online platform that allows you to discover internet information using mainly images.

You can also **design** your images on other online platforms such as Canva⁸ or Thinglink⁹.

- **Canva** is an online platform of simplified graphic design tools that offers pictures, vectors, graphics, and other sources to create designs. It provides plenty of templates that can be edited and adjusted to your purpose.
 - **Thinglink** is an online platform of digital tools that allows you to turn images into interactive graphics.
- In **online teaching**, the second step also involves **searching** the most suitable image or group of images for achieving your purpose, but in this case, in the online platform **Quizlet**¹⁰.

⁶ <https://images.google.com/>

⁷ <https://www.pinterest.es/>

⁸ <https://www.canva.com/>

⁹ <https://www.thinglink.com/>

¹⁰ <https://quizlet.com/latest>



- **Quizlet** is an online platform that offers learning tools to students, including flashcards, and study and game modes. In this platform, you can create study sets of lexical items with words, sentences, and images. You can search for the concept and select one out of the five images that Quizlet offers. It has a free and a premium version.

The **third and last step** is slightly different in online teaching than in face to face teaching.

- In **face to face teaching**, you can **support images** with a **word**, a **sentence**, or **anything**. In this way, students easily associate the concept with the image. As I have mentioned, it is not better or worse to support an image with a word or a sentence. You have to consider if this information will be helpful for your students or, on the contrary confusing.
- In **online teaching**, when you use **Quizlet**, you have to associate the **image** with a **concept** or a **sentence** in any circumstance. In this case, sentences work as examples that put the concept in context.

Table to guide teachers to analyse image's compositional level.

Once you select the topic and the image for the presentation of new lexical items in the classroom, you must **analyse the image**, or the group of images, chosen according to its **compositional level**. In this subsection, I present a table that helps you to know what you must observe when analysing an image and how to do it. The **table** has three different sections, distinguished by three different types of orange, that correspond to each of the interrelated systems of the compositional level: **information value**, **visual salience**, and **framing**. As in the mind-map used for selecting an image, there is no right or wrong answer, just a more or less appropriate organisation of the elements in the layout. Each of these **features** affects the degree of attention that you want to demand from your students. Therefore, depending on your answers, you will attract more or less your **students' attention**. The more you get students' attention, the more your students will retain new lexical items, which is one of the most relevant objectives of *Vocasemiotics*.

INFORMATION VALUE	<i>How is the information aligned in the image?</i>	Vertical Axis (Top-Bottom)	
		Horizontal Axis (Left-Right)	
		Centre-Margins Alignment	
SIZE	<i>Do all the elements in the layout have the same size?</i>	Yes	No
	<i>If not, try to classify all the image's elements according to these sizes:</i>	Big	
		Medium	
		Small	
	<i>What can you interpret from big and small elements' relationships?</i>	Bigger elements suggest that...	
		Medium elements suggest that...	
Smaller elements suggest that...			
SHARPNESS OF FOCUS	<i>How are the image's elements depicted?</i>	Clear	Fuzzy
	<i>How is the degree of detail's articulation in the image?</i>	High	Low
	<i>Is there a balance between the level of representation and abstraction of the image?</i>	Yes, there is a balance because...	
		No, there is a high/low level of representation/abstraction because...	

TONAL CONTRAST	<i>Is there any tonal contrast that helps to distinguish the different elements in the layout?</i>	Yes	No
	<i>If yes, how is the tonal contrast?</i>	Strong	Soft
	<i>Which tones can you find in the image?</i>	The image has the following tones...	
COLOUR CONTRAST	<i>Is there any colour contrast that catches students' attention?</i>	Yes	No
	<i>Which colours are involved and catch more students' attention?</i>	The predominant colours are...	
	<i>Do means of saturation of colours make the colour contrast?</i>	Yes	No
	<i>Does colour contrast help to distinguish the different elements in the layout?</i>	Yes	No
	<i>Explain how colour contrast affects to students' attention and image's arrangement of elements</i>	Colour contrast affects to students' attention and image's arrangement of elements by...	
PLACEMENT IN THE VISUAL FIELD	<i>Where are the elements positioned in the image?</i>	On the top/bottom, there is/are...	
		On the right/left, there is/are...	
		On the centre, there is/are...	

<p>PERSPECTIVE</p>	<p><i>From which perspective are elements attached on the image?</i></p>	<p>Foreground</p>	<p>Background</p>
<p>SPECIFIC CULTURAL FACTORS</p>	<p><i>Are there any specific cultural factors in the image that help students to promote intercultural communicative competence?</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>
	<p><i>If yes, what specific cultural factors do you find?</i></p>	<p>The specific cultural factors found in the image are...</p>	
<p>FRAMING</p>	<p><i>How are the elements distributed in the image?</i></p>	<p>The elements of the image are...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Segregated Separated Integrated Overlapped Rhymed Contrasted 	

An example of the visual analysis of an image according to its compositional level.

In this subsection, I present an example of the visual analysis of an image according to its compositional level. I have chosen that image following the **semiotic criteria of face to face teaching** exposed in section II of this proposal: *how to choose an image?* The **image** in question is **appropriate for teaching vocabulary** because it collects many different elements in just one image. This image allows you to **present** many **new lexical items** at the same time and, then, students to **review and consolidate them** by having a look at one slide. The image deals with the topics of **Transport** and **Holidays, Free Time and Leisure**.

I have selected just **one image**, although it has three different parts that give the appearance to be three images in one. I have selected the image from **Google Images**, instead of designing in Canva or Thinglink. I have supported the **image with words** because I think it will help students associate the presented new lexical items with the different elements of the image easily. Then I have analysed the image according to its **compositional level** following the table for teachers presented in the subsection above. After the analysis, I have attached the image in question.

Information value

The information of the image is arranged along a **vertical axis**. The image places the heading "*At the airport*" at the **top** because it is essential information and informs about what is going on the image. The **centre** and the **bottom** depict more specific and practical information in three different areas of the image.

Size

Almost all the elements represented in the layout have a **different size**. This fact suggests that is to attract students' attention. The facilities outside the airport on the image's right side have a **bigger size** than the facilities inside the airport on the left. The plane is on the bottom-left side of the image in a **smaller size**.

Sharpness of focus

The elements of the image are **clearly depicted**. There is a **high articulation of detail** that increases from the left side of the image to the right and helps to the meaning-making process of elements. There is a **balance** between the level of abstraction and the level of representation of pictorial detail because the elements of the image are clearly represented.

Tonal contrasts

There is a **soft tonal contrast** between the light white colour of the plane and the slightly dark grey of the road. In the rest of the image, there are **no other relevant tonal contrasts**.

Colour contrasts

The most significant colour contrasts are between warm and cold colours, instead of strong or soft saturated ones. The colours that attract more students' attention in this image are **yellow and red (warm colours)**, and **blue and green (cold colours)**. The colour contrasts of this image are not made by saturated colours. The different colours of the image help to distinguish easily the elements attached in the image and have influence on **students' attention**.

Placement in the visual field

The image is divided into **three different sections**, so it has three different placements in the visual field. The facilities outside the airport are **on the right**. The facilities inside the airport are **on the left**. The plane's facilities are on the bottom-left side of the image. The title is essential to know image's topic and becomes powerful because it is **on the top**. The plane also becomes powerful because it is on the left and makes an asymmetry with the visual field.

Perspective

The plane on the bottom-left side of the image is a **foreground object** that becomes more salient than others because it overlaps many other background objects, such as those concerning the facilities outside and inside the airport.

Specific cultural factors

In the image, there are different **human figures** and **names of airlines or other companies** such as "Sky Restaurant" or "Internet Café" that results specific cultural factors. An excellent example of specific cultural factor could be a flag of the country where it is the airport.

Framing

A white line in the middle of the image disconnects the facilities outside with the facilities inside the airport. Even so, there is **rhyme** between the three areas of the image (facilities outside, facilities inside, and plane's facilities) because they have common qualities about their colours and formal features.



