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Using Humorous Wordplay as an Educational Tool to Enhance Vocabulary Acquisition in B1 Students at the Institute of Languages of the University of Cuenca

Trabajo de titulación previo a la obtención del título de Licenciada en Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

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Resumen:

Este proyecto de investigación tiene como objetivo explicar cómo el juego de palabras humorístico puede ser utilizado como herramienta para mejorar los procesos de aprendizaje de nuevas palabras. El vocabulario es reconocido como una de las habilidades secundarias más importantes de cualquier idioma. Este proyecto se enfoca en explicar cómo se puede usar el juego de palabras humorístico como método para crear actividades que se puedan usar para mejorar y ayudar a los estudiantes del Instituto de Idiomas de la Universidad de Cuenca a aumentar el número de palabras y conocimiento de vocabulario. Este proyecto de investigación se considera un estudio exploratorio y los datos de esta investigación se obtuvieron utilizando métodos cualitativos a través del análisis de diversos estudios para determinar las formas más comunes de juegos de palabras que son retruécanos, anagramas, adivinanzas y trabalenguas; así como para determinar las ventajas de usar juegos de palabras humorísticos como método para enseñar vocabulario. Además, se realizó una serie de entrevistas a profesores del Instituto de Idiomas para analizar sus percepciones sobre el vocabulario y el uso de juegos de palabras en las aulas. La examinación extendida de cierto número de estudios mostró la efectividad del uso de juegos de palabras humorísticos en los procesos de aprendizaje de vocabulario. El análisis también demostró que explorar las formas de aprendizaje de juegos de palabras ayuda a comprender otros aspectos del idioma inglés, como palabras homófonas y homógrafas y algunas características lingüísticas.

Palabras claves: Humor. Vocabulario. Juegos de palabras.



Abstract:

This research project aims at explaining how humorous wordplay can be used as a tool for improving the processes of vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary is recognized as one of the most important sub skills of any language and in the case of English, this is not the exception, that is why teachers should draw attention to the role that it plays in English as a Foreign Language learning process. This project is focused on explaining how humorous wordplay can be used as a method by creating wordplay-based activities to determine how these activities can be used to improve and help students from the Institute of Languages at the University of Cuenca increase their size and knowledge of vocabulary. This research project is considered an exploratory study and the data was obtained using qualitative methods from the analysis of diverse studies to demonstrate the advantages of using humorous wordplay as a method for teaching vocabulary. Additionally, document analysis was used to determine the most common forms of wordplay which are: puns, anagrams, riddles, and tongue twisters. In addition, a series of interviews were done with teachers from the Institute of Languages in order to analyze their perceptions about vocabulary and the use of wordplay in classrooms. The extensive examination of previous studies demonstrated the effectiveness of using humorous wordplay in the vocabulary learning processes. The analysis also demonstrated that by exploring the forms of wordplay, the learners should be able to understand other aspects of the English language such as homophones and homographs words, and some other linguistic features.

Keywords: Humor. Vocabulary. Wordplay.



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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my beloved family, the love of my life, Carlos and my beautiful children Sebas and Vale.

Also, I would like to dedicate this work to my dear parents, Lucía and Patricio, my grandmother Margarita, and my brothers Mario y Juan.

Thanks for being my everyday support. I love every one of you more than what words would express.



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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Throughout the years, many different approaches have been developed for learning vocabulary in English as Foreign Language (EFL) environments; however, this study is interested in how a specific part of humor denominated *wordplay* could be used as a tool to enhance the vocabulary learning processes.

According to the Collins Dictionary (2011) wordplay is a literary figure that could be employed and create some forms of humor; thus it is important to indicate the pedagogical applications that humorous wordplay might have.

This research study has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter contains information from diverse sources, such as articles, from different journals, and some facts from diverse books that were used to indicate relevant concepts for this project. It starts by defining vocabulary and its importance in the EFL environments. This chapter includes a vocabulary instruction program developed by Graves (2006) that suggests fostering vocabulary learning by using activities based on *humorous wordplay*. Additionally, we try to define “wordplay” and its most common forms, examples or types. Finally, this chapter points out what advantages and disadvantages wordplay can have in an EFL environment.

Moreover, this chapter, through the analysis of empirical studies, is aimed at demonstrating how vocabulary is linked to the main skills of the English language. Furthermore, this project analyzed a vocabulary instruction program called *word consciousness awareness* developed by Graves (2006) which was used as a tool for teaching vocabulary, fostering the acquisition of new words by using wordplay. After



that, the applicability that wordplay could have in EFL environments was examined. To conclude this chapter, the most common forms or types of wordplay have been used in EFL learning processes is discussed.

The second chapter details the methodology applied in this research project, which is mainly an exploratory study using qualitative instruments to investigate the implications of wordplay for enhancing vocabulary processes.

The third chapter contains the main results and findings obtained from the interviews that were conducted to analyze the kind of experiences EFL teachers from the Institute of Languages at the University of Cuenca have had using wordplay in English learning environments.

In the fourth chapter some conclusions are included. Additionally, some recommendations are explained, which can be used as a guide for further investigation.

At the end of this research project, the information collected during this project was used to elaborate a booklet compiling wordplay activities from different sources as a learning tool that could be applied in a vocabulary learning process.

Description of the Problem

Statement of the problem

Learning a new language is challenging because it involves acquiring a wide number of new words (Farjami & Aidinlou, 2013). Every language has four skills, to which the English language is no exception, these are: listening, writing, speaking, and reading. These skills are essential because the acquisition and fine tuning of these skills



“help learners to develop their communicative competence” (Manaj, 2015, p.29).

However, as Farjami and Aidinlou (2013) affirm, if a language learner does not have enough lexical word storage, they could have some problems transmitting or expressing their ideas.

This research focuses on the importance of vocabulary in the English learning process. Lewis (as cited in Nation, 1990, p.1) mentions that the “lexis is the core or heart of language”. It can be considered a key factor in a language learning process because it can have a fundamental role in language.

Acquiring vocabulary could be difficult, not only for learners, but also for teachers when it comes to finding ways to enhance and foster this acquisition because they must help students use new words accurately (Farjami & Aidinlou, 2013).

According to the new guidelines proposed by the Ministry of Education (2012) in Ecuador, English is taught as a mandatory subject since 2011 from second grade until third year of baccalaureate, and the final goal of these new proposals was that high-school students will have an accurate level of English to be communicatively competent when using this language.

However, even the fact that English is taught for almost 11 years, the level of English in Ecuador is low (El Comercio, 2017). Sanchez (2010) explains that vocabulary is one of the most complicated aspects when learning English, and the lack of vocabulary could be linked to the low performance of EFL learners especially in the case of Ecuadorian high-school students.

Although the importance that English has in some educational processes, the English Proficiency Index (EPI) in a study conducted by an Ecuadorian English Institute



called English First (EF) indicates that Ecuador has a low level of English. According to this research conducted in 2017, Ecuador is located in the 55th place out of 80 countries around the world (El Comercio, 2017).

Sánchez (2010) explains that Ecuadorian English learners “have low vocabulary knowledge” (p.12). The researcher explains that secondary learners have some problems when learning new words because students usually memorize new words to use them during their classes. Also, teachers employ traditional methods to teach vocabulary so students do not seem to be interested in learning new words.

Furthermore, secondary learners might not have the sufficient number of words as was expected for B1 learners. The British Council (2015) explains that “there is currently no English language requirement for university entry, and while bachelor’s students are required to graduate with at least B1 English, there is uncertainty as to how this is evaluated” (p.26).

For all the reasons exposed above, Sánchez (2010) indicated that many undergraduate students have to enroll in English classes to fulfill a requirement during their university careers and this way, complete a fixed number of hours in their credits. For example, the System of Credits was created by the Institute of Languages at the University of Cuenca to teach English in three levels and this way guarantee that college students have an accurate level of English.

Background and Justification



English is one of the most significant languages around the world. Crystal (2003) describes English as a global language because

English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language – in over 100 countries, such as China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt and Brazil – and in most of these countries it is emerging as the chief foreign language to be encountered in schools. (p.5)

One of the hardest aspects in learning English might be to acquire an accurate storage of words to communicate successfully (Rohmatillah, 2017). For this reason, this project attempts to create a guide that can be used as a learning tool for teaching vocabulary using some forms of humor, in this case wordplay, as a means to learn new words.

Beginning with the English learning process, it is necessary to familiarize language learners with new words. Bio (2009) says that teachers tend to initiate this process using classroom dialogs .This is a kind of dialog used to explain some daily routines in a classroom such as commands, some fixed sentences, or phrases that follow some linguistic patterns. However, as Firth and Wagner describe, it can result in restrictive practices in the classroom because it can result in a limited learning process of new words (as cited in Rumenapp, 2016).

Since EFL learners are going to be in contact with the target language only during classes, it is very important that their experience from teaching methods in such limited exposure to the language will be the best possible available. Teachers can use diverse learning tools to enhance vocabulary acquisition such as videos, music, or recordings;



however it is necessary that EFL teachers create opportunities to use English words as they are used in real situations.

A language teacher can increase their students' opportunities of learning new words by adding other sources such as humor that can be found in wordplay (Askildson, 2005). Sources like books, worksheets, recordings or flashcards can be complemented with other material that might include many words different from the ones that are used in classroom dialogs.

On the other hand, bringing humor through wordplay in EFL environments can have many benefits for students, for example, creating relaxing environments, reducing stress, increasing self-confidence when using the target language, and learning new words with a different technique (Askildson, 2005).

It is necessary to start defining wordplay, and to explain what benefits and disadvantages its application can have in EFL environments. Guy Cook (1997) considers wordplay as “an effective learning tool” because it allows playing with the forms and functions that the English language has. It also lets students analyze that English words can have different meanings that might facilitate vocabulary acquisition (Vandergriff & Fuchs, 2009).

The use of wordplay in EFL environments is a new concept in the field of language teaching (Cook, 1997), so the importance of this concept should be analyzed to start using it as a learning tool in EFL environments. The main purpose of this project is to create a booklet compiling wordplay-based activities to indicate how these activities can be used in a vocabulary learning process, and how wordplay can be integrated in some classroom tasks that could create different teaching-learning experiences.



Finally, it is important to mention that this project is an attempt to provide some activities using other kind of sources that sometimes can be ignored in the Ecuadorian educational context, because there is no extended evidence about the applicability of wordplay in formal language courses.

Research Questions

- How can humorous wordplay be used in EFL environments for teaching vocabulary?

Objectives

General Objective

To determine how humorous-wordplay can be used as a pedagogical tool for learning vocabulary in EFL environments

Specific Objectives

- To investigate the usage of humorous wordplay as a learning tool in EFL environments.
- To examine the advantages and disadvantages of using humorous wordplay in EFL environments.
- To analyze the most common types of wordplay.
- To evaluate the opinions of the participants about using wordplay activities in their classroom.



CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Vocabulary is a significant element or sub skill that can be used to develop other language skills and it could determine language proficiency (Aria & Tracey, 2003).

Alqahtani (2015) explains that EFL learners need to have enough word storage so they can express themselves accurately. However, what does learning a new word mean? This does not only mean memorizing words, but also remembering how to use this new word after a long time in the appropriate context (Schmitt, 2000).

1.1 The Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is one of the most important aspects for EFL learners (Alqahtani, 2015). Acquiring new words allows language learners to increase their language abilities (Viera, 2017). However, it is necessary to start understanding what vocabulary is to indicate the importance vocabulary has in a language. According to the Macmillan Dictionary (2018) vocabulary is “all the words in a particular language”.

In the field of language learning, Lessard-Clouston (2013) defines “vocabulary as the words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning”. It means that learning vocabulary does not only mean learning word by word, but also learning some phrases and how to use them in a context accurately.

Furthermore, Neuman and Dwyer (2009) explain that vocabulary are words people must know to express themselves and to listen in an effective manner. According to these



authors there are two kinds of vocabulary which are: the receptive vocabulary used for listening and reading, and the productive vocabulary this is used for speaking and writing, so it explains why is a determinant factor in the development of general language skills.

In addition, according to Diamond and Gutlohn (2006) to complement vocabulary acquisition, it is necessary to understand another concept which is word ..

, because it explains what features a person should be familiar with in order to master their vocabulary. Nation (as cited in Schmitt, 2000) states that knowing a word implies seven types of knowledge: the meanings of the word, how it is written, its spoken form, its grammatical behavior, what collocations can be used with that word, the register of the word, how that word can be associated with other words, and how frequently that word is used.

From the definitions, it can be stated that vocabulary is not only the entire number of words that a language has (Alqahtani, 2015), but also knowing the usage that words can have. All types of word knowledge are used to convey the speaker's meaning, and this knowledge may help with the vocabulary acquisition process.

1.2 Vocabulary in EFL Environments

Alqahtani (2015) remarks that “Vocabulary is an essential part in foreign language learning” (p.21), because it is used to develop communicative competence in EFL learners. In line with this concept, Nation describes that there is a relationship between vocabulary acquisition and communicative competence. Learners can be able to express themselves correctly, if they have a large number of words (as cited in Schmitt, 2000).



Alqahtani(2015) also says that vocabulary is recognized as a tool in reading and listening comprehension, speaking and writing fluency, so this means that vocabulary is involved in every language skill. Vocabulary is considered a good predictor in an EFL process because the more vocabulary a learner has the more success they could have using the target language (Alqahtani, 2015).

However, how should vocabulary be taught? The National Reading Panel (2000) indicates that there is not a single way to teach vocabulary in EFL environments, so teachers should find different ways to engage their students. They can use and apply different types of instructions, strategies, materials, or activities to enrich the vocabulary of their students.

Implicit Vocabulary

Schmitt (2000) explains that implicit vocabulary is acquired “through exposure when one’s attention is focused on the use of language, rather than the learning itself” (p.116). Longhurst (2013) also considers that the implicit vocabulary acquisition takes place while a person is focused on working with another part of the language. This process occurs incidentally.



Explicit Vocabulary

On the other hand, explicit vocabulary implies learning new specific words through conscious processes (Schmitt, 2000). The Cambridge online dictionary defines explicit learning as something that is “clear and exact” (2018), this acquisition is done through clear exposure to specific words (Longhurst, 2013).

Since the target group of this project are B1 learners, it is necessary to explain what B1 learners are able to do based on the Common European Framework (CEFR). The CEFR is a “language-neutral” standard that can be applicable for any language in Europe, Asia, and Latin America (Grimes, 2015).

The CEFR is a framework, published by the Council of Europe in 2001. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn, to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively (Cambridge Assessment English, 2019).

The CEFR has organized the language proficiencies into the following three levels: the A level (basic), the B level (independent user), and the C level (proficient user). These three levels are further subdivided; the A level in A1, A2, the B level in B1, B2, and finally the C level in C1, and C2. In total, these six levels indicate what language knowledge learners develop in each stage. The CEFR indicates learners’ abilities around five skills: Spoken Interaction, Spoken Production, Listening, Reading, and Writing (Grimes, 2015).

According to the CEFR, a B1 learner :

Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple



connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. (p.24)

1.3 Instructional Strategies to Teach Vocabulary

Instructional strategies are all approaches that a teacher can use to actively engage their students during their vocabulary learning process (Meador, 2018). Some authors like Sedita (2005) and the National Reading Panel (2000) explain that vocabulary can be taught using direct or indirect instructions. However strategies similar to Graves' Framework (2008) are going to be selected to explain how Wordplay can be used as a learning tool for teaching vocabulary.

To start, The Texas Reading Agency (2002) has developed a vocabulary instruction program that includes the following elements:

- to use indirect vocabulary instructions by encouraging learners' reading,
- to expose students to high-quality oral language in reading-aloud activities,
- to apply direct vocabulary instructions indicating the meanings of specific words,
- to teach independent word-learning strategies, including the use of context clues, the use of word parts, and the efficient use of the dictionary, and
- to promote word consciousness.

1.4 Promoting Word Consciousness

Nagy and Scott explains word consciousness refers to the knowledge and dispositions necessary for students to learn, appreciate, and effectively use words and it can



help learners understand not only the meaning of specific words but also of other words in general to enrich their vocabulary (2009). “Word Consciousness integrates metacognition about words, motivation to learn words, and a deep and lasting interest in words” (Graves & Watts- Traffe, 2008,p.186).

Word consciousness can be considered as a learning strategy to teach vocabulary and its benefits could be “that can lead to students’ absorbing and retaining words taught and those they are exposed to incidentally (Graves & Watts- Traffe, 2008).

1.5 Wordplay to Promote Word Consciousness Awareness

The Texas Reading Agency (2002) explains that one way to promote word consciousness is playing with words using wordplay. Wordplay is considered a key element in the development of word consciousness awareness in EFL learners, because wordplay promotes language knowledge and learning (Cook, 1997).

Fisher (2004) explains some advantages the usage of wordplay can have in a vocabulary learning process:

- Wordplay is motivating and an important component of the wordrich classroom.
- Wordplay calls on students to reflect metacognitively on words, word parts, and context.
- Wordplay requires students to be active learners and capitalizes on possibilities for the social construction of meaning.
- Wordplay develops domains of word meaning and relatedness as it engages students in practice and rehearsal of words. (p.220)



Nordquist (2018) provides an overall definition of wordplay, it is also known as language play in which language is used in an unusual manner to entertain students with words. Thus, wordplay is characterized by the use of words that convey different meanings from their common meaning (Cambridge Online Dictionary, 2018).

Two terms merge at this point, wordplay and language play, so it is necessary to explain why language play and wordplay can be considered synonyms. The definition for language play and wordplay have something in common, both of them make reference to the use of the language in a playful manner (Cook, 2000). That is why, it can be understood that language play and wordplay are synonyms that refer to the same figure of speech, so the information related to these two terms will be analyzed and included in this study. However, only wordplay will be the term used to refer to either wordplay or language play.

Furthermore, some other definitions have been developed to explain Wordplay in language learning processes, for example, Vygotsky defines word play as private speech that works as a rehearsal allowing for language development to occur. It happens when a person starts repeating some words to themselves to analyze, and even to correct what they had said.” (as cited in Bell, 2011). In this definition, language play is not necessarily fun, but rather it is a means by which learners develop linguistic skills.

On the other hand, Cook (1997) says that wordplay is a discourse used to engage with the elements of a language. In addition, Tarone (2001) explain that the main function of language play is the ludic use of the language to have fun. This is a language which is not used mainly to transmit information.

A current definition is the one provided by Zirker and Winter-Froemel (2015), they said that wordplay can be part of everyday communication experiences. According to these



authors wordplay can be found in advertising slogans, jokes, nursery rhymes, or in literary language. All these examples are manifestations of the use of language in a playful manner. Additionally, when a person tells a joke their purpose is to indicate a competent use of the target language using wordplay as “a means to present themselves as being linguistically competent” (p.5).

