

Encyclopedic bits: a tool to increase vocabulary in preschoolers

Los bits enciclopédicos: una herramienta para incrementar el vocabulario en pre escolar

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Abstract

The application of encyclopedic bits increases the vocabulary of preschool children, through a dynamic and continuous program in a procedural and systematic way, increasing their verbal fluency, the knowledge of meanings and the construction of syntax that allow them to communicate and develop their vocabulary, evidenced in the words they use (productive vocabulary) and the words they know (receptive vocabulary). The research shows the results of a study whose objective was to determine to what extent the application of contextualized encyclopedic bits increases the vocabulary of five-year-old children in an early childhood education center in the province of Chiclayo. The quantitative method and the pre-experimental design with a single group were used. The instruments used were: a checklist, adapted to pre-school children and an evaluation booklet, elaborated by the researchers, used as a pre-test and post-test for the

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participating children. The results were optimal, showing that the children's vocabulary increased by 100%. It is concluded that the application of a program of encyclopedic bits framed within the constructivist approach produces positive effects on the vocabulary of preschool students.

Keywords: Encyclopedic bits, pre-school vocabulary, early childhood education.

Resumen

La aplicación de bits enciclopédicos incrementa el vocabulario de los niños y niñas en pre escolar, a través de un programa dinámico y continuo de manera procedimental y sistemática, logrando incrementar su fluidez verbal, el conocimiento de significados y la construcción de sintaxis que le permitan comunicarse y desarrollar su vocabulario, evidenciándose en las palabras que utiliza (vocabulario productivo) y las palabras que conoce (vocabulario receptivo). La investigación muestra los resultados de un estudio cuyo objetivo era determinar en qué medida la aplicación de bits enciclopédicos contextualizados incrementa el vocabulario de los niños y niñas de cinco años en un Centro Educativo de nivel inicial, en la provincia de Chiclayo. Se empleó el método cuantitativo y el diseño pre experimental con un solo grupo. Se utilizaron los instrumentos: lista de cotejo, adaptada a los niños de pre escolar y cuadernillo de evaluación, elaborado por los investigadores, usada como pre test y post test de los niños participantes. Los resultados fueron óptimos, muestran que el vocabulario de los niños se incrementó en un 100%. Se concluye que la aplicación de un programa de bits enciclopédicos enmarcados dentro del enfoque constructivista produce efectos positivos en el vocabulario de los estudiantes de educación pre escolar.

Palabras clave: Bits enciclopédicos, vocabulario pre escolar, educación infantil.

Introduction

With the passing of time, society has been awakening interest in the advantages offered by education and quality teaching to children (hereinafter the generic term "children" will be used). Teachers, motivated by the responsibility they have in the education of future citizens who will take the reins of the country in the near future, make joint efforts to meet these challenges, requiring them to have a solid academic background together with ongoing training. In particular, pre-school teachers, who are in charge of the formal education of children, seek pedagogical strategies that allow them to stimulate and facilitate the formation and achievement of significant learning in their students, through a creative and dynamic way.

Thus, the need to study the vocabulary of pre-school children arises, becoming an important topic today, because the complexity of the

information and topics that students must understand throughout the learning process, not only requires areas related to everyday life and a more direct experience, but also the development and breadth of their vocabulary.

Language is "the primary tool of human beings" (Acero et al., 2001, p. 23) allowing communication between people, through gestural, written and oral language systems (Navarro, 2003) affirm that language acquisition involves learning vocabulary and refers to everything related to daily life. Vocabulary is a powerful communication tool and plays a fundamental role in people's lives. Vocabulary refers to a group of words that a child understands or comprehends when he/she hears and reads them. Barros-Bastidas & Gebera, (2020) argue that children need words to build syntactic categories, nominal, verbal or adjective syntagms and to establish grammatical relationships.