11

11 <https://www.computermedia.cz/obraz-en-el-aeropuerto-spa>

III. How to use the images?

In this section, I present two lesson plans of vocabulary teaching based on the use of semiotically analysed images.

i. Lesson plan for the second course of Lower Secondary Education in face to face teaching: Let's travel!

TOPICS
<p>This lesson plan deals with two topics of the Royal Decree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel and holidays. • Transport, goods and services.
OBJECTIVES
<p>The main objectives of this lesson are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present new lexical items through semiotically analysed images. • Review and consolidate the presented lexical items through four different tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fill out an infographic. ○ Write an essay. ○ Make a representation. ○ Create a visual map. • Check students' understanding of the new lexical items following a rubric.
TARGET STUDENTS
<p>This lesson plan is designed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 students. • B1 Lower Intermediate Level. • Second course of Lower Secondary Education. • Bilingual Education High School La Senda.

MATERIALS

For the development of this lesson, you need:

- An **image** or a group of images semiotically analysed to present vocabulary.
- **Infographics** with blank spaces besides some elements represented in the image.
- Structure of an **essay**.
- Template of a **script**.
- Example of a **visual map**.
- Digital board.

VOCABULARY

The **vocabulary** included in this lesson is about:

- **Airport's facilities** highlighted in bold font in the image "At the airport."
- **Actions** that people perform in the airport, represented in different places of the image.
- **Concepts related to both** airport facilities and actions, attached to the different elements in the image in normal font.

OTHER CONTENTS

1. SKILLS

This lesson works on the following skills:

- In the **pre-task**, students work on:
 - Reading (interpreting the image).
 - Listening (teachers' explanation).
 - Speaking (expressing ideas and opinions about the image).
 - Interaction (brainstorming and discussion)
 - Mediation (between students and the image).

- In the **task-phase**, students work different skills in different tasks:
 - Fill out an infographic.
 - Write an essay.
 - Make a representation.
 - Create a visual map.

Reading is worked in all these tasks because students need to read and interpret the image to develop the task.

Listening is worked in all these tasks because students need to know their peers' opinions before the task's development.

Writing is worked in different ways in all these tasks. Students have to fill in the blanks in the first task. Write an essay in the second. Write a script for the representation in the third. Draw different elements and associate them with concepts in the fourth.

Speaking is worked in all these tasks because students make an oral presentation at the end of each task. In this way, students will present their infographic, essay, representation, or visual map to their peers.

Interaction and **mediation** are worked in all these tasks because they require students' reactions to the image and students' mediation with the environment represented "At the airport."

- In the **post-task**, students interact, mediate, and speak with each other and with you to express their opinions about the task. They have to listen to your instructions and look at the examples that you provide.

2. COMPETENCES

The **competences** worked on this lesson are:

					
Competence in linguistic communication	Competence in processing information and use of ICT	Learning to learn	Competence in social skills and citizenship	Autonomy and personal initiative	Cultural and artistic competence
Developing the six skills proposed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) in an L2.	Interpreting images and using online platforms for their representation.	Learning about transport, holidays, free time, and leisure vocabulary	Working in groups and interacting and mediating with others.	Associating a personal experience with the lesson's content.	Dealing with infographics , creating scripts , and visual maps .

Procedure

Preparation

- Select the **topic**: Transport and Holidays, Free Time and Leisure.
- Select the **image**: "At the airport".
- Analyse it according to its **compositional level** following the table of section II.

Now, you are ready to bring the image to the classroom and present new lexical items.

Pre-task

In this section, I explain what you must do to introduce the topic and the image and familiarize students with them. You must:

- Introduce the **topic** of the **image** and situate students in a **specific context**.
- Introduce the **task** concerning the image to increase students' interest.
- Show the image that you have selected empty of words or sentences to your students. If possible, do it on a **digital board** to avoid the use of paper and ink printing an image for each student. In this case, you can use the image analysed in section II.
- Make a **brainstorming** with your students after asking them the following questions about the image:
 - *What do you think we are going to talk about?*
 - *What is it represented in each part of the image?*
 - *Can you think about the concepts that fit with each element represented in the image?*
 - *Is there any situation that you see in the image and do not understand?*
 - *Do you have any other doubts concerning the image?*
- Explore the image with students to facilitate its **interpretation**.
- Let students **express** the concepts that they see or directly **indicate** the lexical items that appear in the image. Your decision will depend on the **level of interaction** that you want to promote in the classroom. In any case, **write** down the concepts expressed by the students or the lexical items that you have indicated on the digital board.
- The level of interaction between your students and you will be higher if your students express their ideas about the elements that they see in the image. The interaction will be lower if you indicate the new lexical items that appear in the image. Your decision should be based on your **students' needs**, but the general intention should be to **assess intelligibility before accuracy**.
- Students will make a more **dynamic interpretation** of the image and acquire a **new habit** or strengthen or modify an existing one if you let your students interpret the image freely.
- Develop a **matching task** where students link the different elements of the image with the new lexical terms expressed or explained in the classroom.

The present pre-task allows **kinaesthetic learners** who learn by doing, **auditory learners** who learn by listening and **visual learners** who learn by visual and written content presentation, to incorporate new terms almost to short-term memory quickly.

Task-phase

In this phase, you must:

- Explain the procedure of each of these tasks to your students as follows:

FILL OUT AN INFOGRAPHIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An infographic is a collection of images and charts that can include minimal text and gives an easily understandable overview of a topic. • Look at the airport's image and think about the most suitable concepts for each of the elements represented. • Fill in the blanks attached to each element of the infographic with the concepts that you have thought. • Present the infographic to the rest of the class in an oral presentation.
WRITE AN ESSAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write an experience that you have had in an airport using the concepts represented in the image of the airport. • Follow the template structure that I will provide you. • Make an oral presentation about your experience in the classroom.
MAKE A REPRESENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a situation represented in the image, for example, "check-in." • Write a script for its representation using new lexical items. • Perform the situation as if it was real in an oral presentation.
CREATE A VISUAL MAP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and synthesize the most relevant information of the image. • Be creative and draw other elements in the visual map to associate the concepts represented in the image with the ones that you have thought. • Present your interpretation of the image using the visual map as a guide in an oral presentation.

- Ask students to select one of the previously mentioned tasks:
 - **Fill out an infographic.**
 - **Write an essay about an experience at an airport.**
 - **Make a representation of the check-in process, for example.**
 - **Create a visual map.**
- Divide students into five **groups** of five.
- Let students **brainstorm** and **discuss** their ideas about the task.
- Give students time to **develop** the task and **prepare** the oral presentation.
- **Monitor** and help students during the performance of the task.
- Give **corrective feedback** during students' oral presentations.
- Ask students to:
 - *Write down the differences between your peers' work and yours.*
 - *Highlight all that you have considered useful for the understanding of the image.*
 - *Assess your peers using a rubric table that I will provide you.*

Post-task

After the development of the task and the oral presentation, you are ready to:

- **Discuss** with your students what they have done and their success.
- Let them **express** their opinions about the activity.
- Show an **example** of a completed infographic or a well-structured visual map or tell an experience that you have had in an airport.

Assessment

When your students have finished, you are ready to assess students' development of the task and oral presentation. For that, you must consider:

- If students have **understood and interpreted** image's content accurately.
- If the image and the task have **caught their attention**.
- If they have processed and incorporated **new lexical items**.
- If the task has helped students to memorize vocabulary **easily and for a longer time**.

You can use a **rubric** for the assessment of the different tasks: fill out an infographic, write an essay, make a representation, and create a visual map. Below you have a rubric that I have created to assess students' visual maps.

