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**THE USAGE OF PRE - READING STRATEGIES AS A MEAN
TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION IN FOURTH
GRADE STUDENTS FROM GREENLAND MONTESSORI
SCHOOL DURING THE FIRST TRIMESTER OF 2021.**

Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English with Concentration in Teaching

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Abstract

Several researchers have worked to study the effects of methodologies and strategies in the teaching of a second language such as English, the study of how the applications of different strategies work to improve student performance has been part of the research. Reading comprehension in a second language as a skill of a person's reading ability has been repeatedly studied. The objective of this study is to determine if the strategies applied before reading exercises have any effect on the student and their performance in the task, specifically the activation of prior knowledge strategy. With this objective in mind, the question: What is the effect of pre-reading strategies on students? To achieve the objectives, a sample of 15 fourth-grade students from a private institution in Costa Rica was chosen, through the application of questionnaires used to evaluate the students development and improvement after performing a reading exercise in which the pre-reading strategy activation of prior knowledge was applied. The findings made during the investigation showed a positive effect of the strategies, and the students improvement on their performance on reading tasks.

Resumen

Varios investigadores han trabajado en estudiar los efectos de metodologías y estrategias en la enseñanza de un segundo idioma como el inglés, el estudio de como funcionan las aplicaciones de distintas estrategias para mejorar el rendimiento de los estudiantes ha sido parte de las investigaciones. La comprensión lectora en un segundo idioma como una habilidad de la capacidad lectora de una persona en repetidas ocasiones ha sido estudiado. El objetivo de este estudio es determinar si las estrategias aplicadas antes de ejercicios de lectura tienen algún efecto en el estudiante y su desenvolvimiento en la tarea, específicamente los ejercicios de activación de conocimiento sobre el tema a trabajar en los ejercicios de comprensión de lectura. Con ese objetivo se concluyo la pregunta ¿Cuál es el efecto de la aplicación de las estrategias aplicadas antes de la lectura en los estudiantes?. Para lograr cumplir los objetivos se eligió una muestra de 15 estudiantes de cuarto grado de una institución privada en Costa Rica, por medio de la aplicación de cuestionarios utilizados para evaluar a los estudiantes después de realizar un ejercicio de lectura en el cual se les aplico una estrategia antes para activar conocimiento previo al tema que se va a leer durante el ejercicio. Los descubrimientos realizados durante la investigación muestran un efecto positivo de las estrategias siendo así que los estudiantes mejoraron su rendimiento y desenvolvimiento en las actividades realizadas.

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Dedication

To God, because not what I want, but what You want, not as I want, but as You want, not when I want, but when You want.

To my mom, for giving me a hug in the light and in the dark.

To my dad, for teaching me that I can achieve everything I set out to do.

To my brother, for giving me so much joy.

To my friends, for being my unconditional supporters.

To myself, for not letting myself lose.

Chapter I

Introductory Framework

This chapter presents the problem to be studied, as well as the objectives the investigation hopes to accomplish. In addition, it shows antecedents from many sources to sustain the investigation, indicates why and for whom the study is, and explains the scope and the input to the subject. This section also offers a general view of the information used and collects information about empirical investigations that used other investigations as examples to follow. All the information presented is focused on investigating reading skills and strategies to help enhance the performance of the students.

1.1 Problem Statement

Learning English as a second language is a complex process that represents a big achievement for many students. While students are learning, they need to develop the ability to achieve the four skills, that is listening, speaking, writing, and reading in order to communicate correctly in the target language. Reading and writing are the last skills to be learned and certainly not the most important at the beginning of the learning process. Students struggle to be the better readers, meaning that in the process of learning English, they are not well prepared to have a real comprehension of texts. Consequently, the researcher of the present investigation is aiming to demonstrate if preparing and applying a plan with the reading strategy known as “activation of prior knowledge,” makes a difference in the understanding of readings.

Researchers and theorists had said that there is a real relationship between a good performance on reading tasks and the preparation before the reading by activating prior knowledge (Butcher & Kintsch, 2003; Schallert & Martin, 2003). When readers work on reading

exercises, they go through some complications to develop a good comprehension of the reading, what goes through their minds, what they struggle in relation to new vocabulary, problems with getting meaning of words, phrases or even the complete text (Block, 1986). Therefore, this is the main reason why teachers or facilitators should prepare students' minds to fulfill properly a reading task, using pre-reading strategies. Without the proper training, most students could become poor readers, and teachers could get frustrated. Eskey (as cited in Block, 1986) described the "maddening experience of having a student who appear to understand every sentence and yet cannot answer the simplest question about a passage as a whole" (p. 177).

Comprehension is the last of the goals to achieve in reading skill. For the accomplishment of the reading skill in the learning process, it is necessary to activate background knowledge. To fulfill this, teachers, facilitators, or instructors must apply techniques and strategies. For what this study matters, pre-reading strategies; especially, activating prior knowledge. Consequently, the investigation pursues to present an analysis that gives the readers valid data about the results obtained by the evaluation of the students who apply the pre-reading strategy activation of prior knowledge in reading tasks with the appropriate teacher instruction and the application of qualitative instruments like tests, questionnaire, and surveys to students and teachers, in order to provide information of the successful or unsuccessful results.

As a mean to accomplish the objectives of this investigation, it is necessary to answer the question: What improvement students present by using pre-reading strategies? This investigation will comprise the results and conclusions from the students' view, but it will also take into account the position of the instructors. Moreover, it will be necessary to have a sample of students from a public or private institution; therefore, the investigation is going to be done during the school year. For its application, it will be necessary pedagogical material such as the

pre-reading strategies that are coupled to the topic, readings with topics related to what students are studying, comprehension questions for every reading to be applied after the readings to diagnose the level of comprehension, comprehension exercises, and evaluation instruments as test, questionnaires, and observations.

Throughout the years, many empirical researchers had used this topic to investigate different variables; there are also books, articles at journals and investigations that solidify the foundations of this investigation. As mention before, this study aims to look if the activation of prior knowledge before the reading tasks allows students to perform better during the class without having the need to look up for answer or to re-read everything. This will be investigated by the application of the strategies and the evaluation of the students' performance with a test and questionnaires about the readings. For that it can be answered the following research question: What is the effect of pre-reading strategies on the comprehension skill in fourth grade students from Greenland School during the first trimester of 2021?

1.2 Objectives of the Investigation

1.2.1 General Objective

To analyze the effectiveness of pre-reading strategies on reading tasks in order to improve the comprehension of reading passages and medium length texts on a normal setting at fourth graders in the first trimester of school year.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

- 1.2.2.1** To identify fourth graders deficiencies on the reading skill by applying instruments as tests in the first weeks without any previous knowledge of reading strategies.

- 1.2.2.2** To apply the reading comprehension strategy “activation of prior knowledge” to improve the English reading proficiency by presenting the strategy and work on reading tasks and comprehension exercises for two weeks.
- 1.2.2.3** To evaluate the results of using pre-reading strategies on a test composed by reading tasks and comprehension questions with a specific time to solved at the final week.

1.3 Justification of the Study

The investigation aims to analyze the effectiveness of the pre-reading strategy and the activation of prior knowledge to improve the reading comprehension on fourth grade students at Greenland Montessori School, who are in the process of preparation. The results and conclusions will contribute to demonstrate that teachers can apply pre-reading strategies in their monthly planning and that with their correct application and accompaniment at the moment of application, students can be better readers. Students in school do not usually trust their performance at the moment they present an English test where comprehension is needed to obtain a good result. The concern of achieving good reading comprehension has existed since years ago and had been a subject of many empirical studies, especially when students feel that the learning process used in the English subject is not fulfilling their knowledge goals, and it is not giving them the tools to do a better performance.

The ability of reading and understanding seems to present real trouble to readers, as native speakers or as second language students. Therefore, this study aims to contribute with the understanding of the reading learning process and the key to develop the reading comprehension skill. Many empirical researchers had investigated about the topic; many others had studied the

results of comparing strategies as a mean for improving comprehension on readers and all of them had come to a similar conclusion, the strategies work to improve comprehension, but a good application and a good teacher instruction, are needed.

The present investigation will take place at a private high school, in a group of fourth graders who are going to use the strategies and follow instructions for its good use. At first, the chosen students will be beneficiated because at the end of the investigation they will be able to apply the strategies they learned during the process. Second, it will be value for teachers because the information collected will be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the strategies, considering than with an effective application plus a good teacher instruction, students, in a short period of time, can develop suitable reading comprehension skills. Finally, when teachers apply the strategies during the reading tasks at class, future students at the institution will get a benefit, as well.

The question to be answered in this investigation does not present a problem to be solved, but it does aim to question the operation of the process and if the results of using strategies as part of the reading task benefit the students and their performance. Moreover, the research aims to demonstrate how viable the strategies chosen for the investigation are and, if the correct application and good assessment help the methodologies used when teaching reading skills in English as a foreign language. The investigation is to compare students' knowledge after they did exercises to awake their background knowledge by using prior knowledge activation before the reading task. Consequently, this investigation has a theoretical application, as the study aims to demonstrate if the existing methodologies are successful or if changes are needed to help students.

1.4 Antecedents

Reading belongs to the four principal skills teachers develop in students, as it is known, every skill has its own methods and strategies to enhance students' skills. In the case of reading, they are the call pre-reading strategies and are used to activate the prior knowledge of students in the process of learning reading and on learning comprehension.

Historically, throughout the years, theorists and specialists on the field of education had done investigations and studies that showed that in the reading learning process, students need to match what the reader knows (prior knowledge) and the vocabulary background. However, also a good teacher-instruction is needed. Langer (1980) indicated that only a few strategies help students to have knowledge on the information presented in a text. Since the beginning, teachers have tried to use strategies, but in many cases, they were ineffective because the use was incorrect, or the performance of the students was poor. Consequently, Langer designed a Pre-Reading Plan (PreP) that includes assessment components and an instructional component.

The PreP structure is a 3-step assessment/instructional procedure. First, it is needed to activate prior knowledge by using key words, pictures or phrases, then a group discussion activity in order to obtain information of the topic and for the teacher to know how much the students know. Once the students have the information related to the topic that is going to be read in class, concepts that add knowledge to student's background and ideas that could be primary or secondary about the topic to be studied, are included. Moreover, then the teacher helps them to reformulate their knowledge by asking them for new ideas to prove their memories. The PreP was based on the idea of activities that help to reinforce the information stored in the memory and the use readers give to the information to facilitate comprehension. The study and preparation of

this PreP was elaborated by focusing on the theories of Adams and Collins (1979), J. Anderson (1976), Anderson, Spiro and Montague (1977), and Spiro (1980) as mentioned in Langer's framework. The study exemplifies how prior knowledge can be used in order to help readers to improve reading comprehension.

In addition, throughout the years, many researchers have worked in the use of pre-reading strategies in order to better comprehend what it is being read. Barnett (1988) mentioned that "Reading strategies are the mental operations involved when readers approach text effectively and make sense of what they read" (p. 150). Barnett made a study designed to analyze the impact of strategies on reading comprehension. Students read two different passages of a medium length and then answered questions to verify the background knowledge they had related to the readings. Barnett used strategies to help comprehension, and, at the end, it was concluded that the use of pre-reading strategies worked effectively to understand the context, and the students who used the strategies as indicated contrasted it with the students who employed this strategy less or less well. To sum up, it can be said that the pre-reading strategies to comprehend a text work, as long as they are employed correctly.

As mentioned before, reading is a skill that not only consists in reading, but also in understanding the text, words, context, and more. Consequently, there have been carried out studies that proved the importance of reading strategies. On the academic year 2013/2014, in the University Kasdi Merbah Ouargla, the student Rouai Souhila elaborated a thesis dissertation based on the topic "The Use of Reading Strategies in Improving Reading Comprehension." In the investigation, Souhila concluded that students have difficulties to approach a full comprehension in reading materials. The study showed a full relation between students' knowledge and the

successful application of the strategies. It also indicated that students may have an improvement on their comprehension if they apply reading strategies properly.

Due to research findings about pre-reading strategies, it can be said that the strategies used before a reading task facilitate the reading comprehension. Hanna S.S. Al Rasheed (2014) investigated the effectiveness of pre-reading strategies in college students. For this study, Al Rasheed made the study using a pre-questioning strategy and vocabulary pre-teaching on forty-six students in preparatory year at King Saud University. Al Rasheed randomly chose half of the students to use a strategy and the other half, another strategy was used. The researcher used reading passages with multiple choice comprehension questions to be applied after each reading. The results of this investigation showed significant differences in the performance in reading comprehension. As a conclusion, Al Rasheed's study stated that it is highly recommended the application of pre-reading strategies in classes to improve the comprehension of students of English.

A recent study in Costa Rica was made as a response to a complain of students from the University of Costa Rica, indicating the lack of understanding of the texts analyzed on a course at the School of Modern Languages in the University. Therefore, the Master's Degree in English Teaching as a Foreign Language, Daniela Barrantes made an investigation regarding such complaint. The teacher-researcher worked with pre-reading strategies; in this case, she used the K-W-L strategy (K= what I want to know, W= what I want to learn, L=What I learned) as a mean to help students to match their background knowledge with the given texts. Barrantes (2015) also applied summaries to check the knowledge gained by the students after the reading exercises. The University applied surveys before the applications and one survey after in order to collect data to verify the effectiveness of the pre-reading strategy. The conclusion was that students

improved their understanding of the main ideas, yet some of the students still had difficulties.

The results showed that students thought that the strategies were useful.

Many researchers had done investigations that get to similar conclusions, not all the strategies improve comprehension, but the results do not depend only of the strategy, as in the process it can be found variables that prevent students from obtaining positive results as for example, the teacher instruction, student's performance, and that the chosen strategy can properly fit the text.

