UCUENCA

Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación

Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

The Effects of Using Cognates to Teach English Vocabulary to Spanish Speakers

Trabajo de Integración Curricular previo a la obtención del título de Licenciada en Pedagogía del Idioma Inglés.

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Cuenca, Ecuador

12-julio-2022

Resumen

Esta síntesis de investigación tuvo como objetivo examinar los efectos del uso de cognados español-inglés en el aprendizaje de vocabulario de inglés de hispanohablantes. Un total de 21 estudios empíricos recolectados ayudaron a respaldar y responder preguntas sobre los efectos del uso de los cognados para enseñar vocabulario en inglés a hispanohablantes, la categoría más efectiva para enseñar vocabulario en inglés, las ventajas y desventajas de usar cognados y las perspectivas de maestros y estudiantes sobre el uso de cognados como una forma de adquirir léxico en inglés. Los resultados de este análisis revelaron que, a través del uso de cognados, específicamente cognados idénticos y similares, la comprensión y el desarrollo del vocabulario en inglés fue efectivo para los hispanohablantes. De igual manera, se pudo evidenciar que los cognados no solo ayudan en el aprendizaje y ampliación del léxico, sino también en el procesamiento del habla, inferencia de significado, reconocimiento de palabras, procesamiento de palabras, adquisición de léxico y confianza de los estudiantes. Por ende, tanto profesores como alumnos coinciden en que el uso de cognados en el aula es fundamental. Se proporcionan recomendaciones para futuras investigaciones sobre los efectos del uso de cognados español-inglés para enseñar vocabulario en inglés a hispanohablantes y algunas implicaciones prácticas. Es importante mencionar que también se propusieron recomendaciones para futuras investigaciones sobre los falsos cognados debido al continuo debate entre autores sobre su posible eficacia en la adquisición de vocabulario.

Términos clave: Efectos de cognados. Vocabulario en inglés. Cognados en inglés para hispanohablantes. Falsos cognados.

Abstract

This research synthesis aimed to examine the effects of the use of Spanish-English cognates on the learning of English vocabulary by Spanish speakers. A total of 21 empirical studies were collected to answer and support questions about the effects of using cognates to teach English vocabulary to Spanish speakers, the most effective category to teach English vocabulary, the advantages and disadvantages of using cognates, and the teacher and student perspectives on the use of cognates as a way of acquiring lexicon in English. The results of this analysis revealed that through the use of cognates, specifically identical and similar cognates, the comprehension and development of vocabulary in English were effective for Spanish speakers. Similarly, it was possible to identify that cognates not only help in learning and expanding lexicon but also in speech processing, meaning inference, word recognition, word processing, lexicon acquisition, and student confidence. Therefore, both teachers and students agree that the use of cognates in the classroom is essential. Recommendations for future research on the effects of using Spanish-English cognates to teach English vocabulary to Spanish speakers and some practical implications are provided. It is worth mentioning that recommendations for future research on false cognates were proposed due to the ongoing debate among authors about their possible efficacy on vocabulary acquisition.

Key terms: Effects of Cognates. English Vocabulary. English Cognates for Spanish speakers. False cognates.

Índice

Resumen 2
Abstract 3
Índice 4
List of Tables 6
Cláusula de Licencia y Autorización para Publicación en el Repositorio Institucional 7
Cláusula de Propiedad Intelectual 8
Acknowledgments 9
Dedication 10
Introduction 11
CHAPTER I 13
1. Description of the Research 13
1.1. Background 13
1.2. Statement of the Problem 14
1.3. Rationale 15
1.4. Research Questions 17
1.5. Objectives 17
General Objective 17
Specific Objectives 17
CHAPTER II 18
2. Theoretical Framework 18
2.1. Definitions 18
2.1.1. Language Transfer 18
2.1.2. Cognates 19
2.1.3. Methods for classifying cognates 21
2.1.3.1. Methods to Identify Cognates 21
2.1.3.2. Cognates Categories 22
2.1.4. Cognate Effects 23
2.1.4.1. Cognate Effects on English Vocabulary Development and Comprehension 23
2.1.4.2. Effects of Cognates as Contextual Clue Strategies for Latino EL Students 24
CHAPTER III 26
3. Literature Review 26
3.1. The Use of Cognates for Teaching English Vocabulary 26
3.1.1. Implications of Using Cognates Explicitly 26
3.1.2 Distinction between Cognates and False cognates when Teaching Vocabulary 28
3.2. The Effects of Cognates when Teaching English Vocabulary 29

3.3. Cognate Categories in Teaching English Vocabulary 32
3.4. Advantages of Using Cognates to Teach English Vocabulary 33
3.5. Disadvantages of Using Cognates to Teach English Vocabulary 34
3.6. Teacher's- Student's Perceptions on the Use of Cognates as a Component in Classrooms. 36
CHAPTER IV 38
4. Methodology 38
CHAPTER V 40
5. Data Analysis 40
5.1. Foci of Studies 40
5.2. Academic Level in which Cognates are Used to Teach English Vocabulary 41
5.3. Effects of Using Spanish-English Cognates to Teach English Vocabulary. 43
5.4. Cognate Categories in Teaching English Vocabulary 46
5.5. Distinction between Cognates and False Cognates when Teaching English Vocabulary 47
5.6.Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Cognates for Teaching English Vocabulary 50
5.7. Perspectives of Teachers and Students towards the use of Cognates 54
6. Conclusions and Recommendations 57
6.1. Conclusions 57
6.2. Recommendations 59
References 60

List of Tables

Table 1. *Foci of Studies* 40
Table 2. *Academic Level in which Cognates are used to Teach English Vocabulary* 42
Table 3. *Effects of Using Spanish-English Cognates to Teach English Vocabulary* 43
Table 4. *Cognate Categories* 46
Table 5. *Reasons for Using Cognates when Teaching English Vocabulary* 48
Table 6. *Reasons for Using False Cognates when Teaching English Vocabulary* 49
Table 7. *Advantages of Using Cognates in English Vocabulary.* 50
Table 8. *Disadvantages of Using Cognates in English Vocabulary* 53
Table 9. *Perspectives of Teachers towards the use of Cognates* 54
Table 10. *Perspectives of Students towards the use of Cognates* 55

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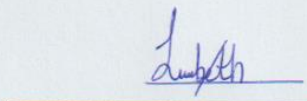

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Acknowledgments

First of all, I want to express my sincere gratitude to God, my greatest support and source of encouragement, for guiding me through this path and giving me the necessary knowledge to achieve my goals.

Secondly, I wish to show my appreciation to the University of Cuenca for being the institution that helped me make my dreams come true.

Finally, I want to extend my special thanks to my dear thesis tutor, Dr. Tammy Fajardo Dack, PhD, for sharing her extraordinary and brilliant ideas, thoughtful comments, recommendations, constant support, and guidance on this research project. It was a privilege to work under her guidance.

Dedication

This research synthesis is dedicated to my beloved parents, Arturo and Zoila, who are my source of motivation to fulfill my dreams.

To my unconditional love, Esteban Barrezueta, for being my source of inspiration and support. He gave me the strength to never give up and continue to be the best version of myself.

To my dear friends, Paula, Clarita, and Fer, for always believing in me and pushing me to study hard.

Last but not least, I dedicate this work to myself, for believing in me, for doing all this investigative work, and for never giving up.

Introduction

The influence of Latin between Spanish and English has provided people who speak both languages to share common linguistics. Due to this relationship, the advantages that Spanish speakers have in learning English are enormous. Therefore, for Spanish speakers, finding a possible strategy to employ this relationship seems to be indispensable when learning English, specifically its vocabulary. This possible lexical strategy is the use of cognates. Hall (2002) stated that "cognates are words in two or more languages that share phonological and/or orthographic form, and are usually (but not necessarily) also related semantically" (p.69). Therefore, the relationship between Spanish, the mother tongue, and English, the second foreign language, may allow Spanish speakers to develop English vocabulary easily and effectively since, as Anthony (1952) explained, "cognates are valuable as a method of rapid expansion of vocabulary for the language student. For the Spanish speaker learning English, the number of such lexical items that he can add to his vocabulary is enormous" (p.79).

Despite how valuable the use of cognates can be for Spanish speakers, this strategy has not received adequate attention in language education. Therefore, this research synthesis attempts to present Spanish-English cognates as a valuable vocabulary strategy for Spanish speakers by analyzing the effects of using them to learn English vocabulary. In addition, it aims to present the advantages and disadvantages of the use of cognates, the perspectives of teachers and students on its use, and the most effective category of cognates for Spanish speakers. Taking the latter objective into account, it is important to mention that false cognates, "words that are phonologically and orthographically similar but not related in meaning" (Pérez, Peña, and Bedore, 2010, Literature review section, para. 1) are also addressed in this investigation due to its possible usefulness in the development of the English lexicon.