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	SATISFACTORY	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
VISUAL MAP	It is well-structured and coherent. There is an excellent relationship between text, drawings, and connectors.	It appears to be structured, and it is mostly coherent. There is almost always a relationship between text, drawings, and connectors.	It is sufficiently structured and coherent. In some cases, there is no relationship between text, drawing, and connectors.	In many cases, it is messy and incoherent, not relating text, drawings, and connectors.
CREATIVITY	It is very creative and uses different types of letters and well-defined drawings.	It is creative and uses different types of letters and well-defined drawings.	It is creative, but it does not use different types of letters and well-defined drawings.	It is not creative and/or it is copied from another, nor does it use different types of letters and well-defined drawings.
CONTENT	It summarizes very clearly all the essential information. All the concepts of the unit appear in English.	It summarizes all the information more or less well. Most of the concepts appear in English.	It summarizes some of the essential information, but not all. Some concepts appear in English.	It does not summarize essential information and concepts do not appear in English.
SPELLING	There is not spelling mistakes.	Spelling is good but could be better.	There are two to five misspellings.	There are a lot of misspellings.

ii. *Lesson plan for the third course of Upper Secondary Education in online teaching: Vocabulary Medley.*

TOPIC
This lesson plan deals with the topic " Relations between objects and ideas " of the Royal Decree. It covers concepts that students have seen in different units of their textbooks.
OBJECTIVES
<p>The main objectives of this lesson are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present new lexical items through semiotically analysed images in Quizlet. • Review and consolidate the presented lexical items through the following learning activities in Quizlet: flashcards, learn, write, spell, test, match, gravity, and live. I will explain them in the task-phase section of this lesson. • Check students' understanding of the new lexical items in Quizlet's progress section and Quizizz's test reports. I will explain what this last online platform is in the assessment section of this lesson.
TARGET STUDENTS
<p>This lesson plan is designed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 students. • C1 Advanced Level. • Third course of Upper Secondary Education. • Bilingual Education High School La Senda.
MATERIALS
<p>For the development of this lesson, teachers need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group of images semiotically analysed to present vocabulary in Quizlet. • Quizlet's study set with all the new lexical items. • Quizizz's test for assessment. • Computer and access to different online platforms mentioned below.

VOCABULARY

The **vocabulary** included in this lesson presents:

- Nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that relates objects with ideas.

OTHER CONTENTS

1. SKILLS

This lesson plan works on the following skills:

- In the **pre-task**, students work on:
 - **Interaction** and **mediation** if you start a videoconference with them.
 - **Reading** and **listening** if you have recorded a video tutorial for them.
- In the **task-phase**, students work different skills in Quizlet's tasks:

Reading is worked in all Quizlet's tasks because students need to read the concepts and the examples associated with the semiotically analysed images.

Listening can be worked in all Quizlet's tasks if students want to listen to concepts or examples' audios.

Writing is worked mostly on the activity "Write."

Speaking and **Interaction** are the two skills that can be least performed by students because almost all the activities are individual. In Live, students are involved in a group activity, but they do not need to interact or speak with the rest of the class.

Mediation is worked in all Quizlet's tasks because students need to associate the image with the concept.

- In the **post-task**, students work mostly in reading and mediation when completing Quizizz's test.

2. COMPETENCES					
The competences worked on this lesson are:					
					
Competence in linguistic communication	Competence in processing information and use of ICT	Learning to learn	Competence in social skills and citizenship	Autonomy and personal initiative	Cultural and artistic competence
Developing the six skills proposed by the (CEFRL) in a 2 nd language.	Using Quizlet and Quizizz as ICT tools for learning activities development.	Learning new lexical items about different topics seen during the course.	Discussing with the teacher and their peers in a videoconference.	Developing Quizlet's learning activities at their own pace.	Dealing with semiotically analysed images .

Procedure

Preparation

- Select the **topic**: Relations between objects and ideas.
- Create a **study set in Quizlet** that collects the new lexical items that you want to present with the images that you have analysed semiotically.
- For this lesson plan, I have created a study set¹² of 150 terms adapted for the third course of Upper Secondary Education. This study set deals with **nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that relates objects with ideas**. These concepts have been seen during the course in different units of students' textbooks.
- If you want to **create** your own study set, you can follow these Quizlet's instructions: <https://help.quizlet.com/hc/en-us/articles/360029780752-Creating-study-sets>

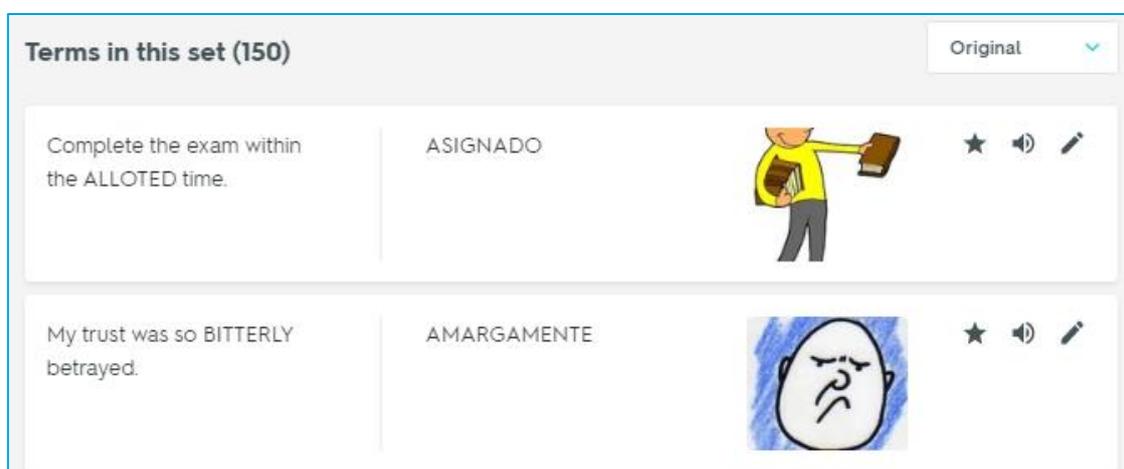
¹² <https://quizlet.com/es/497381334/vocabulary-bach-advanced-flash-cards/?new>.

- If you want to **use** a study set created by other teacher, look at the following link:
<https://help.quizlet.com/hc/en-us/articles/360029772872-Finding-study-sets>

Pre-task

To introduce Quizlet's study set and make students familiar with the platform, you must:

- Select one of these **two options**:
 - Start a **videoconference** in Google Meets or Microsoft Teams with your students. Both online platforms offer a video conferencing service for teachers, students, workers, among others.
 - Record a **video-tutorial** in Screencast O Matic for your students. This application allows you to record everything that happens on your computer screen.
- Share your **screen** with your students.
- Explain **what Quizlet is** and present the study set that you have selected in Quizlet.
- Have a look at the **list of new lexical items** presented in Quizlet with your students. The next figure represents an example of how Quizlet presents new lexical items.
 - First, the study set presents the **English concept** within a **sentence** that serves as an example.
 - Then, it provides its **translation** into the students' First Language (L1).
 - Finally, it associates the concept with a **semiotically analysed image**.



- Ask your students the following questions in relation to the **study set**:
 - *Do you know all the concepts presented in the study set?*
 - *If your answer is no, what concepts are new to you?*
 - *Do you find helpful the association of the concept with an image?*
 - *If your answer is yes, can you explain why?*
 - *What images catch your attention the most?*

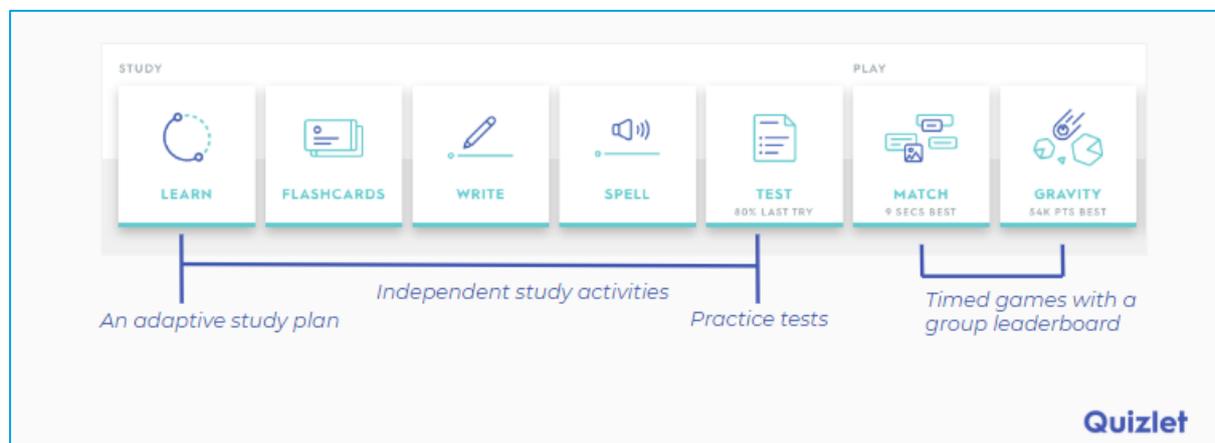
If you are in a **videoconference**, expect students to **answer orally** to these questions. If you have recorded a **video-tutorial**, tell them to **write an email** with their answers.