1.5 Scope

To show the effectiveness of the pre-reading strategies on reading tasks, the study needs to complete other variables. Consequently, in this study, it is expected some important results to help the conclusion and final discussion to be developed as expected.

- Show efficiency in the application of pre-reading strategies in fourth graders as a mean to improve the comprehension of different tasks in usual classroom development.
- Give tools to the students to apply in their tests, and in future courses, where they can enhance their comprehension.
- The results of the investigation are expected to be positive; for that reason, the investigation hopes to give teachers a path to follow in the topic, meaning that the idea is that teachers at Greenland Montessori School can incorporate the pre-reading strategies in their classes as a tool to help students in all levels.
- Prove the effectiveness of the strategies on students to demonstrate that with the correct application and teacher instruction, students are going to improve their comprehension of texts.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

This chapter gives the definitions to basic components to understand the direction of the investigation. The first point would be the antecedents this investigation is based on, as they add important data to the investigation and help to understand the methods and models. The next point would be to develop the learning process for students learning English as a foreign language. Then, a general view of the reading learning process is essential in order to introduce the process and the skills needed to accomplish the full comprehension of texts. After that, it will be provided a brief explanation of the most common reading models and the models with more weight for the investigation. Finally, the investigator will explain the reading comprehension processes and definitions, strategies to improve reading comprehension skills, and the processes compound by sub strategies, starting with prior knowledge, follow by mapping, and finalizing with summarizing, strategies that are used to assess the comprehension of the students.

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

“Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body,” said English author Joseph Addison (1837, pg. 270). Human beings are in constant evolution, we evolve every day on every stage of our lives. Exercising the mind is one of the most important activities in order to achieve a good condition for our minds. Therefore, reading has become an activity of interaction between us and an author that maybe we would never know. Comprehending the words that are written on paper is a process of evolution and improving of our minds. All processes must be constant, and reading is an action that needs consistency and hard work because is a complex process with

many components as cognitive actions, language, and general knowledge as culture and experience on certain topics. This chapter aims to give basis to the investigation by showing to the readers how the reading processes are, the foundations according to specialists and theorists that had been studying and learning the reading procedures. All the information presented in this chapter has the purpose of creating a framework for the reader.

2.1 Antecedents

Reading and its skills, procedures, methods, theories, and strategies had been researched by many theorists and researchers, and the main topic of many investigations. All those investigations and studies presented different theories according to the field of study. In 2010, McNeil investigated the contributions of the background knowledge and two reading strategies. In the research, McNeil mentioned the importance of background knowledge and how it improves comprehension in reading exercises. The study was made to 20 students of a group level 4 of English, from different countries. McNeil applied two strategies, the background knowledge and self-questioning, through the application of questionnaires to know the background knowledge and self-questioning to test the exercise.

The results of the study indicated that the use of the strategies improved the performance of the students in the exercise, increasing the level of comprehension. Even though, the results showed that one strategy was better than the other, the main result is helpful to this investigation. Those results created a background to this research by indicating that the strategies actually have an effect on the comprehension process, with the correct teacher instruction and the use of proper material. McNeil not only contributed to this topic in results, but also on knowledge. McNeil also mentioned some theorists that worked on the strategy's topic as Taylor, Stevens, and Asher (2006). The research mentioned how well-developed strategies and proper instructions allows,

average students of English, to comprehend texts better than students with non-training on reading comprehension strategies.

To add more basis to the investigation, Fung, Wilkinson, and Moore (2003) propose a study about the reciprocal teacher interaction. The base of the study was to investigate the effect of a different form to apply reciprocal teaching. It has to be stated that during the procedure, the researchers used strategies in order to measure the difference in the post-test. The responsible of applying the instruments used the thinking out loud strategy with activities as prior knowledge assessment, prompted think-aloud, and text retelling. All those activities were used to fulfill the goal of the strategy and demonstrate the knowledge of the students for processing information. The results of the investigation had shown how students presented a better performance on the reading task after applying and learning the reading strategies. Fung, Wilkinson, and Moore's investigation is related to this topic because one more time, with actual results one can demonstrate how the reading strategies used before, during, or after a reading, can improve comprehension.

Moreover, a study on reading strategies and prior knowledge was to explore the text-induced and strategic influences and the interactions with prior knowledge (Salmerón, L., Kintsch, W. & Cañas, J.J., 2006) using the construction-integration model (C-I) as a base to facilitate the process of making relations among ideas. The hypothesis of the study was that students with no prior knowledge will be more benefited from the strategies than students with prior knowledge on the situation model. During the investigation, the researchers applied two different experiments. The experiment used instruments as hypertext, prior knowledge questions, inference questions, relatedness judgment task and text-based questions. In addition to this investigation, the study confirmed hypothesis, reading strategies show effect in the hypertext comprehension and the effect has relation with the prior knowledge of the readers. Moreover, Recht and Leslie (1987)

add important information to the present investigation. In their study, they concluded information that had been found before. The results shown that when the prior knowledge strategy is applied to readers with less knowledge on the topic, they are going to demonstrate a bigger level of improvements in comprehension than when it is applied to readers with less knowledge. To sum up, the strategy works perfectly for those who present an important level of general knowledge on a specific topic, but readers with poor level of knowledge would present less improvements.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Learning process

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, learning is the activity of obtaining knowledge by study (Cambridge Business English Dictionary, n.d, definition 1). Learning is a process that not only involves acquiring new knowledge, but it also gives to the learner skills and influences his attitudes, decisions, and actions. Learning is a process that is active because it involves experiences and conversations (Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1964; Vygotsky, 1986). Moreover, during the process the students build knowledge along their interaction with objects, scenes, and other people, and the students establish connections between what they knew before and what they are learning during the process. In addition, the process is also based on previous knowledge. One of the objectives accomplished in the learning process is the evolution of the existing comprehension.

As mentioned by Alexander “One's knowledge base is a scaffold that supports the construction of all future learning” (Alexander, 1996, p.89). As mentioned before, the process occurs because the interaction with people, objects, words they use to communicate, social contexts, and the actions they do (Bransford, et al., 2006; Rogoff, 1998). This means that the process occurs in a complex social environment. During the learning process, the students are

required to have an active participation, as this demonstrates the motivation and commitment, they have with the learning process. Considering the previous information, teachers – facilitators or instructors must follow some steps in order to achieve goals during the learning process. The steps are to involve, to motivate, and to teach every one of the students with the proper level of information by using the correct method to achieve comprehension taking in count the emotions and cognitive profiles of each student.

The learning process is composed by five components identified by the National Reading Pattern (2000), which are: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and oral language development. Phonemic awareness, as described on Read Naturally (s.f), is the first component of the process, which includes understanding the spoken language and it can indicate if a student is a good or poor reader. The understanding of sounds, every time a student performs reading exercises, help the student to understand the word and its meaning. The second component is phonics which is "A system of teaching reading that builds on the alphabetic principle, a system of which a central component is the teaching of correspondences between letters or groups of letters and their pronunciations" (Adams, 1990, p. 50). Readers use phonics as the first step to the process of taking a sound, decoding the sound to convert it into a spoken word, and then add meaning to it. Phonetic awareness and phonics are not the same, but they complement each other.

Moreover, fluency is the ability of reading almost as you speak. Reading fluency is only successful if the reader is understanding what he is reading. Consequently, fluency is directly related to comprehension. Vocabulary is the next component, as its obtention expands the readers' minds and improves the readers' skills. The knowledge of words is important, but the knowledge of how that word fits into the world is more significant than just knowing about the existence of the word. For that, vocabulary is not only about how many words we store in our

minds, but if we know the use of the words and the meaning they add in context. Furthermore, comprehension, as the goal of reading, is the most important component. Nevertheless, it needs help from the other five. To comprehend a text involves reading, analyzing, internalizing, and making the information their own. Regarding this component, investigations and studies have been made to demonstrate how comprehension is obtained and its process. For that, they had concluded on strategies to achieve the main goal of reading.

Finally, it is the oral language development or spelling. This component is important for the reading process, as an incorrect spelling of a word leads to an incorrect understanding of meaning. By knowing how a word is spelled, it makes the representation of it accessible and encourages fluency when reading (Snow, 2005, p 86). To sum up, the learning process is the acquisition of knowledge through different components that help the brain to obtain, retain, and understand the information received. The components of the learning process are developed to help comprehension. The proper application of phonetic awareness, the use of phonics to read correctly, fluency while reading, the correct vocabulary knowledge, good comprehension, and spelling properly, are part of the process of comprehending a text.

a. Steps in the Learning Cycle

All students have different ways of learning; consequently, teachers prepare the classes in order to enhance students' performance. Learning is complex. However, learning an academic subject is even more complex, as it is not the same to learn how to ride a bicycle than to learn how to do math, as the prior knowledge for both actions is different and involves different scenarios. Learning in academic level demands a different level of understanding; it requires communication, interaction, study, preparation and attention, for that exist a cycle that shows how learning works, is a process of four steps (Unknow, 2015).

Preparing: this is a factor in the process, as a prepared student is able to focus his attention on important details and the information given by the instructor; in comparison, an unprepared student focuses his attention on the book that is not ready, the pencil that cannot be found, the coffee that he could not drink because he woke up late. The concentration of the students is in different places because one student prepares the mind and his surroundings and the other, did not. Preparing to learn is the first step for learning.

Absorb: this means the actual action of “absorbing” new ideas. This happens when the learner reads a book or listens to the instructor giving a lecture. Sometimes this is the only way students retain information.

Capture: this is the moment when a student starts taking notes. It refers to the words written on the paper, as memory alone is not good enough to retain all the information given in a class or lecture by a professional. In this case, every word, sign, or symbol written in the text book will eventually be helpful at the moment the learner needs to reactive the memory to apply the new information.

Review: this is the last step. This step is for solidifying the information by listening the classes again, reading the notes, re-reading the chapter or else, as by reviewing the information the student can realize what really learned and if the material is useful.

b. Learning styles

Chick (2010) said that learning styles are widely used to describe how learners interpret, organize, conclude, and storage information for further use. One of the most popular learning style inventories is VARK, which means visual, aural, verbal (reading-writing), and kinesthetic. However, it is not the only categorization of learning style, there are others listed in Felder and Silverman’s Index of Learning Styles (1988), with some variations among them. All of the

categories share something in common, the learner has a specific learning style which can also be called a preference. It is the best style for processing information according to the student's abilities and capabilities. Even there is no physical evidence that the learning styles improve a student's learning, it is logical and demonstrable that there are ways to teach some subjects and make the comprehension of the information more digestible for the learner. As what students it means, every one of them learns differently, processes the information differently and can demonstrate knowledge differently. Some styles are described from the personalities and the profiles of the learners, as the popular theory of the multiple intelligences, which is based on eight different types of intelligence as verbal, logical, visual, kinesthetic, rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist.

2.1.1 Reading learning process

The action of reading had been defined for many experts covering many aspects of the action itself. The Cambridge Dictionary has a few forms of defining it, most of them conclude that, reading is the process of getting new information from books or written words and the understanding of the information received (Cambridge Business English Dictionary, n.d, definition 1, 2 and 3). Experts, through time, have defined reading. For example, Nunan (1989) defines it as a skill used for different purposes and for a student to accomplish the goals, they most comprehend what they are reading. Day and Bamford (1998) defined reading as the process of constructing meaning from written words, so the learner is responsible of connecting information with previous knowledge in order to understand. Finally, Harmer (2007) said that reading helps in the acquisition of vocabulary, mentioning that the more a learner reads, the best will be the vocabulary used in oral and written communication. Therefore, according to the

different definitions, reading is a process that carries knowledge, good performance, attention, motivation, and exchange of information between the reader and the author.

Reading is a process of analysis that includes two main important actions: recognition of words and the engagement of language and the mechanisms that assemble these words into messages (Perfetti, 1985). Learning to read is as complex as a long process, it consists of different levels and stages starting in the early childhood to the adult age. In the process of learning reading in English, students are going to be exposed to methods and strategies to help the process of learning new information be complete and successful. At first, it starts with visual input as isolated letters, and then the process of learning grapheme forms, that are individual and group (words) letters. The words are presented to the reader. This shows a successful word reading when students are capable of recognizing the input letter (individual letters) in a group of letters together generating meanings (words). (Perfetti, 1985).

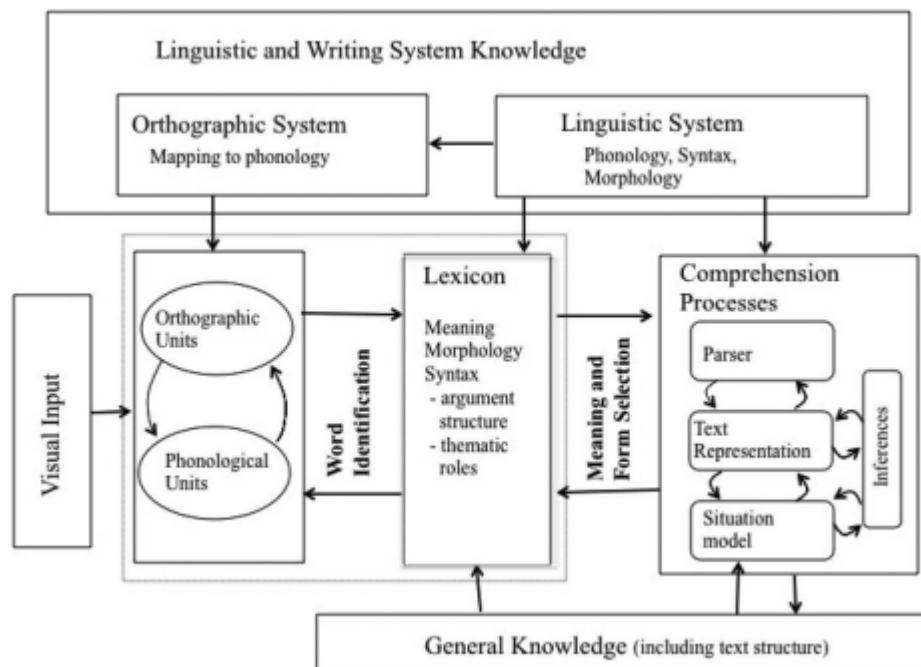


Figure #1. The Reading System Framework. Taken from Perfetti and Stafura 2014 based on Perfetti 1999.