The development of language has been approached through various theories, among which the following stand out: Skinner's behaviorist theory, which explains that the acquisition of language in children occurs through imitation, as a response to verbal stimuli, that is, they associate sounds with objects, limiting themselves to imitating the sounds. Also noteworthy is Piaget's genetic theory, who maintains that language represents a meaning, produced by a signifier that appears through a mental representation. He considers children as active subjects who construct meanings through their experience with objects. Similarly, we find the historical-cultural theory of Vygotsky, who will focus on the relationship that arises from language and thought, which is produced through social interaction. These cognitive theories maintain that children develop their language through a systematic, interactive and social process in which they gradually create mental schemas to give rise to a fluid and enriching vocabulary of structured thoughts (sentences) which, if not stimulated, will have negative consequences for their future development.

At the "Diez de Octubre" Private Peruvian-Chinese Educational Center, through a systematized observation, it was observed that the children in the Kinder 5 classroom had a limited vocabulary, not yet being able to recognize and understand the meaning of words that for their age were significant, presenting difficulty when expressing thoughts through sentences and answering reading comprehension questions. This is how a suitable and highly effective tool appears as the proposed encyclopedic Bits, through its theory of brain development conceptualized as units of information that are presented to children in an appropriate way, having as a fundamental element the family, the father or mother in charge of teaching the

child (Sánchez-Otero et al., 2019; Moya, A. and García, A., 2014; Gamboa et al., 2013).

Bits like "a very precise drawing or illustration or a photograph of excellent quality. It has certain very important characteristics: it must be precise; differentiated; accurate and new. It also has to be large and clear" (p. 70). In addition, they should show the drawing and include the word written in red, because it is the best color for babies to see. They were designed to increase the baby's knowledge and promote the maturation of his neurological system. The procedure is carried out according to the stage of realization and the age of the child, from showing the images up to a maximum of ten times a day, to decreasing the frequency as the child grows older. The bits should be grouped by categories, showing the pictures or cards quickly and saying the name of what it represents out loud.

Intelligence Bits are a method aimed at children aged 0 to 6 years, with the purpose of "improving attention, facilitating concentration and developing and stimulating the brain, memory and learning" (Egido, 2012). According to Rodríguez (2015) "Intelligence bits are units of information, presented in the form of cards accompanied by sound, which involve a specific visual and auditory stimulus that the brain can process, make sense of and store". This is a learning method based on stimulating the brain to help it build neural connections, the main objective of the intelligence bit is to enable children to be able to identify things by name and then name them.

A multitude of bits, according to the divisions by category that we make, but the most used are: Encyclopedic Bits, Reading Bits, Math Bits. The encyclopedic bits, are units of information that are presented to children in a brief form, which captures the attention of children, as it is a visual stimulus, it is done with graphic material such as an illustration, a very precise drawing or a good quality photograph, in addition, it must be accompanied by an auditory stimulus, enunciating aloud what it represents. These bits show images, which are divided into categories and presented to the children in a grouped manner.

The reading bits are bits of words for global reading. They are done by presenting the word bits three times a day (morning and afternoon in colloquial group and again in the corners) for a few seconds each, in which the teacher will pronounce the word clearly and confidently, taking care not to cover part of the word when presenting the bit. These bits show only the word, not the image associated with the word. We try to use the color red for visual impact. In addition, when children are under three years old, the words are presented in capital letters, and from the age of 3 years onwards, they start with lowercase letters, as this is the letter with

which they will learn to read. And finally, the math bits or numeration and calculation, are a support for learning mathematics, allowing the discovery of quantity, numeration and calculation. They are applied twice a day: morning and afternoon, the teacher will mention the number, quantity, addition and subtraction in a clear and safe way.

The intelligence bits provide great benefits for infants, such as: strengthen brain development, as the bits will allow children to take advantage of the ability they have to learn at an early age, making their brains store as much information as possible. They increase the creation of neuronal connections. They increase and stimulate memory, which is the basis for later learning that will be easier and more attractive for children. Enriches the intelligence and develops children's learning, since it allows them to develop their attention capacity, to be able to see, listen and be alert to receive the information with which they will discover and relate personal experiences. They develop the visual and auditory senses. They increase vocabulary learning. They favor meaningful learning and finally, they nurture and prolong the infants' attention.