These definitions show the multi-functionality that wordplay can have. Wordplay is a regular figure of speech that can be applied to different aspects such as applied linguistics, language processes, and advertising (Tarone, 2001). The most important definition is the one that considers wordplay as a means that will indicate language proficiency and the ability to engage in the use of words in a different way.

1.6 Humorous Wordplay

Wordplay may not always be fun. Some examples of wordplay include inappropriate content that could not be used in educational settings. However, in this study humorous wordplay is going to be analyzed. This definition can include some humorous components, so it is necessary to know how humor is involved in wordplay, and what relationship exists between wordplay and humor.

Dynel (2009) states that wordplay is considered a form of humor, and it has a special role within humor, manipulating words with purpose. Playing with words is a humorous manifestation of a language, especially the ones that include verbal manifestations, such as homophones and homographs. The differences between the two



meanings or the forms of pronunciation and spelling create a conflict or break expectation, and can generate humorous situations (Taylor & Mazlack, 2004).

1.7 Forms of Wordplay

According to Attardo (2018) wordplay can be found in different elements of the English language which include: puns, anagrams, tongue twisters, riddles, palindromes, acrostics, and many others. However, in this project anagrams, riddles, puns, and tongue twisters are going to be analyzed because these are the most common forms of wordplay in English (Segal, 1984).

Puns

English is a language that uses a great variety of puns (Lems, 2013). The Merriam Webster Dictionary (2018) defines puns as “the usually humorous use of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more of its meanings or the meaning of another word similar in sound”. Learners could enjoy activities with puns because learners could be able to decipher “*hidden*” meanings behind the literal meanings (Lems, 2011).

Segal (1984) explains that puns can be used as “mini-lessons in grammar, vocabulary, and speech patterns” (p.286). Another advantage of using puns is they can be used with images to create visual puns. These visual puns are humorous and creative expressions of word play (Mulken et al as cited in Yang, 2015).

Lems (2011) states that puns are classified into three categories: sound-alike, lookalike, and close-sounding puns.

- **Sound-alike Puns**



These puns are based on homophones. Lems explains that “Homophones are two or more words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings” (Lems, 2011). These kind of puns can help intermediate learners with phonological awareness and, later, reading and spelling (Lems, 2011).

- **Lookalike Puns**

“These puns are based on words that both sound and look the same but have two or more unrelated meanings” (Lems, 2011, p.199). It could be found not only in isolated words but also in phrases and idiomatic expressions. It can help intermediate learners understand multiple meanings that words can have.

- **Close-sounding puns**

“These puns are based on words that have different meanings and spellings, but sound similar, differing in only one or two sounds” (Lems, 2011, p.200). “Knock-knock jokes” are examples of this kind of puns and these can help proficient learners associate between the sounds of words contained in other words or phrases that have nothing else in common (Lems, 2011).

Anagrams

According to Rahman (2016) anagrams are a type of wordplay. An anagram is “A word or phrase made by arranging in a different order the letters of another word or phrase” (Rahman, 2016, p.130). Anagrams could bring the opportunity for learners to form new words.

Capper and Suzugamine (1999) number some advantages of using anagrams to develop vocabulary:



- “1. involves constant mental and verbal recycling of lexical items
2. may be played competitively or cooperatively
3. involves constant attention and concentration
4. valid for any level of language learner
5. may be played for fun or for specific language study
6. focuses attention on word formation and spelling” (par. Anagram: A Vocabulary Development Game).

Riddles

“Riddles are expressions comprising of a question image and an answer. (...) The answer is hidden in the question, which simultaneously both misleads and provides a hint to the right answer” (Kaivola-Bregenhøj, 2017). Riddles could be an interesting learning tool that can be used not only in oral exercises but also in written exercises because English learners have to apply some skills to solve them and riddles can help in vocabulary learning identifying different meanings words can have (Wright as cited in Rahman, Mursanti S., Hasan, Huzairin H., & Huzairin, 2013).

Tongue Twisters

Tzakosta and Sfiraki (2016) explain that “tongue-twisters are popular language word games which are used crosslinguistically mostly in order to assist children develop clear speech and practice the pronunciation of difficult words” (p.1). However, tongue twisters can help language learners understand alliterations present in tongue twisters.



“Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound or letter at the beginning of each or most of the words in a sentence” (Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service, n.d).

1.8 Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Wordplay in EFL Contexts

Askildson considers humor as a ‘double-edged sword’ (as cited in Stroud, 2013, p.74) because humor has many advantages but also it could have different disadvantages that should be analyzed in order to create significant learning experiences.

One of the most important advantages is that humorous wordplay is an element that can be used “for different areas of language learning” (Stroud, 2013, p.74), such as in this case for teaching vocabulary. Other advantages can be that humorous wordplay is an element that could be used for lowering tension, improving learners’ retention, increasing learners’ activity, creating a positive learning environment, and engaging learners in other kinds of activities to play with forms, meanings, and pronunciation of words (Stroud, 2013).

However, the use of humorous wordplay could have some disadvantages for example humor can be a distractor element in a regular classroom because some teachers consider that using any form of humor allows creating noisy classrooms that could generate problems with discipline leaving aside the importance that an educational process should have (Stroud, 2013). Finally, Stroud (2013) explains that another disadvantage that teachers could deal with is that sometimes students might not be able to understand humor in the target language.

To conclude this part, it could be said that humorous wordplay has different characteristics that sometimes are not considered in educational settings especially for



teaching vocabulary. Using wordplay can give EFL teachers the opportunity to create different activities for learners including another kind of material such as humor that can be used as an accurate tool to promote learning of new words.

1.9 Literature Review

In order to highlight the importance of vocabulary for EFL learners (Alqahtani, 2015), an academic examination of the vocabulary learning processes is presented in this part. Specifically, EFL researchers are interested in determining teaching methods or learning strategies that are helpful during the vocabulary learning processes and which options might be better to set aside. For example, The National Texas Agency (2000) mentions that promoting word consciousness is one element that can be incorporated into an EFL vocabulary instruction program and could be an integrated method for teaching vocabulary.

Vocabulary is an essential factor in the EFL learning process because as Wilkins expressed “while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 2013, p.2). Besides the fact that vocabulary is not considered a main skill in English language learning, it is thoroughly related to the established main four skills, these being: listening, reading, writing and reading. Thus, Candra Rahman and Hasan (2013), explain that by mastering vocabulary, EFL learners could be able to produce and understand the English language

As of now, many different strategies have been developed in order to teach vocabulary more effectively. One example of these strategies is the one that promotes word consciousness developed by Graves (2006), who explains that word consciousness is



a term that can be used as a technique to understand and recognize different meanings that words could have. This section will analyze some studies related to the importance of vocabulary in EFL environments, how to promote word consciousness by using wordplay activities to enhance vocabulary in EFL learners, and finally how the types of wordplay can be used in EFL environments.

This literature review is specifically focused on three topics: to explain how humorous wordplay can be used in EFL environments, to review the advantages and disadvantages of its usage in EFL environments, and to analyze the most common types of wordplay. The last topic is related to a detailed investigation of and thoroughly explores the connection between vocabulary acquisition and humorous-word-play-based activities in the form of a literature review. Additionally, the application of wordplay in the Ecuadorian context is going to be reviewed to analyze how it is used in this specific context. Generalizations must be made due to the fact that analyzing reports specific to Ecuadorian teaching of EFL learners is too narrow of an academic focus to gain specific insight from published resources.

1.9.1 The Importance of Vocabulary in EFL Environments

Candra Rahman and Hasan (2013) explain that vocabulary knowledge is considered a good predictor of language proficiency. The study by Stæhr (2008) is analyzed to explain the importance of vocabulary size in an EFL learning process. The main objective of the study conducted by Stæhr (2008) was to explain the relationship between vocabulary size and three of the four skills of English language; listening, writing, and reading. The participants were 88 Danish low-level learners of English. They were asked to complete multiple-options and matching tests to measure reading and listening comprehension



abilities. To measure writing ability, participants had to write a composition for a job application using 450 words. Additionally, a vocabulary level test (VLT) was used to measure the vocabulary receptive and the vocabulary size of learners. After analyzing the data, the results indicated that vocabulary size was used as a predictor of language performance of L2 learners. In the case of reading, the results demonstrated that reading was the most dependable skill of vocabulary size because the more words participants known, the better they were able to understand and comprehend the readings proposed in the study. In the case of listening, this skill was linked to the ability that learners had to comprehend the listening exercises. In the case of writing, vocabulary was related to the quality of the participants' compositions. If learners had a high score in vocabulary-receptive tests, the learners were able to produce better compositions. The results indicated that vocabulary size had a direct relationship with listening, reading, and writing because Stæhr proved that vocabulary size was directly associated with the success in reading and listening skills. As conclusion, the author suggested that teaching vocabulary should be more important in L2 processes.

Khan, Radzuan, Shahbaz, Ibrahim, and Mustafa (2018) studied the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and speaking proficiency in Saudi EFL language learners. The aim of this study was to determine the interference of vocabulary knowledge in speaking abilities of Saudi EFL learners. 100 elementary-level university students and 20 teachers were the participants of this study. Both qualitative and quantitative procedures through three different instruments were applied to collect the data. The students solved a questionnaire to identify the problems that they could face during their English learning process, while the teachers participated in an interview and then completed a yes/no



questionnaire in order to analyze what perceptions teachers had about the problems learners could have while developing their learning abilities. The results showed that learners expressed that they did not have the precise words to express something; it means that vocabulary insufficiency was considered one of the most important factors that could affect their speaking proficiency. Teachers' answers indicated students were not speaking as it was expected in their level of English and that was one of reasons why learners were not able to maintain a fluent conversation. The results shown how vocabulary knowledge and the speaking ability are connected because it was demonstrated that the deficit of vocabulary knowledge could affect what EFL learners wanted to communicate or what message learners wanted to convey.

1.9.2 Word Consciousness for Teaching Vocabulary

As was explained in the theoretical framework, Graves affirms that word conscious awareness can have positive effects in expanding vocabulary knowledge. Graves assumes that if teachers could show learners how to play with words, learners would be interested in learning new words by themselves (as cited in Nathan, 2013).

For instance, Lane and Allen (2010) analyzed how two teachers promoted word consciousness in their regular classes and its effects in vocabulary knowledge of young learners. Both teachers worked with young children in large classrooms. One of them worked in a kindergarten classroom, and the other worked in a fourth-grade classroom. The kindergarten teacher used circle time activities with her students for the duration of a year. The kindergarten students expanded their vocabulary knowledge by gradually employing words related to jobs and other classroom activities. The improvement of vocabulary was



perceived when five-years learners started using different words they did not usually use at such age. For example, at the beginning of the school year the child who was designed as the zookeeper used words like “*feeds the hamsters,*” the teacher explained that by midyear the zookeeper changed that phrase for “*provides nutritional sustenance to our rodent friends*” (Lane and Allen, 2010, p.363).

On the other hand, the teacher, who worked with fourth-grade students, created modeling activities. At the beginning of the school year, students used a limited vocabulary; however, the teacher introduced different meanings of common words every day, students were curious to know how to use such words. After promoting word consciousness, fourth-grade students were able to use and understand the meanings of more sophisticated and difficult words. The results also showed that fostering word consciousness promoted students’ interest and motivation to learn new words. Finally, Lane and Allen (2010) explained that, based on the previously discussed case studies, word conscious awareness could be applied in formal educational contexts, and its application would have positive results on expanding vocabulary knowledge.

Neugebauer, Gámez, Coyne, Cólón, McCoach, and Ware (2017) developed a study to examine how teacher discourse that includes word consciousness awareness could improve learning of new words in young learners from kindergarten classrooms. The aim of this study was to analyze how 25 kindergarten teachers promote word consciousness by analyzing teachers’ utterances specifically during the time designated to vocabulary instruction. The classes of participants were observed and videotaped analyzing 20 minutes of their classroom discourse, and the interactions that teachers had with students. The researchers transcribed what they had seen during the observations to code teachers’



utterances and to indicate how the participants had promoted word consciousness. At the end when the school year finalized, the researchers evaluate students' vocabulary by applying them different tests to determine what benefits word consciousness had during that period. The results showed that word consciousness was a significant and a useful technique because learners' vocabulary had a relative increment. As conclusion, the researchers ended up the study indicating some advantages of promoting word consciousness in students such as the following ones word consciousness helped students to understand how to use words correctly, to recognize different meanings that words sometimes could have.

1.9.3 Wordplay in EFL Environments

This section will include several studies to summarize the major findings related to humorous wordplay. These studies include the differences between how wordplay is applied in the language learning processes and an analysis of how children and adults use wordplay. The different factors that were analyzed were how participants applied wordplay and what methodology was used to explain and recognize how wordplay could be used as a pedagogical tool in EFL environments. The following studies will describe how wordplay is used in EFL environments analyzing teachers' perceptions regarding its application during classes.

Heidari-Shahreza (2018) researched teacher-initiated humorous wordplay in EFL environments by explaining the connection between wordplay and humor. According to Heidari-Shahreza (2018), wordplay is a verbal manifestation of humor that can be considered as a learning tool to enhance language learning in EFL students.



Heidari-Shahreza (2018) conducted a study to analyze teachers' perceptions about the use of wordplay in the Iranian context. The participants were twelve well-qualified teachers from two language institutes who worked with students who had different levels of language proficiency. The participants were organized into three groups. Four language teachers in the elementary level, four in the intermediate level, and four teachers in the advanced level were analyzed to investigate humorous wordplay techniques, humorous wordplay forms, humorous wordplay styles, what advantages and disadvantages the usage of wordplay could have, and what pedagogical aspects the application of humor wordplay in an EFL context could have.

First, teachers were interviewed to investigate some pedagogical effects they had recognized during their teaching experiences and to analyze their opinions they mentioned during the dialogs in the interviews. In addition, teachers filled-out a questionnaire to understand what humor styles they had. Furthermore, teachers' classes were recorded to identify what humor techniques they used during their classes. All participants explained that when they applied humorous wordplay it had positive benefits in their classrooms. Those benefits included creating a positive learning environment and facilitating teaching instruction. One of the major findings was that using puns, irony, and allusion were the verbal humorous techniques that this group of Iranian EFL teachers used in most of their classes.

Although the teachers had mentioned benefits of humorous wordplay, the researcher also encountered some negative thoughts. The entire group of teachers were concerned about how their overall authority in the classroom could be affected when using some kind of humor. Additionally, some teachers considered that humorous wordplay might not



produce a significant learning experience. The teachers who had decided to use humor during their classes had to pay close attention to the cultural background in which this academic option was used since what is amusing or not insulting is culturally divergent.

Forman (2011) analyzed a bilingual Anglo-Australian instructor who worked in a Thai university. The goal was to analyze some experiences that this teacher had when he used humorous wordplay during his classes working with low-level proficiency learners. The data was collected through audio recordings. During the lessons, the author identified two types of wordplay: the discursive and the linguistic type. The results showed that the linguistic type was related to wordplay directly. The discursive type was the type of humor that engaged students in some oral tasks, for example, when a student pronounced the word “*bottle*” as the word “*bottom*”. In order to fix the mistake, the teacher did not correct it by repeating the word; instead, the teacher chose to misunderstand student’s pronunciation. He made fun of this situation by indicating where the bottom is to let the student know that he had made a mistake. Forman (2011) strongly believed that “parody, irony, and word-play are legitimate ways to teach English” (p.558).

On the other hand, Forman (2011) expressed that wordplay provided opportunities to play with form and function of a language in all three levels of language however it could be understood in a better for those students who had a higher level of language proficiency. Furthermore, the author explained that wordplay had affective, linguistic, and sociocultural benefits in the English learning processes. One of the most important aspects that should be mentioned are the linguistic benefits that researcher found. These benefits included increasing students’ levels of participation, despite the limitations that students had in the target language. Forman (2011) stated that “wordplay has the potential to raise



students' metalinguistic awareness" (p.562). Furthermore, the researcher explained that wordplay could help EFL learners to understand different aspects of English language such as the lexis, the phonology, and the semantic features of the English language.

Forman (2011) explained some emotional benefits that the use of wordplay could have in an EFL process because he believed that using wordplay could be a way to change social relationships between teachers and students. The author explained that using wordplay could reduce social distances between teachers and students. Forman (2011) supposed that if students were able to use a form of humor they had the opportunity to develop other abilities such as creativity and imagination.

1.9.4 Wordplay in Vocabulary Learning

Ghaffari and Mohamadi (2012) carried out a study to determine the effectiveness of humorous and non-humorous contexts on vocabulary acquisition and retention of 58 Iranian EFL learners. These 58 EFL learners were organized into three categories: the experimental group who worked in humor contexts (humor group, HG), the experimental group who worked in non-humor contexts (non-humor group, NHG), and finally, the comparison group (CG). The participants were asked to participate in seven classes in total over the course of three weeks, and they had to work with 62 new words. One session after the treatment ended, a non-expected post-test was applied to the three groups to analyze the receptive and productive vocabulary. The results indicated that the HG those students who had worked in humor contests had higher scores not only in terms of receptive but also in the productive vocabulary in comparison with the two other groups that did not work in humor contexts. These results were demonstrated because word lists that students were able



to recognize were superior in the HG group. The researcher assumed that humorous contexts helped learners improve receptive and productive vocabulary (Ghaffari & Mohamadi, 2012). Finally, the researcher believed that humor could be used as an accurate learning tool in vocabulary acquisition because it could help learners recall and produce new words. The researcher strongly believed that humor might be used to facilitate learners' concentration and he alleged that concentration could be considered as a positive starting stage in the process of learning new words.

Furthermore, Zabidin (2015) conducted a study at the University Teknologi Mara (Malaysia) to find out what benefits using wordplay could have in vocabulary retention and comprehension of ESL adult learners. This study was aimed to present a different tool whose purpose was to increase learners' vocabulary. Two selected classes were divided into two groups: the experimental group (9 males and 16 females) and control group (8 males and 17 females). The two groups of students were required to learn the same words that were presented in four reading sessions, however, only the experimental group worked with humorous texts. The participants had to solve a pre-test before each reading session to analyze their word recognition of the presented vocabulary, and after the reading session, the participants took a post-vocabulary test to analyze their vocabulary comprehension. After a week, the participants of both groups solved the second post-vocabulary test to measure their vocabulary retention.

The results showed that in terms of word comprehension English learners from the two groups had almost the same tests scores. However, in terms of word retention, the researcher found that the experimental group had higher mean scores in two of the four reading sessions. The researcher explained that results showed that humor helped learners



to remember new words improving their “retention ability” (Zabidin, 2015, p. 109). To conclude, the researcher encouraged the use of humor in vocabulary teaching processes that could be included in the curricula of formal educational settings.