Figure 1 schematizes one organization for the reading process in a cognitive approach explained by Perfetti. Reading is a process that begins with a visual input that makes use of orthographic units and phonological units to lead the reader into word identification. Once these steps are done, readers use their knowledge to process the information semantically and apply it to the context. Then, words are ready to go directly to parse and have a representation to provide interpretation to the reading to finally bring the full comprehension of what has been read. In between the steps of the process, many difficulties are shown by the learners, difficulties that obstruct the total comprehension of texts. Therefore, the learner needs different skills in order to improve those difficulties. Reading has demonstrated to be a complex process. It carries more than just putting words inside our mind; it carries understanding meaning, vocabulary, fluency, knowledge. The reading process implies an active participation from the reader, as he must do a representation from the reading in his head, has to understand which is his role in the process, and which is the purpose of the lecture (M di Stefano and M.C. Pereira, 1997).

Theorists have investigated the process of learning to read in a second language. Verhoeven (2010) mentions that representation, unification, and control are basic in the reading process in Spanish and English. When we mention representation, we are referring to the act of identification of words storage in the mind; unification means the unification of those words into complete sentences and texts with proper syntactic; and control refers to following and evolving the processes as lexicon and syntactic in the memory. Reading in a second language requires more work from our minds than reading in the mother language, as students will need additional resources or effort. The process can be hardly affected by lexical abilities, syntactic abilities, or oral language comprehension abilities (Verhoeven, 2010). In conclusion, it can be said that reading does not have one theory because there are many components and processes for just a single theory (Perfetti and Stafura, 2014) as mentioned in Theories of Reading Development. Reading is

complex and it represents difficulties in different ways for every student. In addition, reading demands different skills and methods for everybody.

2.1.2 Reading Skills

What are reading skills? The answer to this question includes two components: definitional and substantive. The definitional answer consists in a personal performance on a reading assessment, and the substantive answer consists in two individuals who differ in their performance on reading assessment giving the question. Therefore, what are the processes in reading that produced variation in assessed reading skills? (Perfetti, 1985). Reading is not just the action of reading words and memorizing sentences to help us understand something, it is a process in which the reader must develop skills in order to fully comprehend the reading. Students are in the need of developing skills as decoding, which helps the student to connect the new information with the information in his mind, as well as to connect the prior knowledge in his mind with the knowledge that he is acquiring.

Another skill is fluency. Once a student reads fluently a text, the action of decoding the information becomes easier. A student who is always stopping the reading because he needs to look words for translation, misunderstood a sentence or just lost attention of the words that is reading, may be a student who will present troubles in the development of his comprehension skill. As mentioned before, the lack of vocabulary makes a student to stop reading to translate isolated words, which is harmful for the development of comprehension. Consequently, the acquisition of new vocabulary is completely important in the process of reading texts successfully. Another factor in the reading process is knowing the sentence construction and coherence. For instance, sentence construction is how sentences are built and cohesion is how ideas are linked. Therefore, a student who recognizes how ideas are linked, it is a student with the

capabilities and tools to get meaning from entire texts. Every skill should be learned in isolation first and once the student mastered it, to apply them simultaneously. The process of mastering the needed skills does not happen from one day to other; for that reason, the reading process starts at a very young age, as students at the level from fourth grade onwards change from learning to read to reading to learn (Hirsch, 2003).

2.1.3 Reading models

Reading is a cognitive activity, as the actions that one needs to achieve take place in the mind. Because of this categorization of the action, reading had been a matter of interest of many psychologist's research. Some of the research made by psychologists interested in the human mind, had concluded two big models in the reading activity, the bottom-up model and the top-down model. These two models are highly recognized by many teachers. First of all, it is important to mention that a model attends to demonstrate descriptions of the process of how our mind recognizes words, the time those words are kept in mind, if a syntactic process is made, and how much time it takes, and more (Gough, 1972 and Rayner and Pollatsek, 1989). On the other hand, there is the componential models, which describe the components involved in the reading process. This model does not explain the time or interaction of those components in the reading process.

Returning to the process model, it is important to include in the definition of sequential model. They model the reading process as a series of stages and in order to proceed with the next stages one has to conclude the previous stage. To get into the matter, it is time to describe the approaches into the process models. First, it comes the bottom-up approach which was taken out of the first place by the top-down approach. It is important to mention that the top-down suggests

the reverse process of the bottom-up, there is not a top-down theory. It is more like a bottom-up approach with some modifications and the rapidly replace the bottom-up initial approach.

a. Bottom-up approach

Gough's (1972) bottom-up approach is a model that analyzed starting with parts of the text or some small stimulus; in other words, do not begin with the complete text. In order to explain the model, it is important to mention that Gough used some words to describe and name the stages of the process. Gough's model indicates that the first stage starts when the reader begins with letters, which are recognized by scanner. Then, the information obtained is processed by a decoder in order to convert the string of letters into a string of phonemes ordered systematically. The string is passed to a librarian, so in this stage the lexicon helps to recognize the word. Once the process is done with one word the reader does the same with the rest of the words on a sentence to almost finish the process on a stage called merlin, in which the syntactic and semantic rules made its appearance to assign meaning. In the last stage, it was mentioned that it is almost the finish of the process, because the last step is when the reader uses its vocal system to orally produce what is inside his mind.

Gough's process uses isolated units; it means that uses every step of the process for obtaining the information inside the mind separately one of another. It gives reference to the fact that the process may take a long time to be complete. Once the process is presented, one can note why it is called the bottom-up approach, as it begins from nothing to all the sentences. Nevertheless, some specialists as Rayner and Pollatsek have shown some irregularities in this approach. They pointed out the fact that, Gough mentioned the processing of letters in isolation before the mind connects them into a word, and a test stated that it is not correct. This means,

words are quickly recognized than isolated letters. Another irregularity in this model is the fact that how do one knows when the stage of processing words stops and the stage of processing sentences to give them their syntactic and semantic meaning starts, this seems to be unlikely possible. The bottom-up approach gave important details and processes to the reading process, but it has shown some defects that may display some problems.

b. Top-down approach

Before the introduction and explanation of the approach, it is important to mention that the given name to this approach does not mean an opposite approach from the bottom-up. One can think of this approach as model which shows the process beginning from the complete text, continuing with the paragraph, and ending with words. This will not be favorable for the process because it can mislead the information and the understanding of the reading. Moreover, the term top-down is used to establish a converted form of the mentioned (top-down) approach, but in a different way. The approach refers to the expectations of the reader towards the reading. The reader will look for something, in this case will be called a hypothesis, as the reader aims to confirm or deny the information. For this approach, the reader begins the reading with a plan formulated before starting the reading. Therefore, the reader will omit parts of the text that seem unnecessary for his goal.

Goodman (1971) is the name associated to this approach. He seemed to conclude that the reading process is a tool for the reader to verify his hypothesis using specific data. His position it is not an attempt to decline the past approach, but to modify the pedagogical process in order to show a better understanding of the process. However, in future testing, Goodman realized that his vision of the process was partly wrong. The reader in fact observes the text, works on text's

redundancy to eliminate unnecessary information, and uses the prior knowledge in the language to help him guide his initial ideas. Consequently, the model suffered some modifications as, the reader begins scanning lines not letter or words, picks up graphic cues using some components, then forms an image divided into what he sees and he expects to see. Therefore, now it is called representation. To sum up, it seems that the name of the approach refers to the reader bringing the expectations into the reading and use them to begin the process and complete it properly by obtaining the needed information. The model is driven by the reader and not the other way around. Goodman influence contributes to the reading theorist, as Hosenfeld claims a good reader is a good guesser (1984), agreeing with the model.

2.1.4 Reading Comprehension

In this point, the researcher aims to mention the most used theories to explain comprehension and indicate that reading comprehension is mostly affected by the lack of skills during the reading process. It has to be stated that reading comprehension is a prerequisite to success in the academic area of reading. Reading requires a series of components in order to achieve the main goal of every reading exercise, which is understanding the text, comprehend the words, and, in most of the cases, storage the information in the mind, action that cannot be fully achieve if the reader did not get correct meaning and fully comprehension of the passage, paragraph, or text.

As mentioned earlier, reading is a very complex process that goes from the action of learning to read throughout the action of showing comprehension of the readings and producing something with the information acquired. Throughout time, many theorists have made studies and tested some hypotheses trying to understand and represent the reading comprehension

process, but there are several theories. Reading needs three classes of knowledge in order to function: linguistic knowledge, orthographic knowledge, and general knowledge. Once the reader demonstrates this type of knowledge an instructor can infer that the reader is fully skilled to comprehend the text easily than a reader who does not show the same level of knowledge. All the cognitive process in our mind use those classes of knowledge to perform the reading task properly.

Theorists have concluded that reading comprehension processes use two ideas that complement each other. The first is that the reader can achieve a high level of comprehension through the literal meaning of a text; this means the reader uses the information obtained through the reading process and by processing the information he can build up a situation. This is called the situation model (Van Dijk and Kintsh, 1983). The situation model uses, as one of its bases, the vocabulary. Secondly, it can be found the process that involves more cognitive components, called the construction-integration (C-I) model (Kintsh, 1988). This model interacts among the memory, procedures of recollecting and transferring information, known as cognitive processes, and others. An important detail of the C-I model can be explained by using the top-down and bottom-up models together using specific characteristics of each other in order to complement the C-I model.

The theories mentioned are just global frameworks, there are not specific theories of reading comprehension. More than a theory of what reading comprehension is, they are frameworks of how it functions and what affects the process. The theories mentioned before give value to the investigation because it demonstrates and gives details of comprehension process, but it also shows how the cognitive architecture of the mind works to process the input to produce an output with proper information. If the reading process is too complex for just a single

theory, reading comprehension suffers the same path, it is too extensive for precise models; for that reason, it is during the research there were found a variety of models, but just the most common were mentioned.

2.1.5 Strategies to Improve Reading Comprehension Skills

A comprehension strategy is an action applied in a particular context targeting to improve some aspects of comprehension. A strategy of comprehension is compound by two actions: behavioral and cognitive. The behavioral action of a strategy would be to look up a word in a dictionary and locate the unknown and, the cognitive action of a strategy would be to read the definition, read the sentence with the now known word again, and then to comprehend the sentence (McNamara. 2007). An important aspect to take into account is how to optimize the effectiveness of the strategies. With that in mind, it has to be mentioned three criteria for reading comprehension strategies. The first one is power in order to impact the process of comprehension. The second is functionality, as all strategies should be applied and performed in a way that do not affect other processes. In other words, the strategy does not require more comprehension than the text itself. The third and last criteria is engineering efficiency, which means that strategy should be used by teacher and students easily.

2.1.6 Pre – Reading Strategies

The pre reading strategies are a subcategorization of the reading strategies. Pre reading strategies have as main goal to increase comprehension. Therefore, the activities are prepared to be applied some minutes before starting to read the complete text. Based on the model used in McNamara's Reading Comprehension Strategies Theories (2007), this investigation would apply a sub strategy from a multipart knowledge-focused reading comprehension strategy. The strategy

consists in three sub strategies which are text elaboration, propositional concept mapping, and summarization/writing sub strategy. Although one is the basis for the next those, they are strategies than can be applied independently and result helpful to the reading comprehension process.

2.1.6.1 1 Text Elaboration Sub strategy

The text elaboration strategy is the base for the propositional concept mapping and summarization/writing sub strategy. For what this investigation matters, text elaboration is the one that would be applied, as such strategy uses prior knowledge activation as the activity to improve comprehension to later apply the assessment. The application of the strategy consists in that fact that students may have or may have not read something before that class. Consequently, it is necessary to know when a student starts obtaining new information that about the topic, it can be before classes, or in the same class that will increase knowledge. As next, the teacher guides the students to create a relation between the text and their prior knowledge, which was activated before the reading by using flashcards, words, worksheets, or whatever instrument the teacher chooses. Then, when knowledge starts blooming in their head, students will relate the previous information in order to gain previous learning for the oncoming passage to be read.

2.1.6.2 2 Propositional Concept Mapping Sub strategy

The main purpose of the sub strategy is for the students to formulate, in a listed form, the main ideas, examples, and representations. The strategy consists of creating an elaborated and organized mapping of the actions in the reading. The information obtained by reading the passages would be organized and students have to make relations in order to not lose the string of the reading and comprehend the passages.

2.1.6.3 3 Summarization / Writing Sub strategy

This is the last sub strategy of the process, and it aims to help the students to generate a product with the information obtained by relating prior information, new information, organizing the ideas to finally be able to produce a coherent answer with foundations, because he was able to comprehend the passage. The sub strategy aims that the student can deliver the product as a text prose elaborated in a new passage, it is sustained for the complete information collected for student in the complete process. From a processing perspective, the sub strategies are created to function together in order to generate information that can be assessed by the instructor. The information would be the product of a reading process giving as a result the link of old and new information into a newest information.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

In this chapter, it will be found all the information related to the methodologies of the investigation. First, the approaches of a research and the specific approach for this investigation are explained, as well as the two designs used for the study. Moreover, this section will cover the information sources used in the document, the analysis categories with the explanation of the variables of the study, and the description of the instruments to be used and the procedure to collect the data and then analyzed it.