In teaching, teachers should take into account some aspects for the effectiveness of the sessions with the intelligence bits, such as: the children must be silent and seated in front of the teacher, the teacher's attitude must be calm, relaxed and smiling, without showing any kind of impatience, it is necessary a previous preparation when passing the bits, this will allow presenting the bits ordered and in the correct position, the image of the complete bit must be shown, making sure that the fingers that hold it do not cover them, accompany these actions with verbalization, so that it coincides with the moment in which the image is being taught, and also make possible some sessions in which the students have the opportunity to manipulate the different categories of the bits, and finally, it should prevent the children from repeating the information that the teacher verbalizes both or during the passing of the bits.

In this way, through the encyclopedic bits we can give information to children, in a systematized way, starting with a magnitude, the simplest, and then introducing more complex magnitudes and developing in parallel indicators that help us to increase their productive and receptive vocabulary, such as the knowledge of meanings, reading comprehension and elaboration of messages or syntax that allow them to communicate eloquently and with verbal fluency.

Language is a means of communication that allows the exchange of information through a coding system (communication, imitation, gesture, behavior). It materializes through communication and not

for communication. (Monfort and Juarez, 2013). Oral language is an important tool in children's learning, inasmuch as we speak to communicate. The family environment and the school environment influence the emergence and development of children's oral language by providing satisfying activities, valuing play and affective relationships, and allowing children to manipulate objects, improving their skills, and creating routines, among others. However, as far as the school environment is concerned, children have stopped giving importance to oral language because they are under pressure to learn to read and write by the age of five.

Two different approaches to oral language learning coexist. Thus, the constructivist approach appears, according to which children learn or acquire knowledge from what they already have. They also learn by manipulating objects and thus elaborate new knowledge. This type of learning allows children to assume responsibilities and to be able to choose, define, plan and conduct learning. Likewise, we have the sociocultural method, which allows children to learn through their interaction with the world around them, on which they reflect and construct new knowledge. "Oral language, involves a series of linguistic skills that include phonological awareness, receptive and expressive vocabulary, narrative skills and conceptual knowledge" (Arango-Tobón, et al., 2018).

Vocabulary learning is present every day of our lives and words are the primary linguistic signs, therefore the acquisition of vocabulary is perhaps one of the human capabilities that has generated much research because it forms the basis of language in the pre-school period and determines the future pattern of their linguistic competence. The child learns "the phonetic system, then the basic morphosyntactic structures and finally the more complicated ones" (Martín, 2009, p.176), because through it the foundations of language are formed in the pre-school period and determine the future pattern of their linguistic competence.

In infancy, the child instinctively builds a vocabulary, through imitation of the words they hear, associating them with objects and actions (heard vocabulary). This gives way to spoken vocabulary, in which the child's thoughts become dependent on his or her capacity for self-expression, no longer relying on gestures or babbling. Once reading and writing vocabularies begin to develop, through questioning and education, the child begins to discover the anomalies and irregularities of the language.

It is argued that knowing the vocabulary is a combination for listening, which is why, if children do not know the words, they will not be able to listen or pay attention to the message. Thus, in order for a child to know a word, he/she must know its pronunciation,

meaning, syntactic function, morphology and spelling. At this point, the school plays a fundamental role, since it must stimulate children to acquire a non-standard lexicon, which will stimulate and enhance the development of speech and listening. Word recognition goes through the following phases: first, encoding (stimulating with different lexicons), second, verification (eliminating the lexicon that does not fit in the sentence), and third, identification (selecting the correct word). The lexical and formal connections of the words, as well as their repetition, must also be assessed.