1.9.5 Types of Wordplay

Puns are the first example of wordplay that will be analyzed because “it is a widely used vehicle for English language humor” (Lems, 2011, p.197).

The first study to be analyzed was the one conducted by Lucas (2005) to demonstrate how puns can be used as an educational tool in an EFL class. The participants had to interpret the double meaning that puns could have. The ten participants were enrolled in an intensive English course, and they were placed between a low-advanced and advanced class. All ten participants came from different countries and they were organized into five pairs to work on a collaborative task. Each pair was asked to read eight comic strips containing puns. The participants had to tell the researcher whether they understood the double meaning of the puns or not. After these sessions, the participants had to take part in follow-up interviews.

In order to facilitate the collection of the data, the participation of each pair was video-recorded and after that, these conversations were transcribed. The researcher denominated these conversations as Pun-Related Dialogue (PRD). The results showed that at the beginning of the intervention the majority of participants were not able to understand puns, however when they started using other aspects of the language or to use the language in a different way the comprehension of participants was different and they were able to understand the double meaning of a pun. The researcher explained that when learners



started understanding the double meaning and ambiguity that puns could have, learners were interested in working with other aspects such as the phonological, morphological, syntactical, or lexical aspects of the English language that can enhance learners' comprehension (Lucas, 2005).

To conclude, the researcher mentioned that deciphering the double meaning of puns in a collaborative task could be convenient in the adult ESL learners because it could promote "metalinguistic awareness" (p. 234) during their learning process. Finally, the researcher suggested that language teachers could use puns as a different strategy in their classes to enhance other learners' abilities.

Another significant study to be considered is the study carried out by Kaplan and Lucas (2001) because this was conducted in a Spanish speaking country, which is important for the current study. Although this study is not focused on vocabulary process specifically, it has some important pedagogical implications that could be applied for teaching vocabulary. According to Kaplan and Lucas (2001) the Spanish name of puns is "retruécano" and the researchers were interested in exploring why non-native speakers, even if they were advanced learners, sometimes were not able to understand the English humor presented in puns.

The participants were 20 advanced students from the sixth semester of the major of Modern Languages at the Metropolitan University of Venezuela. The aim of this study was to determine what cognitive strategies this group of students were able to use in order to infer and understand the double meaning of puns. The researchers selected 15 comic strips from an English newspaper published in Venezuela. The participants worked in pairs, and



the researchers could not help the participants because it could affect the results of the study. The conversations between participants were recorded and after that, the recordings were transcribed to analyze the cognitive strategies participants applied to understand puns presented in the comic strips. The results were organized into three categories: if participants did not understand the pun at all, if participants understood the pun partially, and if participants understood the pun totally. The categories were stated based on what strategies participants developed during the development of the study. Some strategies that the participants used were: the participants were asking for information to clarify some of their doubts, they applied metacognitive analysis, they repeated the pun for themselves, and they used some visual supports to clarify unknown words. Kaplan and Lucas (2001) explained that from all the strategies that participants developed for understanding puns, the strategy that included visual supports was an important strategy that was helpful when learners were trying to comprehend a pun.

Finally, to conclude the study, the researchers suggested to use humor regularly in EFL classrooms. The researcher recommended “utilizar textos e ilustraciones humorísticos en la enseñanza del segundo idioma, en lugar de incluirlos solamente como elemento motivador”. (Kral, Woolard & López Corría as cited in Kaplan & Lucas, 2001, p. 256) [to use texts and humorous illustrations in L2 teaching processes, instead of including them only as a motivating element].

On the other hand, Muchmore, Griggs, Tidwell, Mnayer, and Beyer (2016) explained that humor is a manifestation of human development that can be considered a device in EFL environments. The authors wanted to investigate the use of humor during their teaching practices. They analyzed their own teaching experiences and found that the



methods were different because each teacher decided to collect the data by using different techniques. For example, Muchmore was working in a face-to-face class with 17 undergraduate students, so he collected his data in written journals as a means to register humorous classroom situations. Another example is the case of Tidwell, this teacher collected her data by analyzing and studying what she found in her video recordings. Wordplay presented in puns was identified in James' classes, where these practices were spontaneous. The results showed that using wordplay during her classes had increased students' willingness to participate. Muchmore et al. (2016) explained that their teachers' authority was not affected because the use of puns during their classes created collaborative relationships between teachers and students. Muchmore et al. (2016) concluded their study by explaining some reasons why they have used puns or another form of humor. They explained that humor was created to increase human relationships. Humor was applied to generate new forms of interactions that can be used in formal settings. Finally, Muchmore et al. (2016) explained that the researchers used puns in their learning processes because humor was implemented as an element to generate cooperative learning when some difficult situations happened during their teaching practices.

As explained in the theoretical framework, riddles are another type of wordplay. Wiwin, Sutapa, and Rosnija (2016) explained how to use riddles effectively in a vocabulary teaching process. The researchers conducted a pre-experimental study to see if their 31 eighth-grade participants improved their vocabulary after using riddles as a teaching tool. The research identified some learning problems at the beginning of their study, prior to the application of riddles; one example was that participants were not interested in learning new words. This outcome was a result of students did not remind new words due to how



the teacher introduced new words, because teacher used to repeat new words and ask participants to memorize these new words. Thus, the researchers wanted to investigate if this situation could change by using riddles to introduce new words. The data were collected in different stages. Initially, a pretest was applied to identify the baseline levels of fluency. In the pretest, as well in the post-test, the researcher gave the students 25 short answer questions composed of riddles. The aim of the post-test was to look at how using riddles helped learners in their vocabulary mastery. The results showed that participants had a noticeable improvement in their vocabulary; the post-test had higher students' scores after using riddles. Wiwin, et al. (2015) affirmed that riddles were efficient tools to increase and to master students' vocabulary because "the involvement sequence of puzzling question in riddle helps students understanding the meaning of word, because the riddle arrange by the meaning of word itself" (p.9).

Finally, the researcher found some disadvantages of using the riddle technique because this activity could take a long-time for students to get used and for teachers to prepare it. As a final point, the researcher mentioned that unfortunately some students became confused when solving the riddle correctly.

Another study that dealt with investigating how to use riddles for mastering vocabulary was one piloted by Rahmadanta (2018). The researcher developed a quasi-experimental study with two classes, one of them was the control group and the other class was the experimental group. The control group did not work with riddles and the teacher in this case used regular techniques for teaching vocabulary. On the other hand, the experimental group worked with riddles. The researcher wanted to analyze which group had learned more words at the end of the study. In both groups the researcher used a pre-



test to have a baseline of students' knowledge and after the treatment the researcher used a post-test to measure vocabulary improvement, especially those who had worked with riddles. In the case of the experimental group, the results showed that students learned a significant number of new words. However, in the control group, students had not acquired as many words. The results were expressed with the following quantities: the control group learned 1851 new words, however, the experimental group learned 2064 new words in total, and the researcher showed that using riddles was beneficial in a vocabulary teaching process. The researcher concluded that teachers could use different techniques for teaching vocabulary, and using riddles "can make the students think deeply" (Rahmadanta, 2018, p.44). To conclude, the researcher indicated that using riddles could have positive results because using riddles could be a fun technique that can draw students' attention and concentration (Rahmadanta, 2018).

Furthermore, Manurung (2014) developed a study to analyze the use of anagrams to improve vocabulary achievement. The participants were 38 grade VII-7 students in SMP from an Indonesian school. The study was conducted through a Classroom Action Research (CAR) following a qualitative research design. Students took a pre-test in order to measure their vocabulary capacity. The results from this pre-test showed that participants' vocabulary was low. However, after the application of anagrams the students took a post-test, which indicated that their vocabulary improved because participants had better results on vocabulary tests and writing tasks. The researcher concluded the study by stating that participants were willing to participate in their learning process because "students were active, cooperative, enthusiastic and interested in learning vocabulary" (Manurung, 2014, p.7-8).



Another example of the use of anagrams was the study conducted by Rahman (2016). The researcher investigated the benefits that using anagrams could have in vocabulary size of 97 VIII-grade students from a Polynesian institution. It was an experimental study in which the participants were organized into two groups: the control group, that did not work with anagrams and the experimental group, which worked with anagrams. After the treatment, the results showed that those students who worked with anagrams had higher scores on vocabulary tests that measured their vocabulary size compared to those students who did not work with anagrams. Rahman (2016) stated that anagrams could be used as a means to spread EFL learning, specifically for teaching vocabulary. The author explained that using anagrams could increase students' vocabulary because when students use anagrams they rearrange, transpose, or omit some letters that give students the opportunity to create or to produce new words (Rahman 2016). Finally, Rahman (2016) indicated that using anagrams for increasing vocabulary size could create collaborative learning situations, increasing motivation and student participation.

Tongue twisters are common examples of wordplay. Tzakosta, and Sfiraki (2016) conducted an experimental study with ten preschool children. The study was developed in three phases: in the first one, the teacher measured children's level of language proficiency. During the second phase, the teacher used some kinesthetic activities to present the tongue twister. The children were asked to memorize and retell the tongue twister. In the final phase, the teacher gave her students extra time to determine and write what words they had learned after using tongue twisters. The results showed that the participants did not acquire a significant number of words, however, the researchers explained that this could have happened because tongue twisters were not presented in a systematic and regular process in



regular language classes. They assumed that using tongue twisters in regular learning processes could have positive effects and for that reason it should be included in the curriculum. To conclude, Tzakosta, and Sfiraki (2016) affirmed that tongue twisters could help teachers assess children's phonological development. Using other kinds of techniques such as tongue twisters could create new activities to engage students to be more active during their learning process because tongue twisters could give language teachers the opportunity to explain multiple language aspects at the same time.

There is no evidence regarding the application of wordplay for teaching vocabulary within formal education settings inside the country of Ecuador. However, some isolated studies have shown the usage of some examples of wordplay. For example, Muñoz (2012) conducted a study to investigate how to use anagrams to apply them as a technique for improving the process of learning English grammar in 10th grade students in the city of Quito. Other studies such as the one developed by Argudo (2011) explains the application of some rhythmic elements to motivate students when learning English applied in the city of Cuenca.

The analyzed studies shown that wordplay has certain characteristics that can be useful in EFL processes for example wordplay could be used as a means to facilitate collaborative work in classrooms. In conclusion, wordplay is a concept that could be applied as a technique to enhance learning of new words because as was demonstrated in the previous studies wordplay could facilitate comprehension of the target language and this way improve language performance of EFL learners.



Chapter II

Research Methodology

This chapter will describe the methodological procedures used in this research study in the following order: 1) the approach used during this project, 2) the context and participants involved in this study, 3) the procedures of data collection, and 4) data analysis.

2.1 Research Design

The purpose of this exploratory study is to analyze how wordplay can be used in EFL classrooms for improving vocabulary acquisition by creating a booklet that contains activities based on the different types of wordplay available. An exploratory design is defined as research that explores a phenomenon that is not clearly defined and helps the researcher determine the best methods of data collection and the possible participants of the study (STANDS4 LLC, 2019).

Additionally, this study has a qualitative emphasis because during this study, teachers' opinions and perceptions about the use of wordplay in EFL classrooms were analyzed. Harvell (2014) explains that a qualitative research method focuses on understanding participants' opinions and meaningful information, based on their experience, about the topic.

The following chart is a guide to summarize the instruments used according to the research questions and objectives that were stated in this study.



Research Questions	Research Objectives	Instrument
How humorous wordplay could be used in EFL environments for teaching vocabulary?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To investigate the usage of humorous wordplay as a learning tool in EFL environments. 	Document analysis and a semi-structured interview
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To examine the advantages and disadvantages of using humorous wordplay in EFL environments. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To evaluate what the teachers think about the use of wordplay in the classroom. To create activities containing humorous wordplay. 	Semi-structured Interview.

Chart 1: Relationship chart between the Objectives and the instruments that were stated in the development of the study.

2.2 Participants and Setting

Participants



Sampling Technique

A convenience-sampling procedure was used for selecting the participants in this study. According to Farrokhi and Mahmoudi-Hamidabad (2012) this technique “is one of the most commonly used sampling procedures in second language acquisition studies” (p.784). This is a non-random sampling procedure in which members, as Dörnyei mentions “are selected for the purpose of the study if they meet certain practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, easy accessibility, or the willingness to volunteer” (as cited in Farrokhi & Mahmoudi, 2012, p.785). This technique was used because the teacher participants were willing to volunteer.

Five teachers were the participants in this study and all of them work as English teachers at the Institute of Languages at the University of Cuenca. All have ten or more years of teaching experience, and based on their wide experience they were able to provide a depth information about the use of wordplay in EFL environments. Figure one indicates the years of experience that participants had at the time of the interview.

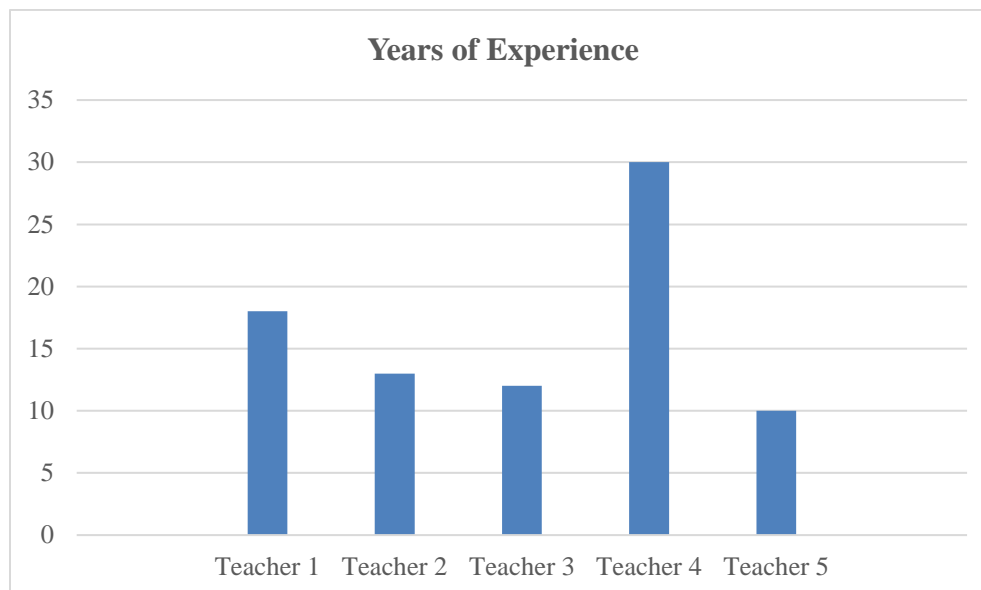


Figure 1: Years of Experience of the Teacher Participants

The data obtained from the interviews were summarized in the previous chart. The time of teaching experience were explained in the vertical column according to each one of the teachers that participated during the interview.

Setting

The Institute of Languages at the University of Cuenca was selected because this is an Institute where students can learn different languages, however this study will specifically focus on English. The Institute has various programs, some for undergraduate students, and most notably, there is an English program for those who are not undergraduate students. This Institute offers different courses to meet the specific group necessities. There are “intensive courses” which are geared towards those who are not undergraduate students at the university and wish to take English as personal/professional development. This program has eight levels in total. In addition, the Institute of Languages offers the credit-system courses that are specifically for undergraduate students at the



university. The requirement for this program is for students to pass three levels of English before graduating.

2.3 Instruments

Qualitative instruments were used during this study; these instruments were document analysis and a semi-structured interview with the teacher participants who work at the Institute of Languages. The document analysis allowed for investigation and provided important definitions about the importance of vocabulary in EFL environments, how vocabulary can be taught, how wordplay could be used as a strategy for teaching vocabulary, what advantages and disadvantages humorous wordplay could have in EFL environments, and the most common examples of wordplay.

Furthermore, in this study a semi-structured interview was conducted because it was the most useful type of interview to elicit participants' perceptions (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). In order to guarantee the correct application of the instruments two expert teachers from the English Language Major were asked to validate the questions of the interview administered to the participants of this study.

2.4 Data Collection Procedures

Document Analysis

Document analysis is an instrument used in a qualitative research in which documents about the topic are reviewed and evaluated (Bowen, 2009). Existing literature was examined and the most relevant concepts and studies were incorporated in the theoretical framework and in the literature review of this study. Additionally, it is important



to mention that document analysis was useful to determine the most common examples of wordplay, which are puns, riddles, anagrams, and tongue twisters.

Many studies were analyzed to be included in the literature review, each one chosen to prove the importance of vocabulary in EFL learning, and how it could be taught. The study conducted by Graves (2006), in particular, demonstrated that word consciousness awareness could be used as a strategy for teaching vocabulary.

Semi-structured Interview

According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) “interviews are a widely used tool to access people’s experiences and their inner perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of reality” (p.1). Furthermore, the specific type of interview used during this study was a semi-structured interview, (See appendix 2) because this type of interview allows the researcher “exploring the topic in more detail, depending on how the conversation is going” (Harvey, 2012).

The semi-structured interviews were applied to five teachers from the Institute of Languages. There was a guide containing eight questions; however, other questions were spontaneously formulated based on what the teachers mentioned during the interview about their teaching experience on vocabulary. These interviews were conducted to obtain general information about the participants, as well as other types of data such as: what were the teachers’ perceptions and their experiences regarding with the use of humorous wordplay for teaching vocabulary. The interviews took place between June 25th and June 26th 2018 in different places of the University of Cuenca. Each interview was audio recorded, and they were carried out in English.



2.5 Data Analysis

The document revision allowed for the examination of theories, research papers, studies, and articles from different journals in order to collect important information for the development of this study that was stated in the theoretical framework and in the literature review. Furthermore, the interviews were audio recorded, were numbered from teacher 1 to teacher 5 for ease of identification. After that, all interviews were transcribed. Additionally, a recognized translator reviewed the transcriptions to guarantee that transcriptions were a reliable source that will maintain what the participants manifested during the interview. To evaluate the content of the interviews, these were examined through qualitative content analysis as this allowed the researcher “to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular text” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Furthermore, the data found in the interview were organized in the following categories:

1. The importance of vocabulary in EFL learning processes.
2. Strategies for teaching vocabulary.
3. Difficulties teaching vocabulary.
4. Humor in EFL classrooms.
5. Teachers’ opinions about a booklet containing word-play based activities.
6. Inappropriate puns, riddles, or tongue twisters to use in EFL classrooms which include the following subcategories:
 - a. Inappropriate puns, riddles, anagrams, or tongue twisters according to the content.



- b. Inappropriate puns, riddles, anagrams, or tongue twisters according to the students' level.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

First, the researcher explained the purpose, the objectives, and what instruments were used in this study to the director of the Institute. After that, the researcher met every participant and they expressed their willingness to collaborate in the study. The researcher scheduled a meeting with every participant, in which all participants signed an informed consent form (appendix 1), which also allowed the researcher to guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants' identities.