For this research study, the following questions were addressed.

1. What are the reported effects of using Spanish-English cognates to teach English vocabulary to Spanish speakers?
2. What category of cognates has been reported as the most effective for Spanish speakers to acquire English vocabulary?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using cognates to improve the vocabulary of Spanish Speakers?
4. What are the perspectives of teachers and students towards the use of cognates as a way to acquire English vocabulary?

This research synthesis is presented in six chapters. The first chapter is the description of the research that includes the background, the statement of the problem, the justification, the research questions, and the objectives. The second chapter encompasses the theoretical framework, in which key concepts and definitions about cognates are clarified. The third chapter consists of the literature review, which provides a general overview of the use of cognates in the teaching of English vocabulary. The fourth chapter, methodology, describes how the research synthesis was carried out and the inclusion criteria considered for the selection of studies. The fifth chapter contains the organization and analysis of the data according to various categories. Lastly, the sixth chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER I

1. Description of the Research

1.1. Background

Richards and Schmidt, define a cognate as "a word in one language which is similar in form and meaning to a word in another language because both languages are related" (as cited in Pérez, Peña & Bedore, 2010, Literature review section, para. 1**)**. In the same line, Hall (2002) mentioned that "cognates are words in two or more languages which share phonological and/or orthographic form, and normally (but not necessarily) are also related semantically" (p.69).

Due to the Latin-based relationship between Spanish and English, the Spanish and English languages share a common alphabet and 10,000–15,000 cognates, Latin-based words, and share similar orthographic features (Nash, as cited in Lubliner & Hiebert, 2011). Despite how notorious cognates may be, bilingual students often fail to notice cognate pairs even when they appear to be quite transparent (August; Feldman & Healy; García; Nagy; Nagy, García, Durgunoglu, & Hancin-Bhatt, as cited in Lubliner & Hiebert, 2011). Likewise, cognates might have received less attention compared to other strategies for acquiring vocabulary and in the language educational environment in general.

Nevertheless, cognates have received attention in vocabulary research. Anthony (1952) stated that "cognates are valuable as a method of rapid expansion of vocabulary for the language student. For the Spanish speaker learning English, the number of such lexical items that he can add to his vocabulary is enormous" (p.79).

Through the years, several categories to learn about this particular component of vocabulary have appeared. Echeverría (2018) classified cognates into three main classes: identical cognates that are completely orthographically equal, similar cognates are those that only differ by one or two consecutive letters, and partial cognates which are those that differ by two or more letters (not necessarily consecutive). From these categorizations, Echeverría (2018) stated that words that have more similarities, such as identical or similar cognates, were easier to recognize than words that did not share as many graphemes, such as partial cognates. Therefore, novice L2 students can recognize "cognates as a natural strategy for understanding language" (Cunningham and Graham, et al., as cited in Echeverria, 2018, p.25). On the other hand, other authors who also worked with beginner L2 students, conclude that "students do not readily recognize cognates and must be instructed on how to recognize and work with them" (Lightbown and Libben, et al., as cited in Echeverria, 2018, p.25). One of the reasons for this non-recognition is false cognates which according to Stamenov (2009) are words in two languages that are identical or similar in form but differ in meaning and consequently may mislead the bilingual individual to think that they have the equal or similar meaning. Even so, cognates should be considered an important means that Spanish speakers could apply to acquire English vocabulary, thus researching their effects can help develop students' vocabulary.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although cognates could be a valuable strategy for vocabulary development, little or nothing is known about their definition and use as a tool to acquire vocabulary in language educational fields. Montano (2009) in her study showed that only 60% of the participants defined what a cognate was; 16% gave an incomplete answer, 14% defined it incorrectly, and 4% did not answer the question. These results lead us to consider possible reasons for the low use of cognates. The first possible reason as mentioned above is false cognates. According to

Pérez, Peña, and Bedore (2010), "false cognates are words that are phonologically and orthographically similar but not related in meaning" (Literature review section, para.1). Therefore, due to this difference in meaning, the use of false cognates might negatively impact Spanish students' English vocabulary. The second possible reason is cognate recognition. In a study directed by Echeverría (2018) about how students recognize cognates, the researcher managed to identify that "not all cognates are the same (identical, similar, and partial) so not all cognates are recognized or learned automatically" (p.38). Therefore, taking into account the recognition of cognates when teaching vocabulary could avoid future errors in the recognition and comprehension of words. The third possibility is language transfer. As Cunningham and Graham (2000) mentioned, "the term transfer has been applied to the effects of the native language on the interlanguage of second language (L2) learners." (p. 37). Therefore, Spanish students might tend to adjust Spanish words and features to the English language. Additionally, these effects have been identified in virtually every aspect of L2 development, including phonology, syntax, morphology, lexicon, and discourse (Loup and Weinberger; Odlin; Selinker; Adjemian; Ard & Homburg; Kellerman; Odlin; and Olshtain, as cited in Cunningham & Graham, 2000).

For this reason, analyzing the effects of cognates, highlighting their existence, and using them as a tool to teach vocabulary to Spanish speakers will help overcome the mentioned problems. Cognates should be considered an important skill for Spanish speakers to acquire vocabulary in the English language since they might be able to develop meaningful connections between L1 and L2.

1.3. Rationale

Several studies about the use of cognates as a way to acquire vocabulary can be found. (Echeverría, 2018; Hall, 2002; Montano, 2009). Nevertheless, a research synthesis that shows Spanish speakers the effects of using cognates, their advantages, disadvantages, categorization, and teachers' and student's perspectives to acquire and increase English vocabulary has not been done yet in our context. It is well known that the use of cognates to acquire vocabulary may not be the best-known strategy, and due to this lack of knowledge, the use of cognates to acquire vocabulary and their use in language educational aspects may decrease or be null. Indeed, "it is difficult to find textbooks that explain what a cognate means or activities that help their recognition or use." (Echeveria, 2018, p.24). Nevertheless, this lack of knowledge might not only lie in the lack of textbooks but also in the teacher's knowledge. As considered by Montano (2009) teachers do not teach cognates; however, they do not do so because there is no method for teaching them and they do not know the techniques and materials they can use. An important step in this regard would be to train teachers. Nevertheless, as De Groot, Dannenburg, and Hell (as cited in Echeverria, 2012, p. 2) stated "cognates have been identified as helpful and easy vocabulary items to learn in a second language."

In particular, this research proposal aims to examine the reported effects of using Spanish-English cognates on Spanish speakers' English Vocabulary. It is important to understand the effects, correct function, and use of cognates as a tool for learners to be able to create connections between the L1 and L2. Besides, understanding the role of cognates to acquire vocabulary in language educational settings may allow students to increase their vocabulary words and select the most appropriate ones according to a specific context. Therefore, this research synthesis could help to investigate the effects of the use of cognates to acquire vocabulary in English, to find the most effective category of cognates to learn the

English lexicon, the advantages and disadvantages related to the use of cognates, and the perspectives of students and teachers about the use of cognates.

1.4. Research Questions

After preliminary research, the following questions have emerged:

1. What are the reported effects of using Spanish-English cognates to teach English vocabulary to Spanish speakers?
2. What category of cognates has been reported as the most effective for Spanish speakers to acquire English vocabulary?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using cognates to improve the vocabulary of Spanish Speakers?
4. What are the perspectives of teachers and students towards the use of cognates as a way to acquire English vocabulary?

1.5. Objectives

General Objective

To examine the effects of using Spanish-English cognates to teach English vocabulary to Spanish speakers.

Specific Objectives

- To determine the most effective category of cognates for Spanish speakers to acquire English vocabulary.
- To discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using cognates to improve the vocabulary of Spanish Speakers.
- To analyze the perspectives of teachers and students towards the use of cognates as a way to acquire English vocabulary.

CHAPTER II

2. Theoretical Framework

Due to the importance of cognates as a vocabulary tool and to provide a conceptual basis for the synthesis of this research, this chapter includes definitions of the following terms: language transfer, cognates, methods for classifying cognates, and cognates effects.

2.1. Definitions

2.1.1. Language Transfer

Language transfer has been a "controversial issue in second language acquisition for a long time" (Lanfeng, 2010, p. 4). Since its first use in 1881, when it was used to refer to cross-linguistic influences, this term has elicited diverse opinions. Because of this, during the 20th century, research on language transfer was carried out. The results identified that "language transfer is divided mainly into three categories: behaviorist, mentalist, and cognitive view" (Ellis, 1994, as cited in Lanfeng, 2010, p. 4). Therefore, Lanfeng (2010) explained that "Behaviorists regarded language learning as habit formation. In the view of mentalists, language acquisition was a creative construction of linguistic rules. Cognitive linguists focused on factors that influence language acquisition" (p. 4). Despite these findings, "linguists still do not have an exact definition of language transfer" (Lanfeng, 2010, p. 4).