3.1 Research Approach

Research is at times mistaken for gathering information, documenting facts, and rummaging for information (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001 as mentioned by Williams, 2007). Research is the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information in order to understand a phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001 as mentioned by Williams, 2007). Research appears when we have at least one question about something, about a phenomenon that calls the attention. The three common approaches for a research are the quantitative, the qualitative, and the mixed method. Consequently, researchers need to anticipate the data needed in order to choose the correct method (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001 as mentioned by Williams, 2007).

The quantitative research is an approach for testing theories by examining variables. The variables able to be measured, and the data that can be typed as numbers in order to allow researchers to analyze it. In addition, the quantitative research approach involves the collection of data, which can be quantified and exposed to statistical treatment. Quantitative research begins with a problem statement and involves the formation of a hypothesis, a literature review, and a

quantitative data analysis (Williams, 2007). This research has deductive assumptions, which means it comes direct from the data collected and the results obtained. The present study is going to use some instruments for the quantification of the data to measure the numbers and use them to obtain the results. Nevertheless, the study is going to work with the qualitative method, as well because the data will be obtained through the participation of a group of individuals. This investigation is qualitative, but it needs some quantitative instruments in order to obtain real results.

The qualitative research explores and understands individuals or groups involved on a social problem. The process has questions and procedures, the data typically comes from the participants, and the data analysis is obtained inductively by the use of observations in order to obtain detailed information of the subject and the behavior of the sample (Guest et al., 2013). Moreover, at the end, the researcher can reach conclusions on-the meaning of the data, which is not given in a statistical form, as in the case of the quantitative method. An important characteristic of this research method is that in the qualitative research, it is necessary to move back and forward on the collected data in order to analyze the information. This is called the Constant Comparative Method (Thomas, 2009).

Leedy and Ormond (2001) described two things about this research. First, the method focuses on things happening in normal settings, the “real world;” and second, it tries to capture and study that phenomenon that takes place. In the qualitative method, the researcher obtains a lot of information from different angles, but the work of the researcher is to limit the information for the good of the investigation. Leedy and Ormond stated that qualitative research typically serves for many purposes as exploration, multifaceted description, verification, theory development, problem identification and evaluation. For what this investigation matters, evaluation will help to

fulfill the method used, because it aims to judge the effectiveness of particular practices, as the use of pre-reading and prior knowledge activation strategies.

If information is missing, there is not enough data, and the variables are unknown, a qualitative research can help to determine what is important and what needs to be studied. The qualitative researcher covers five kinds of studies: case studies, ethnographies, phenomenological studies, grounded theories studies, and content analysis. According to Leedy and Ormond, this research is a case study with a qualitative research design, because it deals with the analysis of instructional strategies to improve a specific skill. In addition, in order to analyze the results obtained from the investigation, the data will be transcribed in numbers using the evaluations of the students as a pre-test and post-test. The grades obtained in those two instruments are going to be the numbers used for analysis. The data will be collected from participants by means of observations and checklists, the instruments used to evaluate the students and the interaction with the participants, as comments and discussions. Once the instruments were applied the results are going to be evaluated and interpreted by the researcher. On the other hand, the mixed research involves both, quantitative and qualitative research, and integrates the forms of collecting data. The mixed designs are philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. This form provides a complete understanding of the research problem than just one approach alone (Richards and Richards, 1995).

3.2 Research Design

Historically, the term ‘action research’ has been long associated with the work of Kurt Lewin, who viewed this research methodology as cyclical, dynamic, and collaborative in nature (as cited in Hine, 2013). The present investigation will use the action research as one of its

research designs, due to the fact that Hine mentioned that such design works through planning, observing, and reflecting individuals and groups. This design is not just useful as a design for researchers, but also in education as it is used to analyze the environment through the participatory nature of the design. The design according to Hine (as mentioned in Stringer, 2004, p.4), it is described as a helix starting on look, then act, then think, and then it starts all over again. Hine also mentioned the action research is a cycle (Calhoun, 1994; Wells, 1994) that is used to complete the action research helix meaning. The actions required to collect data are not just to look, think, or act, as in between there are more steps as the study design, collecting data, the analysis of the data, communicating outcomes, and taking action. Those complement each other, and if are used together, they will add more accuracy to the study.

The second design used is the descriptive design. According to McCombes (2019), it aims to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon accurately and systematically. This research can be used when there is lack of information and when it is necessary to look up for characteristics, categories or frequencies. The descriptive research methods are surveys, observations, and case studies. Those are methods later discussed in this document, as the instruments used to collect data. Consequently, this investigation will work with two research designs; the action research because is a study that works through planning, observing, and reflecting the action of individuals or groups, and with the descriptive research because it describes the answer the research question that involves the participation of a determined population, as well as their behavior with determined interaction and instructions.

The research designs mentioned are going to work for the study in different stages. First, the planning stage when the researcher is going to plan the lessons with the activities, the time for every task, the distribution of time, the application of the pre-test and post-test, and the

observation of the group. The second step is to apply the instruments of observations of individuals and the group dynamics to choose the appropriate materials. The last step is to present the results and conclusions by showing the response to instructions, interaction teacher-student, and student-task.

3.3 Information Sources

A source is the origin of something; therefore, information sources are the origin of specific information related to a topic or a kind of subject. A specific way to explain the meaning of information source is to say that is “anything that might inform a person about something or provide knowledge to somebody” (Varshney, 2011). There exist categories and types of information sources. There are two categories of documentary sources and non-documentary sources. Documentary sources are generally published documents of knowledge, and are divided into primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.

Primary sources of information are the documents written directly from the author. Varshney (2011) mentions that these sources come from original research and development and, therefore, are original documents from original ideas. Examples of primary sources are books, research reports, empirical thesis, speeches, etc. Moreover, secondary sources of information are “sources of data and other information collected by others and archived in some form” (Stewart and Kamins, 1993). These sources are used in documents as references to help a new study or to contribute to the continuation of a topic, and are sources taken from an original document to be used in a new research. The original information, the one that came from the primary sources, is modified or adjusted to the topic to help in the investigation’s development. They can also provide new knowledge about a topic because these sources can be used to compare information

among them. Secondary sources can be investigation thesis, books, journals articles, news or newspapers. Finally, tertiary sources combine primary and secondary sources. Varshney (2011) defined them as sources that bring information from secondary sources in a reformatted and condensed way, to make it easy and convenient to read. These sources work to help the searcher and reader of information in the use of the first two sources. This type of source does not have subject knowledge content. Tertiary sources can be bibliographies, glossaries, dictionaries, encyclopedias, etc.

This investigation aims the use of the three types of information mentioned before to create foundations for the research. All the sources in the investigation are used with the consent of the author and are mentioned in references. The primary sources used in this investigation add important details about the processes, application of the theoretical basis, instruments used to evaluate, and results to explore the subject with real data of real studies. The sources offer important material as recommendations to future investigations as the present study, and to help in the development of this investigation. Furthermore, the secondary sources mentioned offer a series of data, that at some point in the process of application if this study, are going to be taken into account to avoid usual mistakes or misinterpreting of data that can be harmful to the results giving mistaken conclusions. The documents cited were studied for the present researcher by analyzing the frameworks, the theories in which they were based on and how the information helped the studies in order to use the information properly and according to the subject in matter. The tertiary sources are important because are going to offer punctual definitions to explain with exact words some concepts to give the reader a better comprehension.

3.4 Analysis Categories

According to Janesick (as cited in Richards and Richards, 1995), “The qualitative researcher uses inductive analysis, which means that categories, themes, and patterns come from the data...” Therefore, the main categories for this investigation come from the objectives. These analysis categories are students’ deficiencies in reading tasks, pre-reading strategies, and reading comprehension proficiency. First, one can say that students’ deficiencies on reading tasks are the lack of some necessary qualities or elements in order to complete task based on the development of reading tasks. Second, pre – reading is the process of getting information of the text before reading the text carefully and strategies, are a plan of action designed to achieve a major aim, for that is that pre – reading strategies will be defined in the investigation as a plan of action designed to help students locate ideas before carefully reading a text. Finally, reading comprehension is the ability to process text, but most importantly to understand its meaning and integrate the information with what the reader knows.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

In order to collect the information, it will be necessary to use specific instruments. In this case, the instruments are going to be one observation chart, a pre-test, two comprehension activities and a post-test. All the instruments are going to be applied on site in classes of 40 minutes.

The first observation chart will be prepared to know the group and its behavior, to know the teacher, and the procedures used to manage the students on tasks. The observation will have a header of important information such as date, teacher’s name, group, and total of students and students present in class, topic, and class duration. Then, the chart will comprise by two columns.

In the first column, a header “class aspects” and on the next, “comments” to describe the aspects. The chart will have five lines; the first one will observe the class initial behavior to know the protocol of the class at the moment to begin the class, the time, the routine used to start the class. The second line deals with, the time consumed in the complete class, the time of every task, the way to handle control the time. In the third line, class behavior aims to evaluate the behavior of the students in the development of the class to have an idea of their participation, if they are talkative, and if they pay attention and complete the tasks. In the fourth line, teacher management of the class, how the teacher presents the topic/task, uses of different tools, and the teacher/student interaction. Finally, the last line will be to take notes about technical details such as internet connection, cameras, noises, etc. (See appendix A)

For this investigation, it will be needed another type of observation chart. This one will be used to observe the class while they perform a reading task to study students’ reactions and problems at the moment of reading and comprehending the exercise. At the end, this chart will help to identify student’s deficiencies. The chart will be a rubric to evaluate the students. The chart will have a header with general information such as date, teacher’s name, group, and total quantity of students and students present in the class, topic, reading task to be done, and class duration. The chart will have five columns. In the first column, a header “Rubric / Scale” and on the next four columns a number to be used as a scale, where one is a poor development and five is an excellent development. The last column is to write “Comments.” Moreover, the chart will have three lines. The first one will evaluate class on task behavior with aspects as: respect the time for reading, reading in silence and individually, and termination of the task. The second line deals with vocabulary knowledge, as this line aims to evaluate the level of vocabulary students know in the reading. The evaluation will use aspect as none, some, and complete vocabulary

knowledge respectively, and if the students need to translate words or the complete text. The third line deals with comprehension in order to know if the students can answer some questions about the text and support the answer, and also show evidence of the answer on the text. At the end, the fifth line will be used to take notes in case of important details. (See appendix B)

At the beginning of the observation, a pre-test will be applied using the story “Hercules Quest” from the book *Journeys: Common Core for 4th grade* to test students’ knowledge and performance. In between, a follow up task will be applied with a different topic found by the researcher the first will be “A Cat and a Mouse Partnership” to demonstrate the improvement of the students, then a second application with the text “Rumpelstinskin”. Finally, to obtain the final results, the students will be evaluated through a post- test by using the strategy and the proper instruction, and then the students are going to read the text “Zomo’s Friends” from the book *Journeys: Common Core for 4th grade*, and answer comprehension questions.

3.6 Collection Data Process and Data Analysis

In this stage of the study, it is necessary to be clear on the procedures to process the data correctly and, in this way, the data will be concrete, useful, and rightful. As mentioned before, the instruments are going to be observation charts, quizzes, and a test. The observation chart number one will be used to know the group in its usual setting. The classes are presential, and it is important to understand the dynamics of the group and the interaction with the teacher in every class, as well as to know how much time the class consumes and the performance of the students. In order to apply the instrument, the researcher is going to observe the group to create a good idea of how to work with them. After the information is collected, it is going to be tabulated in order to organize the results and, in that way, to help the planning of the class.

After the observations are carried out, the researcher will prepare the lesson plan to present the strategies to the students, practice the strategies, and finally apply them. The objective of this step is to give a proper explanation of the strategies and to help the students to apply them by themselves two times. At the end of the classes, a comprehension quiz is going to be applied, the results tabulated and compared with the results obtained from the pre-test. To evaluate the performance of the students, the final test will be applied individually. Next, the test must be checked, and the results tabulated on a excel sheet. Once the process of recollection and application of comprehension quizzes and tests in ended, all the information is going to be studied to analyze the results and start writing the conclusions.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

This chapter aims to analyze the data obtained during the application of the instruments. The importance of the chapter lies on the analysis of the results obtained, to demonstrate whether the research and implementation of the chosen instruments helped the reading process and understanding. At the end of the chapter, the results will attempt to answer the research question: What is the effect of pre-reading strategies on the comprehension skill in fourth grade students from Greenland School during the first trimester of 2021?

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

The analysis and interpretation of the results is going to be based on the performance of the students. For this investigation, the sample was 15 students of a private school with the proper mastery of the language. For that, the instruments used were an observation chart, a reading rubric, a pre-test, two quizzes with comprehension questions about a story, and a post-test. The instruments were planned to determine the setting of applications, behavior of the students, and their knowledge. Moreover, it also was planned to evaluate the knowledge and the application of the strategy. Every instrument used in the process is going to be mentioned and analyzed in order to demonstrate the improvement of the students.

4.1.1 Observation report

The observation of the group was the first step. Before applying the instruments, it was important to know the group regarding their intangible and tangible characteristics, as well as to let the students to know the researcher, whom from now on will be called, the instructor. The observation report was helpful to determine group dynamics, tastes in reading, attitudes, and habits of the group. In addition, it gave to the instructor a perspective of the group and their

interactions. The main goal of the observation was to help the instructor to choose the proper reading for the students, to analyze if the strategy was chosen properly according to students needs and knowledge, and to give an overview of the group and the students, individually.

The report had five main aspects. The first aspect showed how the students prepared themselves for every class, the routines, the time the students spent in the language class, and the time they used to work on reading exercises. The comments on this first section showed, students are energetic, talkative, and sociable. Moreover, the students like to participate on the activities, as they answered when the teacher asked questions. The observation allowed the instructor to notice that sometimes, when students were finishing one class with the teacher in charge of the language class, who is the same for math and science, they needed between 5 to 10 minutes to get ready. This because they lost attention and got distracted talking to each other or playing some random games. Students worked very well, but they lost control very easily. Therefore, to get their attention, the teacher has a system of points, so they get a point for doing the change quickly at the end of the week. This point gives them free time or some special activity. Something important to mention is that at the beginning start of the class, as the change of subject is a little hard, the attention of the students is lost because they focused on something else and got distracted. Hence, a lot of time is wasted.