The objectives of the study were presented to all of the participants so they could understand the general characteristics. Finally, all of them were informed that they were able to refuse answering any questions should they feel uncomfortable and they could do this at any time during the interview.

2.7 Limitations

One of the problems that the researcher faced during this study was that participants were not familiar with the term *wordplay*, so it was necessary to explain this term by using the most common examples of wordplay, which are puns, riddles, anagrams, and tongue twisters, as previously stated in the theoretical framework. This way participants understood what wordplay refers to, and this made collecting the information much simpler.



CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results and analysis of this research project. The data was collected through document analysis and a semi-structured interview.

3.1. Qualitative Methods

3.1.1. Document Analysis

Document analysis was helpful to determine the features of wordplay that could be applied in an EFL learning process. Furthermore, document analysis provided the current background to analyze advantages and disadvantages wordplay has in EFL environments for teaching vocabulary.

Moreover, document analysis was used to demonstrate the importance that vocabulary has in EFL learning processes and how wordplay was applied in EFL learning classrooms through empirical studies. Thus, the studies conducted by Stæhr (2008), and Khan, et al.(2018) highlighted the importance that vocabulary has in the development of the main skills of the English language.

Additionally, Nordquist (2018) indicated that anagrams, puns, riddles, and tongue twisters are the most common examples of wordplay. Based on these forms of wordplay, studies developed by Kaplan and Lucas (2001), Rahmadanta (2018), Manurung (2014), and Tzakosta, and Sfiraki (2016) were considered to determine how these forms of wordplay could be used to increase vocabulary in EFL environments, and thus enhance comprehension of the target language.



3.1.2 Interviews

To analyze what teachers thought about the use of wordplay in class, face-to-face interviews were conducted during this study. The results of the interviews were analyzed through content analysis which were organized in the following themes: the importance of vocabulary in EFL learning processes, teachers' strategies for teaching vocabulary, teachers' difficulties for teaching vocabulary, pedagogical aspects about the use of humor in EFL classrooms, teachers' opinions about a booklet containing wordplay based activities, inappropriate examples of the forms of humors to use in EFL classrooms which include the following subcategories: inappropriate forms of wordplay according to the content and inappropriate forms of wordplay according to the students' level.

3.2 Results

As explained previously, the results of this study were organized into six categories in order to better analyze the teachers' perspectives about the use of wordplay in the EFL learning processes, and the most important results will be described in the following paragraphs.

The Importance of Vocabulary in EFL Learning Processes

All participants agreed that vocabulary is important in the EFL learning process. The participants expressed that vocabulary is directly related to every skill of the English language, and vocabulary could be a determining factor for language proficiency. Moreover, the participants emphasized the benefits EFL learners could have if they had a proper vocabulary foundation. Finally, the participants mentioned possible problems



students could face if they do not have an accurate amount of vocabulary under their command.

One of the participants mentioned the importance of vocabulary,

Vocabulary is the basis for learning all the other skills such as reading, writing, speaking, comprehension and it will improve language fluency. I'd say that it is extremely important. (T2)

On the other hand, one of the participants mentioned the benefits EFL learners could have if they knew an appropriate number of words.

Having pupils knowing a certain amount of vocabulary builds their self-confidence, makes them independent learners and improve their understanding. Having done so, they will enjoy using English more and also improve themselves in other skills such as writing and speaking. (T4)

As a final point, one of the participants indicated the disadvantages the lack of vocabulary could cause for EFL learners. Teacher 3 expressed,

A lack of vocabulary is also behind a lot of issues. Students have problems with fluency and coherence in speaking, and it also impedes listening skills because they don't recognize the words the other person is saying.

Teachers' Strategies for Teaching Vocabulary

All participants expressed that there is no single way to teach vocabulary. The participants expressed that they have used many different strategies for teaching



vocabulary, such as repetition, memorizing, using songs to learn new words from the context. The majority also mentioned that it is important for students to learn words from the context. It could help students acquire new words. One of the participants mentioned that she did not teach vocabulary word by word because it would not be meaningful for EFL learners.

I like to work in context. For example, I like to use readings in which the words are involved, but what I don't like is to use them in isolation, because I think it's not like memorizing every new word or something like that... (T2)

Difficulties for Teaching Vocabulary

All participants pointed out that one of the difficulties that they face when teaching vocabulary is the fact that EFL learners are sometimes unable to remember new words. One participant said that:

One of the most common, drawbacks of vocabulary or teaching vocabulary is the fact that, words, do not remain in their long-term memory. What I've seen is that they are aware of the meaning of words, or how to use these words for a test or for quiz, but then, after a while. It's like for example doing the midterm test or the final text, they notice that they have forgotten those words that you've taught. (T1).

In addition to the problem cited previously, one of the participants expressed that motivation is also an important factor for learners' success when learning vocabulary, especially since motivation can make teaching new words easier. The teacher said that



Probably the most difficult issue we have with our credit students is that they have to fulfill a requirement and they are not really encouraged to learn the language in contrast you know with the intensive-course students and they do want to learn, they are happy to learn they are really motivated to do a lot of things (T4).

On the other hand, a participant explained that translation could be a problem when learning new words because it creates interference between the native language and the target language.

In teaching vocabulary, most of them is interference; interference from L1 to L2, Ok. They always try to translate everything from Spanish, from their native language, from L1 to L2. That's the most difficult part: to have them think in English and not in Spanish

To conclude the analysis of this question, one of the participants manifested that spelling is a problem for EFL learners. The participant expressed,

It's difficult to teach vocabulary, especially because sometimes the word that you write is very different from the word that you pronounce. Spelling it's kind of complicated for them, so, I think spelling is one of the most difficult things when teaching vocabulary.

Pedagogical Aspects about the use of Humor in EFL Classrooms

All participants expressed that humor should be included in the EFL classrooms because it creates a different learning environment. Most of the teachers considered that



humor can be used to promote learning and that it is helpful when acquiring new vocabulary because humor might help EFL learners remember new things in a new and exciting manner. One of the participants indicated some reasons to use humor in the classroom.

I think laughing is important in class because it is a way to show empathy to students, so students feel comfortable and that makes a really good environment for students to learn (T2).

The majority of the participants agreed that using some form of humor, that might be wordplay, makes English lessons more memorable. The teacher participant expressed positive reasons to use humor. The participant mentioned that

These activities are entertaining, fun and students can feel motivated to learn new words [...] Fun activities are memorable and they can learn easier (T3).

The majority of participants agreed that humor could be used to create meaningful learning situations. One of the participants indicated the following benefit of using humor for teaching vocabulary:

Humor can help them to remember things as in the case of vocabulary (T5).

On the other hand, another participant explained other benefits of using humor for teaching new words.

When they have fun, of course, it's gonna be a lot more memorable and they will remember things in a more effective way. (T2)



When they laugh, they remember. That's meaningful learning, Ok? If your class is boring, it's going to be very difficult for them to remember things because that's not going to work. They need to have more meaningful learning. And when you use humor, jokes, they like it, they love it, and they learn better. They remember.(T4)

Wordplay for Teaching Vocabulary

The participants were asked to explain if they have used humorous wordplay in their classroom or if they have had the opportunity to use wordplay for teaching vocabulary. In addition, the participants explained how often they have used wordplay and what kind of sources they have used to find material that contain wordplay based activities.

The majority of participants expressed that they have used some form of humorous wordplay in their classes at least once; however, they explained that they did not have the opportunity to use the forms of wordplay specifically as a strategy or as a technique for teaching vocabulary.

Everyone mentioned that they have used wordplay at least once in their classroom. The participants explained that they have organized their classes to use wordplay and this way to create the opportunity to work with supplemental material from the main book, for example one teachers said,

Well, we have two-hour sessions, three days a week. That is six hours. So, at least, once a week we have something different than a regular class. So, I bring extra material (...) to play and to reinforce some content.



It should be mentioned that all of the participants manifested that they have used some forms of wordplay, for example anagrams, puns riddles or tongue twisters as warm-up activities, or to target other types of activities, for example for correcting students' pronunciation through the use of tongue twisters.

I have used tongue twisters not to teach vocabulary, but to strengthen their pronunciation. I use that more for having students, you know to help them to vocalize the words correctly. (T1)

The participants started explaining how they have applied wordplay in their classrooms. One teacher said that she has used humorous wordplay to complement other strategies. Some of the participants explained why they have used wordplay. The participants explained that these activities *are different, useful, entertaining and very effective (T2)*.

Other participants mentioned the importance motivation could have for learning new words and the participant explained how humorous wordplay could be used to motivate EFL learners for leaning new words. One of the participants explained that she has used some forms of wordplay, *When I see they are kind of unmotivated I try to use them. (T2)*

if you make your class entertaining and fun, students, like, feel motivated, and motivation is a key. .I don't know. It's something... It's a must so they can learn. Yeah, yeah. I think that fun activities are memorable, and they can learn easier. (T3)



As a final consideration, one of the participants mentioned one advantage that using wordplay has for teaching vocabulary. The participant expressed that

students will feel less stressed and they will learn vocabulary without even noticing it. (T5)

At this point, it is necessary to explain that two subcategories emerged in this question. One of these subcategories is the teachers' perceptions about the use of anagrams, puns, riddles, or tongue twisters according to the level of the students. One participant detailed,

If you teach first second or third levels you have to use tongue twisters which are not very complicated especially because they don't know the vocabulary or the words you are using, but for example in fifth, sixth, or seventh levels you can use them because they can manage the language in a better way. I think you can use any but according to the language. You can use any kind of pun, riddle or tongue twister but according to the ability to speak (T3).

The following subcategory in this question was *the inappropriate examples of humorous wordplay according to the content*. Forman (2011) mentioned that not all forms of humor can be used in classrooms because a teacher should be aware of the content that anagrams, puns, riddles, or tongue twisters might have. One of the participants stated:

You don't have to use those related with those that have sexual content. I mean you can never use something like that in your class (T1).



Well I will depend on your students' level and what type of humorous content you may use, for example students from lower levels I think could get confused with some elements of puns, riddles, and tongue twisters, but I guess that high-level students will be able to deal with this material. In relation with the content I think you should avoid the ones that may contain bad or trashy language. (T5)

Teachers' Opinions about a Booklet containing Wordplay Based Activities

To start analyzing this question, the teachers explained the sources where they can find anagrams, puns, riddles or tongue twisters. A teacher said this material sometimes comes in the textbook; however, all of them said that the main source for getting this material was the internet. They use Google to find any kind of anagrams, puns, riddles, or tongue twister to complement what they are teaching in class. However, as one participant expressed, problems with internet access could be the main reason why a booklet could be useful.

Moreover, one participant said that the creation of a booklet containing anagrams, puns, riddles or tongue twisters is a good idea because it could be useful to analyze how these forms of wordplay could be applied as a strategy for teaching vocabulary.

Furthermore, to complement the idea of having a booklet, another participant mentioned that this booklet could be a useful tool because wordplay is a material commonly used with children; however, it would be interesting to find a way to adapt this kind of material for adult learners. The participant expressed that



if you check books for kids... They pretty much have those kinds of activities. It's kind of weird not to find them as often for young adults. That would be great, because I think students really like and feel comfortable and it's a... You know, we have more enjoyable classes when students get to play with language and have other activities rather than the typical ones.

Analyzing teachers' opinions was important because they expressed that humorous wordplay could be a useful way to teach vocabulary. All the information collected through these interviews was helpful in order to better understand the current state of teachers' perceptions towards the use of some strategies for teaching vocabulary.

3.3 Discussion

The importance of vocabulary in EFL processes was analyzed by Stæhr (2008) and Khan et al. (2018), and in this research project, the participants also agreed with the relevance that vocabulary has for learning English. Furthermore, in the analyzed studies and in this research project, vocabulary was seen as a good predictor to develop language proficiency concluding that helping EFL learners to master their vocabulary might help learners to improve their language abilities.

Another aspect to mention is the language level of learners. Forman (2011) and Heidari-Shahreza (2018) reviewed the use of humorous wordplay indicating the experiences they had in EFL environments. However, in both studies the language level of participants was a determining factor to consider when using wordplay. Both authors explained that using humorous wordplay required a deeper language knowledge, and they proposed to use wordplay with learners that had a higher level of language proficiency because they would



be better able to understand humorous wordplay. The authors indicated that deciphering wordplay could be difficult for low-level learners because “it contains ambiguous meanings” (as cited in Heidari-Shahreza, 2018, p.15).

The language level of learners was also considered a key factor in this project because the participants believed that higher-level students would be able to manage language accurately and this way to understand humorous wordplay in a better way especially understanding the double meaning or the ambiguity that puns might have.

When analyzing the benefits of using wordplay in EFL environments, Heidari-Shahreza (2018) indicated that helping learners increase their metalinguistic knowledge was a benefit of using wordplay as a tool to enhance the EFL learning processes. Additionally, Forman (2011), Heidari-Shahreza (2018), and the participants of this research project strongly believed that wordplay could be used to change the class atmosphere, to increase learners’ motivation and attention, and to decrease learners’ stress.

Moreover, the participants’ age and the use of wordplay for teaching vocabulary were also aspects that were analyzed. In the studies conducted by Rahmadanta (2018), Wiwin et al. (2016), Rahman (2016), and Manurung (2014) the participants were young learners from fourth to eighth grades. In these studies, the target groups were kids. However, in this research project it should be mentioned that the target group were adult learners. Although humorous wordplay is commonly used with children, participants were interested in examining how this material could be adjusted for adult learners.

The main difference between previous studies and this project is the fact that the participants manifested that they had not used wordplay for teaching vocabulary. The



majority of participants explained that they had used wordplay in their language classes but only for warm-up activities or as icebreakers.

Hence, this is the reason creating a booklet containing activities based on wordplay is a necessary tool to enhance learners' vocabulary. It is through the application of adapted material commonly used for children that adult learners will have the opportunity to use a different part of the English language.

3.4 Description of the Booklet.

As was explained, to indicate what wordplay-based activities might be useful for teaching vocabulary it was necessary to create a booklet with these kind of exercises. The Cambridge Dictionary states that a "booklet is a very thin book with a small number of pages and a paper cover, giving information about something (n.d).

The booklet was designed for B1 learners from the third level at the Institute of Languages from the credit system at the University of Cuenca. B1 learners were the target group of learners chosen because they could be considered independent learners that could deal with non-routine information for example in this case humorous wordplay (Council of Europe, 2017).

The document analysis was used to determine the main types of wordplay, and this information was included in the booklet to organize it into four parts. The first part had activities to work with puns, the second part containing exercises to work with riddles, the third part containing riddles, and the last part that containing exercises to work with tongue twisters



At the beginning of the booklet, it was included a section explaining and defining what wordplay is and the concepts of some examples of wordplay, (puns, riddles, anagrams, and tongue twisters) will be included. The researcher considered that indicating the most important definitions could be an effective way of familiarizing EFL learners with the concepts and the material they are going to work with.

The booklet included different types of questions such as multiple-choice questions, gap-filling questions, matching exercises or word-formation type questions that can be used for in exercises to reinforce vocabulary (Pavlů,2009). Furthermore, visual supports were used to explain the different aspects of wordplay for example types of puns were presented through visual puns. “Visual puns are a type of visual expression in which the concept of wordplay is applied to an image” (Hempelmann & Samson, as cited in Giorgadze, 2015, p.362.). Finally, at the end of the booklet, the answer key sheet was included and this way learners could check the answers of the different exercises.

Figure 2 was used as an example of a visual pun that could be used in the booklet.



Figure 2: Visual Puns Punny Pixels. (Digital Synopsis, nd.). Retrieved from: <https://digitalsynopsis.com/design/punny-pixels-illustrated-puns-visual-wordplay>

The final project can be analyzed in Appendix 4.



CHAPTER IV

Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

Vocabulary is an important part of any language. In previous chapters, authors like Wilkins considered vocabulary even more important than grammar because without vocabulary no message could be conveyed (as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 2013) assuming that vocabulary could be considered the core of a language. On the other hand, Neuman and Dwyer (2009), and Alqahtani (2015) demonstrated that increasing the processes of learning new words improves language skills of EFL learners.

The previous idea was supported during the interviews with teachers. This group of participants manifested the importance that vocabulary has in the EFL learning processes, although vocabulary is not considered one of the main skills of the English language, it is important since having a big command of vocabulary could help express and convey a learners' message accurately.

The research questions of this study were the following: *how can humorous wordplay be used in EFL environments for teaching vocabulary? What are the most common forms of wordplay that could be used in EFL classrooms?* These questions were answered in the theoretical framework and through the analysis of some empirical studies: puns, anagrams, riddles and tongue twisters were determined as the most common examples of wordplay. These forms of wordplay were used to create the booklet at the end of this study.



The main and specific objectives of this study were to determine how anagrams, puns, riddles, and tongue twisters as forms of wordplay could be used as a tool to enhance vocabulary learning processes. Another objective was to describe how these forms of wordplay could be applied for adult EFL learners as in the case of this study, B1 learners at the Institute of Languages at the University of Cuenca. These objectives were reached in the literature review. The analyzed studies indicated how puns, anagrams, riddles, and tongue twisters can be used to enhance vocabulary in EFL learners.

Additionally, the categories of puns explained by Lems (2011) were used to indicate different meanings that words can have through the use of homographs. Also, puns were used to indicate homophones and how some different forms of pronunciation could be used to generate new words.

On the other hand, solving anagrams and riddles could be used to form words from the existing words or letters. As was analyzed, humorous wordplay might be considered a good resource for providing material to be used in a vocabulary learning process, as shown with anagrams, EFL learners were able to create new words and this way increase their vocabulary.

Furthermore, the advantages of using tongue twisters was explained through the use of alliteration that consists in repeating the same sounds that is characteristic of tongue twisters and proves beneficial when committing words memory (Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service, n.d).

Hence, it is necessary to mention that even the fact that humorous wordplay is commonly used for children, kids, or in nursery programs, this material could be adjusted



to obtain interesting activities for adults because using activities based on wordplay could create the opportunity to explore other aspects of the English language such as the socio-cultural aspects in which humorous wordplay could take place,.

4.2 Recommendations

At the end of this project there are some recommendations that should be stated for further studies. First, since humorous wordplay is a part of the English language and requires some degree of language proficiency, the material created in the booklet should be used for language learners who are familiar with the English language and are able to understand the proposed activities. Once learners understand the activities proposed in the booklet, they will have the opportunity to create their own expressions of humorous wordplay.

Furthermore, humorous wordplay is a concept that can be used to create different activities in EFL classes. Wordplay can be used to create cooperative learning situations among learners and can also be used for increasing critical thinking, decoding the meaning of puns, anagrams, riddles and tongue twisters.