Nevertheless, for this research, the definition proposed by Odlin (1989) is going to be used. According to this author, "transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (Odlin, 1989, as cited in Houssos, 2020, p. 271). In other words, language transfer is the application of features from the first to the second language.

Language transfer constitutes one of the main research areas of second language acquisition (University of Erfurt, 2020, Introduction section, para.1). Therefore, different types of language transfer may exist. From these, the two main ones are positive and negative transfer.

> Positive transfer (facilitation) occurs when the structures of the two language systems align well with each other and provide an ease of transition. On the other hand, Negative transfer (inhibition) exists when two language systems do not match well in structure and meaning, and the ability to draw upon one system for understanding to transition to the other is not readily available. (Lewis, 2014, Cross-Linguistic Influence section, para. 1-2).

Nevertheless, as mentioned by Cummins (2008) there are five more specific types of language transfer.

> The first is the transfer of conceptual elements. Once concepts such as democracy or photosynthesis are learned in one language, they are known. The second type, transfer of metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies, includes comprehension strategies that can be used in multiple languages. The third is the transfer of pragmatics, such as turn-taking in conversation or the use of gestures to supplement oral communication. Transfer of specific linguistic elements is fourth. Finally, the transfer of phonological awareness, or the knowledge that words are comprised of sounds. (As cited in Briceño, 2017, p. 113)

Considering these types and for the purpose of this study, only the transfer of specific linguistic elements, namely cognates, will be the main focus of this research.

2.1.2. Cognates

As mentioned in the previous chapter and as Ajayi (2018) also stated "a crucial linguistic asset for English learners (ELLs) is cognate use" (p.1). The term cognate is:

> an adjective word which is formed with the prefix cō- which means 'with' or 'together and with the adjective gnātus which means to be born' (older gnāscī). Thus, the word is derived from the Latin adjective cognātus (fem. cognāta), which means 'related by blood, or literally 'born together' or 'co-born' (Online Etymological Dictionary, 1995, (n.d).

The word cognate has evolved over time. For instance,

> In the 19th century, the word cognate was used to refer to two words that originated from the same Latin term. Over time, in applied linguistics, the term cognate designates words from different languages whose origin is the same, and they have a similar significance. (Gonzalo, 2016, p. 11)

Similarly, the word cognate evolved in historical linguistics, but with a different sense. In this field of study, "it is used for words that descend from the same word in an ancestor language through oral transmission, that is, they must be patrimonial words in the two languages, and they cannot have been borrowed from other languages" (Aske, 2014, p.13).

In 1997, another definition of the word cognate arrived. Crystal (as cited in Gonzalo, 2016) defined a cognate as "a linguistic form that is historically derived from the same source as another language/form" (p.11).

As it can be seen, the concept of cognates has evolved little by little; however, some characteristics since its discovery have been maintained. In simple terms, the term cognates can be defined "as words that share similar spellings, pronunciations, and meanings in two languages" (Nash as cited in Ajayi, 2018, p.1).

Due to the development and recognition of this concept, new and in-depth research on cognates should be developed. Additionally, the term cognate should be considered a main term when talking about the acquisition of a second language, especially in the development of vocabulary, since as Calderón et al. (2003) explained, "cognates are an obvious bridge to the English language" (p.1).

2.1.3. Methods for classifying cognates

Over the years, the term cognate has evolved significantly; now, "cognates are already used frequently and wait to be recognized as they should" (Moran, 2006. p.10). As a consequence, different methods to categorize and identify cognates emerged.

2.1.3.1. *Methods to Identify Cognates*

According to Campbell (2004) “Cognate identification is an important task in historical linguistics for the purpose of establishing genealogical relationships between languages” (as cited in Rama and Kolachina, 2013, Introduction section, para.1). Thus, there are two main methods for identifying cognates: phonetic and semantic similarity.

Phonetic similarity

To identify the phonetic similarity of cognates, this method can be divided into two groups: the spelling approaches and the phonetic approaches. Spelling approaches ignore the fact that alphabetic symbols express real sounds, employing an identity function. On the other hand, phonetic approaches attempt to take advantage of the phonetic characteristics of individual sounds to estimate their similarity (Kondrak, (2001). p. 3).

Semantic similarity.

This method, based on the relationship between the meanings of the lexemes and their glosses, is the simplest method to detect semantic similarities of cognates since if the lexemes

have at least one gloss in common, the words are related. However, "the similarity of semantically related glosses is not recognized" (Kondrak, (2001). p. 3). This is due to spelling errors or variants, morphological differences, determiners, adjectival modifiers, nominal modifiers, complements and adjuncts, synonymy, small semantic changes, and radical semantic changes.

The previously presented methods could help identify cognates as "cognates on average show greater phonetic and semantic similarity than unrelated words" (Kondrak, (2001). p. 7). Furthermore, these findings could serve as a starting point for future research.

2.1.3.2. *Cognates Categories*

As it will be portrayed in the literature review chapter, and taking into account the categories proposed by Echeverría (2018), cognates are classified into three main classes: identical cognates that are completely orthographically equal, similar cognates are those that only differ by one or two consecutive letters, and partial cognates which are those that differ by two or more letters (not necessarily consecutive). Similarly, Moran (2016) also proposed a classification of cognates according to different perspectives:

Exact Cognates: actor, doctor, error, terror, animal.

Partial Cognates: perfect - perfecto, direct - directo, básico - básico.

Real Cognates with some additional unrelated meaning: batería: a device that produces electricity; but also, musical drums in Spanish.

False Cognates: mayor in English is the head of a city; a mayor in Spanish is older or higher.

According to their Latin roots: dict = to say: dictate - dictar.

According to their Greek roots: dem = people: democracy - democracia.

According to their prefixes: monocycle - monociclo, monogamy – monogamia.

According to their suffixes: globally - globalmente, frankly - francamente.

Borrowed words: karaoke, karate, violin.

Linguistic adaptations of borrowed words: croissant - cruasán, soufflé - suflé. (p.12).

Nevertheless, from these categories, the one that "creates one of the biggest challenges for Spanish language students is false cognates" (NYS Statewide Language RBERNT, 2015, Introduction section, para. 2). False cognates are "words that are phonologically and orthographically similar but not related in meaning" (Perez, Peña, & Bedore, 2010, Literature review section, para.1); thus, Spanish speakers can confuse words. On the other hand, Mendoza and Varela (2017) state that false cognates are advantageous in the process of learning and teaching a foreign language since they help students to develop and increase their vocabulary and improve reading comprehension and textual production. Due to the complexity of false cognates, new studies should be analyzed to determine whether or not they are effective for vocabulary development.

As it was presented in this section, over time, new methods for recognition and classifications of cognates have been developed. The information presented should be considered as a starting point for future studies on cognates.

2.1.4. Cognate Effects

Cognates have been identified as helpful and easy vocabulary items to learn in a second language (De Groot, Dannenburg, & Hell as cited in Echeverría, 2012, p. 2). Therefore, cognates can have different effects on vocabulary acquisition.

2.1.4.1. Cognate Effects on English Vocabulary Development and Comprehension

The importance of vocabulary instruction cannot be overstated, particularly with English language learners (ELLs) who come to the classroom with limited knowledge of English (Ajayi, 2018. p. 1). This is why a tool to develop vocabulary and comprehension properly is necessary. Therefore, this tool can be cognates since "the use of cognates facilitates English vocabulary development as Hispanic ELLs can transfer vocabulary with similar phonological and orthographic forms and semantics from Spanish to English" (Hall, 2002 as cited in Ajayi, 2018. p. 2). Thus, allowing students not only to create connections between their languages but also to increase their vocabulary and comprehension of words. As Ajayi (2018) mentioned, "teaching students to recognize and use cognates as a starting point for learning English words builds a bridge between their home resources and instruction" (p. 2). Therefore, the use of cognates can create positive impacts on the development of the vocabulary and comprehension of Spanish speakers.

2.1.4.2. Effects of Cognates as Contextual Clue Strategies for Latino EL Students

Spanish-speaking students often come across words they do not know; this " inability to understand these unknown words affects comprehension " (Montelongo, Hernández, Herter & Cuello, 2011, p. 429). The use of cognates as context clues can be used to guess the meaning of an unknown word, thus helping students to expand their vocabulary and not lose understanding. Additionally, "teaching students this useful strategy in tandem with their knowledge of cognates can enhance their meaning-making capabilities" (Montelongo, Hernández, Herter & Cuello, 2011, p. 430). Therefore, making use of cognates as key contexts such as synonyms, antonyms, definitions, examples, appositive words or phrases, and punctuation can help Spanish speakers in their lexical development.