Task-phase

After introducing and going through **Quizlet's study set**, you are ready to show to your students how to perform different tasks in Quizlet for **reviewing and consolidating the lexical items presented**. In this section, I will explain each Quizlet's learning activities.

- Explain to your students that Quizlet has **different learning activities** that they can perform to review and consolidate the lexical items presented in the study set.
- Invite students to go through each learning activity **at their own pace**.
- Tell students that they can go over the activities **as often as they like** until they successfully acquire the study set's vocabulary and achieve the highest mark.
- Establish a **delivery date** to complete all the activities.

Below there is a figure that represents the learning activities that Quizlet offers.



- Give the following **instructions** to your students about each learning activity:

FLASHCARDS

- Click on the section "**Flashcards**" to study and review the Quizlet's study set.
- Look at the bottom-left side of the webpage and click on "**Options.**"
- Select what you want to see when looking at the flashcard. You have three options:
 - **Semiotically analysed image associated with a concept in your L1.** When you click on the flashcard, you will see its translation in English within a sentence.
 - **English's concept within a sentence.** When you click on the flashcard, you will see its translation in your L1 with its corresponding image.
 - Semiotically analysed image, English's concept within a sentence, and its translation in your L1 **simultaneously**.
- Listen to how the concept and sentence sound by pressing the **audio icon** at the top of each flashcard.
- Mark with a **star** the concepts that you want to study separately.
- See your **progress** in the bar on the left of the website.
- Study in the way and the pace that you want before passing to the next activity.

LEARN

- Click on the section "**Learn**" to consolidate presented lexical items in the study set.
- Answer to the **different questions** of this section. Questions can be of two types: written or multiple-choice.
 - In **multiple-choice questions**, mark one out of the four answers to the question. Questions can have the English's concept within a sentence or its translation in your L1 associated with a semiotically analysed image.
 - In **written questions**, write down or the concept in your L1 or the sentence in English, always looking at the semiotically analysed image associated.
- Find flashcards between questions to **review** the vocabulary's study set.
- See how much **time** you have left, how many items you have **mastered** and which ones you have **missed** on the left side of the web page.
- Listen to the questions if you switch on "**Audio**" in the options of the left-bottom side of the webpage.

WRITE

- Write down the **English sentence** or the **concept's translation into your L1**, depending on the type of question that you have selected in options.
- See your remaining, incorrect, and correct answers on the top-left side of the webpage.

SPELL

- Type what you hear in this **audio-powered study mode**.
- Click on the **audio icon** to start listening to the auto-play.
- Decide if you want to answer in **English** or in your **L1**.
- See your **progress** in a percentage bar on the left side of the webpage.

TEST

- Answer to **20 questions** of four different types: **written, matching, multiple-choice, and true or false** questions. You will have five questions of each type.
- Decide if you want to answer in **English** and your **L1** and adjust it in "Options."
- Generate different **tests** based on teachers' study set once and again in "Options."

MATCH

- Race against the clock to **drag on images with words** or sentences and make them disappear.
- You can see the **time** you spend on the activity on the left side of the page.

GRAVITY

- **Type in the correct answer** as terms or definitions scrolls across the screen in the form of asteroids.
- In this way, you will protect the planets!
- Select the **level of difficulty** of the game: easy, medium, or difficult.
- Indicate if you prefer to answer in **English** or your **L1**.
- If you miss a term twice, they will destroy your planet
- You can see your **score** and your **level** on the left and pause and restart the game.

LIVE

- Play in a **collaborative online class game** to consolidate the new lexical items presented in Quizlet's study set.
- Select if you want to play **individually** or **in teams**.
- Consider that teams must have almost **five players**.
- Select the **combination of prompts and answers** that you want to see.
- Introduce the **code** given by Quizlet to join to Quizlet live.
- **Start playing!**

Post-task

After the development of all the learning activities in Quizlet, you are ready to:

- Ask students to complete a **test** created in Quizizz to check if they have acquired the vocabulary presented in Quizlet successfully. **Quizizz** is an online platform that allows you to conduct student-paced formative assessments in a fun and engaging way.
- For this lesson plan, I have created a test¹³ of **20 multiple-choice questions** based on the examples and concepts used in **Quizlet's study set**.
- If you want to **create** your own test, you can follow these instructions:
<https://quizizz.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/203769241-Creating-a-quiz>
- If you want to **search** for a test created by other teachers, look at the following link:
<https://quizizz.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/115000338045-Getting-Started-with-Quizizz>

Assessment

When your students have developed pre-task, task-phase, and post-task, you are ready to assess students' development of the learning activities done in Quizlet. For that, you can look at the **Info Section in Quizlet** and **students' reports generated in Quizizz**.

¹³ <https://quizizz.com/admin/quiz/5e945ddea1acb1001b965cb9/vocabulary-bach-advanced>

Quizlet

You can see the **evolution** of each student in the section "**Quizlet Info**" and realize what students have started or completed flashcards' review and what students might need more encouragement for activities' development. You can also see students' most misused terms to identify which concepts need more review.

Quizizz

Once students finish the test, you can see in Quizizz's main page, the **results** obtained by all the students and the **percentage of success** in each question. **Quizizz** generates a **report** with all these data, that can be download in **Excel format**. This report shows students' answers to each question and lets you detect students' or contents' problems if students repeat the same mistake.

To find out more

de Saussure, F. (1983). *Course in general linguistics*. London: Duckworth.

Kress, G. & van Leeuwen, T. (2006 [1996]). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. London: Routledge.

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Royal Decree 1041/2017, of December 23, which establishes the basic curriculum of Lower and Upper Secondary Education. Official State Bulletin (BOE), n. 311, December 23, 2017, p. 13. Retrieved from: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2017/BOE-A-2017-15367-consolidado.pdf>

4. VOCASEMIOTICS IN PRACTICE

In this section, I present the analysis of a questionnaire that collects the impressions that students of the second course of Lower Secondary Education and third course of Upper Secondary Education of the Bilingual Education High School La Senda (Getafe) have about some aspects of vocabulary teaching. The questionnaire also aims to know students' impressions of the development of the second lesson plan presented in section III of *Vocasemiotics*, planned for online teaching. In this way, I can adjust and improve my proposal and my teaching practice.

I wanted to know students' opinions about the relevance of learning vocabulary to acquire an L2; the usefulness of the vocabulary that they learn for real-life; the time that they retained new lexical items in their memories; and the level of difficulty that they found in the development of *Vocasemiotics*. I could only collect this data because the coronavirus lockdown did not allow me to use other methods of data collection and deepen into other aspects of vocabulary teaching. The complete questionnaire is in appendix I.

The design, the analysis, and the evaluation of the questionnaire were based on Zoltán Dörnyei and Tatsuya Taguchi's book (2003): *Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing*. The questionnaire was created in Google Forms and consists of four parts. These are:

- How important is it to learn vocabulary for L2 learning?
- How useful is it to learn real-life vocabulary?
- How long does vocabulary learned remain in our memory?
- How easier is to learn vocabulary?