Another recommendation is that humorous wordplay not be used in EFL classrooms only as icebreakers or warm-up activities. Different authors such as Tzakosta, and Sfiraki (2016) manifested that humorous wordplay should be included in the formal curricula of English language programs. Due to its different elements that can be analyzed in formal



learning classrooms, EFL learners will have the opportunity to explore other aspects (phonological, syntactical, and linguistics) of the English language.

Further research can investigate how humorous wordplay is used as a tool to enhance other aspects or skills of the English language such as teaching grammatical structures, or how to improve the speaking ability, or how wordplay could be used to indicate linguistics, and the socio-cultural aspects of the English language. The current study should be considered the starting point to investigate the importance that humorous wordplay could have in EFL environments.

Lastly, bringing humorous wordplay to the classroom could contextualize EFL learning classrooms because humor is an important part of a language that could be used as a motivating element. Forman (2011) mentions the importance that humorous wordplay may have in EFL environments, he states that “Humour is a form of verbal art which emerges from creativity, and shades into wit, into intelligence, all of which are dimensions of daily language use” (p. 562-563). Humorous wordplay should not be considered a distracting element instead, it should be considered an invaluable resource that could produce meaningful and interactive learning situations.





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APPENDICES



Appendix 1

CONSENT FORM

I have read and I understand the provided information about this research project (Using humorous wordplay to enhance vocabulary processes in B1 students) and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form.

I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____

Date _____



Appendix 2: Teachers' Interview

Teachers' Interview

Personal Information

1. Gender

Female _____ Male _____

2. Age Range

20-25 _____ 30-35 _____ 35-40 _____ 40-45 _____

More than 45 _____

3. How long have you been teaching English?

4. What levels have you taught mostly at the University of Cuenca?

5. How important do you consider vocabulary is in the EFL learning process?

6. What strategies do you use for teaching vocabulary?

What kind of difficulties have you found in teaching vocabulary?

7. Do you think that using humor such as anagrams, puns, riddles or tongue twisters could make English lessons more enjoyable and effective? Why or why not?



8. Do you think that students want teachers to use humor when teaching vocabulary? Why or why not?

9. Have you ever used anagrams, puns, riddles or tongue twisters as a strategy to teach vocabulary?

What types of anagrams, puns, riddles or tongue twisters do you think are not appropriate to use in classroom?



Appendix 3: Transcriptions from Teachers' Interview

Teacher's 1 Interview

Personal Information

Gender

Female _____ Male X

Age Range

20-25 _____ 30-35 _____ 35-40 X 40-45 _____ Older than 45 _____

Interviewer: Ok. Good morning, professor. Thank you for helping me with this interview. So to start, I would like to know: how long have you been teaching English?

Teacher 1: Good morning. I've been teaching English for about eighteen years now.

Interviewer: Yeah. Ok. Just in the institute?

Teacher 1: .When I graduated, I started working in a... In a school; in an elementary school. Then, I moved into a high school. Then, I moved into a language institute.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 1: And then, I moved into the university. So, at the university, I've been teaching for about thirteen years now.

Interviewer: Yeah. Ok, thank you. And what levels have you taught mostly at the... At the language institute?

Teacher 1: Yeah, .I would say that I've been teaching between intermediate and advanced courses. At this moment, like, for the last year, I started teaching like basic levels, but mostly for my teacher career, I've been doing like intermediate and, .High... .Like upper levels.



Interviewer: Yeah. Ok. and are you working all of the systems, all of the levels that the language institute offers? I mean the credit courses, the intensive courses...?

Teacher 1: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yea. I've taught the 'Créditos' program, I've taught the intensive programs, and even, like, we have the professional programs. I've taught the TOEFL preparation course also.

Interviewer: Yeah. Ok. Have you had the opportunity to travel to the States?

Teacher 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Or to any speaking country?

Teacher 1: Yeah. I've actually been to the States for academic purposes and also for, er, like pleasure.

Interviewer: Let me introduce the topic please with this question how important do you consider vocabulary for learning English?

Teacher 1: Well I strongly believe that if we as teachers don't build a strong list of words, students won't be able to communicate effectively in the future.

Interviewer: Could you tell me why please?

Teacher 1: Because as I also consider grammar and reading are very important too and vocabulary is related directly with these parts of the language. If our students don't have an enough numbers of words as I told you they won't be able communicate or to use English correctly.

Interviewer: Ok. According to your experience, what strategies do you think are the most helpful for teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 1: .One that I really like a lot is teaching vocabulary through readings and through songs, like lyrics.

Interviewer: Right.



Teacher 1: I guess that readings will, like, give the students a chance, you know, to understand the words within a context. So, that's why I use readings for teaching vocabulary. And I like also, like, songs, because that's the way, you know, sort of like, er, they can get a grip of what words mean, you know, though, like, .music.

Interviewer: Ok. And what kind of difficulties have you found in teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 1: One of the most common, like, drawbacks of vocabulary or teaching vocabulary is the fact that, you know, words, do not remain in their long-term memory.

Interviewer: Yeah. Ok.

Teacher 1: Well, what I've seen is, like, you know, that they are aware of the meaning of words, or how to use these words, you know, for a test or for quiz, but then, after a while It's Like, for example... Like doing the midterm test or the final text, they notice that, sort of, like, they have forgotten those words that you've taught.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Ok. You mentioned that you use songs.

Teacher 1: Uh-huh.

Interviewer: .Have you ever noticed that songs could contain anagrams, puns or some kind of these jokes?

Teacher 1: .Well mostly, like, songs have, like, .Like... .Like slangs.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Teacher 1: More than puns. But some of them have, actually. Yeah, but I haven't actually, like, focused on the pun itself, you know, to teach that.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Teacher 1: But yeah, yeah. Some of them do have that.

Interviewer: Ok. Thanks. Do you think that using humor, such as anagrams puns, riddles or tongue twisters could make English lessons more enjoyable?



Teacher 1: Definitely. You know, everything that makes learning a language more memorable it's, of course, you know, like something positive.

Interviewer: Have you ever used these instruments to teach vocabulary?

Teacher 1: I guess I brought up some puns, like once in a while, but it's not actually that I use them to teach vocabulary.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Teacher 1: I've used riddles as a... As a warm-up, you know, to start up the class, but not, again, to teach vocabulary. I have used tongue twisters not to teach vocabulary, but to strengthen their pronunciation. I use that more for having students, you know to help them to vocalize the words correctly.

Interviewer: Yeah, words Do you think that students would like that teachers use this kind of puns and this kind of humor, such as puns, riddles, or tongue twisters?

Teacher 1: Yeah, I wouldn't be able to tell you that exactly, whether or not they really want to have that in class, but I'm sure that, again, you know, as I said before, whatever makes the class more memorable and more interesting, I guess, you know, should be used in class.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Ok. You told me that you have used some puns.

Teacher 1: Uh-huh.

Interviewer: How often do you use puns?

Teacher 1: Yeah, as I said, is not that I actually use them, you know, in every class. I remember that I use them, like, once in a while, but it's not that I use that in a... Like in a fixed, you know, like, basis.

Interviewer: What are your sources to obtain these puns?

Teacher 1: Well, normally, I go to the internet.



Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 1: I just google them and then, you know, I try to find some, like, either anagrams, tongue twisters, riddles or, in the case of puns, you know, something that actually fits into the class because whenever you talk about puns you may have those with, er...

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher 1: With not appropriate...

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Teacher 1: You know, content.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Teacher 1: So, of course you should not be using those. So, you need to be careful when using them.

Interviewer: Yeah. Would you like to have a booklet or something like a booklet with specific puns or riddles to use in educational areas?

Teacher 1: Sure! Sure! Sure! I guess that, nowadays, you've got plenty of resources available on the web.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Teacher 1: And... What could be a good thing, is the fact of, you know, compiling, like, those appropriate ones to be used in an EFL classroom, for example.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Teacher 1: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Definitely. I guess it would be very useful.

Interviewer: Ok. And, finally, .You mentioned something about appropriate or inappropriate puns. What types of puns, riddles or tongue twisters, do you think are not appropriate in an EFL class?



Teacher 1: Again, you know, you should be aware of the type of the content, you know, the type of words you're using in there.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Teacher 1: And, of course, you would... You would have to use those, you know, related to daily communication, rather than having, you know, like sexual content, for instance, you know? I mean you would never use something like that in a class.

Interviewer: Ok. Ok, thank you. Thank you very much for your interview.

Teacher 1: You're welcome.



Teacher2's Interview

Personal Information

Gender

Female X

Male

Age Range

20-25 30-35 35-40 X 40-45 Older than 45

Interviewer: Ok. Thank you for letting me do this interview with you. So as a first question I have: how long have you been teaching English?

Teacher 2: Well, I've been a teacher for twenty years.

Interviewer: Twenty years. .How long have you been working at the university?

Teacher 2: Here, in the university, for twelve.

Interviewer: Twelve years.

Teacher: Twelve years.

Interviewer: And before? Where did you...?

Teacher 2: Before that... Well, I was a primary-school teacher. I worked at the Abraham Lincoln Center also. Teenagers.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Teacher 2: And... Well, for a long time.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 2: And then I started working here, in the university.

Interviewer: Ok. .Have you travelled to the States?



Teacher 2: Yes, I have.

Interviewer: To any speaking country?

Teacher 2: Yes, to an English-speaking country.

Interviewer: Ok. What levels have you taught mostly at the University of Cuenca?

Teacher 2: Well, I have taught... At the language school... Public speaking, creative writing, .Yeah, that's basically. And, at the institute of languages, I've taught intensive courses, the seventh level, and now I'm teaching third level credits which is the highest, you know, for those who need the requirement.

Interviewer: Let me introduce the topic please with this question how important do you consider vocabulary for learning English?

Teacher 2: Well for me vocabulary is extremely important as grammar is or even more. If you don't use the right word, it can change the meaning of what you're saying and miscommunication occurs, or it makes what you're saying impossible to understand. A lack of vocabulary is also behind a lot of issues. Students have problems with fluency and coherence in speaking, and it also impedes listening skills because they don't recognize the words the other person is saying. I know this from experience with students I have had over the years.

Interviewer: Ok. That's what really interesting. Well, according to your experience, what strategies do you use for teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 2: Well, I think I... Well, I use many different strategies, you know? Like repetition. I use, .Well, before reading and listening, we have a pre-listening section. So, we analyze, and we go through the vocabulary first. .I also ask them to write sentences to use the new vocabulary.

Interviewer: Yeah.



Teacher 2: To memorize the vocabulary, you know? To use... To associate things with the vocabulary. So, there are many different strategies going on, on the time, I should say.

Interviewer: Yeah. Ok. .What kind of difficulties have you found in teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 2: Well, .Sometimes students are not really encouraged to study vocabulary.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 2: To really learn vocabulary. The... Probably, the most difficult issue we have with our credit students is that they have to fulfill a requirement, and they are not really encouraged to learn the language. In contrast, you know, intensive-course students, they do want to learn, they are really happy to learn, they are really...

Interviewer: Motivated?

Teacher 2 Yeah, motivated to do a lot of things. So, it's kind of, you know, we need to push them a lot, you know? Speaking about credit students, and that's a challenge.

Interviewer: Do you think that using humor such as anagrams, puns, riddles or tongue twisters could make English lessons more memorable?

Teacher 2: They do. They do. In fact, I use... Not every day, but, yeah, sometimes tongue twisters, you know, those fun activities, games and things that make... Make them move.

Interviewer: Yeah,. Ok.

Teacher 2: That's a difficult... Believe it or not, even though we have young students. It's hard for them to move sometimes, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 2: Especially... Well, I have a class at one, and they are hungry.

Interviewer: Yes.

Teacher 2: And they... You know...



Interviewer: Because of the time.

Teacher 2: Like, moving them... You know, working in groups, really, .You know, when they have fun, of course, it's gonna be a lot more memorable and they will remember things.

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 2: In a more effective way. Yes.

Interviewer: Ok. Ok. The next question is: do you think that students want teachers to use humor when teaching?

Teacher 2: Oh, humor? All the time.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 2: Yeah, I think laughing is important in class because, you know, I think showing empathy to students, so, students feel comfortable. That makes a really good environment for students to learn. And, also, for the teacher to have fun. I mean to... Not to relax in class in a wrong way, but, yeah, to... To be able to... To actually go through the same path and try to reach the same goal together. So, in that sense.

Interviewer: Ok. Have you ever used anagrams, puns, riddles or tongue twisters as a strategy to teach vocabulary?

Teacher 2: Yes. As I said, you know, it's... Well, I should say that is not that frequent, but I do use them among other strategies, as I mentioned.

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 2: Yeah. Not just those, but other ones. Yes, they are definitely useful and so entertaining.

Interviewer: Yeah. Ok.

Teacher 2: And very effective.



Interviewer: Do you think...? How often do you use it?

Teacher 2: Well, .At least, once a week.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 2: Well, we just have three days, .Three days... Well, we have two-hour sessions, three days a week. That is six hours. So, at least, once a week we have something different than a regular class. So, I bring extra material, .You know, today I have dominos.

Interviewer: Yeah, Ok.

Teacher 2: So, we're gonna work with dominos to... To play and to reinforce some content.

Interviewer: And what are your sources? Where do you find the material?

Teacher 2: Well, I have a very good friend that shared a huge library folder. And... A digital one with lots of different activities. But I do use Google to find, you know... I have these ESL collective source, ESL lab, well, for listening. Well, there're many different, er, websites that you can use for that.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you think the creation of a booklet with these activities could be a good idea to collect all of this kind of material?

Teacher 2: Well, actually, if you check books for kids... They pretty much have those kinds of activities. It's kind of weird not to find them as often for young adults.

Interviewer: Yes, in this case the booklet will be designed and adapted to be used for adult people.

Teacher 2: That would be great, because, you know, I think students really like and feel comfortable and it's a... You know, we have more enjoyable classes when students get to play with language and have other activities rather than the typical ones.

Interviewer: Different.



Teacher 2: Yeah. A lot of different activities in, like, a formal book. You know, like mixing them. It will be better...

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 2: ... for them to...

Interviewer: Finally, what types of puns, riddles or tongue twisters do you think are not appropriate in EFL classrooms?

Teacher 2: Well, .in class is everything that's uplifting...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 2: ... that's really enriching not just the language, but also your values... is perfect for the class. I really avoid stuff where, you know, like, it's gonna take my students to learn something inappropriate or something that's not really, respectful for people.

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 2: So, I really adjust to, well, I wouldn't say to formal material, but I would say really, enriching and uplifting. I think that's the key word I usually use for planning...

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 2 what I gonna do with my students.

Interviewer: Ok, that's all. Thank you for your interview.

Teacher 2: Yeah, no problem.



Teacher 3's Interview

Personal Information

Gender

Female X

Male

Age Range

20-25 30-35 35-40 X 40-45 Older than 45

Interviewer: Ok, thank you. Thank you, teacher, for letting me do this interview with you.

So the first question is: how long have you been teaching English?

Teacher 3: Well, I have been teaching English for about fifteen years. Yeah, because I started when I was like 22 or 23. So, it's gonna be like fifteen years. Uh-huh.

Interviewer: Fifteen years. Ok. .How long have you been working at the language department?

Teacher 3: .Over there, I have been working for twelve years. Uh-huh.

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 3: Yes.

Interviewer: And... What is your level of English?

Teacher 3: .It's gonna be fourth level. Yeah, because I have already a master's degree, and I am also taking a doctorate right now. Uh-huh.



Interviewer: Ok. What levels have you taught mostly at the university?

Teacher 3: At the University, .At the language department, I have been teaching almost all of them. I think, er, credits... Well, Credits only has three levels, Ok?

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Teacher 3: So, I have taught three of them; all of them. And... But, for example, the intensive courses, I have taught first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth, I think.

Interviewer: Yeah. Ok.

Teacher 3: So, up to the sixth level. Uh-huh.

Interviewer: Ok to introduce the topic could you tell me please how important do you consider vocabulary for learning English?

Teacher 3: From my experience vocabulary is more than essential in the early stages and it is very difficult to catch up later in the learning process unless students make a great effort because vocabulary is the basis for learning all the other skills such as reading, writing, speaking, comprehension and it will improve language fluency. I'd say that it is extremely important.

Interviewer: According to your experience, what strategies do you use for teaching vocabulary.



Teacher 3: Yeah. So, if I want to teach vocabulary, I have to apply different strategies because, for example, it depends on the topic, and... For example, if I am talking about clothes, I really like to use, like, something real.

Interviewer: mmm like what for example

Teacher 3: Yeah, real. Real, in this case with clothes, etc. but, generally, I like to work in context. For example, I like to use readings in which the words are involved and... But I... What I don't like is to use them in isolation, because I think it's not like memorization every new word or something like that. It's something that I don't generally use.

Interviewer: Ok. And what kind of difficulties have you found in teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 3: It's difficult to teach vocabulary, especially because sometimes the word that you write is very different from the word that you pronounce. So, you know, spelling it's kind of complicated for them.

Interviewer: Yes that part it's complicated.

Teacher 3: So, I think spelling is one of the most difficult things when teaching vocabulary. So, they have to, er, learn how to write it correctly.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you think that using humor such as anagrams, puns, riddles or tongue twisters could make English lessons more memorable?

Teacher 3: Yeah... For example, I like to use tongue twisters, especially as warm-up. I haven't used that as a strategy for teaching vocabulary, but I have used them. I have used riddles, I have used tongue twisters.



Interviewer: mmm, what about puns?

Teacher 3: Puns, not so much because it's kind of difficult for them to know what a pun is, but, yes, tongue twisters and riddles, definitely, I've used them. Not specifically to teach vocabulary, but in the class, yes. Uh-huh. I have used them.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you think that students want teachers to use humor when teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 3: Yes, I think if you make your class entertaining and fun, students, like, feel motivated, and motivation is a key. I don't know. It's something... It's a must so they can learn. Yeah, yeah. I think that fun activities are memorable, and they can learn easier.

Interviewer: Ok. You told me that you have used some riddles or tongue twisters in your classes. How often do you use them?

Teacher 3: .Maybe every two lessons, probably. Because... Yes. It depends also on the topic, but I like to teach them, .Not teach them, but maybe, as I told you, it's just like as a warm-up. So... When I see that they're not... They're are kind of unmotivated ... I try to use them. Yes. But maybe four or five times in a period, in a semester, for example.

Interviewer: Yeah. Ok.

Interviewer: Is this a material that you can find in the books?

Teacher 3: Well, now with the internet you can find anything.

Interviewer: Yeah.



Teacher 3: .So, yes; yes. .Sometimes they come in the book, but sometimes I actually use it as an extra material.

Interviewer: So your main sources are from the internet.