Throughout what was presented in this chapter, the development of the term cognate could be evidenced. Starting with its origin and definition, the process of this term could be

observed from its etymology to its simplest concept. Then, continuing with its classifications and methods, three main categories stand out. Moreover, new categories according to different perspectives were also presented. Additionally, two main methods for identifying cognates: phonetic and semantic similarity were also covered. Finally, the two main effects cognates have on vocabulary development were analyzed. Therefore, the term cognate was explored in detail.

CHAPTER III

3. Literature Review

As many researchers have mentioned, even though cognates currently have more attention in vocabulary research, much of the literature on cognates is based on how they are used to improve language skills such as writing or reading and not on how they can help Spanish speakers to learn English vocabulary (Anthony, 1952; Echeverria, 2012; Montano, 2009; Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August, and White, 2011; Montelongo, Hernández, Herter, and Cuello, 2011).

With the purpose of learning about research on the use of cognates and providing a background for the analysis, this chapter presents a systematic review of several published studies. The chapter is organized in five sections: the use of cognates for teaching English vocabulary, the effects of cognates when teaching English vocabulary, cognate categories in teaching English vocabulary, advantages and disadvantages of using cognates to teach English vocabulary, and teacher's and student's perceptions on the use of cognates as a component in classrooms.

3.1. The Use of Cognates for Teaching English Vocabulary

Although in the past cognates may have not been the most recognized means for acquiring vocabulary, they have gained more popularity in the last few years; therefore, the understanding of using cognates for teaching English vocabulary seems to be crucial. This section is divided in two aspects: the implications of using cognates explicitly, and the distinction between cognates and false cognates when teaching English vocabulary.

3.1.1. Implications of Using Cognates Explicitly

As explained by Rosenshine (1987) explicit instruction is "a systematic method of teaching with an emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students" (as cited in Sharma, 2019, p.1). Therefore, combining explicit instruction and the use of cognates refers to using and teaching cognates in a clear and detailed way, without leaving room for confusion or doubt.

Esquivel (2017) presented a quantitative study in which fourth-grade English-Spanish bilingual students, divided into an experimental and a control group, demonstrated their ability to recognize and transfer knowledge of 18 cognate word ending rules. Through the demonstration of the ending rules of cognate words as well as their variation from English to Spanish and vice versa, and the performance of daily assessments in a period of 12 days, the results confirmed that the experimental group, which received the explicit instruction of 72 cognate words and their respective 18 transformational cognate words ending, outperformed the control group, which did not receive any explicit instructions regarding the 18 rules of cognate word endings. As a consequence, explicit instruction is of utmost importance for accurate use and understanding of cognates.

With similar results, Colombo (2019) presented a study in which 32 third-year adult students, divided into an experimental and a control group, demonstrated an improvement in vocabulary knowledge and an acquisition of lexical competence. Through explicit instruction of Spanish-English cognates as well as the performance of an online course focused on self-learning of 1000 frequent words in English, the results suggested that the experimental group demonstrated higher levels of vocabulary scores than those obtained by the control group students, which did not receive any instruction. Consequently, explicit instruction has a significant role in the Spanish-English cognate vocabulary and lexical acquisition of adult English learners.

3.1.2 Distinction between Cognates and False cognates when Teaching Vocabulary

Kelley and Kohnert (2012) conducted a study on the cognate advantage to process vocabulary in Spanish-speaking English language learners (ELLs) using standardized vocabulary tests and classifying items as cognate or false cognate based on phonological overlap with their Spanish translation. Scores on these tests showed students experienced less difficulty classifying items as cognates than as false cognate items. With similar results, Baird, Palacios, and Kibler (2016) conducted a study in which through the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the picture vocabulary subtests of the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey in emerging bilingual young learners, it was possible to show that students can recognize, produce, and cannot confuse cognates with false cognates. These findings demonstrate that despite the young age of the learners, they already have a bilingual advantage in recognizing similar elements. Likewise, the authors Leacox et al. (2016), in their study based on the recognition of cognates and false cognates, pointed out that through the task of naming images and pairs of translation equivalents between cognates and false cognates, 31 Spanish-speaking ELL children achieved higher levels in phonologically similar cognates than in phonologically different false cognates.

Concerning the use of cognates, it is worth mentioning the study of Grasso, Peña, Bedore, Hixon, and Griffinc (2018), in which it was revealed that specific language deficiencies (SLI) do not impede bilingual children to be able to produce, identify, and use cognates efficiently; peculiarly, children can name cognates more frequently than false cognates. But why is there this facility in the identification of cognates and false cognates? To illustrate this, Decker (2020) conducted a study in which using electroencephalogram (EEG) techniques, it was possible to indicate that less processing of the electrical activity of the brain is needed using cognates compared to what is required with false cognates. Therefore, the former is processed more easily than the latter.

Nevertheless, with a new thought, Mendoza and Varela (2017), in their study on how the lexical approach can favor the recognition of false cognates in 24 English speakers, concluded that the identification of false cognates was accessible. The authors obtained their results through the processes of observation, hypothesis formulation, and experimentation. As a consequence, it can be stated that through the lexical approach, the use and identification of false cognates can positively help English-speaking students. With similar thoughts, Lopez (2007) in her study about how false cognates enhance vocabulary and reading comprehension in seven English students of the Centro de Estudios Avanzados (C.E.A), concluded that false cognates improve English lexicon and reading comprehension. Through the use of a pedagogical strategy, the author stated that false cognates do not impede the development of English vocabulary and reading. On the contrary, by differentiating the meaning of words, false cognates could help students to expand their vocabulary and improve their reading comprehension. Therefore, the use of false cognates would be necessary.

In conclusion, and based on the studies presented, Spanish-speaking English learners demonstrated an advantage in vocabulary processing, specifically in cognates recognition. As a result, cognates possess an advantage in vocabulary acquisition over false cognates. Nevertheless, it is necessary to continue carrying out studies and research on false cognates to clarify whether or not they can be beneficial in acquiring vocabulary.

3.2. The Effects of Cognates when Teaching English Vocabulary

Cognate knowledge can influence the way bilingual students learn vocabulary; this is because bilingual students shift from mediating their knowledge of words in their second language via their knowledge of words in their first language to having direct access between words and concepts in both of their languages (Kroll & de Groot, 1997; Kroll & Tokowicz, 2005). But what effects does the use of cognates knowledge have on the vocabulary

development of bilingual people? The answer is simple: when the transfer of knowledge is used, the possible observed effects are speech processing, vocabulary acceleration and development, inference of meanings, word recognition, lexical processing and acquisition, recognition, understanding, and transfer of cognate words (Tessel, 2013; Ware, 2011; Decker, 2020; Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August, and White, 2011; McGregor, 2015; Echeverría, 2018; Pérez, Peña, and Bedore, 2010; Tabares and Úsuga, 2016; Esquivel, 2017; Colombo, 2019).

Tessel (2013) conducted a study on whether the cognate state facilitated or inhibited the discrimination of vowel mispronunciations. Through the use of event-related potentials (ERP) and behavior outcomes in 15 monolingual English speakers and 15 late Spanish-English bilinguals, the results showed that although both groups of participants could discriminate pronunciation errors, the bilingual group was less precise to discriminate them, especially for false cognates. Furthermore, it was possible to demonstrate that cognate words facilitated L2 phonological processing. Thus, cognate words facilitate not only the acquisition of vocabulary but also the processing of speech. With similar results, Mcgregor (2015) carried out a study on the effect and acceptance of cognates in the production of speech by bilingual people. The results showed that during the production of speech, the relationship between the second and first languages improved and a significant effect of cognates was appreciated. Therefore, cognates could help bilingual people to develop an effective discourse.