The second aspect in the observation was time. This point refers to the amount of time in which students receive class per week. The students have four language classes per week. Every class is 40 minutes long. This group receives two class on Tuesdays and the other two on Thursdays. The instructor chose Thursdays to apply the technique from 12:30pm to 1:50pm just before the last class. One supporting point to add is the time students spend on the exercises assigned to them. When the teacher provides them with reading exercises, the students complete the task successfully and thus, they do not have to finish it at home. In other words, they are able

to finish the reading exercises because they are good readers and despite the fact that the school does not work the reading skills, as much as the other skills. Students read at a normal speed for 4th graders. Furthermore, they answer and do the exercises on time and with good rhythm. This means that the students pay attention to what they are doing, and do the exercises carefully. At the end of every class, they usually have 10 more minutes, according to the information the teacher provided. All the information gathered on this section of the observation gave to the instructor an overview of the students' performance on tasks, as whichever the task is students work properly and are good listeners, since they follow instructions.

The third aspect in the observation was behavior. This section intended to offer an overview of how the group is in matters of respect and obedience, since in order to fulfill the objectives of the investigation, the instructor needed a good attitude from the students. The comments offered good results, as the students get along well, and there was not a single student with special needs or complicated behavior. The group is well developed in matters of values towards the teacher and among peers. As mentioned before, they are good listeners and follow directions, ask for permission and respect when the teacher is talking and giving instructions, raise their hands, and in general they are very polite and respectful. Something important to mention is that students pay attention and working well, but all that good behavior comes because the teacher is always attentive. Without the teacher, students would lose their attention and could not be able to complete the exercises. Moreover, the teacher uses a reward system and, in that way, students keep focused on their tasks.

Moreover, the fourth aspect was the teacher's management of the class and the interaction teacher-students. The procedure that the teacher uses to maintain the order in the group is, as mentioned before, rewards as an incentive to promote concentration and good development. In addition, she uses the silent method at the moment of working on the book, worksheets or

reading, as she likes to keep the class calm and in silence to help students' concentration. However, she also works with the direct method because one of the main objectives of the teacher's yearly syllabus plan, is to generate conversations and free communication in English among she and the students. The third method used is a little bit of suggestopedia, as students had shown a great interest on drawing, painting, and making art. Therefore, the teacher used this on her favor, she works a lot of topics using material for the students to manipulate, color, and create new things at the same time they are learning. The use of those methods is appropriate for the application of the strategy because as in the lesson plan one of the activities is to activate prior knowledge and thus, to show students pictures related to the story and let them infer information. Consequently, students were interested when observing and analyzing the images to give an appropriate argument.

Students showed interest on reading. Moreover, they liked the tales and stories that are not related to academic or geographic topics. When they were reading an academic paper, that is on the program, they answered the questions correctly, as they are good readers. However, during the observation, the researcher noticed that in the case of comprehension, students needed improvement because they had some trouble remembering details and some actions that were on the reading. The teacher mentioned they do not work reading skills as much as the oral, listening, and grammar skills. Consequently, the observation report gave to the instructor a better view of some important characteristics to take into account at the time of planning the lesson, choosing the reading, and creating the proper comprehension questions to apply the strategy. All the results obtained were helpful to the correct development of the investigation.

4.1.2 Pre- test

The pre-test instrument consisted on a reading comprehension exercise and then answering ten questions. Consequently, in that way, the instructor could evaluate student's

comprehension, while at the same time, an observation rubric was used to identify the of students' deficiencies on the task. The story used was "Hercules Quest" from the 4th grade Journeys Book. The instrument was made by the instructor. The questionnaire was is composed by ten questions. At the end, every student received a score. The pre-test was applied on the regular language class schedule, the class attendance was complete, for a total of 15 students. (See Lesson Plan in Appendix C.)

The total of correct answers of the pre-test represented the 56% of comprehension. This indicated students developed the reading correctly, but they needed improvement. The analysis of the questions was done from top to bottom using the results as the data to sort them. As it can be seen in the Figure, the question with more correct answers was number nine, as it got 15 correct answers. This indicates that all students got it right. Moreover, this specific question was searching that the students remembered details of the story, specifically at the end of it which was the special reward the main character obtained for learning his lesson, according to the story. The second question shown with more correct answers was number ten, with a total of 10 correct answers. This question aimed to make the students analyze all the story in order to infer the moral the story offered by taking into account all the sequence of events, conversations, and conclusions. From 15 students, just 10 were able to answer correctly, probably because it was a question that needed the of full comprehension of the text. The remaining 5 students were a little bit lost when answering it.

The question number six had as purpose to make the students to go back to the story, so they could remember the necessary details to answer the question. Even though, it was not a difficult question only 9 students chose the correct answer, which had to do with how the main character was able to overcome a situation on the journey he was asked to do. On the other hand, the questions one and eight had a tie with 8 correct answers. Those questions had two different

scopes; number one aimed to the part of comprehension of small details that were not undercover on the story. 7 students failed the answer demonstrating the lack of attention to details.

Moreover, as it can be seen in the figure below, questions two, three, four, and five have the same quantity of responses each, that is 7. In this case, question two had the same purpose as question one, which was attention to details; nevertheless, questions three and four were about the line of actions that followed the mistake made by the main character of the story.

Consequently, some students did not answer questions number one and number two correctly, as perhaps they were confused or distracted. Likewise, question number five was about the first action of the journey that the main character had to do as consequence of his past actions. If we compared this question to number six, it shows a big difference. Even though, they were related students were not able to support their answers and correlate the moments on the story.

Moving on the last question, which was number 7, it showed the less quantity of correct answers. It only got 6 correct answers, leaving 9 students who answered wrongly. The question intended students to use the line of the reading to answer which was the last action the main character had to do in order to finish his punishment; even though, the character did not know it was his last action on his journey. Students got confused and mixed up the actions, most of them answered how the character fulfilled the task, but the question was about to name it and not how he accomplished it.

Using the data analyzed, the instructor inferred some possible deficiencies which are lack of attention to details, misunderstanding of the reading, and there was not a full comprehension of the text or the questions because students did not remember at 100% the line of the story at the time, they answered the questions, and this got them confused. (To see the questionnaire, see appendix D.) (To see the table with all the answers, see appendix E.)

Figure 2

Correct an Incorrect answers of the Pre-Test

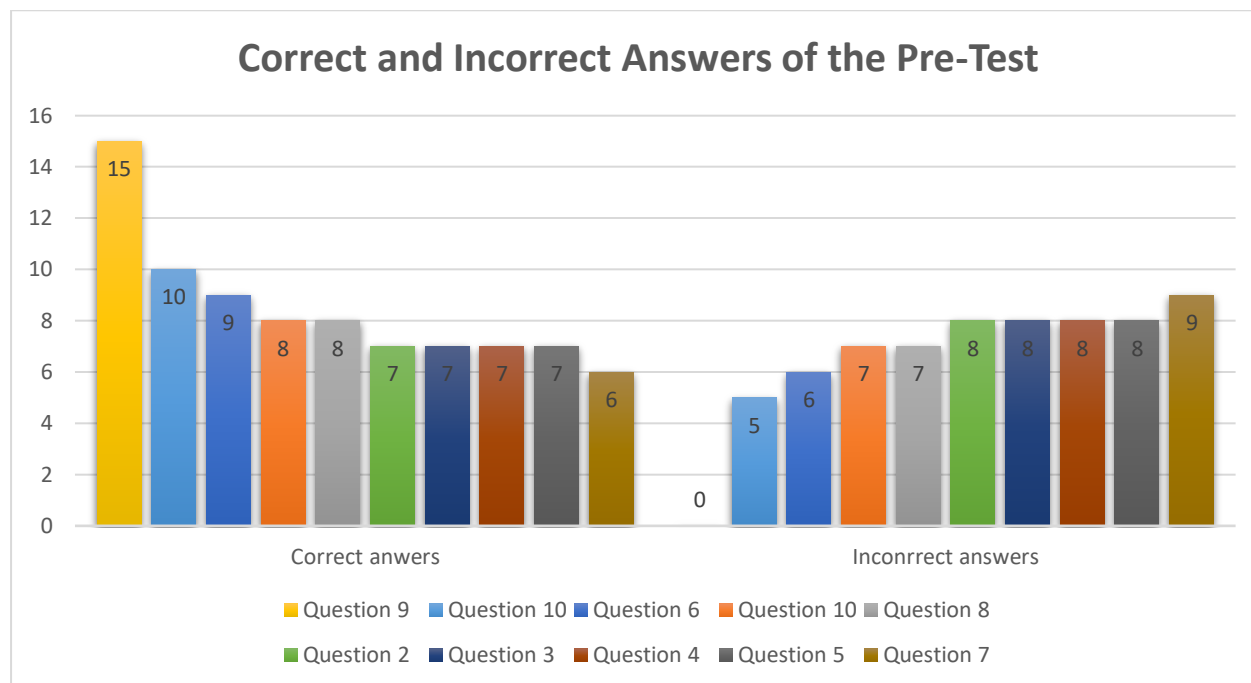


Figure 2. Represents the number of correct and incorrect answers obtained from the students on each question of the pre-test. Source: Researcher's own creation.

4.1.3 Reading strategy application

The two next points in this chapter show the analysis of the data obtained through the application of the pre-reading strategy, activation of prior knowledge by using activities as presentation of pictures to activate knowledge and the reading of two segments of the chosen texts. The first reading was carried out on the first week of March on normal language class schedule. (To see lesson plan for reading #1, see appendix F). In this activity, the reading used was “A cat and a mouse partnership” by The Grimm’s Brothers. Student’s prior knowledge was activated by using a presentation of five pictures related to the story. The results of the exercise at first sight demonstrated to increase the understanding of the students because they were prepared

for the text. At the moment the instructor began presenting the pictures, they started making connections.

The result of this activity was a 67% of understanding. As it can be seen in figure 3, just four questions out of the eight comprehension questions are going to be used to analyze the results. Those four were key questions, as the students had to prove their memories and to use the information obtained on the previous exercises. As it is shown in figure 3, the questions with more correct answers were number six and four, as they got 12 and 11 correct answers, respectively. Those questions aimed to make students to infer the meaning of something; topic covered on the pre-reading strategy. The number of correct answers was fifteen; it means that all students got it right. For the next question, students had to demonstrate if they comprehended the real intention of one of the characters. Therefore, the number of correct answers was 9. Question one got the less number of correct answers. The question's purpose was to determine if students paid attention to details, and the result indicated that the comprehension of details needed more improvement. For these kinds of tasks, students seem to have used some information given in the pre-reading strategy. Pictures and questioning were useful to answer some questions. (To see questionnaire, see appendix G.) (To see the table with the answers, see appendix H.)

Figure 3

Correct an Incorrect answers of the First Strategy Application

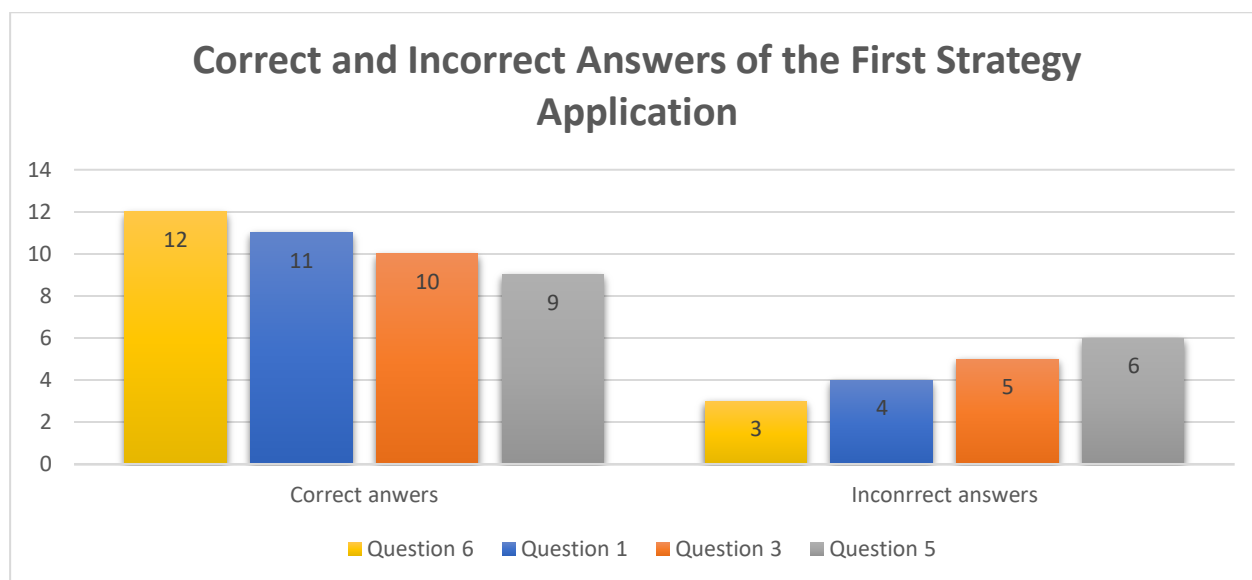


Figure 3. It represents the results of the correct and incorrect answers obtained from the students on the questions 1 – 4 – 6 – 8 of the application of the strategy, the results are of the key answers of the reading number 1 “A cat and a Mouse Partnership”. Source: Researcher’s own creation.