Teacher 3: Yeah, from the internet.

Interviewer: What do you think about having a booklet with this kind of material?

Teacher 3: Yes, I think it would be great, because sometimes you have problems with the internet connections so the booklet will be a good option.

Interviewer: Ok. Finally, what types of anagrams, puns, riddles, or tongue twisters do you think are not appropriate in EFL classrooms?

Teacher 3: Well, it depends on the level, I think. If you're teaching, for example, first and second levels you have to try to use tongue twisters which are not very complicated.

Interviewer: Ok,

Teacher 3: Especially because they don't, maybe, know the vocabulary, etc., or the words you are using. But, for example, in a fifth, sixth or seventh level you can use them. Because they can manage the language in a better way. So, I think you can use any, but according to the language.

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 3: I mean according to the... According to the level. .You can use any kind of riddle, or any kind of tongue twister, but connected to their ability to speak. Uh-huh.



Interviewer: Do you think puns could be difficult for students?

Teacher 3: .Yes, because... Not difficult because maybe they don't understand, especially... Also, it happens with riddles. Sometimes riddles in Spanish and in English are different. But I think puns... We have, maybe to, as I told you, to teach them what a pun is. and then they will realize how it works, etc. But they're very funny. If you have a very high level of, maybe, of English, you can... You know how it works. So... Yeah. So, I think puns are kind of more complicated than the other two.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for this interview.

Teacher 3: You're welcome.



Teacher 4's Interview

Personal Information

Gender

Female X

Male

Age Range

20-25 30-35 35-40 40-45 Older than 45 X

Interviewer: Good afternoon. Thank you for letting me do this interview with you. So, the first question is: how long have you been teaching English?

Teacher 4: I've been teaching English for about thirty years.

Interviewer: Ok. How long have you been working at the institute?

Teacher 4: Here, at the university, I've been working only for a few months.

Interviewer: Oh.

Teacher 4: For five months.

Interviewer: Where're you from?

Teacher 4: I'm from Venezuela.

Interviewer: Oh, Ok. What levels have you taught?

Teacher 4: All the levels you can imagine.

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 4: In thirty years, I have been teaching all the levels; conversational levels. I've also taught ESP, English for Specific Purposes. Ok? I worked in universities, high schools, language institutions. So...



Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 4: I have even taught Spanish.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. That's really good. What levels are you teaching here at the...?

Teacher 4: Here, I'm teaching levels 1 and 2. 1 for intensive, and for credits, level 2.

Interviewer: The basic levels.

Teacher 4: Yeah, yeah. The basic levels. I just started four months ago.

Interviewer: Let me introduce the topic please with this question how important do you consider vocabulary for learning English?

Teacher 4: As a teacher of more than 30 years of experience, I find teaching vocabulary extremely important. Having pupils knowing a certain amount of vocabulary builds their self-confidence, makes them independent learners and improve their understanding. Having done so, they will enjoy using English more and also improve themselves in other skills such as writing and speaking.

Interviewer: Ok. According to your experience, what strategies do you use for teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 4: That depends on the groups. That depends on the groups. I usually try to mix approaches. I use a more eclectic approach. Sometimes I use drills and buttoned-up structures.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: But, most of the time, I try to use the inductive-deductive method for them so that they can figure out the vocabulary only through pictures, ok? And videos.

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 4: And a lot of things.



Interviewer: What kind of difficulties have you found in teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 4: In teaching vocabulary, most of them is interference; interference from L1 to L2, Ok. They always try to translate everything from Spanish, from their native language, from L1 to L2. That's the most difficult part: to have them think in English and not in Spanish.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you think that using humor such as anagrams, puns, riddles or tongue twisters could make English lessons more memorable?

Teacher 4: I totally agree. I do it in class. They laugh a lot.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: And when they laugh, they remember. That's meaningful learning, Ok? If your class is boring, it's going to be very difficult for them to remember things because that's not going to work, Ok? They need to have more meaningful learning. And when you use humor, jokes, and you... They like it, they love it, and they learn better. They remember.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you think that students would like that teachers use humor when teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 4: I think so. According to my experience?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: Ok. They like... Yeah, they like teachers who use humor.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Ok. Have you ever used puns, riddles, or tongue twisters as a strategy to teach vocabulary?

Teacher 4: Here, no. But in the institutions where I used to work and the university where I used to work, yeah, I did.

Interviewer: How do you use them?

Teacher 4: I have them try to memorize them first.



Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: Then, after they memorized them, I used to give them a prize to the best one, Ok? The one who repeated it the best.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah. Ok.

Teacher 4: I usually gave them a chocolate or a candy. It was when I used to work in a language institution, Ok? But... At the university, I was teaching ESP, English for Specific Purposes, for the Engineering students, and... They... They don't... They don't use speaking very much, Ok?

Interviewer: Yeah, and could tell me why?

Teacher: Because... When you teach ESP, you are based on two skills only: reading and writing.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: But mostly reading, Ok? The idea is that... The main objective of ESP is that students understand vocabulary from their majors, from their careers.Ok? So, for example, I had students of Petroleum Engineering, and the readings had to be from petroleum engineering, and they were supposed to understand how to say, for example, what a bit is, Ok? What a drill is; what an oil rig is. That kind of vocabulary.

Interviewer: Ok.

Teacher 4: So, you don't use tongue twisters in those cases.

Interviewer: Ok. How often do you use them?

Teacher 4: Now, I haven't use them in this institute.

Interviewer: No, in the previous institutes.

Teacher 4: .Oh. Very often; about once or twice a week.



Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: But it was about twenty years ago.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah.

Teacher 4: It was a very long time ago.

Interviewer: Ok. Where do you get that information?

Teacher 4: Well...

Interviewer: What are your sources?

Teacher 4: Oh, my sources? Well, when I used to work in the institute, I got them from books.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: Because we didn't have much access to internet, but now, my sources are the internet, Ok? And books too.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: Also, some... Some vocabulary that I can find by YouTube, etc.

Interviewer: Last question. What types of puns, riddles, or tongue twisters do you think are not appropriate in EFL classrooms?

Teacher 4: I haven't had the opportunity to, now, recently, to work with tongue twisters, but... I don't think students of levels one and two should have tongue twisters because they are not familiar...

Interviewer: With the language.

Teacher 4: Yeah, with the language yet. So, I guess that tongue twisters should be used with students of higher levels.



Interviewer: Yeah. This kind of puns?

Teacher 4: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Riddles?

Teacher 4: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: All of them?

Teacher 4: Yeah. And puzzles too; riddles, Ok? But... Levels five and six.

Interviewer: Five and six.

Teacher 4: Yes. Because they're not... They're not very related to the language yet.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Teacher 4: So, it's better for them to use them in higher levels.

Interviewer: Ok. Do you think that the creation of a booklet with this material would be a good idea for these students of higher levels?

Teacher 4: Oh, yeah. Of course, it would. Uh-huh.

Interviewer: Because...

Teacher 4: Yeah, yeah. Because the more they practice, the more fluency they get.

Interviewer: Ok. Thank you very much. That's all.

Teacher 4: You're welcome. Ok.

Teachers 5' Interview

Personal Information

Gender



Female X Male _____

Age Range

20-25 _____ 30-35 _____ 35-40 X 40-45 _____ More than 45 _____

Interviewer: Good morning thank you for helping me with this interview. Ok could you tell me please how long have you been teaching English?

Teacher 5: I have been teaching English for around 10 years.

Interviewer: What levels have you taught mostly at the University of Cuenca?

Teacher 5: I have taught all the levels at the language institute, and the University of Cuenca I have taught different subjects.

Interviewer: ok to start with the topic could you tell me please how important vocabulary in EFL learning processes?

Teacher 5:

Interviewer: Ok the next question is what strategies do you use for teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 5: I've used different strategies to teach English, being translation the last resource. It's important for students to get familiar with English word without translating them that's why I like to use different methods in order for them to know what is the meaning of new words according to context for example.

Interviewer: what kind of difficulties have you found in teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 5: There are many problems for teaching vocabulary but for me the most significant has been students are sometimes reluctant to use English during their classes or to use the new words they have learned.

Interviewer: Do you think that using humor such as puns, riddles or tongue twisters could make English lessons more enjoyable and effective? Why or why not?



Teacher 5: Of course! Because students will feel less stressed and they will learn vocabulary without even noticing it.

Interviewer: Have you ever used puns, riddles or tongue twisters as a strategy to teach vocabulary?

Teacher 5: No I haven't used them as strategy for teaching vocabulary specifically, but I have used them as a warm-up activity to change how regular classes are.

Interviewer: How often have you use puns, riddles or tongue twisters in your classes?

Teacher 5: I have use them only once or twice during my classes.

Interviewer: What are your sources to get this material?

Teacher 5: I mainly use the internet. I think this is the main source to get this material.

Interviewer: Do you think that creating a booklet to compile this material could be a good idea to use for teaching vocabulary?

Teacher 5: Yes, I think it could be a great idea to have some exercises with puns, riddles or tongue twisters.

Interviewer; What types of anagrams, puns, riddles or tongue twisters r do you think are not appropriate to use in classroom?

Teacher 5: Well I will depends on your students' level and what type of humorous content you may use, for example students from lower levels I think could get confused with some elements of puns, riddles, and tongue twiters, but I guest that high-level students will be able to deal with this material. In relation with the content I think you should avoid the ones that may contain bad or trashy language.

Interviewer; Thanks for your time.

Teacher 5: You're welcome.



Appendix 4: Booklet







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Introduction

Wordplay is a figurative language used in jokes especially in puns, anagrams, riddles or tongue twister. This booklet attempts to include humor using a common part of language as an incredible source that could be used to create new learning experiences.

The main objective of this booklet is to help B1 learners from the Institute of Languages from the University of Cuenca to learn new words using this guide to increase learners' vocabulary. This booklet has a bunch of activities including humorous content and also it has a lot of visual aids. At the beginning students can find some introductory exercises to familiarize students with the material they will work in later on in the booklet.

In this booklet students could find hilarious content that can teach them multiple meanings of words or same forms of pronunciation for the same words. Also, students will have the opportunity to solve riddles,



anagrams, and to repeat tongue twisters and this way to improve their vocabulary.

Enjoy and have fun with this booklet.

The author.



Brief Definitions

Pun

is a clever and amusing use of a word or phrase with two meanings, or of words with the same sound but different meanings.

Collins Dictionary

Anagram

A word or phrase made by arranging in a different order the letters of another word or phrase”

(Rahman, 2016, p. 130).



Riddles

are expressions comprising of a question image and an answer. The answer is hidden in the question, which simultaneously both misleads and provides a hint to the right answer

(Kaivola-Bregenhøj, 2017).

Tongue Twisters

are words, phrases or sentences difficult to articulate because of a succession of similar consonantal sounds

Merriam Webster Dctionary

Introductory Exercises

Circle the correct picture.

The following exercises (1,2,3) will introduce what homographs, homophones are to help students later on to understand how these words can be used in puns.

Exercise 4: You'll be working with *homographs* words.

These are words that are pronounced in the same way but have multiple meanings.

He greets his cousins with a wave of hand.



The abstract shouldn't contain more than 300 words.

Abstract

The present Master's thesis seeks to their network relations during the ex four theoretical perspectives includi



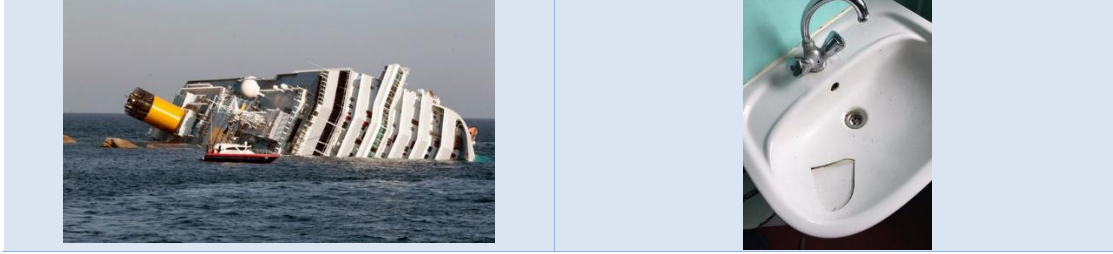
She had had a lower back pain for three months.



The baby has a short fine hair.



The bathroom sink was broken.



**Choose the correct word and complete the sentence**

In this exercise you'll be working with homophone words. These are words that are pronounced in the same way but have different meanings and are spelled in a different way.

Regina _____ pizza with his friends	ate	eight
I need to _____ food for my tomorrow's travel.	buy	by
I hurt my _____ when I was at work.	I	eyes
One of the most interesting New York's attraction is the _____	fairy	ferry
I can't _____ what my father is telling me.	here	hear
_____ favorite season is winter.	hour	our
I prefer to travel at _____ because there aren't traffic jams.	night	knight

Identify the mistakes and correct them.

Children bought suites in a big candy shop.

My mom needs to buy flower to prepare the birthday cake.



Speak allowed during the classrooms.

The teacher said take a peace of paper.

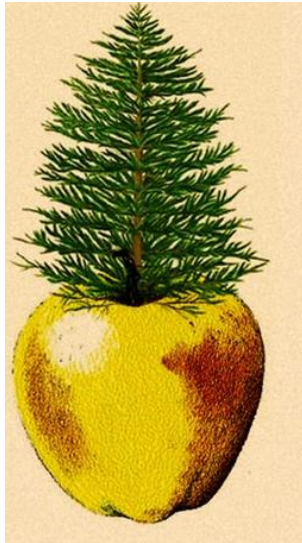
Bee quiet please!

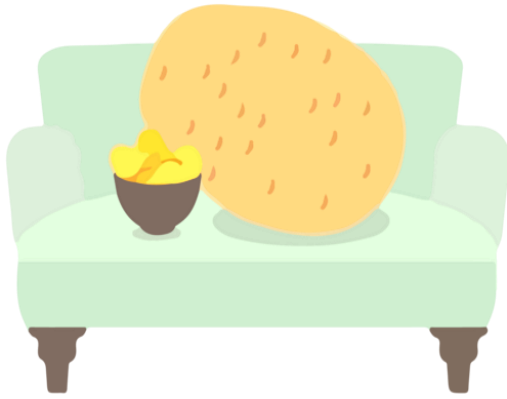
The professor nose about new surgical techniques.

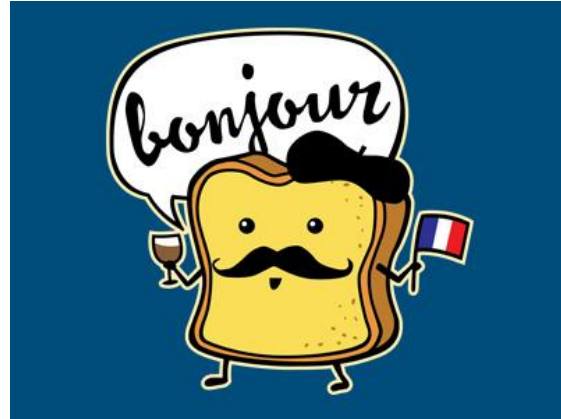


Name the following pictures. You can use the words below in the box.

Flash memory	Watermelon
Just in case	Banana Split
French toast	Pineapple
Brainstorm	Soap opera
Super bowl	Couch potato







Circle the correct sentence that represents the following pictures.

B 4

Ball 4

Before

A vitamin



Look four goats

Eyes Ball 4 goat

I forgot.



Great	Repeat Eight times letters g and r	8 Grams
-------	------------------------------------	---------



CUBIC	See you	Copper
-------	---------	--------



3 cycles	Tricycle	Cycles' sale r
----------	----------	----------------



Leaf for a bee	Look at the bee and the leaf.	I believe in you.
----------------	-------------------------------	-------------------





Chemical component	Date	Eight developing countries
--------------------	------	----------------------------

What does this mean?

Discover the hidden meaning

Example

Death life Life after death

stand _____
|

you/just/me _____

minute minute on _____
minute



| R | e | a | d | _____

Matching the pictures with the correct sentence



feet	feet
feet	feet
feet	feet
<hr/>	
ground	

Circle the correct word

Check to check

Sgeg

Meaning meaning

Circles around the eyes

	horse	dinasour
parrot	<u>correct</u>	
	pot	
house		

Tuna fish
Two na fish

Scrambled eggs

Nafish nafish



Double meaning

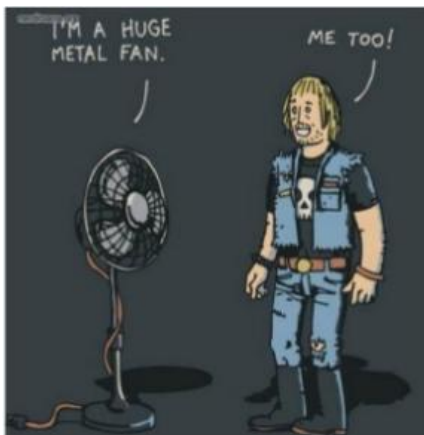
✓ 2 ✓

Six feet over ground

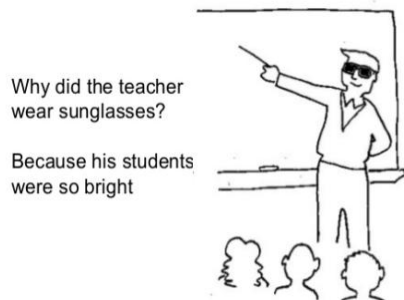
Look at the pictures and identify the homograph words.

You'll be working with *look-a-like puns*.

These puns use homographs words.



.....



.....



Time flies like an arrow
Fruit flies like a banana

.....





.....



.....

Horses are very stable animals.



.....



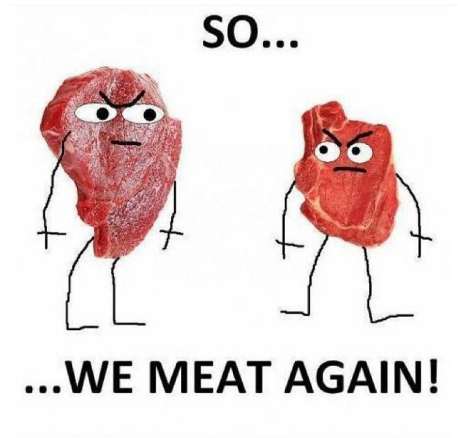
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Look at the pictures and identify the homophones words.

You'll be working with *sound-a-like puns*.

These puns use homophones words.