Vocabulary, according to Nation (2001), can be differentiated into receptive/passive vocabulary and productive/active vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary refers to our ability to recognize words when we hear them or see them written, or when we recognize the parts of their components and assign a meaning to them, if we associate them with other words or recognize their correct use in the appropriate context and know with which other words they are presented (p. 28). Productive vocabulary, on the other hand, is the ability we have to pronounce or write words correctly, we can divide them and use them in different contexts, we know the synonym or antonym, we can form sentences and exchange the original words of the sentence for other words (p.24). We can say then, that when we talk about passive vocabulary, we refer to our reading and listening skills, and when we refer to active vocabulary, it refers to oral and writing skills. (Villegas, 2010).

In school, students acquire most of their vocabulary through conversations and reading. This will allow that by encountering the words several times and in different situations, students gradually learn their meaning and the various uses that each word has. For example, they learn that the word "tongue" is not only the muscle we use to eat and speak, but also means language. On the other hand, according to research, books are the most important source of new words for children who already have the vocabulary for oral communication. This suggests that, in addition to exposing them to frequent conversations, it is necessary to give them the tools to deal with the language of written texts and, in this way, to continue enriching their vocabulary through reading. Therefore, it is essential for children to read to them and have them read a large number of texts, taking care that these include some new words that are accessible to the students' level of comprehension, along with working with them on the chosen words.

In the classroom, it is important that when teaching vocabulary, we create in our students, two fundamental attitudes: we must direct attention to unknown words and arouse curiosity and interest in their mastery, also, exercise them to mobilize the known words or look

for other more appropriate for their use. This will allow: enriching and perfecting the set of terms that students possess before entering school, broadening the scope of meaning of words that are already known by the students, dynamizing the comprehensive vocabulary to achieve ease of speech, establishing multiple connections between the words that make up our linguistic corpus.

Materials and methods

The method used for the study was observational, the type of research was quantitative, with a pre-experimental design. The population and sample consisted of 10 students of 5 years of age at the initial level. The technique used to collect information was observation. The data collection instrument was the checklist, adapted to preschool children, taking the dimensions of productive and receptive vocabulary, which was intended to collect the process of the bits and measure the vocabulary of preschool children, and then passed to be validated by expert judgment. Then an evaluation booklet was elaborated, which we used as a pre-test and post-test for the purposes of our research, developing a program of contextualized Bits that was the stimulus we used to increase our dependent variable.

The research hypothesis was stated as follows: the contextualized encyclopedic intelligence bits program increases the vocabulary of five-year-old children of the Centro Educativo Peruano Chino Diez de Octubre of the district of Pimentel- Chiclayo 2015.

The most relevant material that became a stimulus to increase the vocabulary of pre-school children was the contextualized encyclopedic Bits made of graphic material (photographs) of museums, food, characters, fruits and animals of the Lambayeque region. The information was collected through the Internet and presented in magnitudes from the simplest to the most complex, in a number of 5 weekly Bits with 5 magnitudes each, that is to say 25 units of weekly information, which at the end of the research was able to present 25 bits with 5 magnitudes each, generating 125 units of information in total.

It is expected that this research will be useful mainly to professionals who work as teachers in early childhood education, extending to teachers of basic and higher university and non-university education, university and postgraduate students, as well as the general public, in order to encourage their participation in research, seeking to provide solutions to the many problems that arise in the field of early childhood education.

Results

The application of the proposed methods resulted in the increase of vocabulary in preschool children. For this purpose, the children were evaluated individually through the pre-test, taking into account their learning rhythms and family environment.

The results of the pre-test showed that 90% of the students had an initial vocabulary and 10% had an achievement vocabulary according to the assessment scale used at the initial level: initial, achievement and process. After applying the pre-test, we proceeded to develop the contextualized encyclopedic bits program of the Lambayeque region, which is designed for children 5 years old in the pre-school stage and can be facilitated by a professional who manages active and participatory methodologies and who knows the subject, preferably a teacher. It is organized in 5 categories, in one week 1 category with 5 bits will be presented in 3 different moments during the whole school day. Each bit will contain 1 encyclopedic program, which comes to make 5 magnitudes of encyclopedic information of the image shown, such information will be provided gradually, one magnitude per day and thus reaching the week with 25 information of 5 bits corresponding to a category. Likewise, the encyclopedic bits were applied to the children in the study group.