The second reading was carried out during the second week of March on a normal language class schedule. In this activity, the reading used was Rumpelstinskin by The Grimm’s Brothers. Student’s prior knowledge was activated by using the same procedure mentioned on the first reading. The material used by the instructor was a presentation of five pictures related to the story, and then she read two segments of the story to create a background for the reading (To see the lesson plan for the reading #2, see appendix I). The questions used to evaluate the understanding of the students are one, three, five, and six. The results of those questions were good, and the percentage of comprehension was improved from the previous reading in a 3%.

The result of the correct answers to those specific questions is 70%. As it is shown in the figure, the question with more correct answers was number six, as 12 students got it right. The goal of the question was to remember an action made by the main character. Then, question number one got 11 accurate answers. This question aimed at making the students use the plot to

know why the main character was ~~is~~ on a difficult situation. Question 3 got 10 correct answers, and its purpose was making them recall how the main character found a temporary solution for a problem. Question number 5 aimed the students to analyze the reason of why the main character was on a difficult situation for a specific period of time. According to figure 4, the number of correct answers is 9; therefore, this is considered the question with less accurate answers. (To see the questionnaire, see appendix J) (To see the table with the answers, see appendix K)

Figure 4

Correct an Incorrect answers of the Second Strategy Application

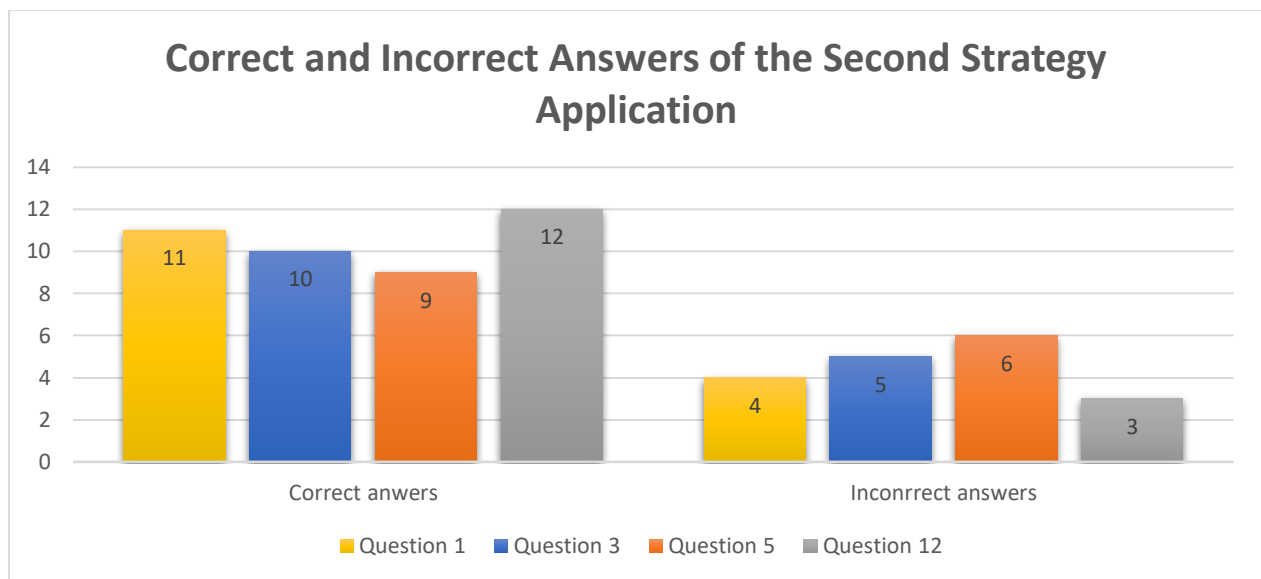


Figure 4. It represents the results of the correct and incorrect answers obtained from the students on the questions 1 – 3 – 5 – 6 of the application of the strategy, the results are of the key answers of the reading number 2 Rumpelstinskin. Source: Researcher's own creation.

4.1.4. Post-test

In order to complete the process, the instructor applied a post test. Its function was to evaluate how the student's comprehension level was improved from the pre-test to the post test. The strategy was applied individually and following the next process. Consequently, the instructor showed a Power Point presentation with the pictures on the board, and students had to take notes about the pictures. After the exercise, the students read two segments of the reading individually and then read the story, which was taken away once they read it. The students read and responded the comprehension questions individually. The assessment was a ten-comprehension question questionnaire regarding the reading Zomo's Friends of the 4th grade Journeys Book. The evaluation was applied on the third week of March, on a non-usual schedule of the language class. (To see the lesson plan, see appendix L)

The results of the posttest demonstrated a 25% improvement in the students' comprehension skill from the pre-test to the pos-test, which indicates the advantage of using such good strategy with the students. Consequently, figure 5 demonstrates the results of the questions made in order from top to bottom using the number of correct answers as the guide to analyze these data. As it is shown in figure 5, the questions with the majority of correct answers were questions number 3 and 10. Question number 3 was simple, as the students had to recognize characters and the actions that led the main's character to take such decisions. On the other hand, question ten asked the students to use their own words to describe the learning they obtained from the reading. The students used information given on the pre-reading strategy, which was the description of people who think they are better than others, so all of the students got the answer right because they choose one side of the story as the moral was "not to be presumptuous." Both questions had as an aim that the students used the background information obtained from the strategy and the possible connections, they could make at the moment of reading the story. The

results demonstrated how students were able to connect the actions that involved the consequences of previous actions made by the main character.

The following question, shown in the figure, is number four, which was about the journey of the character. Therefore, the students needed to remember details and to use the background information of the story to remember the order of the actions made by the principal character. The number of correct answers was 13, as the remaining two students did not carefully read the options and choose how the character fulfilled the task. This same mistake was made in the pre-test with the difference that in this exercise, more correct answers were obtained.

The next five questions obtained 12 accurate answers. The questions under study were 1, 2, 6, 7, and 9, and had different purposes; for example, 1 and 2 dealt with the consequences of the actions made by the main character, which were explained at the beginning of the story. Those little details gave sense to the story, and most of the students choose correctly. Moreover, questions 6 and 7 had as goal of understanding the journey of the character. For instance, question 6 was about the second task of the character to achieve his personal goal, so the student could choose among four options, but just two were close to the right answer since the others were about how it was fulfilled and not which was the task. As mentioned before, this is a normal mistake on this specific group of students. As per question 9, it was a little bit tricky, as the secondary characters of the story were in an emotional state because there was a missing object and the main character had nothing to do with it. Consequently, the students were asked about what the main character did in order to recover the others characters' approval and friendship. The answer was to return an object that he did not steal, but that he knew will have an impact on the perception that others had about him. As a result, students confused the options a chose something that was easy to remember and not the right answer.

The last two questions were the two with less correct answers. As it is shown in the figure, question number 5 had 10 correct answers in comparison with the performance of the rest of the questions, so it was not as good as the ones before. The question was about what the character thought in order to fulfill the task. Students got mistaken and chose an answer that was not even close to the correct one. Then, the last question in this analysis is question 8, which also has many incorrect responses, as it had only 8. As mentioned before, the secondary characters had some sort of emotional state because something was stolen from them, so the question was looking for the students to demonstrate if they paid attention to such details. However, students chose the one that stated that those characters were like that because of the main character, but actually it had nothing to do with him. (To see the questionnaire, see appendix M) (To see the table with the answers, see appendix N)

Figure 5

Correct and Incorrect Answers of the Post-Test

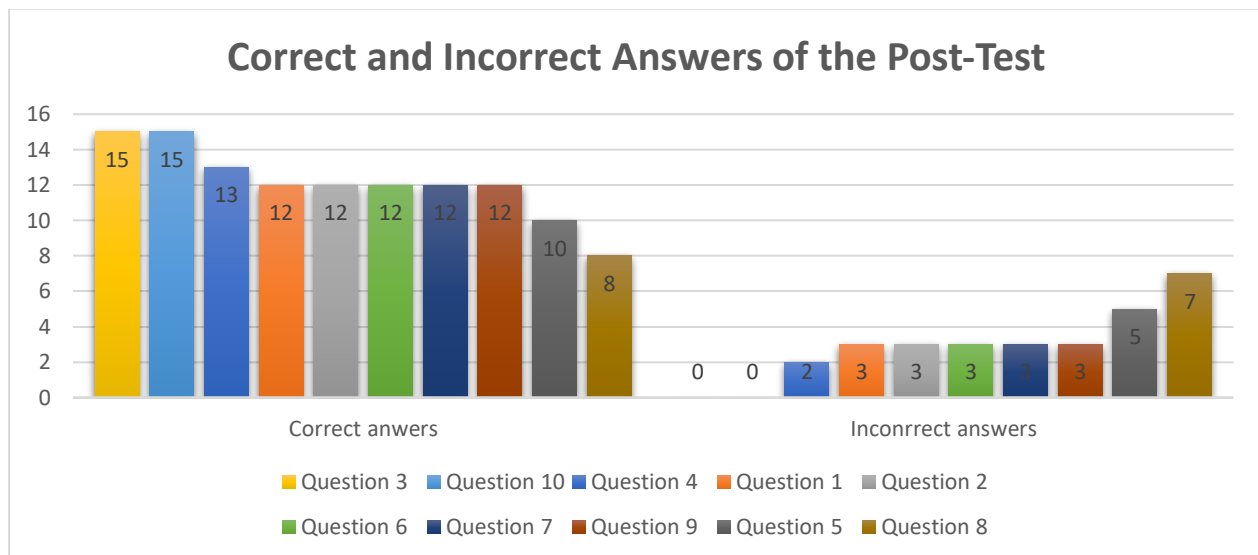


Figure 5. Represents the number of correct and incorrect answers obtained from the students on each question of the post-test. Source: Researcher's own creation.

4.1.5. Reading Rubrics

In order to evaluate more than the level of comprehension of the students, the instructor applied a reading rubric. Its purpose was to evaluate students' performance in the task. The rubric covered elements as concentration, vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension. In this point, the instructor analyzed the result of every rubric applied regarding the four reading tasks. Moreover, a comparative figure was used to indicate the progress and improvement of students according to the results of the rubric plus the results mentioned and analyzed before in this chapter. Therefore, in order to help the reader to have a good overview of the analysis, the results were analyzed by date of application, so in that way, figure 6 helps to have a better understanding of the comparison made.

The initial observation rubric was applied during the development of the pre-test. The procedure used was explained earlier in this chapter. In its application the instructor just asked the students to read the text and then answer the comprehension questions according to they own knowledge of the reading and their own process to do so. The results of the observation regarding "On task behavior" obtained a total of 3 points out of five, because students did not have the proper concentration on the task. They were talking to each other about unimportant topics at the moment that the task was being completed, students were dispersed, and did not compromise with the task.

In the following section of the rubric related to "Vocabulary knowledge," the result was 3 points out of five. The students are in a private bilingual institution; therefore, they have good vocabulary knowledge and have strong communication skills. However, this did not stop them from asking about words attached to some important details of the reading, as they needed help to locate the meaning of words in context. Finally, the rubric based on "Comprehension," the students obtained a 3 points out of five, because they were able to answer and support the

responses. Nevertheless, they did need help at the moment of answering the questions. One important detail is that they did not read the text while answering the comprehension questions; hence, they asked to the instructor for some advice at the time of answering. They even-asked if something happened on a determined way or not. The points obtained were 9 out of 15, giving them a 60 as grade. As it is shown in figure 6, the results of this rubric were the lowest of all the four rubrics, proving that students showed deficiencies on this specific point and that it was an obstacle for a suitable development in reading.

Regarding readings 1 and 2, the results were similar in some aspects and improved a little in others. The procedure of the application was explained earlier in this chapter. The instructor first explained the exercise, then students did the exercises according to instructor's guide, and finally answered the questions individually. The results obtained in the rubric "On task behavior" was 3 points, because students did not concentrate on the task, since they were talking to each other about unimportant issues, and thus, when the students were analyzing the pictures, a lot of comments out of topic appeared. The task was completed, but with moments of distraction.

In the "Vocabulary knowledge" rubric, it was obtained 5 points. In relation to these readings, students showed an improvement in vocabulary knowledge. They expressed that the preparation was helpful to understand words in a context. Having studied the context through images before the reading helped them to get the meaning of the vocabulary during the process. To finish, in the rubric "Comprehension," students obtained 5 points because they were able to answer and support their responses. Moreover, when the instructor asked them to prove where their answer was in the text or support their answer, they were able to find it easily. The result was thirteen points out of fifteen, giving them a 87 as grade. The observation results of the application of the strategy were positive and showed an improvement, as it can be noticed in the

figure below. Two out of the three elements go up in the bars and reveal important and significant changes in the students' development.

During the post-test, the procedure was the same as in readings one and two. In the post-test, the instructor was very clear with students concerning their attention to the reading and thus, to focus on the exercise because students were not going to receive an input of any kind from the instructor. Regarding the results of the rubric, the "On task behavior" obtained 5 points out of five, since students were focused on every stage of the process, they were attentive to details and to instructor's directions. Moreover, they respected the personal space and attentiveness of every one of their classmates. According to "Vocabulary knowledge," the result was 5 points out of five, as in this reading students showed a more suitable vocabulary knowledge than before, and used the tools given by the instructor in the background activation. Students, as during the previous exercises, analyzed some parts of the text, obtained vocabulary indirectly from the images and brainstormed before the reading; therefore, it can be stated that this was helpful for them at the moment of understanding new or unusual vocabulary. To finish, in the rubric "Comprehension," students obtained 5 points out of five, since they were able to answer and support the responses with evidence in the text and even, they did not need to go back to the text, as they recalled the information and supported their answers. The result was fifteen points out of fifteen giving them a 100 as grade. As it is demonstrated in the figure below, the improvement of students was notable, as they even enhanced their grades by showing a good performance.

Figure 6.