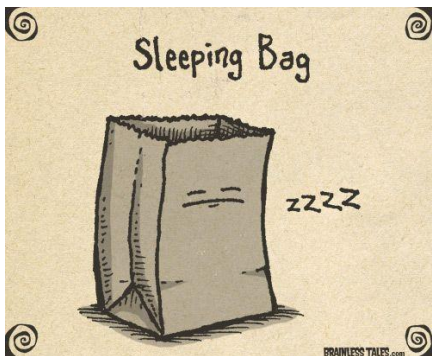
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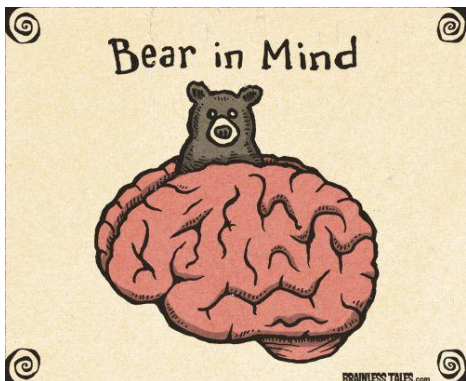
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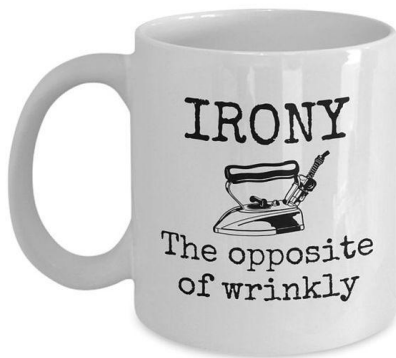
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Read the following puns, identify, and categorize them in the chart below sound-a-like puns or look-a-like puns.

- a. A bicycle can't stand on his own because is 2 tired.
- b. An investigator is an alligator in a vest.
- c. A pear pair are two pears together.
- d. Where do medieval soldiers study? Knights studied at night school.
- e. Lettuce know if you have found a fresh salad.
- f. Where do you find giant snails? On the ends of giants' fingers.
- g. I have a tearrific day at work.
- h. Peas not war.
- i. The past, the present, and the future walk into a bar... It was tense.
- j. Why is the obtuse triangle always upset? Because it is never right.
- k. A barometer walks into a bar –I need a drink. I am under a lot of pressure-
- l. – It was nice to see you.
 - Yes, hope to see you again soon so we can ketchup.

Sound-a-like puns	Look-a-like puns
	a



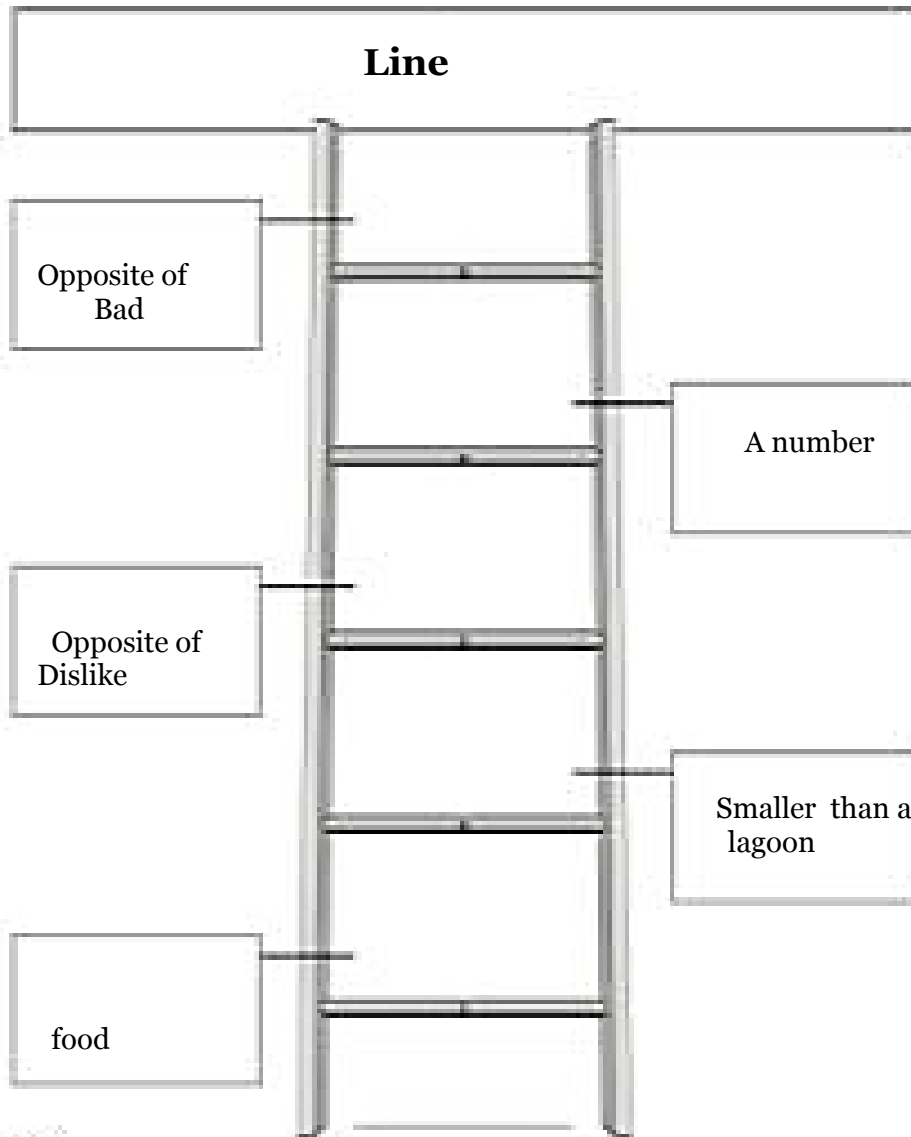


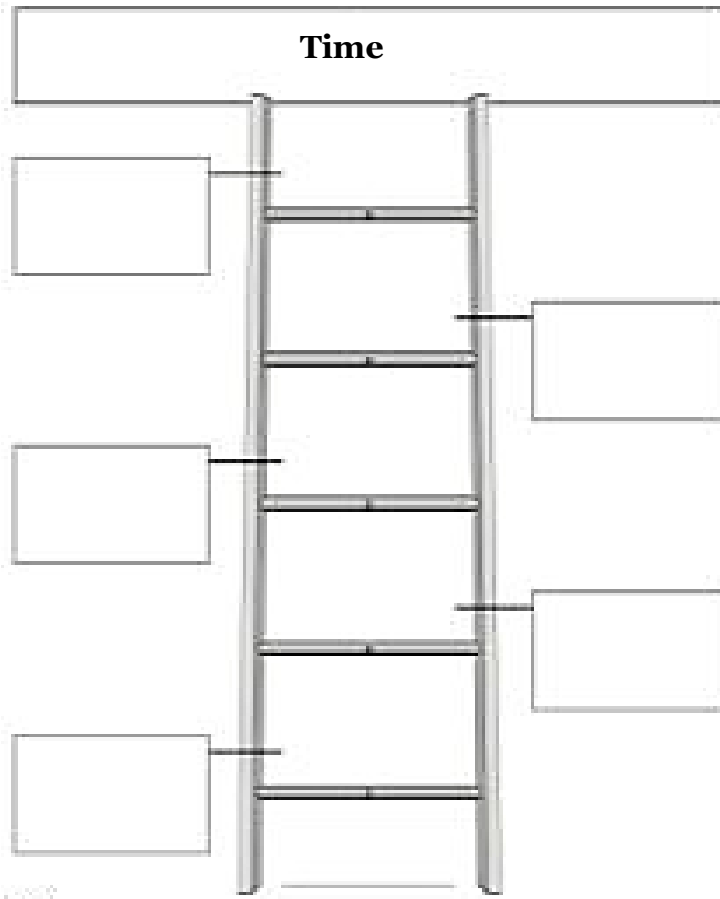


Word ladders

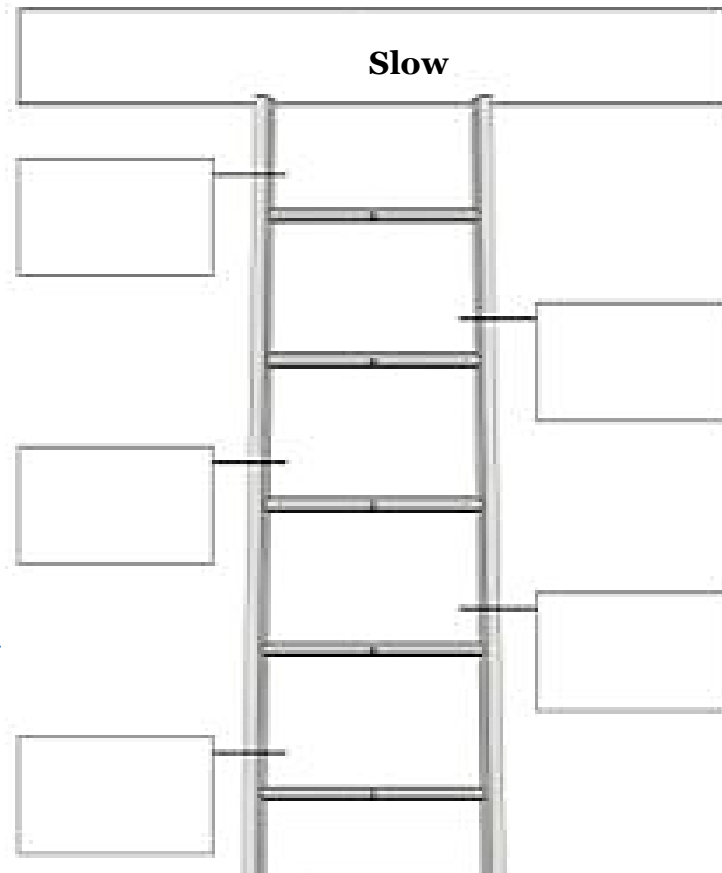
Form new words changing only one letter each time.

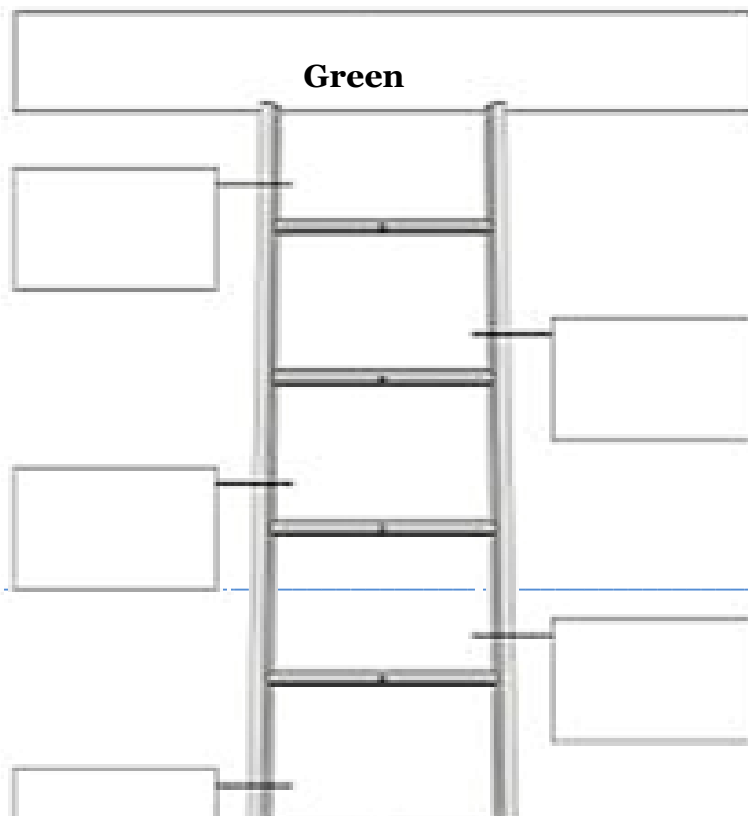
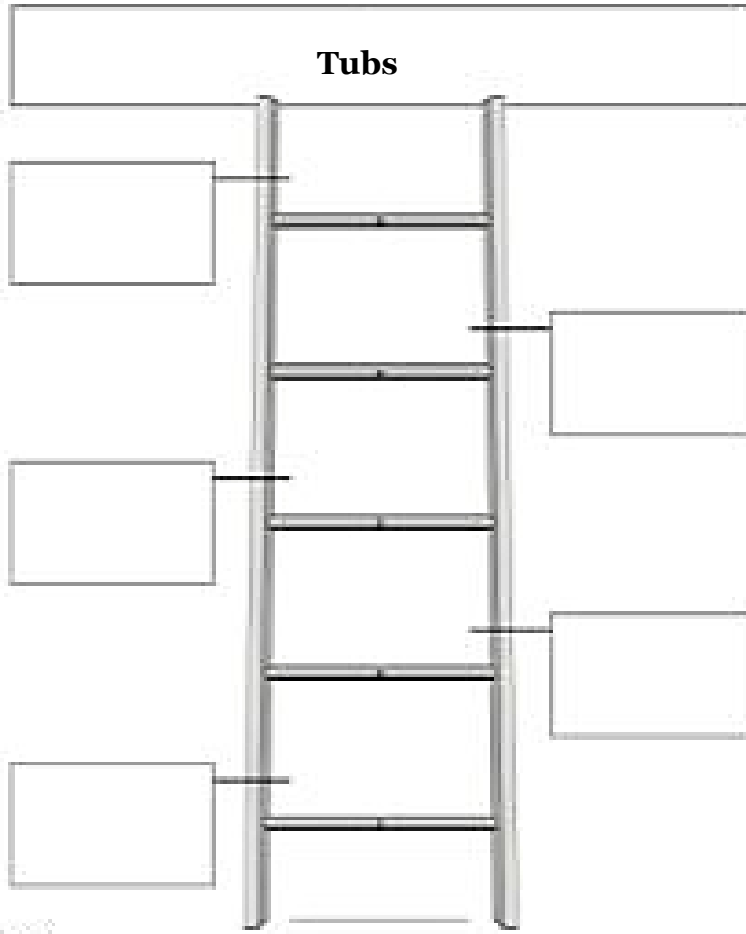
Lie
Die
Tie
Toe
Poe
Pow
Now





...







Could you solve these anagrams?

Clue: These are names of famous people.

- acts fink intervenor _____
- ripley vessel _____
- bath steele _____
- Len nh nj Ono _____
- la Simona _____
- Adidas Lolarv _____
- bite bothh _____

Find the mate of the following words.

You have to use all letters.

Mate meat _____

Garden _____

Credit _____

News _____

Cruel _____

Lemon _____

Tyred _____

Grade _____



Army_____

How many words can you create from



The only condition is that every word should have one letter *t*

<i>Rath</i>	

How many words can you form from this word?



You should form new words using only three letters-

<i>Rin</i>	

Form words from the following word





Christmas

You should form five-letters words.

<i>Stars</i>	

Make out words from the following word



You should made out three-letters words.

<i>let</i>	

Form words from the following word



You should form four-letters words.

<i>Pears</i>	
--------------	--



Form words from the following word



You should create three-letters words.

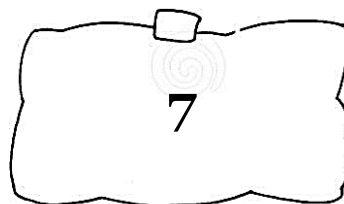
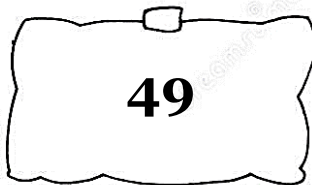
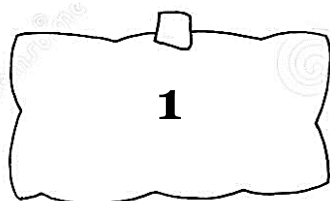
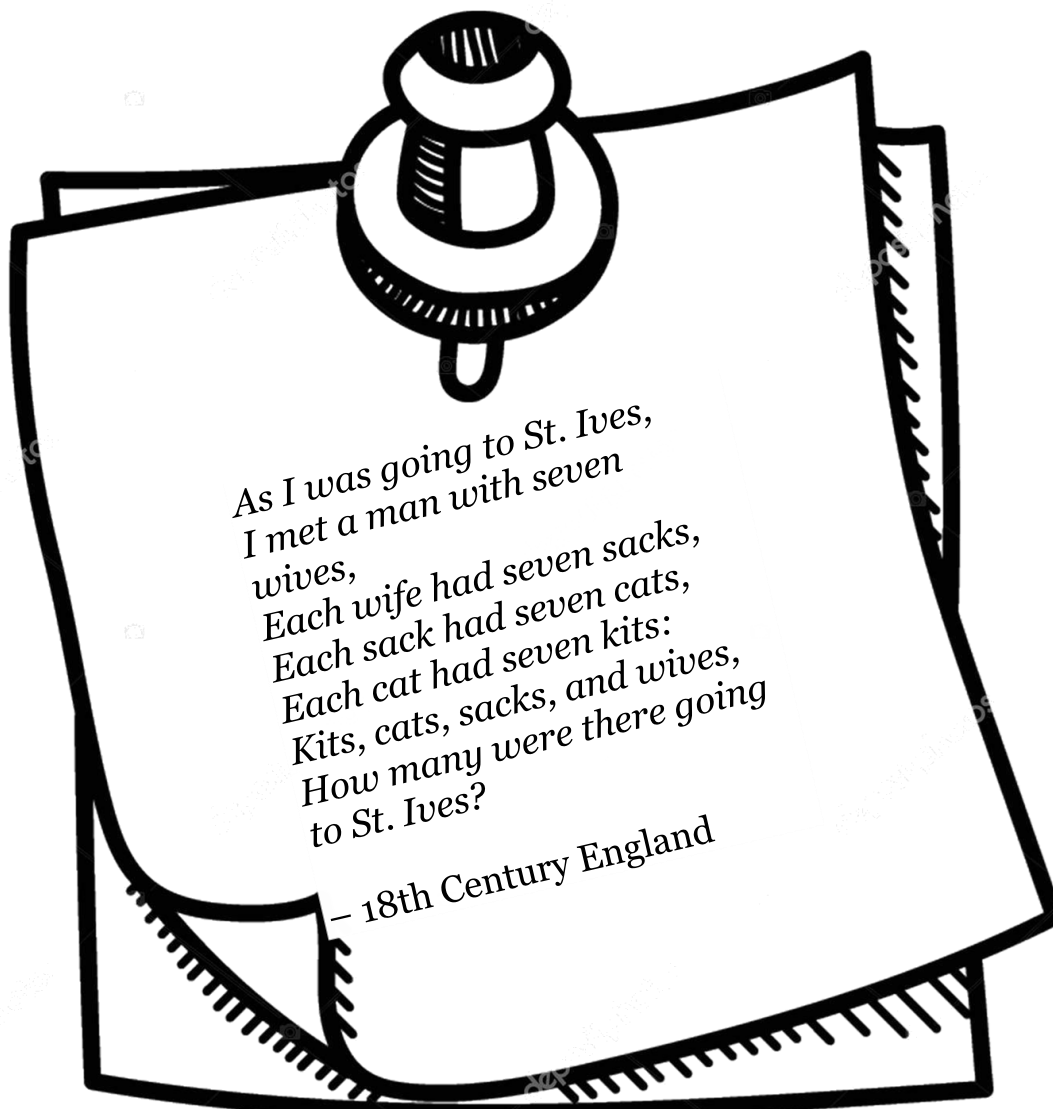
<i>Ate</i>	