After applying the program we proceeded to verify through the post test the vocabulary level of the pre-school children, whose results were the vocabulary rating scale in achievement (A) = indicates that the child has improved his vocabulary with a satisfactory achievement with indicators that reflect a knowledge of the meanings and signifiers and therefore produce in a fluent way an oral expression according to their age, being 100% of students who were located at this level. The grading scale (B and (C) was declared deserted with 0% of the students, indicating the successful influence exerted by the application of the Contextualized Bits Program in the children under study.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to determine to what extent the application of contextualized encyclopedic bits increases the vocabulary of five-year-old children of the Peruvian-Chinese Private Educational Institution "Diez De Octubre" Pimentel - Chiclayo - 2015. The results demonstrate reliably that the application of a program of contextualized encyclopedic bits increases the vocabulary of pre-school children. It was possible to prove that the

bits framed within the constructivist approach increased the vocabulary of five-year-old children, with whom the study was carried out.

These results are consistent with the findings of the study by Bernal (2020) who concludes that after applying the intelligence Bits to 27 5-year-old students and 1 teacher at the initial level, he obtained a significance level of 95%, that is, the level of oral expression of 5-year-old students at the initial level was significantly improved.

Quinteros (2017) accentuates that although after the application of the intelligence bits she evidenced a noticeable change in the language of the 28 children investigated (from 3 to 4 years old), at the same time she emphasizes that it is necessary to achieve greater language development, that the intelligence bits are applied individually and personalized to each child, in addition to increasing the frequency and time that the bits are presented.

In this sense, it is paramount to understand what was exposed by Cárdenas (2017), in his studies on bits. Both studies recognize the importance of bits as a source of information for children. For Cárdenas, bits contain concrete information, which is presented to children with the purpose of acquiring adequate information, internalizing it in their brain and increasing their knowledge (Cárdenas, 2017, p. 7). For his part, he assures that bits are used as a highly sophisticated teaching method, because it allows teachers to reduce the explanations they provide while teaching and focus so that children can expand their auditory and visual senses, which will allow the comprehension of oral and written language.

In the same line, Calderón and Machaca (2017), serves to determine what was the level with which the students entered and then the next evaluation was to check if the bits improved such development. The conclusions of the research of Alva and Rodríguez (2016) demonstrate the usefulness of the "Bits of intelligence" in the learning of vocabulary of students of initial level, concluding that the efficiency of the pedagogical strategy "bits of intelligence" for the teaching and learning of the English language in the vocabulary of five-year-old children is confirmed.

Our problematic reality shows a high percentage of receptive and productive vocabulary at the beginning in a private institution due to external factors such as unsupervised children at home, access to television as the only means of entertainment, caregivers in charge of the children who do not interact with them. The statistical results obtained in the present study show that after the application of the program, the experimental group had already reached a high level in vocabulary, surpassing themselves in a previous stage.

On the other hand, seeing the expected increase in the experimental group, it is possible to think that the paradigmatic framework of the educational institution would have had an influence, since it applies the active methodology from the initial level and this would have influenced the positive change in the group.

In general terms, the authors consider quite significant, in light of the evidence, that the program of contextualized encyclopedic bits to increase the vocabulary of preschool children produces positive effects when focused on specific aspects, such as knowledge of meanings, reading comprehension and elaboration of messages or syntax that allow eloquent communication and verbal fluency.

It is recommended to prioritize the research and implementation of vocabulary in preschool children by addressing content and strategies with scientific relevance that help them acquire concepts that are meaningful and allow them to communicate and understand messages.

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