Another research study, conducted by Ware (2011), aimed at finding out whether the role of Spanish cognates influences the development of English vocabulary in bilingual kindergarten students. The results showed that there is a facilitating effect of cognates in word learning. Thus, this allows students to recognize, learn, and remember cognates easier than false cognates. Additionally, the results of this study suggested that the use of cognates can accelerate students' vocabulary development. Moreover, in terms of vocabulary

development, Pérez, Peña, and Bedore (2010) carried out a study in which, through a section of questions and using the Primary Language Development Test:3 (TOLD-P: 3), 89 bilingual children indicated which of the four images corresponds to the cognates provided. The results showed that there was a sensitivity to cognates that were phonologically similar and semantically related. In addition, this sensitivity was related to the level of exposure to English and Spanish. Children exposed to more Spanish knew more about the English cognates of Spanish words than children who were exposed to balanced amounts of Spanish and English and those exposed to more English. Consequently, in this study, a positive effect of cognates on the increasing vocabulary of the students can be evidenced through the transfer of knowledge from the vocabulary of the student's first language (Spanish) to the receptive vocabulary in English. Similar results were found in a classroom project developed by Tabares and Úsuga (2016), in which through six sessions, each focusing on a different topic, fifth-graders demonstrated that cognates are an effective and viable strategy for teaching and acquiring English vocabulary since students were able to understand, reflect, and learn the language and the meaning of words easily and effectively.

In a study developed by Dressler et al. (2011), about the inference of meaning and through the Vocabulary Improvement Project (VIP), it was indicated that cognates are an effective strategy when inferring meanings from English to Spanish and vice versa. In addition, 12 fifth-grade participants who underwent a cognate intervention exhibited higher levels of metalinguistic awareness. Therefore, the knowledge of cognates can generate significant results in the acquisition and interference of vocabulary.

Finally, in the studies developed by Decker (2020), Echeverría (2018), Esquivel (2017), and Colombo (2019) about the effectiveness of cognates, the authors were able to demonstrate through electroencephalogram (EEG) techniques, translation tasks, an online course, and daily assessments, that the implementation of explicit instruction and the

recognition of cognates words towards false cognates help bilingual people to increase, improve, and learn English vocabulary effectively. Therefore, the use of cognates for the acquisition of vocabulary in English could be considered essential.

3.3. Cognate Categories in Teaching English Vocabulary

Over the years, cognates have undergone modifications not only in their definition but also in their structure. Due to these modifications, four essential categories were proposed: identical cognates, similar cognates, partial cognates, and false cognates (Echeverria, 2018; Mendoza and Varela, 2017; López, 2007).

Echeverría (2018) proposed a study in which by using a translation task of comprehension questions and a quantitative and qualitative method, it was demonstrated that the words that contain more similarities, such as identical or similar cognates, are easier to recognize by 39 native English speakers than words that did not share as many graphemes as partial cognates. Therefore, identical or similar cognates represent the categories that may be the most used by language learners to acquire vocabulary. Obtaining similar results and through the responses of an online questionnaire on the importance of synonymous or identical cognates, the participants of Pérez´ (2015) study confirmed that synonymic or identical cognates facilitate access to vocabulary in English by Spanish-speaking students.

Although identical and similar cognates seem to be the most used categories by bilingual speakers, considering partial cognates as another alternative for vocabulary development is equally valid. This assertion is explained by Frunza and Inpken (2008) in their study on the disambiguation of partial cognates based on machine learning (ML) techniques and experiments with 10 pairs of partial cognates. The authors concluded that by using straightforward and accessible methods and tools, it is possible to minimize the ambiguity caused by partial cognates.

On the other hand, in the studies developed by Mendoza and Varela (2017) and López (2007), the authors identified through the use of a pedagogical strategy and the processes of observation, hypothesis formulation, and experimentation that false cognates could be another effective category to improve vocabulary.

3.4. Advantages of Using Cognates to Teach English Vocabulary

The use of cognates can generate positive benefits for bilingual individuals in terms of vocabulary development; relationship and coactivation between the second and first languages; bilingual advantage; understanding, reflecting, and inferring meanings of words; and higher levels of metalinguistic awareness, student's confidence, and speech production. Taking into account this last point, speech production, Sherkina pointed out that bilingual and multilingual students "possess more than one set of lexical representations from which to draw upon when faced with the demands of speech production. As a result, there is always a cognate advantage in speech production and recognition in bilinguals" (as cited in Mcgregor, 2015, Introduction section, para.1) To illustrate this, in the studies conducted by Mcgregor (2015) and Pérez, Peña, and Bedore (2010) on the effects and acceptance of cognates on speech production and vocabulary development in bilinguals, results showed that during the production of speech and vocabulary, the relationship between the second and the first language and the similarity between cognates, allowed the participants to acquire a more effective vocabulary. Consequently, in those studies, a positive effect of cognates on the increasing vocabulary and speech production of the students can be evidenced.

In the studies developed by Dressler et al. (2011), Kelley and Kohnert (2012), Montano (2009), and Ware (2011) about the inference of meaning through the Vocabulary Improvement Project (VIP), standardized vocabulary tests, observation, and questionnaires, it was indicated that cognates are an effective strategy when inferring meanings from English to Spanish and vice versa. In addition, participants who underwent a cognate intervention

exhibited higher levels of metalinguistic awareness. Therefore, the knowledge of cognates can generate significant results in the acquisition and interference of vocabulary.

As explained in the section on the distinction between cognates and false cognates when teaching English vocabulary, Baird, Palacios, and Kibler (2016), verified in their study that the relationship between the first and second language helps Spanish-speaking students to acquire a broader English lexicon. Thus, a bilingual advantage was noticed. Similar results were found in the studies developed by Tabares and Úsuga (2016), Colombo (2019), and Decker (2020), in which through the use of six sessions, each focusing on a different topic, explicit instruction and an online course, and electroencephalogram (EEG) techniques, the authors demonstrated that cognates are an effective and viable strategy for teaching and acquiring English vocabulary since the participants of those studies were able to understand, reflect, and learn the language and the meaning of words easily and effectively.

Finally, Mugford (2008) carried out a study in which, through the development of worksheets on cognates, outstanding recognition, production activities, and reflection, 21 teachers in training in the third year of their Bachelor of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Mexico, demonstrated an understanding of the usefulness and potential relevance of cognates in their classrooms. The results showed that by "implementing reflective, productive, and critical ways of teaching cognates, teachers can help language learners develop broader vocabulary learning techniques in terms of developing student's confidence, accepting risks, and doing educated guesses" (Conclusion section, para.4). Therefore, cognates are an effective vocabulary tool that not only benefits teachers by raising awareness in their training about cognates but also students in the sense that cognates will allow them to develop their vocabulary learning strategies.

3.5. Disadvantages of Using Cognates to Teach English Vocabulary

The use and implications of cognates is an endless debate. Several authors are in favor of using cognates because they believe that their benefits help in the acquisition of vocabulary of a foreign language (Mcgregor, 2015; Dressler, Carlo, Snow, and White, 2011; Tabares and Úsuga, 2016; Pérez, Peña, and Bedore, 2010; and López, 2007). However, others point out the opposite since they consider cognates, specifically false cognates, as learning barriers (Piedrahita and Romano, 2011; Humblé, 2006). With this last postulate in mind, this section of the chapter presents the problems that cognates can present when learning and teaching English vocabulary. Although several disadvantages can be listed, language transfer and false cognates are the main focus.

Cortés (2005) conducted a study on the negative influence of language transfer on British students' vocabulary. Through theoretical and practical analysis, the author determined that language transfer had a negative influence on the foreign language process since the mistakes made by British students in both divisions can not only be observed in vocabulary, but also semantics, syntax, morphology, orthography, and phonology. Consequently, the use of language transfer should be considered the main topic when learning a language.

Continuing with the problems that cognates can bring, Piedrahita and Romano (2011) conducted a study about the knowledge of false cognates in English on 24 students of the Education in Foreign Languages career at the "Rafael Rangel" University. Through a qualitative comparison of false cognates, using exercises to complete sentences and underlying false cognates, the researchers showed that false cognates prevent proper vocabulary development in a foreign language.

Conversely, Mendoza and Varela (2017) and López (2007) studies demonstrated that false cognates can positively help English-speaking students in vocabulary expansion.

Therefore, it is necessary to continue carrying out studies and research to clarify whether or not false cognates can be beneficial in acquiring vocabulary.

3.6. Teacher's- Student's Perceptions on the Use of Cognates as a Component in Classrooms.

There has been an ongoing debate among teachers and students about the use of cognates in the classroom in the last decade. Because of this, this section will explore the perspectives of teachers and students.