Questionnaire's items have been designed based on the following sources:

- The first and the fourth item are based on Cook's (1991) statement: "vocabulary learning is essential for the four language skills." (Latsanyphone & Bouangeune, 2009, p.187).
- The seventh item is based on Taka's (2008) statement: "when obtaining new information, most of it is forgotten immediately." (p. 10).

- The ninth and the eleventh are also based in one of Taka's (2008) statements: "word lists are an old-fashioned and less effective method" (p. 231).
- These last two items are based on the vocabulary teaching strategy promoted by Nation (2001): "directly connecting the meaning to real objects or phenomena" (p.20).

The questionnaire has thirteen items. Two of them are open questions, and the rest are closed-answer statements whose answers are provided on a Likert scale. This scale measures the degree of conformity of the students concerning the statements presented in the items: strongly disagree, in disagreement (disagree), neutral (neither agree nor disagree), in agreement (agree), and strongly agree.

Two teachers, mentioned at the end of the introduction, reviewed the questionnaire before it was passed to 108 students of Lower and Upper Secondary Education of La Senda. 29 students were from the second course of Lower Secondary Education, 28 from the first course of Upper Secondary Education, and 51 from the third course of Upper Secondary Education.

The questionnaire was uploaded to Google Classroom's platform as a task. Students were invited to participate and encouraged to answer honestly, as there are no right or wrong answers, and it is anonymous. The questionnaire was answered by all the 108 students mentioned above, which I take as an additional sign that *Vocasemiotics* had been interesting for them. It was performed between the 7th and the 11th of May of 2020.

After the fieldwork, the collected data were tabulated, through coding and reorganization of information, for the correct analysis of the results and its corresponding final report.

4.1. Analysis of the questionnaire

The analysis of the questionnaire has obtained the following results:

Figure 8 represents that 58.3% of the students surveyed strongly agree with the first item: "vocabulary is an essential tool for learning English." 39.8% agree, and only 1.9% of the students neither agree nor disagree. In short, 98.1% consider that vocabulary is vital for L2 learning.

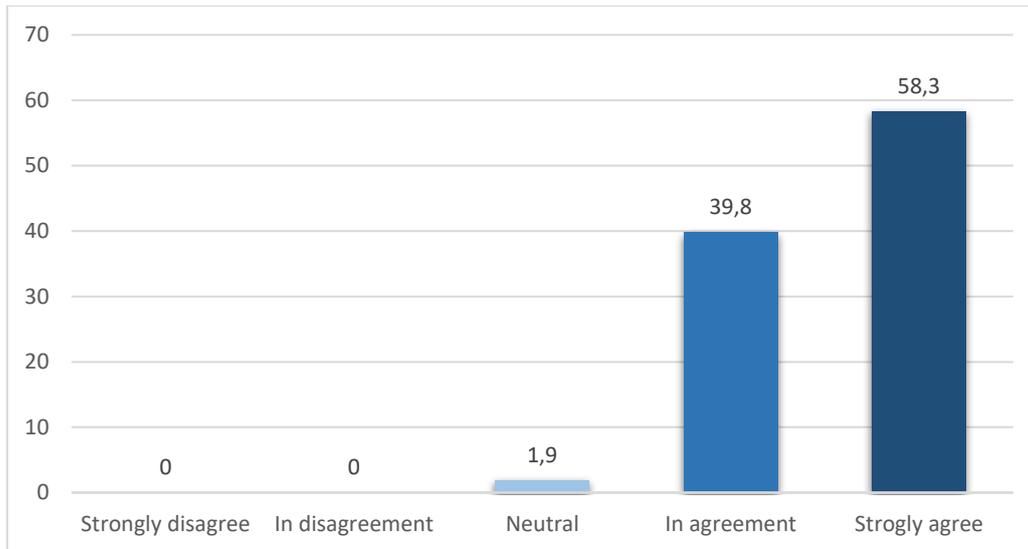


Figure 8. Answers to item: vocabulary is an essential tool for learning English.

The second item states that "vocabulary serves both to understand others and to express my ideas." In this case, 63% of the students strongly agree, and 10.2% neither agree nor disagree. Figure 9 represents that 26.9% agree, and the majority, 89.9%, believe that learning vocabulary serves both to understand and communicate with other people.

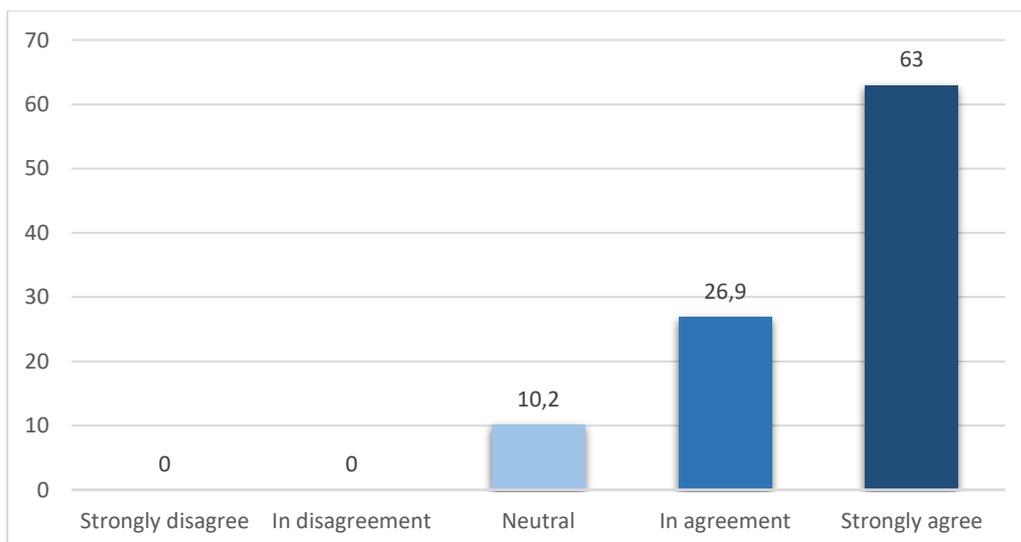


Figure 9. Answers to item: vocabulary serves both to understand other and to express my ideas.

The third item, "vocabulary learning only helps me to pass English exams," collects answers in all levels of agreement, as shown in Figure 10. 25% of the students strongly disagree, and 43.5% disagree. 20.4% neither agree nor disagree, and 11.1% agree with this statement.

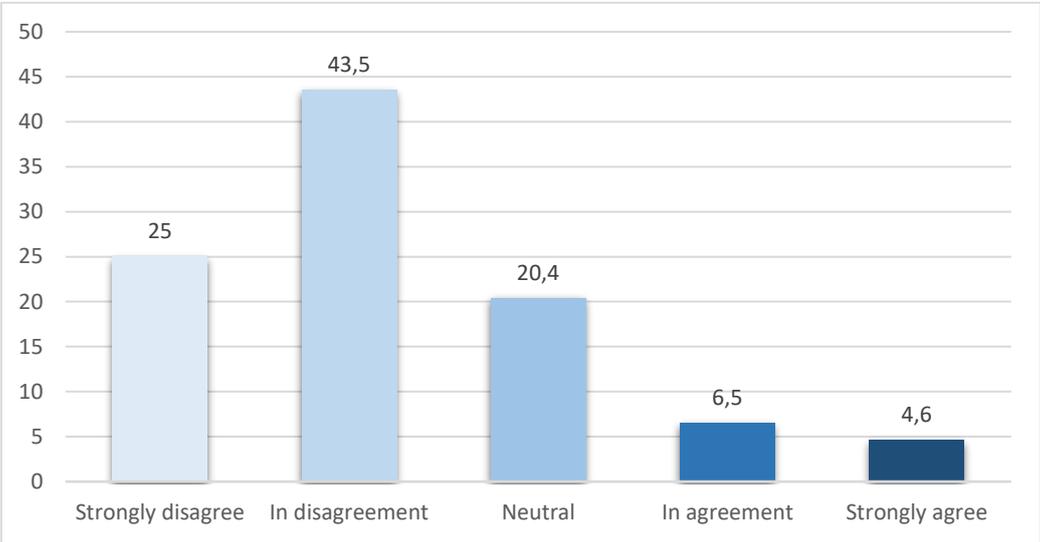


Figure 10. Answers to item: vocabulary learning only helps me to pass English exams.