Categories of the Obtained Grades by the Students during the tasks.

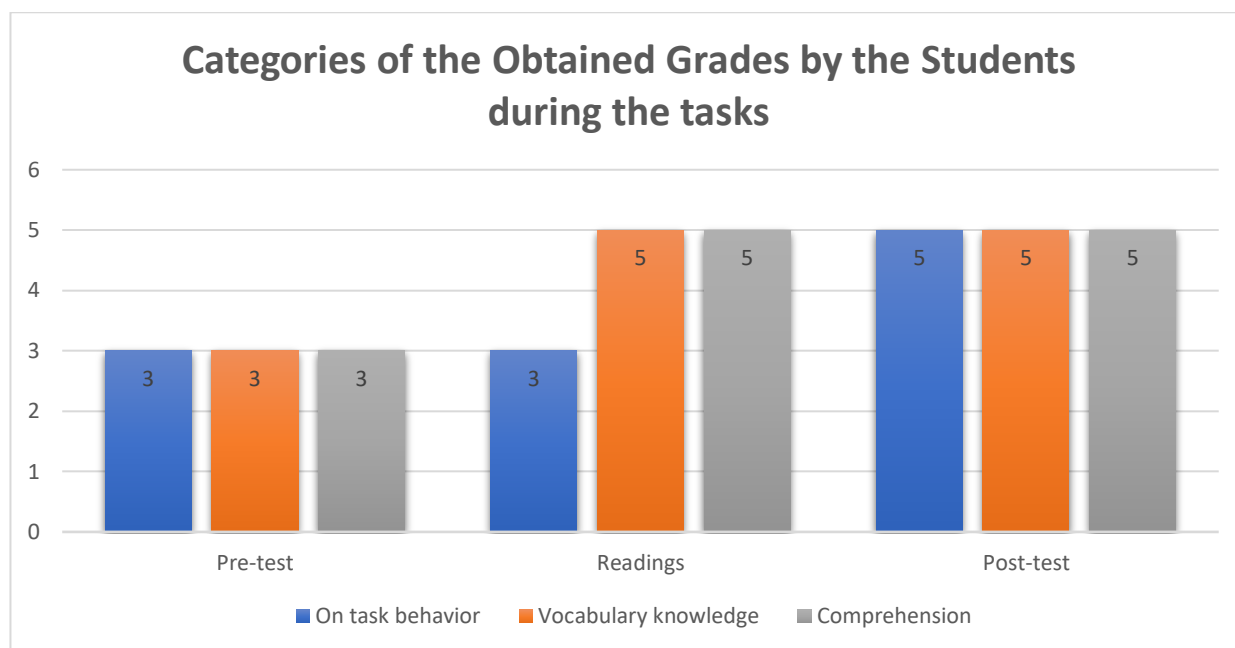


Figure 6. It represents the categories of the obtained grades by the number of the students in every task. Source: Researcher's own creation

As final some comments on this section, it is important to graphic the last data obtained; in other words, the improvement process of students from the pre-test through the application of the strategy exercise to the post-test. The figure below gives an overview of all the results mentioned before in ~~on~~ this chapter and provides a general and easily comprehension of the data. At the beginning, students had a 56% of comprehension, but after the first strategy was applied, they had an improvement of 11% in comprehension from the pre-test through the first strategy application. The following strategy application showed an improvement of 3% from the exercise made a week before. The last result offered an improvement of 11% from the last strategy application to the post-test. At the end, the improvement obtained from the first test to the last test was a 25%.

Figure 7

Improvement shown by students.

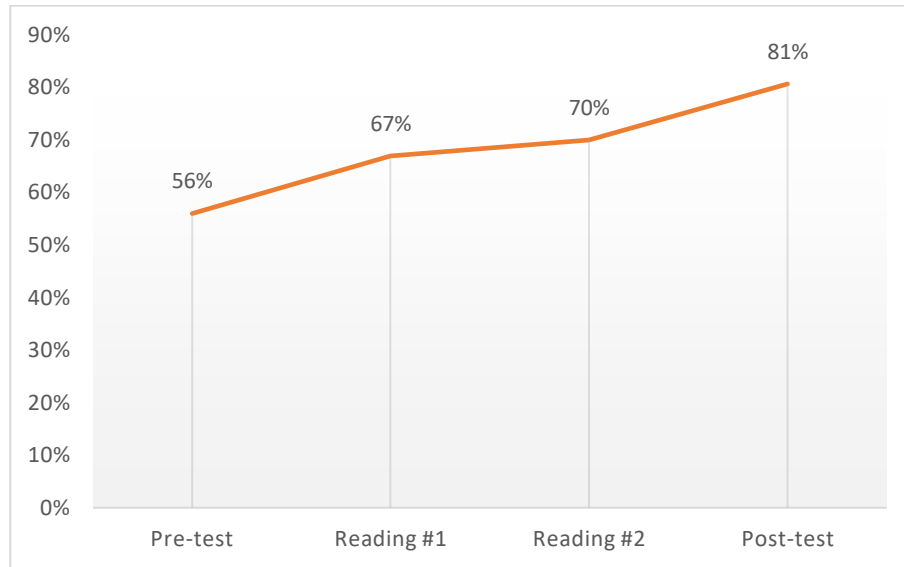


Figure 7. Final resume of the data analyzed from the pre-test through the applications of the strategy and the post-test. Source: Researcher's own creation.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.2 Purpose of the Conclusion

The function of the present chapter is to relate the findings and their analysis with the objectives and briefly explain if the results of the application of the strategies enhanced the level of comprehension of students regarding reading exercises according to the objectives mentioned in the first chapter of the investigation. Moreover, the purpose of the conclusion is to analyze the research question and to answer it in order to prove if the objectives were achieved. In addition, some unexpected results obtained during the process are going to be presented, as well as some important recommendations to take into account when developing a research of this type.

5.2 Conclusions

The conclusions are going to be mentioned according to the objectives of the investigation, which can be found in the first chapter of the investigation. The findings and the data gathered and used to determine the conclusions, was mentioned in the previous chapter.

5.2.1 To identify fourth graders deficiencies on the reading skill by applying instruments as tests in the first weeks without any previous knowledge of reading strategies.

The identification of the deficiencies was done through the reading rubric. The results showed that the students' deficiencies on reading tasks were students' lack of concentration on the task, students were distracted with everything, and they talked a lot between tasks and classes. It has to be stated that when they were supposed to be quiet and working, they did not do it, and even, when students said something, it was not topic related or just a joke. Vocabulary knowledge was a little deficient. Students were used to communicate in English since first grade

and some even since preschool, so this gives them a proper level of vocabulary knowledge. However, this was applied only to communicate with the teacher; hence, vocabulary was little bit limited. Consequently, at the moment of reading texts, there where a proper number of words they needed the meaning.

Comprehension was normal, as students understood main ideas and remembered certain actions, but not details and supporting ideas. Consequently, students were classified with normal comprehension level. In addition, through the application of the pre-test, the instructor could analyze the deficiencies of the students. The result of the quiz demonstrated that students fulfilled a 61% of comprehension, aspect that supports the previous identification of deficiencies, since, the lack of concentration affected the attention to details, misunderstanding vocabulary in context, and failing to answer some questions.

5.2.2 To apply the reading comprehension strategy “activation of prior knowledge” to improve the English reading proficiency by presenting the strategy and work on reading tasks and comprehension exercises for two weeks.

The results of the application of the strategy “activation of prior knowledge” demonstrated an improvement in the reading comprehension skill. Students changed their attitude regarding reading, as they had knowledge about what they were going to read. The fact of providing the students with information before the reading made them feel secure at the moment of carrying out the exercise, as they had halfway gained on the reading. When they were almost 100% in control of the reading and understanding the meaning and the plot, they became more interested on completing the task. The exercises where they created background were a very suitable tool, since they could use such information at the moment of answering the evaluation questions, as they learnt how to use it. Moreover, students demonstrated ability to connect the information obtained through to the strategy and the information obtained from the reading; in

other words, they applied a correct comprehension skill. Therefore, the achievement of this objective gives a reason to believe that pre-reading strategies and activation of prior knowledge in this case, have a positive effect on enhancing students' reading comprehension, by first creating interest on the students to read and by creating expectations as a result of the application of the strategy.

5.2.3 To evaluate the results of using pre-reading strategies on a test composed by reading tasks and comprehension questions with a specific time to solved at the final week.

The results of the post-test made evident the improvement of the skill. Students showed that the pre-reading strategy called activation of prior knowledge, helped them to stay focused, as this provides the students with background knowledge on the topic and feeds their hunger for more information. Moreover, it also increases student's vocabulary in the wake of the instructor's input, and lastly and probably the most important, the comprehension development was enhanced because of the strategy. The data obtained from the application of the instruments, the analysis, and the conclusions set for every objective allowed the researcher to state that the pre-reading strategies applied to the students of 4th grade at a private school, had a positive effect on the comprehension skill, helped the student to get focused on specific information, and improved their vocabulary knowledge.

5.3 Restatement of the Research Question

The problem in which this investigation was based on was the study of the effect of the activation of prior knowledge strategy. The students read the complete text with the purpose of improving their comprehension. Reading medium length texts had not always been an important skill to develop during the earlier stages of learning English and, when the time to cultivate reading as an ability comes, students must develop the skills in order to become good readers.

Therefore, the investigation was based on the question: How can students demonstrate a good performance on the comprehension of reading tasks? Even though, this is not the research question, it was the one which inspired the topic of the investigation. Consequently, such question can be answered by saying that the use of strategies before, during, and at the end of an activity are helpful for the development of the student in these specific tasks. Hence, it is important to remember that the present investigation developed the strategies applied before the reading exercises.

In the previous chapters, the investigation had pointed out the methods and strategies to help the improvement of reading comprehension skills on students. Those chapters emphasized on the applications of the strategies, the procedures used, and the results obtained. The investigations mentioned in the literature review in Chapter I demonstrated that the application of strategies made an important and significant change in the performance of students, as long as the instruction is well-based and well-developed by the instructor. Therefore, the students during their reading learning process developed different skills throughout different stages in the learning process. Reading is a complex process, so learners need help from the instructors to understand and fulfill the goal of comprehension. Therefore, instructors need to use the proper methodologies and strategies. Because of it and the question which generated the doubt is that the research question: What is the effect of pre-reading strategies on students? was created to guide the investigation into the right direction, as the goal was to indicate if the effects were positive or negative, or even if there was no effect on the students.

5.3 Unexpected Results

The results obtained by the application of quizzes and reading texts of medium length with comprehension questions as assessment demonstrated through the reading rubrics that students developed knowledge on other skills and not just improvement in their comprehension. Students

showed a change in their concentration. For example, during the first application, students were a little lost as they talked to each other and had trouble to pay attention to their own reading and to the important details. The students needed a lot of teacher-student instruction to keep their attention on what it was important. However, through the process, students demonstrated that thanks to the activation of background knowledge, their interest on the reading was different, since students expressed that knowing the topic and having an idea of what the reading will be, made make them anxious in a positive way, as to finish the reading and know the conclusion.

Vocabulary improvement had been another aspect linked to the main result. Students increased their vocabulary due to the readings and teacher-student input. Students highlighted on their readings the words they did not understand in isolation, and thus, they tried to comprehend the word in context and when they could not, they asked for the meaning to the instructor.

Vocabulary increase came as a result of reading texts of unusual topics at class. As well, the acquisition of vocabulary is a normal new input for readers, but in this case, the researcher was not expecting to see any improvement in this specific skill, as a consequence of the pre-reading strategy used.

5.4 Recommendations

The development of this investigation was made on an unusual setting, as the world and the country situation were complicated due to global pandemic. At the beginning of the investigation, it was difficult to find a school or high school to use the students as the people to be studied.

Many of the schools were on a virtual or hybrid mode of teaching. Therefore, before starting the investigation, the researcher planned to apply it virtually; however, when the observation was made the results were not favorable, so, the researcher had to change the school and started again.

As a recommendation for future investigations, the application of any teaching strategy in any subject will not be completely fulfilled if it is done virtually because students have to deal with

many distractions that in class they would not have to deal with. Difficulties as internet problems, computer settings, sound, and video problems are considered as technological troubles, and some other issues can be added as for example lack of concentration, distraction because of activities and conversations at home, cellphones and, their surroundings in general.

Tables, Figures, Appendices

Appendix A.

Observation chart.

Date:

Class duration:

Teacher name:

Total students:

Topic:

Student present:

Class aspects	Comments
Class initial behavior: routines, time needed to start, how is it the start if the class?	
Time: Duration of the class. Time for every exercise.	
Class behavior: How the students interact with each other? (Do they pay attention? are they active or not?)	
Teacher management of the class: Learning strategies How the students interact with the teacher?	
Additional comments: Particular characteristics, attitude towards the language, methodologies.	

Appendix B.

Reading Rubric.

Date:

Class duration:

Teacher name:

Total students:

Topic:

Reading task/Technique:

Rubric/Scale	1	3	5	Comments
On task behavior	Students did not respect the time to read and they are not doing the task. Task is incomplete.	Students respected the time to read but distracted. Task is complete.	Students respected the time to read and they did not disturb each other. Task is complete.	
Vocabulary knowledge	Shows none vocabulary knowledge, need to translate all the text.	Shows some vocabulary knowledge, need to translate important parts of the text.	Shows vocabulary knowledge, no need to translate the text.	
Comprehension	Unable to answer questions about the text, gives inappropriate or off topic answers.	Can answer questions about the texts, give answers and starts to support the answers.	Answer questions about the texts, give answers and supports the answers with evidence on the text.	

Appendix C.

Lesson Plan – Pre-test.