In the mix-method study carried out by Montano (2009), in which by using observations and questionnaires, the professors of the Autonomous University of Baja California verified that although only 60% of them knew the definition of a cognate, they all agree on the importance of cognates as a favorable tool and facilitator to acquire vocabulary in English. Additionally, based on the quasi-experimental study and through a class based on cognates, the students demonstrated an improvement in writing skills, text compression, meaning inference, idea associations, and vocabulary. As a result, both teachers and students agree on the importance of cognates as a favorable tool and facilitator to acquire the English lexicon. Additionally, and based on the development of worksheets on cognates, outstanding recognition, production activities, and reflection, and by using observations, questionnaires, a qualitative methodology, and a quasi-experimental study, Mugford (2008) highlights that cognates benefit both teacher and students since cognates are not only new strategies to acquire vocabulary but they are also tools that help to recognize, use, and develop their own linguistic abilities. With similar results in the studies developed by Colombo (2019), Echeverría (2018), and Esquivel (2017), the authors were able to conclude that all their participants demonstrated that cognates are effective vocabulary tools in the development of English vocabulary since they allow both teachers and students to relate their native language and second language, improve their meaning inference, and learning autonomy. As a result,

based on the information presented, it can be concluded that there is a positive perspective of teachers and students on the use of cognates as a vocabulary tool.

Throughout this review of existing research studies on the effects of using cognates to teach vocabulary in English to Spanish speakers, it can be observed that there is a high acceptance of the use of cognates as a tool to acquire vocabulary. Likewise, it can be noted that the four categories presented on cognates: identical cognates, similar cognates, partial cognates, and false cognates are valid in the development of the acquisition of vocabulary in English. Furthermore, cognates were found to have advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, they increase vocabulary development, relationship, and coactivation between the second and first languages, bilingual advantage, understanding, reflecting, and inferring meanings of words, higher levels of metalinguistic awareness, student's confidence, and speech production. On the other hand, on the negative side, language transfer and false cognates can cause problems in learning and teaching English vocabulary. However, it is substantial to mention that more studies are needed to determine whether or not false cognates present a problem in vocabulary learning. Finally, through the perspectives of teachers and students, it could be demonstrated that cognates represent favorable and valuable tools for the acquisition of vocabulary in English. Within this chapter, the most relevant studies on cognates were analyzed and presented, which will serve as the basis for the development of the analysis.

CHAPTER IV

4. Methodology

This study is a research synthesis which is defined as "the systematic secondary review of accumulated primary research studies" (Norris & Ortega, 2006, p. 4). To obtain data about the effects of using cognates for Spanish speakers to acquire English vocabulary, a thorough analysis of literature was carried out. The articles were searched in relevant databases such as ERIC, ResearchGate, Scholar Google, Academia, and ScienceDirect. Additionally, the terms (and their combinations) used to find the data were the following: Effects of Cognates, English Vocabulary, and English Cognates for Spanish speakers. To select the studies to be analyzed in this research synthesis, a set of criteria was proposed. First, qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods studies were considered, and no restrictions related to the design of these studies were established. Second, the articles had to be written in English or Spanish since for this research synthesis the connections between L1 and L2 are considered important. Third, the studies included the effects of cognates only for Spanish-speaking people, since this is the population that the study focuses on. Fourth, the articles were empirical, that is, they presented an investigation that has been carried out on the chosen topic to obtain real information in the field analyzed. Finally, the studies had to be published in one of the aforementioned databases or any other academic source.

The following journals were reviewed for the selection of potential studies: *Bilingual Research Journal, Journal of Educational Psychology, Language Learning, Early Childhood Services, Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research: JSLHR, Behind the Mind, Methods, Models, and Results in Translation Process Research, Multilingual Academic Journal of Education and Social Sciences, Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning, and Language Learning and Language Teaching.* These journals were

considered important and reliable since they contributed to this research synthesis. Finally, an analysis process was conducted to categorize the articles according to different criteria that emerged through the analysis itself.

CHAPTER V

5. Data Analysis

This chapter seeks to answer the research questions established at the beginning of the study through the analysis of the selected research studies. For the presentation of results, these studies have been organized into several categories: the effects of using Spanish-English cognates to teach English vocabulary, categories of cognates, the distinction between cognates and false cognates when teaching English vocabulary, advantages and disadvantages of using cognates for teaching vocabulary, and the perspectives of teachers and students towards the use of cognates. Additionally, and for the purpose of introducing the studies, Table 1 and Table 2 are presented. Table 1 summarizes, clarifies, and provides an overview of the studies analyzed in order to provide guidance to readers and to the synthesis itself. Table 2 is used to present the different academic settings in which cognates are used to teach English vocabulary according to what is reported in the studies.

5.1. Foci of Studies

This category presents the studies analyzed and used in this research synthesis organized by their main foci.

Table 1.

Foci of Studies

Focus	Author/ Year
Effects of using Spanish-English Cognates to teach English vocabulary	Tessel (2013); Ware (2011) *; Decker (2020) *; Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August, and White (2011) *; McGregor (2015) *; Echeverria (2018) *; Pérez, Peña, and Bedore (2010) *; Tabares and Úsuga (2016) *; Esquivel (2017) *; Colombo (2019) *

Cognate Categories in Teaching English Vocabulary	Echeverría (2018) *; Pérez (2015); Frunza and Inpken (2008); Mendoza and Varela (2017) *; López (2007) *
Distinction between Cognates and False Cognates when Teaching English Vocabulary	Kelley and Kohnert (2012) *; Baird, Palacios and Kibler (2016) *; Leacox, Wood, Sunderman, and Schatschneider (2016); Grasso, Peña, Bedore, Hixon, and Griffinc (2018); Decker (2020) *; Mendoza and Varela (2017) *; López (2007) *
Advantages and Disadvantages of using Cognates in English Vocabulary	Mcgregor (2015) *; Pérez, Peña, and Bedore (2010) *; Tabares and Úsuga (2016) *; Dressler, Carlo, Snow, and White (2011) *; Baird, Palacios, and Kibler (2016) *; Colombo (2019) *; Decker (2020) *; Kelley and Kohnert (2012) *; Mugford (2008); Montano (2009) *; Ware (2011) *; Cortés (2005); Piedrahita and Romano (2011)
Perspectives of teachers and students towards the use of Cognates	Mugford (2008) *; Montano (2009); Colombo (2019) *; Echeverría (2018) *; Esquivel, J. (2017) *

Note. * Some studies focus on more than one category.

Table 1 marks the beginning of this investigation and shows the studies analyzed according to their main focus. As it can be seen, the most prominent categories are the effects of using cognates on English vocabulary and the advantages they present in the same field. Likewise, it was possible to notice that the least number of studies dealt with the categories of cognates and the perspectives of teachers and students on its use.

5.2. Academic Level in which Cognates are Used to Teach English Vocabulary

Cognates can be beneficial tools for teaching vocabulary to Spanish speakers at different academic levels.

Table 2

Academic Level in which Cognates are used to Teach English Vocabulary

Author/ Year	Academic Level		
	Primary School	*Highschool*	*University*
Esquivel (2017); Baird, Palacios and Kibler (2016); Leacox, Wood, Sunderman, and Schatschneider (2016); Grasso, Peña, Bedore, Hixon, and Griffinc (2018); Ware (2011); Pérez, Peña, and Bedore (2010); Tabares and Úsuga (2016); Dressler, Carlo, Snow, and White (2011);	x		
Colombo (2019); Piedrahita and Romano (2011); Mugford (2008); Montano (2009); Decker (2020); Tessel, Levy, Gitterman, Martin, and Valerie (2013); Echeverría (2018); Mcgregor (2015); Frunza and Inpken (2008);			X

Cortés (2005)			
Kelley and Kohnert (2012); Pérez (2015); Mendoza and Varela (2017); Cortés (2005).		x	

Table 2 shows the academic level where the studies were conducted. This category of analysis considers the participants of the studies and their education levels from elementary school to university. As it can be seen, most of the studies were carried out with university and primary school students; and a low number of studies were carried out with high school students. Despite these results, this study group is also valid for the development and understanding of English vocabulary. In conclusion, this table demonstrates that cognates are flexible topics that can be used and adapted for any age and any level.

5.3. Effects of Using Spanish-English Cognates to Teach English Vocabulary.

Through the use of cognates, the development of English vocabulary may have some results for Spanish speakers. This category presents the most prominent effects of using Spanish-English cognates to teach English vocabulary.

Table 3

Effects of Using Spanish-English Cognates to Teach English Vocabulary

Author / Year	Effects					
	Speech processing	Vocabulary acceleration and development	Inference of meanings	Word recognition	Lexical processing and acquisition	Recognition, understanding, and transfer of cognate words
Tessel, (2013)	x	x		x		x
Ware (2011)		x	x	x	x	x
Decker (2020)		x				x
Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August, and White (2011).		x	x			x
McGregor (2015)		x		x	x	x
Echeverría (2018)		x		x	x	x
Pérez, Peña, and Bedore (2010).		x		x		x
Tabares and Úsuga (2016).		x	x			x
Esquivel		x				x

(2017)						
Colombo (2019)		x	x		x	x

Table 3 shows the main effects of using Spanish-English cognates to teach vocabulary in English, which are: speech processing, vocabulary acceleration and development, inference of meanings, word recognition, lexical processing and acquisition, and recognition, understanding, and transfer of cognate words. Nevertheless, despite the importance of all the effects mentioned, it is important to develop and specify the most frequent effects among the authors. These are vocabulary acceleration and development, inference of meanings, and recognition, understanding, and transfer of cognate words.