The fourth item, "vocabulary learning improves my level of English in the four language skills," closes the first area covered by the questionnaire. Figure 11 shows that 43.5% of students strongly agree, 45.4% agree, and only 10.2% neither agree nor disagree.

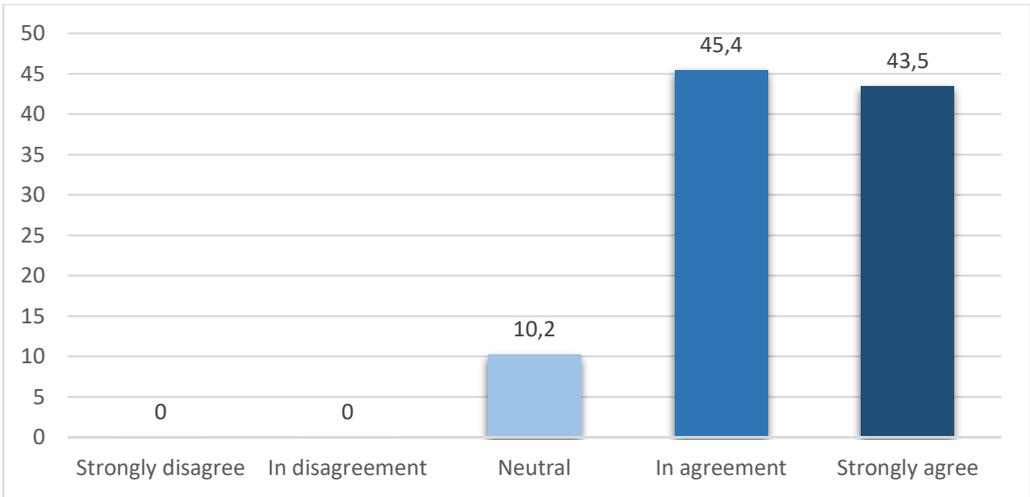


Figure 11. Answers to item: vocabulary learning improves my level of English in the four language skills.

In short, due to the high percentages of conformity obtained in the first questionnaire's area, it could be said that surveyed students know the importance of vocabulary to learn an L2.

Concerning part 2 of the questionnaire, in the item "I feel able to use in real life the vocabulary I learn in class," there are all types of answers, represented in figure 12: 30.6% of students strongly agree, 38% agree, 21.3% neither agree nor disagree and 9.3% disagree.

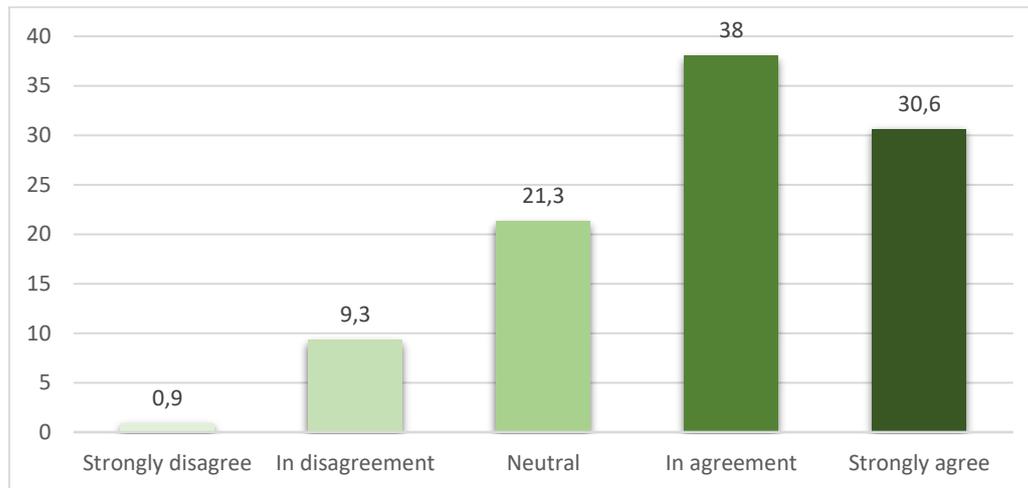


Figure 12. Answers to item: I feel able to use in real life the vocabulary I learn in class.

What is striking about this item is that although the vast majority feel able to use the vocabulary learned in real life, there is a high percentage of students, independently of this statement, that would like to learn even more. 46.8% of the students strongly agree, and 22.8% agree. 69.6% of students show that they are interested in learning more useful vocabulary for real-life in their future (see figure 13).

Concerning the third part of the questionnaire, the first item, "once I take my English exam, I forget the words that I have studied immediately," collects in figure 14 that 39.8% of the students disagree, 27.8% agree, and 32.4% neither agree nor disagree. What can be interpreted from this result is that students are not fully aware of their learning process. If they used the vocabulary they learned, they would have no hesitation in answering this question.

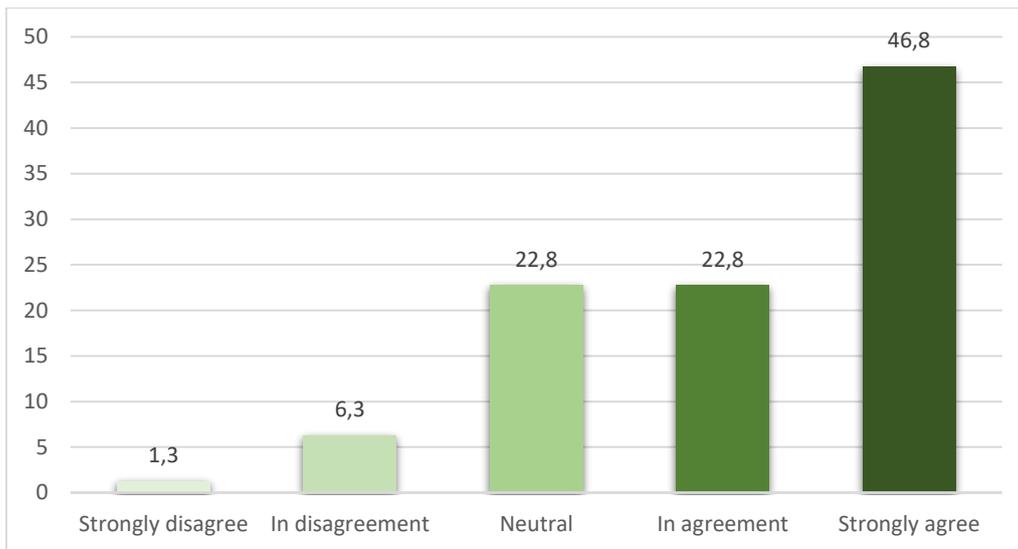


Figure 13. Answers to item: I would like to learn more about real-life vocabulary in class.

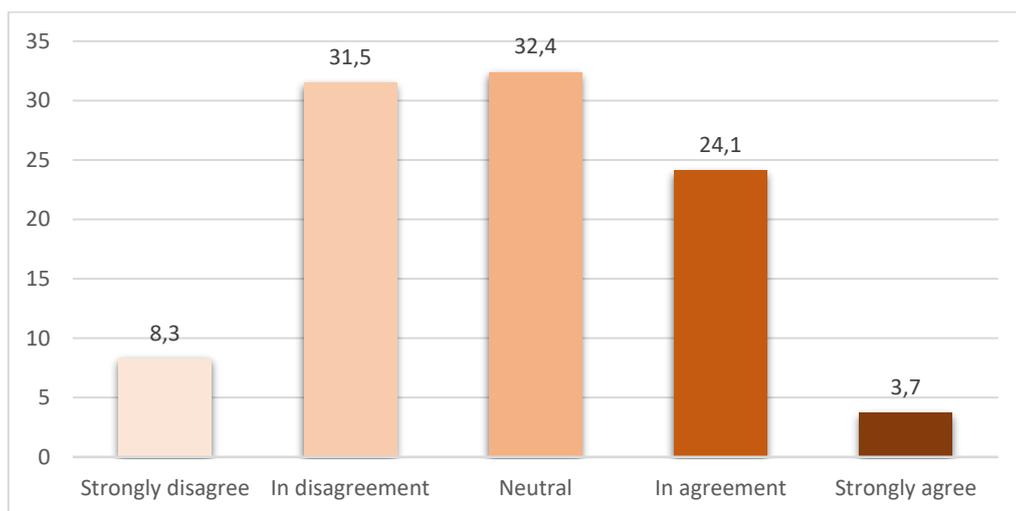


Figure 14. Answers to item: once I take my English exam, I forget the words that I have studied immediately.