Professor's name:	<u>Arijiana Krajinovic</u>	Region	<u>San Jose</u>
Researcher's name:	<u>María Hernández</u>	School Term	<u>I Trimester 2021</u>
Subject	<u>Language</u>	Class #	<u>1</u>
Level	<u>4th grade</u>	Plan Number	<u>1</u>
Date	<u>February 25, 2021</u>		

Linguistic objectives	Mediation strategies	Evaluation of learning outcomes
<p>By the end of the lesson Ss. Will be able to:</p> <p>1. Reading: Comprehend the story "Hercules Quest" by answering direct questions on multiple choice about the reading in a determined period of time.</p> <p>Sources: http://mislabriehamptonhawks.weebly.com/uploads/2/4/3/9/24395937/u4+118unlocked.compressed.pdf</p>	<p>Warm up: Ss. will explain the exercise and talk with them about Hercules. 10 min</p> <p>For this pre-test won't be pre-reading preparation.</p> <p>1.1. Ss. will read the story "Hercules Quest" individually. 15 min.</p> <p>1.2 Ss. will answer 10 comprehension questions about the story. T. will read the questions and options and they will answer on a paper. 15 min</p>	<p>The Learner:</p> <p>Reading:</p> <p>Show comprehension of story by answering correctly specific questions.</p>

Appendix D.**Pre-test questionnaire.**

Answer the following questions according to the reading “Hercules Quest”. Mark with an (X) the correct answer.

1. Who is Hercules father?
 - a. Hera
 - b. King Eurystheus
 - c. Zeus
 - d. Ares

2. Who wants to hurt Hercules?
 - a. Atlas
 - b. King Eurystheus
 - c. Zeus
 - d. Hera

3. Why Zeus send Hercules to earth?
 - a. Because King Eurystheus need help.
 - b. Because Hercules wants to know earth.
 - c. Because Hercules killed baby snakes.
 - d. As punishment for use his strength for bad.

4. Who has Hercules to serve?
 - a. Nemean Lion
 - b. Zeus
 - c. Hera
 - d. King Eurystheus

5. Which was Hercules first task on earth?
 - a. Nemean Lion
 - b. Zeus
 - c. Hera
 - d. King Eurystheus

6. How Hercules defeated the monster?
 - a. Hercules tried to with his mighty club
 - b. Hercules tried with sharpened Spears.
 - c. Hercules tried with his own hands.
 - d. Hercules tried with Zeus powers.

7. Which was the last task of Hercules?
 - a. Bring gold apples from a garden.
 - b. Hold the weight of the world on his shoulders.
 - c. Kill a dragon.
 - d. Kill the Nemean Dragon.

8. How Hercules accomplish the task?
 - a. Hercules ask Zeus to help him.
 - b. Hera gave him more strength.
 - c. Hercules asks Atlas to help him.
 - d. The Dragon let him took the apples.

9. How Zeus rewarded Hercules?

- a. Zeus gave more power to the King thanks to Hercules.
- b. Zeus make Hercules a human.
- c. Zeus make Hercules a God and lived on the Olympus.
- d. Zeus gave Hercules a lot of work.

10. Which is moral of the story?

- a. Use your strengths to help others.
- b. Be selfish and use your strengths for yourself.
- c. Use your strengths to hurt people.
- d. You have to let people use your strengths for their own profit.

Appendix E.**Table #1 - Pre-test Answer's.**

Questions / Answers	A	B	C	D
1		7	8	
2	8			7
3		8		7
4	3		5	7
5	7		8	
6		6	9	
7	6	9		
8	7		8	
9			15	
10	10			5

Appendix F.

Lesson Plan – Application of strategy.

Professor's name:	<u>Arijiana Krajinovic</u>	Region	<u>San Jose</u>
Researcher's name:	<u>María Hernández</u>	School Term	<u>I Trimester 2021</u>
Subject	<u>Language</u>	Class #	<u>2</u>
Level	<u>4th grade</u>	Plan Number	<u>2</u>
Date	<u>March 4t, 2021</u>		

Linguistic objectives	Mediation strategies	Evaluation of learning outcomes
<p>By the end of the lesson</p> <p>Ss. Will be able to:</p> <p>1. Reading: Understand the story tale "A cat and a Mouse partnership" based on the important facts of the story by answering comprehension questions in a 40 minutes class.</p> <p>Sources: https://www.grimmstories.com/en/grimm_fairy-tales/pdf/cat_and_mouse_in_partnership.pdf</p>	<p>Warm up: Ss. will be introduced to the topic of story tales by a brief explanation of what it is, the assesment will be oral.</p> <p>1.1. The teacher will show students pictures related to the story (a cat and a mouse together, pot of fat, top-off, half-gone and all-gone). Ss. will say the first thing that come to their minds and the teacher will record it on the board. 20 min</p> <p>1.2 Ss. will read two specific segments of the text, and then comment, What do they think about it? What do they expect to happen? 15min</p> <p>1.3 Ss. will read individually the story tale "A cat and a Mouse partnership". (the teacher will provide the copies). 20min</p> <p>1.3 Ss. will answer the questions about the story tale, the teacher will read the questions and they will answer on a paper. 15min</p>	<p>The Learner:</p> <p>Reading:</p> <p>Comprehend story tales by answering questions.</p>

Appendix G.**Reading #1 Questionnaire.**

Answer the following questions according to the reading “Cat and a mouse partnership”. Mark with an (X) the correct answer.

1. How did the cat and the mouse started living together?
 - a. They met at the church.
 - b. They were neighbors.
 - c. The cat said to the mouse he was a true friend.
 - d. The mouse offered the cat to live together.

2. How did they prepare for winter?
 - a. They bought a pot of fat.
 - b. They bought cheese and milk.
 - c. The mouse cooked.
 - d. The cat hunts some mice.

3. Where did they keep the fat?
 - a. At the house.
 - b. At the church.
 - c. At the park.
 - d. At the street.

4. What was the cat’s intention when he said “I have been asked to be a godfather”?
 - a. To be a godfather.
 - b. To make the mouse do the house chores.
 - c. To eat the pot of fat.
 - d. To run away.

5. What did the cat do when he went to the baptisms?
 - a. Be in front the baptismal font.
 - b. To name the kitty.
 - c. Eat half of the pot of fat.
 - d. Eat the pot of fat in three parts.

6. What is the meaning of the “Top-Off” name?
 - a. The name of a cat.
 - b. A clue of what the cat did.
 - c. The name of the father of the cat.
 - d. The cat had a happy day.

7. When did the mouse find out that the cat ate the pot of fat?
 - a. When the cat said the name of the first cat “Top-Off”.
 - b. When the cat said the name of the second cat “Half-Gone”.
 - c. When the cat said the name of the third cat “All-Gone”.
 - d. When the winter came and they look up for the fat.

8. What was the cat’s intention from the beginning?
 - a. To eat the pot of fat.
 - b. To be the mouse best friend.
 - c. To eat the mouse.
 - d. To be a godfather.

Appendix H.**Table #2 - Reading number 1 answers.**

Questions / Answers	A	B	C	D
1			8	7
2	15			
3	8	2		
4			11	4
5			8	7
6		12	3	
7	3		7	5
8	6		9	

Appendix I.

Lesson Plan - Application of strategy.

Professor's name:	Arijiana Krajinovic		San Jose
Researcher's name:	María Hernández	Region	
Subject	Language	School Term	I Trimester 2021
Level	4th grade	Class #	3
Date	March 11th, 2021	Plan Number	3

Linguistic objectives	Mediation strategies	Evaluation of learning outcomes
<p>By the end of the lesson Ss. Will be able to: By the end of the lesson Ss. Will be able to:</p> <p>1. Reading: Comprehend the story "Rumpelstinskin" by answering direct questions on multiple choice about the reading in a determined period of time.</p> <p>Sources: https://www.grimmstories.com/es/grimm_cuentos/rumpelstilzchen</p>	<p>Warm up: Ss. will be introduced to the story with a little discussion about Do you know this story? Have you ever read the Grimms Tale?</p> <p>1.1. The teacher will show students pictures related to the story (a miller, a girls in dismiss, a little man). Ss. will say the first thing that come to their minds and the teacher will record it on the board. 20 min</p> <p>1.2 Ss. will read two specific segments of the text, and then comment, What do they think about it? What do they expect to happen? 15min</p> <p>1.3 Ss. will read individually the story tale "Rumpelstinskin". (the teacher will provide the copies). 20min</p> <p>1.3 Ss. will answer the questions about the story tale, the teacher will read the questions and they will answer on a paper. 15min</p>	<p>The Learner: Reading: Comprehend story tales by answering questions.</p>

Appendix J.**Reading #2 Questionnaire.**

Answer the following questions according to the reading “Rumpelstinskin”. Mark with an (X) the correct answer.

1. Why the king took the miller’s daughter?
 - a. Because she was beautiful.
 - b. Because she was young.
 - c. Because she is clever, according to his dad.
 - a. Because she has gold.
2. What was the consequence if the girl could not spin gold?
 - a. She will die.
 - b. The king will marry the girl.
 - c. The king will forgive her.
 - d. The girl will be queen.
3. How the girl spun the straw into gold?
 - a. With magic.
 - b. With his own hands.
 - c. With his cleverness.
 - d. With some help.
4. What had to do the girl to survive the first night?
 - a. To give away a ring.
 - b. To give away her necklace.
 - c. To give away his first baby.
 - d. To marry a little man.

5. Why the king locked the girl for three nights?
 - a. Because she is clever.
 - b. Because the king is avaricious.
 - c. Because he felt in love with her.
 - d. Because she was happy to be in the room.

6. What had to do the girl to survive the last night?
 - a. To give away a ring.
 - b. To give away her necklace.
 - c. To promise his first baby to the little man.
 - d. To marry a little man.

7. What was the girl reward for doing gold?
 - a. To marry the king.
 - b. To let her be his friend.
 - c. To let her go back to his father.
 - d. To give her all the gold.

8. Which was the condition to let the queen keep her baby?
 - a. To give gold to the little man.
 - b. To dance with the little man.
 - c. To say the name of the little man.
 - d. To tell the truth.

Appendix K.**Table #3 - Reading #2 answers.**

Questions / Answers	A	B	C	D
1	4		11	
2	15			
3	5			10
4	3	10	2	
5	6	9		
6	3		12	
7	15			
8	4		11	

Appendix L.

Lesson Plan - Posttest.

Professor's name:	Arijiana Krajinovic	Region	San Jose
Researcher's name:	María Hernández		
Subject	Language	School Term	I Trimester 2021
Level	4th grade	Class #	4
Date	March 18th, 2021	Plan Number	4

Linguistic objectives	Mediation strategies	Evaluation of learning outcomes
<p>By the end of the lesson Ss. Will be able to:</p> <p>By the end of the lesson Ss. Will be able to:</p> <p>1. Reading: Comprehend the story "Zomo's Friends" by answering direct questions on multiple choice about the reading in a determined period of time.</p> <p>Sources: http://misslabrie Hampton Hawks.weebly.com/uploads/2/4/3/9/24395937/u4+118unlocke.compressed.pdf</p>	<p>Warm up: Ss. Will talk a briefly about story tales, if do they like it or not? and which do they know?</p> <p>1.1. T. will show students pictures related to the story (a man who thinks is better than others, a person who is rejected from the group, Zomo asking advice to the Sky God, Zomo dancing with Zebra, Zomo laughing with Croc). Ss. will write on a paper the first thing that come to their mind.. 20 min</p> <p>1.2 Ss. will read two specific segments of the text individually and write notes. Ss will answer mentally the questions: What do they think about it? What do they expect to happen? (if they need to write down the can) 15min</p> <p>1.3 Ss. will read individually the story tale "Zomo's Friends". (the teacher will provide the copies). 15min</p> <p>1.3 Ss. will answer the questions about the story tale. 20min</p>	<p>The Learner:</p> <p>Reading:</p> <p>Comprehend story tales by answering questions.</p>

Appendix M.
Post-test Questionnaire.

Answer the following questions according to the reading “Zomo’s Friends”. Mark with an (X) the correct answer.

1. Why the animals do not like Zomo?
 - a. Because he is clever.
 - b. Because he plays tricks to them.
 - c. Because he plays the violin.
 - a. Because he likes to play with them.
2. Why Zomo was not happy?
 - a. Because he lost his violin.
 - b. Because nobody wanted to be his friend.
 - c. Because he was too clever.
 - d. Because he wanted to be alone.
3. Who gave a piece of advice to Zomo?
 - a. Sky God.
 - b. Zebra.
 - c. Croc.
 - d. Moon.
4. Which was the first journey for Zomo?
 - a. Bring Croc’s tears.
 - b. Dance with Zebra.
 - c. Put the moon over the sky again.
 - d. Bring Zebra’s tale.

5. How did Zomo wake up Zebra?
 - a. He started screaming.
 - b. He started jumping high.
 - c. He played the violin.
 - d. He danced with Croc.

6. Which was the second journey for Zomo?
 - a. Bring Croc's tears.
 - b. Dance with Zebra.
 - c. Put the moon over the sky again.
 - d. Bring Zebra's tale.

7. How did Zomo obtain Croc's tears?
 - a. He made Croc laugh.
 - b. He made Croc cry.
 - c. He told a sad story.
 - d. He felt over Croc's back.

8. Why the animals were not happy?
 - a. Because Zomo's tricks.
 - b. Because the moon was stolen.
 - c. Because it was raining.
 - d. Because sky God helped Zomo.

9. What did Zomo do to gain the animals friendship?
- a. He helped the moon to go back to its place.
 - b. He gave Croc a bath.
 - c. He played with Zebra.
 - d. He danced at night.
- 10.** Write what did you learn from the story.

Appendix N.**Table #4 - Post-test answers.**

Questions / Answers	A	B	C	D
1	3	12		
2		12		3
3	15			
4		2		13
5	5		10	
6	12		3	
7	12		3	
8	5	8	2	
9	12			3
10	15			

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