Tessel (2013), Ware (2011), Decker (2020), Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August, and White (2011), among the other authors listed, explained that cognates have a significant impact on vocabulary development and acceleration. Specifically, Ware (2011) states that the acceleration and development of vocabulary is the effect that stands out the most since through the use of cognates the learning, acquisition, and retention of words is more feasible. With similar thoughts, Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August, and White (2011), Ware (2011), Tabares and Úsuga (2016), and Colombo (2019) stated that cognates not only improve students' vocabulary but also their inference of meanings since through the relationship of languages, the learning, and understanding of meanings would be a more effective process.

Additionally, Esquivel (2017) points out that the recognition, comprehension, and transfer of cognate words would help students to fully develop their vocabulary. Colombo's (2019) results, on the other hand, not only show an active inclination toward the recognition,

comprehension, and transfer of cognate words, but also considers that lexical acquisition is fundamental in the development of cognates, and therefore in the vocabulary of students.

5.4. Cognate Categories in Teaching English Vocabulary

Throughout time the term cognate has been further studied and; new types of cognates have emerged. The following category mentions which are the main used cognate types in teaching English vocabulary to determine which one is the most beneficial for Spanish speakers according to the analyzed studies.

Table 4

Cognate Categories

Author/ Year	Categories			
	Identical Cognates	Similar Cognates	Partial Cognates	False Cognates
Echeverría (2018)	x	x		
Pérez (2015)	x	x		
Frunza and Inpken (2008)			x	
Mendoza and Varela (2017)				x
López (2007).				x

From Table 4, it can be observed that four essential categories of cognates were proposed and found in some of the studies. The results of Echeverría (2018) and Pérez (2015) agreed that of the four proposed categories, identical cognates and similar cognates are the most accessible for Spanish speakers to understand and recognize words due to the

similarities they share with their mother tongue, Spanish. On the other hand, Frunza and Inpken (2008) proposed partial cognates as the most effective alternative to teaching cognates since with the use of simple and accessible methods and tools the ambiguity of partial cognates can be avoided. Additionally, Mendoza and Varela's (2017) and López's (2007) results confirm that false cognates are another advantageous category in learning and teaching a foreign language since they help students to differentiate the meanings of words and to develop and increase their vocabulary.

Therefore, based on the results presented, it can be stated that of the four categories, identical cognates and similar cognates are the categories that most of the authors agree may benefit Spanish speakers in the development of vocabulary in English since they present the translation of cognates in an exact or almost exact way, facilitating the understanding, use, and relationship between the native language and the foreign language.

On the other hand, partial and false cognates are the categories that can present the most challenges to Spanish language students in learning English vocabulary according to the analyzed studies. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that these results are not the final ones regarding cognates since more research on cognates and especially on partial and false cognates should be developed to obtain more precise answers.

5.5. Distinction between Cognates and False Cognates when Teaching English Vocabulary

As evidenced in Table 4, the discussion between cognates and false cognates could always be present when teaching vocabulary. This section will discuss and present the distinction between cognates and false cognates when teaching English vocabulary according to the different reasons that the authors mention in the studies analyzed.

Table 5

Reasons for Using Cognates when Teaching English Vocabulary

Author/ Year	Reasons
Kelley and Kohnert (2012)	- Phonological overlap with its Spanish translation.
Baird, Palacios and Kibler (2016)	- Recognition, production, and distinction between cognates and false cognates.
Leacox, Wood, Sunderman, and Schatschneider (2016)	- Achievement of higher levels in phonologically similar cognates than in phonologically different false cognates.
Grasso, Peña, Bedore, Hixon, and Griffinc (2018)	- Production, identification, and use of cognates efficiently.
Decker (2020)	- Less processing of the brain's electrical activity is needed using cognates compared to what is required with false cognates.
Colombo (2020)	- Improvement of lexical acquisition. - Development of learning autonomy.
Ware (2011)	-The ability to infer the meanings of English cognate words. -Cognate facilitation effect in word learning. -Development of vocabulary.

Table 5 presents the reported reasons for using cognates for learning English vocabulary. The ten reasons identified are related to phonological overlap, recognition, production, and distinction between cognates and false cognates, production, identification, and use of cognates efficiently, and less processing of the brain's electrical activity, improvement of lexical acquisition, inference of meanings, and development of vocabulary.

In the studies of Kelley and Kohnert (2012), Baird, Palacios, and Kibler (2016), and Leacox, Wood, Sunderman, and Schatschneider (2016) about the recognition of cognates and false cognates, the authors concluded that cognates are easier to recognize phonologically than false cognates, thus allowing students to learn and relate vocabulary in a better way. Likewise, in the study developed by Decker (2020), it was possible to identify that cognates require less processing of the brain's electrical activity, thus cognates can bring great advantages for Spanish-speaking students since the process of learning was more effective.

Nevertheless, and despite that phonological recognition of cognates and false cognates is important for vocabulary development, this is not the unique reason why cognates are effective. According to Colombo (2019), explicit instruction plus the use of cognates demonstrated an improvement in vocabulary knowledge and acquisition of lexical competence. In addition, through the use of cognates, the autonomous learning of the students also improved.

Continuing with the highlighted reasons for the use of cognates, Ware (2011) explained through his study that there is a positive cognate effect on vocabulary development, word learning, and inference of meaning. Therefore, cognates can bring great advantages for Spanish-speaking students.

Table 6

Reasons for Using False Cognates when Teaching English Vocabulary

Author/Year	Reason
Mendoza and Varela (2017) and López (2007).	Help students to develop and increase their vocabulary, and improve reading comprehension and textual production.

In Table 6, it can be seen that only two studies were identified that focus on the use of false cognates for learning English vocabulary. These two studies consider that false cognates can also be an effective tool when learning English vocabulary since through the results of both studies on how the lexical approach can favor the recognition of false cognates and how false cognates enhance reading comprehension. It was possible to demonstrate that by differentiating the similarities in the meaning of words, students could avoid errors and improve their vocabulary, reading comprehension, and textual production. Nevertheless, from the limited number of studies available for false cognates, these results leave preferences unclear. Therefore, more studies regarding false cognates should be carried out to verify their effectiveness.

In conclusion, based on the studies analyzed and the information illustrated in tables 5 and 6, it can be said that cognates possess an advantage in vocabulary acquisition over false cognates.

5.6. Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Cognates for Teaching English Vocabulary

Cognates can bring with them positive and negative aspects for the development of the vocabulary of Spanish speakers.

Table 7

Advantages of Using Cognates in English Vocabulary.

Author/Year	Advantages						
	Speech production and effective discourse	Relationship and coactivation between the second and first languages	Bilingual advantage	Vocabulary development	Understanding, reflecting, and inferring the meanings of words easily and effectively	Higher levels of metalinguistic awareness	Build confidence in students, break down language barriers, and help students be critical
Mcgregor (2015)	X	x	x	x			
Pérez, Peña, and Bedore (2010)	x	x	x	x			
Tabares and Úsuga (2016)			x	x	x		
Dressler, Carlo, Snow, and White (2011)		x	x	x	x	x	
Baird, Palacios, and Kibler. (2016)		x	x	x	x		
Colombo (2019)		x		x	x		

Decker (2020)		x	x	x	x		
Kelley, and Kohnert, (2012)		x	x	x	x		
Mugford (2008)				x	x		x
Montano (2009)		x		x	x		
Ware (2011)				x	x		

Table 7 shows the seven advantages identified when using cognates in English vocabulary. For instance, in a study on the effect and acceptance of cognates in the production of speech, Mcgregor (2015) concluded that cognates could help bilingual people through the relationship between languages to develop an effective English vocabulary and speech production. Additionally, in the studies developed by Pérez, Peña, and Bedore (2010) and Baird, Palacios, and Kibler (2016) about vocabulary development, the authors confirmed that there is an important connection between the level of exposure to English and Spanish and vocabulary development. Therefore, by making use of cognates, bilingual people not only acquired English vocabulary but also perfected their mother tongue; thus, creating a bilingual advantage compared to their monolingual pairs. With similar results, in the studies developed by Tabares and Úsuga (2016), Colombo (2019), and Decker (2020), the authors demonstrated that cognates facilitate not only the development of vocabulary but also the understanding, reflecting, and learning of the meaning of words. Furthermore, in a study developed by Dressler, Carlo, Snow, and White (2011), Kelley and Kohnert (2012), Montano (2009), and Ware (2011) about the inference of meanings, it was found that cognates could

be a dynamic alternative for inferring meanings from English to Spanish, in turn, it was also possible to show that through the use of cognates the levels of metalinguistic awareness of the students were high, thus, obtaining better results when learning English vocabulary. Finally, Mugford (2008) stated that cognates are an advantageous learning tool since they not only help students and teachers to acquire broader vocabulary but also help them to increase their confidence, be critical, and break down language barriers.