Figure 15 represents that 78.8% of the students stated in the following item, "if you answered 4 or 5: I would like to remember them for a longer time," that they would like to remember the vocabulary they study for a longer time. Compared to the 2.5% of students that disagree and 18.8% that neither agree nor disagree, this item confirms that there is a need to improve students' ability to memorize and learn.

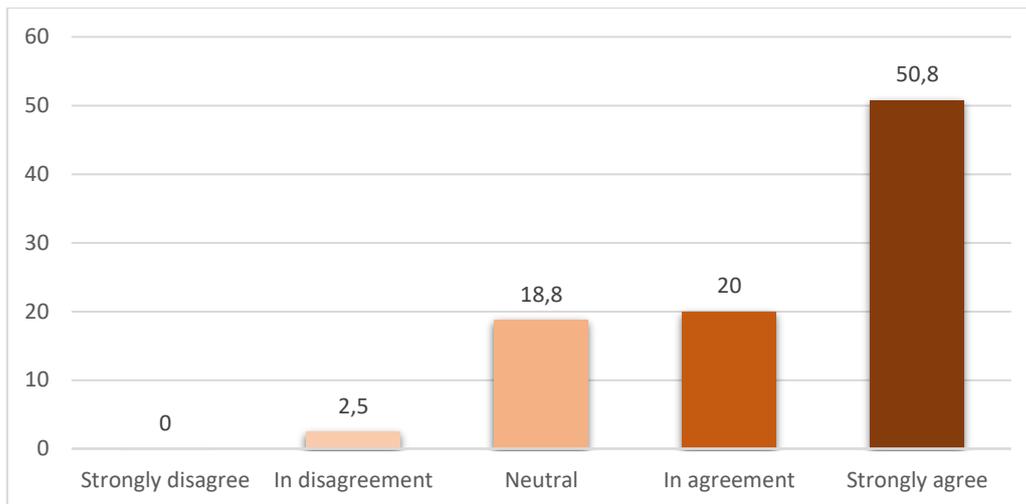


Figure 15. Answer to item: I would like to remember them for a longer time.

Students justify the conformity level with the last item by answering the following open-ended question: "whether you agree or disagree, can you explain why?". In order to evaluate the answers obtained to this question, I have collected the most relevant ones in the following list¹⁴ and concluded that most of the students surveyed think that semiotically analysed images help them to memorize new lexical items more easily:

- Images helped me to contextualize words and memorize them easier.
- If you associate the words with something visual, it's easier to remember.
- I think it easier to understand the meaning of the vocabulary by images.
- It makes studying more visual so it easier to remember.
- Because is more easy to learn a photo than a list of words, a photo I think you keep in your mind always.
- Visual learning is way easier and more interesting than studying a list with dozens of words. However, that doesn't mean you will inmediately learn all the words without any effort.
- I totally agree because it is much more easier learning the vocabulary words in that way because it is much more visual and entertaining.
- Because is easier to understand an image than to only remember the words.

¹⁴ The students' answers collected in this list are literal.

The following item from the fourth area of the questionnaire shows in figure 16 that 72.2% of the students surveyed affirm that "studying vocabulary with images in Quizlet has been easier for me than studying with a list of words." This percentage suggests that students learn vocabulary easier with *Vocasemiotics*. Only 4.7% disagree, and 23.1% neither agree nor disagree.

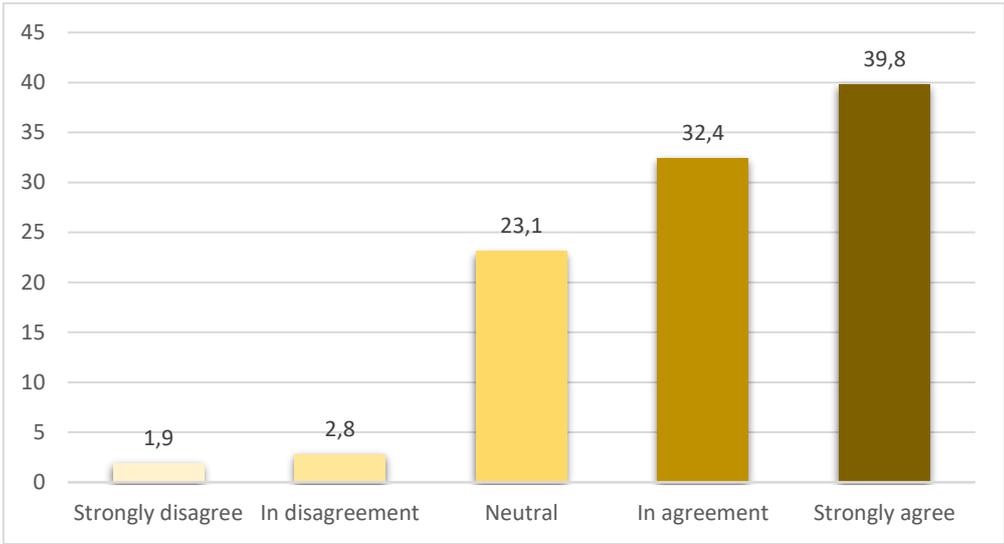


Figure 16. Answers to item: studying vocabulary with images in Quizlet has been easier for me than studying with a list of words

Finally, 63.9% of the students agree with the statement, "I have memorized for a longer time the words I have learned through images than through word lists." 25% neither agree nor disagree, and 11.1% disagree (see Figure 17).

Then, students answered to another open-ended question why they agree or disagree with the item: "I have memorized for a longer time the words I have learned through images than through word lists." To evaluate the answers obtained to this question, I collected the most relevant answers literally in the following list. I also concluded that most of the students surveyed think that semiotically analysed images help them to memorize new lexical items for a longer period:

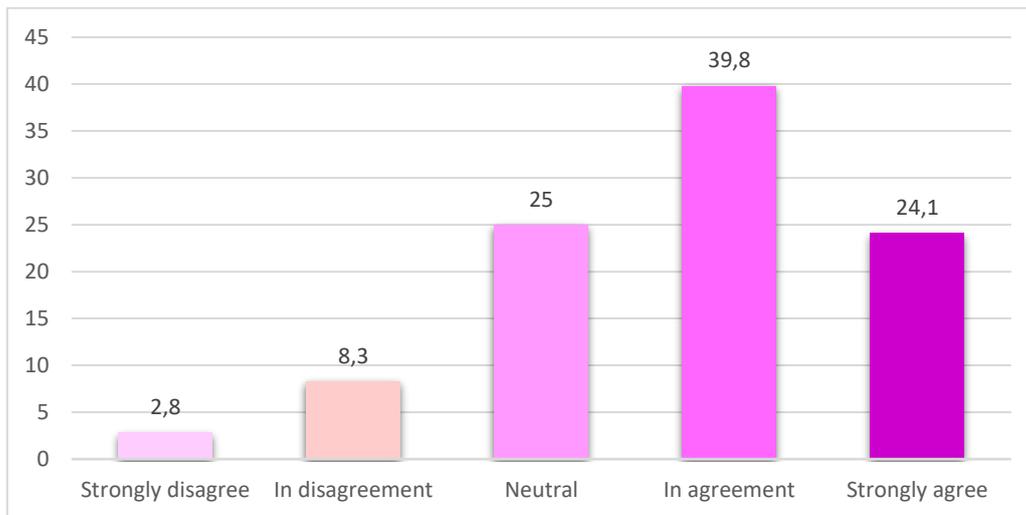


Figure 17. Answer to item: I have memorized for a longer time the words I have learned through images than through word lists.