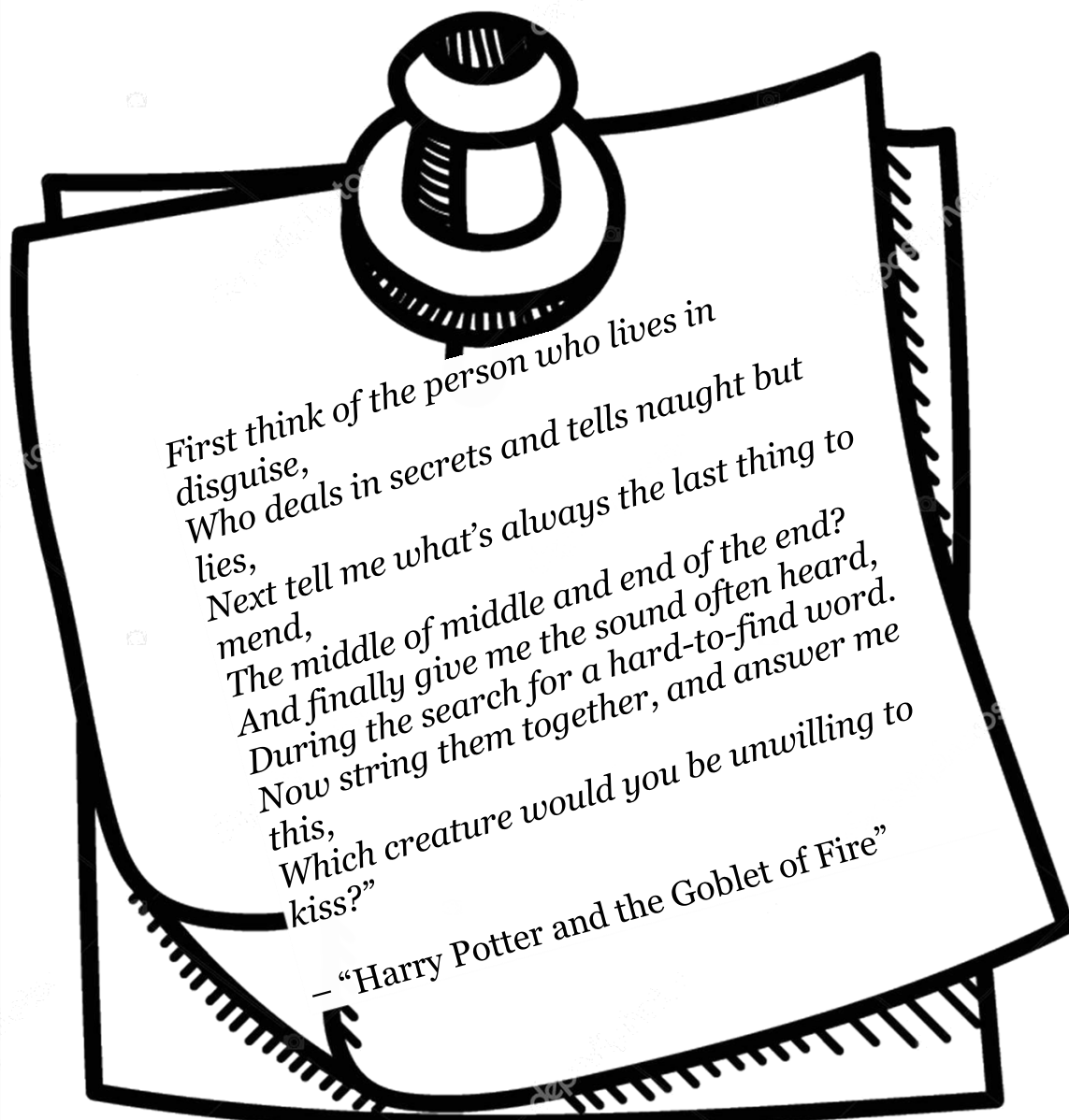




Read the following riddles and choose correct the answer.

FAMOUS RIDDLES







A witch

A wizard

A spider

*“This thing all things devours;
 Birds, beasts, trees, flowers;
 Gnaws iron, bites steel;
 Grinds hard stones to meal;
 Slays king, ruins town,
 And beats mountain down.”*

“The Hobbit”
 by J.R.R. Tolkien

Time

monsters

Earthquakes

Time
Money

*“If you break me, I’ll not
 stop working.
 If you can touch me, my
 work is done.
 If you lose me, you must
 find me with a ring soon
 after. What am I?”*

Following the instructions, answer the riddles, and complete the key word with the correct letters to solve this escape room game.

RIDDLES' ESCAPE ROOM



Clue 1 Use the first letter of your answer as the initial letter of the key word

This old one runs forever, but never moves at all he has not lungs nor throat, but still a mighty roaring call what is it?

Clue 4

The first letter of this answer is the 4th letter of the key word

Branches grow on its head; it wears spotted clothes. Not a donkey or a horse, it runs like the wind.

Clue 5

Use the first letter of this answer to get the 5th letter of the key word.

This is an extraordinary animal who is usually sitting on a pirate's shoulder. The only bird who can actually talk.

Clue 7

Solving this riddle you get the 7th letter of the key word

What occurs twice in January, once in March, in April and in May, but never



Clue 2 your answer is the second letter in the key word

What is the center of joy and the principal mover of sorrow?

Clue 3

Solving this riddle you get the 3rd letter of the key word

Two in a river, one in shelter, none in a bed, but only one in a bathroom.



Clue 6

Solving this riddle you get the 6th letter of the key word

What king you make if you take the head of a lamb, the middle of a pig, the hind of a buffalo, and the tail of a dragon?

Clue 8

This answer is the last letter of the key word

Which letter in alphabet always asks a question?





Before you listen.

Guess the name of the picture looking at these pictures



The name of the movie is: _____



Listen to the tongue twister (link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtBsO8SVtjY>) and fill in the blanks with the correct words.

Tongue twister song "Moses Supposes"

Moses supposes his toeses are _____,

but Moses supposes Erroneously,

Moses he knowses his toeses aren't _____,

as Moses supposes his _____ to be!

Moses supposes his toeses are Roses,

but Moses supposes Erroneously,

A mose is a mose!

A rose is a rose!

A toes a toes!

Hooptie doodie doodle



Moses supposes his toeses are Roses,
 but Moses supposes Erroneously,
 For Moses he _____ his toeses arent roses,
 as Moses supposes his toeses to be!

Moses

(Moses supposes his toeses are roses)

Moses

(Moses supposes erroneously)

Moses

(Moses supposes his toeses are roses)

As Moses supposes his toeses to be!

A Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose is

A rose is for Moses as potent as toeses

Couldn't be a lily or a daphi daphi dilli

It's gotta be a rose cuz it rhymes with mose!

Moses!

Moses!

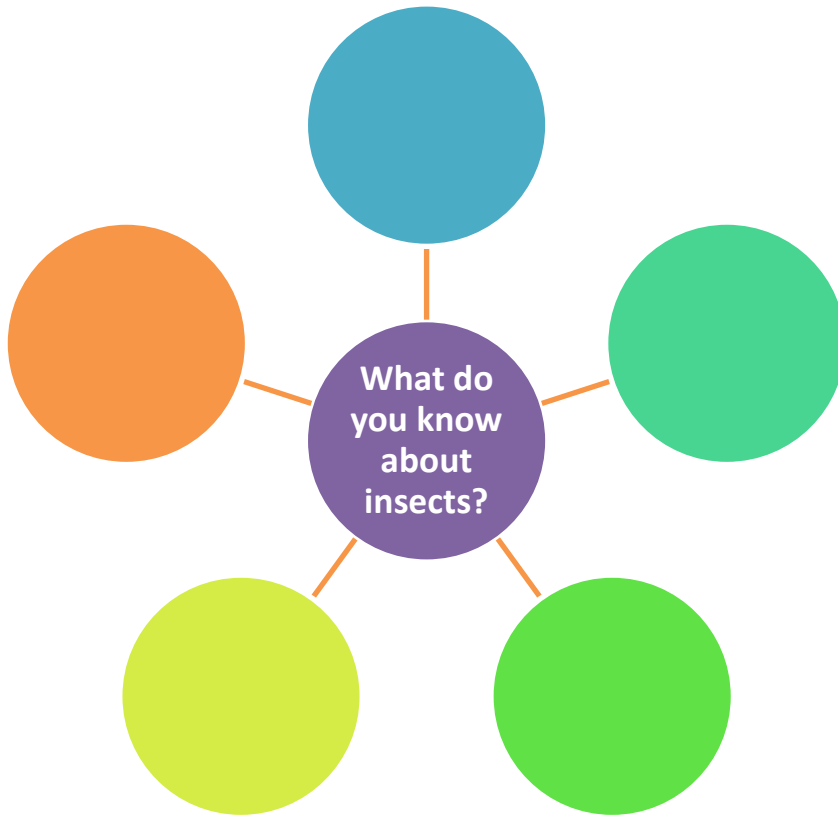
Moses!

**There are some grammar mistakes in the previous tongue twister,
 underline and correct them.**



Memorize and repeat the tongue twister.

Before you listen.



Listen to the tongue twister (link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tD6G4vLpUQ>

Listen and cross out the incorrect word

A Flea and A Fly In A Flue - Poem by Ogden Nash

A flea and a fly in a flue/flute

were impressed/imprisoned, so what could they do?

Said the fly/flee, "let us flee!"

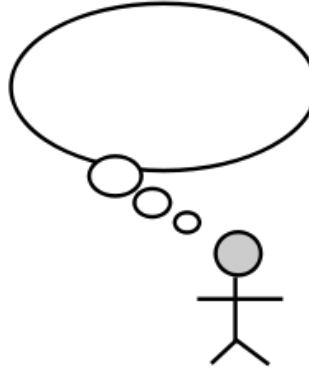
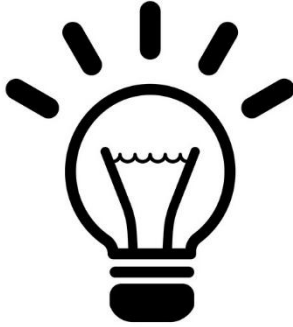
"Let us fly!" said the flea.



So they flew through a flaw/flame in the flue.

Find the antonyms of the following words



- **Imprisoned** _____
- **Flue** _____
- **Flee** _____
- **Flew** _____

Before you listen**Describe these pictures using one single word****Listen the following tongue twister (link:**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fL9unFWyeVI>)**Reeplace the pictures with the correct word** thought a thought.

But the thought  thought
wasn't the thought  thought

If the thought  thought

 thought had been

the thought  thought 

wouldn't have thought so much.

Create your own tongue twister using the verb bought.





ANSWER SHEET

1. Circle the correct picture.

He greets his cousins with a wave of hand.



The abstract shouldn't contain more than 300 words.

Abstract
The present Master's thesis seeks to their network relations during the es four theoretical perspectives includi

She had had a lower back pain for three months.



The baby has a short fine hair.



The bathroom sink was broken.



2. Choose the correct word and complete the sentence

Regina ate pizza with his friend.

I need to buy food for my tomorrow's travel.

I hurt my eyes when I was at work.

One of the most interesting New York's attraction is the ferry

I can't hear what my father is telling me.

Our favorite season is winter

I prefer to travel at night because there aren't traffic jams.

3. Identify the mistakes and correct them.

- Children bought suites in a big candy shop.
- My mom needs to buy flower to prepare the birthday cake.
- Speak allowed during the classrooms.
a loud
- The teacher said take a peace of paper.

Piece

- Bee quiet please!
- Be
- The professor knows about new surgical techniques.

Name the following pictures. You can use the words below in the box



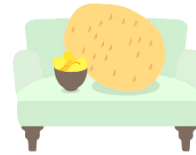
Brainstorm



Pinneapple



Flash memory



couch potatoe



soap opera



super bowl



Banana split



just in case



watermelon



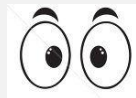
French toast

Choose the correct answer

BEFORE



B 4

I FORGOT.





Great   SEE YOU  TRICYCLE

I BELIEVE IN YOU.  in you.  DATE


What does this mean?

Discover the hidden meaning

stand I understand
|
I

you/just/me Just between you and me

minute minute on minute On the last minute


COW Holly cow

| R | e | a | d | Read between lines

Matching the pictures with the correct sentence



feet	feet	six feet over ground
feet	feet	
feet	feet	

ground


Sgeg Scrambled egg

Meaning meaning Double meaning

Circle the correct word

	horse	dinasour
parrot	<u>correct</u>	pot
	house	

Nafish nafish Tuna fish
Two na fish



Circles around the eyes

Check to check

Look at the pictures and identify the homograph words.

Fan, brilliant, flies, back, stable, ruler, metals.

Look at the pictures and identify the homophones words.

Meat, knight, home, sleeping, bear, bee, pear, irony

Read the following puns, identify, and categorize them in the chart below sound-a-like puns or look-a-like puns.

m. Lettuce know if you have found a fresh salad.

n. Where do you find giant snails? On the ends of giants' fingers.



- o. I have a tearrific day at work.
- p. Peas not war.
- q. The past, the present, and the future walk into a bar... It was tense.
- r. Why is the obtuse triangle always upset? Because it is never right.
- s. A barometer walk into a bar –I need a drink. I am under a lot of pressure-
- t. – It was nice to see you.
 - Yes, hope to see you again soon so we can ketchup.

Sound-a-like puns	Look-a-like puns
E, f, g, h,j,k	A, b, c, d, i, l

Word ladders

Line	Time	Slow	Tubs	Green
Fine	Tire	Snow	Tab	Greed
Five	Line	Show	Labs	Freed
Like	Mine	Shaw	Lays	Fryed
Lake	mile	Sean	Pays	Flid
cake	male	pean	pass	Flies

These are suggested words because it will depend on what each student could deduce.

Could you solve these anagrams?

Victor Frankstein, Elvis Presley, The Beatles, John Lennon, Mona Lissa, Salvador Dali, The Hobbit.

Find the mate of the following words.

You have to use all letters.



Mate meat. Garden danger. Lettuce, Credit Direct. New sewn, cruel ulcer, Lemon Melon, Tyred tried, grade Edgar, Army Mary.

These are suggested words because it will depend on what each student could deduce.

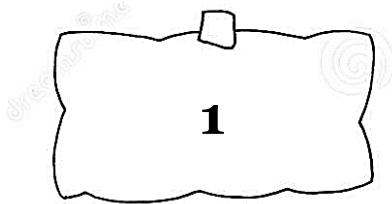
How many words can you create from

Heart	Bring	Christmas	Outlet	Phrase	Alert
Rath	rin	Stars	Let	Pears	eat
Bath	Bin	Scams	Lot	Phase	ate
Heat	Gin	Chair	Out	Sharp	Let
Rate	Rig	Chart	Toe	Shape	Are
Rate	Gib	Chats	Ole	Prase	Art
hate	Big	Crash	Tul	Spear	Ear
Rate		harms	Tel	Hears	Rat
Tear		March		Share	Era
eath		maths		shear	Tea

These are suggested words because it will depend on what each student could deduce.

FAMOUS RIDDLES

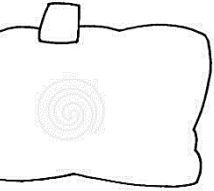
Riddle N°1



Riddel N° 2

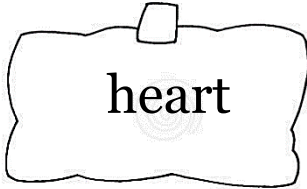


Riddle N°3



Time

Riddle N° 4



Following the instructions, answer the riddles, and complete the key word with the correct letters to solve this escape room game.

Riddle 1 waterfall

Riddle 2 letter o

Riddle 3 letter r

Riddle 4 deer

Riddle 5 parrot

Riddle 6 lion

Riddle 7 letter a

Riddle 8 letter y

Key Word: Wordplay

Tongue Twisters

Before you listen.

Guess the name of the picture looking at these pictures

The name of the movie is: Singing in the rain.

Listen to the tongue twister (link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtBsO8SVtjY>) and fill in the blanks with the correct words.

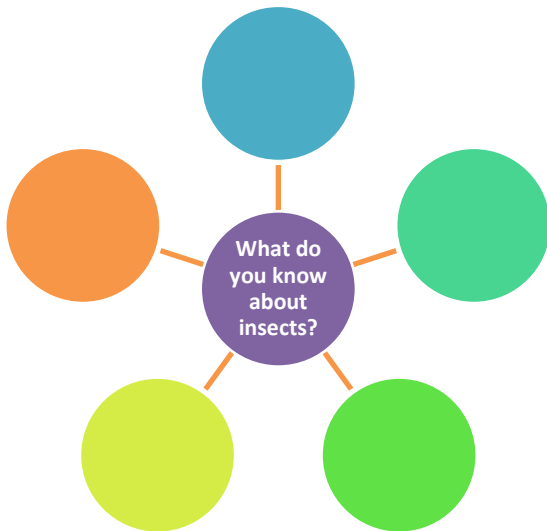
Roses, roses, toeses, knowses

There are some grammar mistakes in the previous tongue twister, underline and correct them.

Toeses toes

Knowses knows

Before you listen. It will vary with students' answers



Listen to the tongue twister (link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tD6G4vLpUQ>)

Listen and cross out the incorrect word

Flute, impressed, flee, flame



Find the antonyms of the following words

- **Imprisoned** confined
- **Flue**
- **Flee**
- **Flew**

Before you listen


Describe these pictures using one single word

Ideas, creative thinking. concepts



Listen the following tongue twister (link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fL9unFWyeVI>)

Reeplace the pictures with the correct word

 Equal to eye



Create your own tongue twister using the verb bought.

It will depend on what students could create!



References

<https://www.gocomics.com/break-of-day/2013/05/13>

[https://www.pinterest.es/search/pins/?q=puns&rs=rs&eq=&etslf=2030&term_meta\[\]=puns%7Crecentsearch%7Co](https://www.pinterest.es/search/pins/?q=puns&rs=rs&eq=&etslf=2030&term_meta[]=puns%7Crecentsearch%7Co)

<https://es.slideshare.net/moderation11/puns>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tD6G4vLpUQ>