In conclusion, and based on the analyzed studies, it can be inferred that cognates can create outstanding opportunities for the development of English vocabulary in bilingual people.

Table 8

Disadvantages of Using Cognates in English Vocabulary

Author/Year	Disadvantages	
	Language Transfer	False cognates
Cortés (2005)	x	x
Piedrahita and Romano (2011)		x

Table 8 lists the two studies that report the disadvantages of using cognates when teaching English vocabulary. The two disadvantages identified are related to language transfer and false cognates. For instance, the study carried out by Cortés (2005) showed that language transfer prevents the correct use of cognates since students confuse the meaning of words. Consequently, there was no significant improvement in the students' vocabulary. Likewise, Piedrahita and Romano (2011) through their study showed that false cognates

impede the proper development of vocabulary in a foreign language. Therefore, false cognates would be an impediment when learning vocabulary.

In conclusion, it can be mentioned that language transfer and false cognates can be the main problems in the correct development of English vocabulary. Nevertheless, and as it was presented in the tables above, false cognates are still unknown tools since it has not yet been determined exactly whether or not they can be helpful for the development of English vocabulary.

5.7. Perspectives of Teachers and Students towards the use of Cognates

The following category presents in a general way the perspectives of teachers and students on the use of cognates as a tool to facilitate English vocabulary.

Table 9

Perspectives of Teachers towards the use of Cognates

Author/ Year	Perspectives				
	Broader vocabulary learning techniques and learning strategies repertoire	Usefulness and potential relevance of cognates	Favorable tool and facilitator to acquire vocabulary in English	Development of word recognition	Facilitator of increase academic vocabulary and overall academic success
Mugford (2008)	x	x	x		x
Montano (2009)	x	x	x	x	x
Colombo (2019)	x	x	x		

Echeverría (2018)	x	x		x	
Esquivel (2017).	x	x	x		x

Table 10

Perspectives of Students towards the use of Cognates

Author/ Year	Perspectives				
	Development of learning strategies	Improvement in writing skills, text compression, meaning inference, idea associations, and vocabulary	Development of learning autonomy	Realize the similarities and differences between languages	Improvement of bilingual skills
Mugford (2008)	x	x	x	x	x
Montano (2009)	x	x	x	x	x
Colombo (2019)	x	x	x		
Echeverría (2018)		x	x	x	
Esquivel (2017).		x	x	x	x

Tables 9 and 10 show the perspectives of teachers and students on the use of cognates. The results show that participants of five studies agree that cognates are facilitating tools for

the acquisition of English vocabulary since they not only help improve vocabulary but also help both teachers and students to improve their writing skills, text compression, meaning inference, idea associations, learning techniques, learning autonomy, and bilingual skills. (Mugford, 2008; Montano, 2009; Colombo, 2019; Echeverria, 2018; and Esquivel, 2017). Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of cognates in the teaching of English vocabulary will create positive results for bilingual students.

Throughout this analysis of existing research studies on the effects of using cognates to teach vocabulary in English to Spanish speakers, it was possible to observe that there is acceptance of cognates as a tool to teach vocabulary. It is shown that the effects of using cognates are closely related to the development and improvement of vocabulary. Likewise, it was shown that the combination of explicit instruction, recognition, comprehension, transfer of cognate words, and lexical acquisition would create more beneficial results for Spanish speakers. Additionally, from the four categories presented, identical cognates and similar cognates are the categories that can most benefit Spanish speakers in the development of English vocabulary. In the distinction between cognates and false cognates when teaching English vocabulary, it is stated that cognates have an advantage over false cognates since cognates are the most widely used tools in English vocabulary development. However, it is important to mention that more research on false cognates is necessary to determine their efficacy. Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of using cognates for teaching English vocabulary, it was evident that there are more advantages than disadvantages. These results lead us to think that cognates can be feasible and effective tools in the development of English vocabulary. Finally, regarding the perspectives of teachers and students on the use of cognates, it was shown that both teachers and students agreed that cognates are beneficial for vocabulary development. Therefore, the use of cognates in classrooms is necessary.

CHAPTER VI

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

This research synthesis aimed to analyze the effects of using Spanish-English cognates on Spanish speakers' English Vocabulary. Based on the collected data from published studies, I was able to identify the effects of using Spanish-English cognates to teach English vocabulary to Spanish speakers, the most effective category for Spanish speakers to acquire English vocabulary, the advantages and disadvantages of using cognates to improve the vocabulary of Spanish Speakers, and the perspectives of teachers and students towards the use of cognates as a way to acquire English vocabulary. Due to the importance, usefulness, and effectiveness that cognates represent in teaching the English lexicon, this research topic was considered relevant because it not only increases the development of meaningful connections between L1 and L2 but also the acquisition of an extensive vocabulary. Thus, and as Ajayi (2018) stated, "a crucial linguistic asset for English learners (ELLs) is cognate use" (p.1).

The results of this analysis revealed that the use of cognates has positive effects on Spanish students' English lexicon. This assumption is supported because the effects reported in the studies reviewed show that cognates not only increased English vocabulary acceleration and development but also speech processing, inference of meaning, word recognition, word processing, lexicon acquisition and recognition, comprehension, and transfer of related words. Tabares and Úsuga (2016) corroborated in their study one of the findings on the aforementioned effects and concluded that cognates are an effective strategy for teaching and acquiring English words because participants presented favorable results in understanding and developing the English language and the meaning of new words.

Regarding the categorization of cognates, it was possible to notice that the most favorable category for Spanish speakers to easily acquire English vocabulary was identical cognates and similar cognates. Echeverría (2018) and Pérez (2015) agreed that the aforementioned categories allow Spanish speakers to create a connection between their mother tongue and their second language; in this way, they not only increase and understand new words but also perfect their own vocabulary. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that among the categories analyzed, the one that has created continuous debates among authors due to its possible effectiveness in vocabulary development is false cognates. In the studies developed by Mendoza and Varela (2017) and López (2007), the results suggested that false cognates can be a vocabulary facilitator tool since they allow students to differentiate the meanings of words. Therefore, more precise research should be carried out to verify if false cognates can help Spanish speakers to develop their English lexicon.

Another conclusion that emerged from this research is that cognates present more advantages than disadvantages for the development of the English vocabulary of Spanish speakers. Mcgregor (2015) confirms in his study that cognates are not only effective in lexicon development but also help bilingual people to develop an effective discourse.

Finally, the last conclusion obtained in this research shows that teachers and students considered cognates as favorable tools in the development of English vocabulary. Mugford (2008) confirmed in his study that cognates not only benefit teachers in learning new teaching techniques but also help students develop a wider vocabulary.

In summary, the use of cognates is an effective strategy for the development of the English vocabulary of Spanish speakers. The category that allows the acquisition of English vocabulary is identical cognates and similar cognates due to their connection between L1 and L2. Additionally, as seen above, it was evident that there are more advantages than disadvantages of cognates. Therefore, the use of cognates by teachers and students in

classrooms must be unavoidable since cognates not only help to improve the lexicon but also help in the development of inference of meanings, speech production, and confidence of students.

6.2. Recommendations

Although there were plenty of studies related to the use of cognates in language education fields in different countries, research that particularly investigated the use of cognates for language learning in Latin America was scarce. In addition, none of the studies conducted was in Ecuador. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out future research on the effects of using Spanish-English cognates to teach English vocabulary to Spanish speakers in our country since it is a challenge to decipher how beneficial the use of cognates would be in Ecuadorian classrooms.

Due to the continuous debate about the use of cognates and false cognates, the researcher suggests, for future research, specialized and specific studies on the effectiveness of false cognates in the development and improvement of English vocabulary since it was not possible to determine whether false cognates are beneficial or not for these purposes.

Regarding the practical implications of this research, the researcher specifically suggests that teachers and institutions encourage students to use cognates as facilitating tools for learning English vocabulary. Therefore, teachers must carefully plan and carry out different activities that allow students to create connections between their native and foreign languages. Additionally, institutions must integrate the use of cognates into their curricula. Likewise, it is recommended that students themselves search for and practice cognates as a beneficial tool for improving their English lexicon.

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