- Images helped me to remember words for a longer time.
- Because when I think the images come up to my mind.
- Whenever I want to recall the meaning of a word I try to think about the image.
- Visual memory does not remember only one word among hundreds in a list, also remembers an image of an specific action or object.
- Because the image comes to your mind quicker than a simple word does.
- Because when you try to remember how to say any word, you will remember the picture and automatically the word.
- This visual method is very helpful.
- Because the images are remembered better.
- Because you get the image in your head and learn it better.
- Our brain retains images way longer than words.¹⁵

¹⁵ The students' answers that this list collects are literal.

In conclusion, most of the students surveyed at the Bilingual Education High School La Senda consider that there is a problem when it comes to acquiring and retaining English vocabulary. Secondly, students know that studying vocabulary to learn English is very important, both to develop other skills and to be able to communicate with others in different bilingual contexts. Thirdly, they state that the vocabulary they learn in class is useful for real life, but they would like to learn more. Fourthly, students consider that they cannot retain the vocabulary they learn in their memories for as long as they want. They would like to do it and have more facilities when putting it into practice. Finally, the results obtained from the questionnaire show that students who have studied vocabulary through semiotically analysed images think that they have done so more easily and have retained it for longer.

5. CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the theoretical background, I have said that "good teaching is teaching that proceeds in accordance with how learners learn" (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p. 27). In the present paper, I have tried to reflect the results of my research on different cognitive and learning styles and effective learning strategies that have served to construct the basis of *Vocasemiotics*. I have also explained the sign, the semiotic field, and the edusemiotic branch because they constitute the central axis of the teaching innovation proposal. Kress and Van Leeuwen's *Grammar of Visual Design* (2006 [1996]) has also been presented because it presents the different levels of images that teachers have to consider when analysing an image according to their purpose and students' needs. Regarding the theoretical background, I have come to the following conclusions.

My first conclusion is that perception and mental imagery are the two most relevant areas of psychology for learning vocabulary. On the other hand, visual preference is the most common learning style according to an important number of studies. Therefore, *Vocasemiotics* uses semiotically analysed images that help students to promote this kind of learning style. Even so, *Vocasemiotics* has activities that suit for auditory and kinaesthetic learners. Besides, the effective learning strategies that result essential for *Vocasemiotics* development are cognitive and metacognitive. Students extract the meaning of new lexical items using semiotically analysed images. Then, they analyse and evaluate them for students' organization of the learning process.

My second conclusion is that signs are great resources for teaching vocabulary, at least in Lower and Upper Secondary Education. Edusemiotics is the basis of *Vocasemiotics* because studies the signs "in the context of education broadly understood as encompassing the whole of human experience which can never be taken in isolation from the enviroing" (Stables & Semetsky, 2014, p. 6). Edusemiotics is an emerging field that is slowly becoming known because it is proving its effectivity. *Vocasemiotics* is based on this very new branch of the semiotic field because it helps students to experiment with what they are learning and have a look at the context and the environment where they learn.

Regarding the teaching innovation proposal, I think that it presents a teaching vocabulary model that can be adapted to face to face and online teaching and easily extrapolated to other courses or subjects. *Vocasemiotics* is not a proposal that uses ordinary images to teach vocabulary. It uses images that teachers' have selected according to their purpose, following some steps, and analysed according to its compositional level to attract their students' attention, and innovatively improve their vocabulary's acquisition.

Our world is multimodal, and students need to know how to make and get meaning from the different modes that surround them. Although multimodality seems to be a new thing, our instinct tends to associate images to words, not definitions, as well as to actions and experiences that give meaning to those words. Students do not have to be passive consumers of meaning, but meaning's creators of the different elements that surround them. Students need to be producers of meaning, as when they interpret a semiotically analysed image by their teachers. As humans, we perceive the world around us through our senses, particularly our sense of sight. We use this information to understand what we are experiencing. Consequently, semiotically analysed images help to make sense of the world around us as they appear to be in every aspect of our daily lives.

Although we are overloaded with visual data, I believed that we have become desensitized to how images affect our thinking and how we view ourselves. Therefore, the integration of semiotically analysed images in the classroom and the study of design elements to support students' interpretive processes could be very useful to improve the teaching-learning process of English vocabulary. As teachers, we should think about semiotically analysed images as cognitive tools, enhancing and extending students' brains, which also help them to solve problems through a process of visual thinking.

In short, I believe that *Vocasemiotics* helps to extend teachers' capacities and students' performance. While students build a variety of related skills like visual literacy, complex thinking, or autonomy, teachers often engage more students in the intriguing process of their learning.

As I have said, my first idea was implementing *Vocasemiotics* face to face teaching lesson plan in the third course of Upper Secondary Education during my second internship period in the Bilingual Education High School La Senda. Due to the coronavirus lockdown that started on March 14, 2020, the only way to put *Vocasemiotics* in practice was through online teaching. At the same time, my first idea was to see if *Vocasemiotics* works by measuring whether students learned better by using this method versus other procedures such as vocabulary lists. In the future, I would like to implement the lesson plan designed for face to face teaching and see if *Vocasemiotics* helps students to retain the vocabulary given in short and long- term memory.

I think that edusemiotics is a branch of semiotics that can help a lot to the educative community because, to my knowledge, it can be applied to different courses, levels, subjects, and purposes. In the future, I would like to see a block in the Lower and Upper Secondary Education Curriculum for reading and interpreting images besides blocks of comprehension of oral and written texts. As teachers, we have a powerful tool to change our students' perceptions and interpretations of the world. If we help students to awake their senses and experience learning, they will acquire vocabulary or any other content successfully.

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APPENDIX

Appendix I: Questionnaire:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScbFhif18LehmLRggAgmYLCrFVmQ74mgBhWODvXaHAXs551Jw/viewform>

Student's questionnaire: Vocabulary Learning in a Second Language.

On the following pages, there are a series of statements about Vocabulary Learning in a Second Language. Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with them:

- (1) Strongly disagree.
- (2) In disagreement.
- (3) Neutral, neither agree or disagree.
- (4) In agreement.
- (5) Totally agree.

For example, if you strongly disagree with statement number 1, please, select option number 1. On the contrary, if you totally agree with statement number 1, select option number 5.

There are no right or wrong answers so, please, feel free to complete sincerely this anonymous questionnaire.

Thank you for your participation!

*Obligatorio

Vocabulary is an essential tool for learning English. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree.	<input type="radio"/>	Totally agree.				

Vocabulary serves both to understand others and to express my ideas. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree.	<input type="radio"/>	Totally agree.				

Vocabulary learning only helps me to pass English exams. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree.	<input type="radio"/>	Totally agree.				

Vocabulary learning improves my level of English in the four language skills. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree.	<input type="radio"/>	Totally agree.				

I feel able to use in real life the vocabulary I learn in class. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree.	<input type="radio"/>	Totally agree.				

If you answered 1 or 2: I would like to learn more about real-life vocabulary in class.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree.	<input type="radio"/>	Totally agree.				

Once I take my English exam, I forget the words that I have studied immediately. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree. Totally agree.

If you answered 4 or 5: I would like to remember them for a longer time.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree. Totally agree.

Studying vocabulary with images in Quizlet has been easier for me than studying with a list of words. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree. Totally agree.

Whether you agree or disagree, can you explain why? *

Tu respuesta _____

I have memorized for a longer time the words I have learned through images than through word lists. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree. Totally agree.

Whether you agree or disagree, can you explain why? *

Tu respuesta

I am a student of... *

- 2° ESO
- 4° ESO
- 2° BACH

Thank you again for participating!

If you want to know about the results of this questionnaire, send me an email to crstinamcdermott1996@gmail.com.

Enviar