



Perspectives of EFL Students towards Reading Strategies in EFL: A Descriptive Study.

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Proyectos de Investigación

Certifico que Lorenzo Atanacio Mielles Mielles ha cumplido satisfactoriamente su investigación descriptiva como pre-requisito de graduación de Magíster en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros con Mención en la Enseñanza de Inglés. Su investigación es parte del proyecto PERSPECTIVES OF READING STRATEGIES IN EFL STUDENTS cuyo objetivo general es determinar las dificultades que tienen los estudiantes al leer en inglés como lengua extranjera.

En este proyecto, cada participante reporta los resultados de una encuesta tomada en un contexto educativo diferente. Las secciones de introducción, literatura y metodología (instrumentos y análisis de datos) son las mismas.

Particular que comunico para los fines consiguientes.

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Abstract

The present descriptive study intended to interpret if the participants applied some reading strategies. This study included quantitative and qualitative data to collect results. Participants were 93 students, 28 males, and 65 females. They were students in a private university. Their ages ranged from 18 to 35. The instrument implemented was a survey divided into two parts. Firstly, there was a section to collect demographic information from students. In the second section, students had a Likert scale and open questions about reading strategies in EFL, comprehension, texts, and reading time troubles. Results demonstrated that with a mean of 1.55, and despite learners have not created a reading habit in the second language, participants practice their reading in Spanish to a great extent. It was also demonstrated with a mean of 2.03 that students understand simple parts of texts and a mean of 2.91 that learners need to read texts more than once. Moreover, a mean of 2.96 demonstrated that students need to improve in their skimming strategy. To conclude, students need to apply reading strategies to enhance their comprehension of texts. Finally, it is recommended for teachers and language learners to read this paper to reinforce the reading strategies to support learners' during their skills development.

Keywords: EFL, reading skills, reading strategies, descriptive study.

Resumen

El presente estudio descriptivo pretendía interpretar si los participantes aplicaban algunas estrategias de lectura. Este estudio incluyó datos cuantitativos y cualitativos para recopilar resultados. Los participantes fueron 93 estudiantes, 28 hombres y 65 mujeres. Ellos eran estudiantes de una universidad privada. Sus edades oscilaron entre los 18 y los 35 años. El instrumento implementado fue una encuesta dividida en dos partes. En primer lugar, había una sección para recopilar información demográfica de los estudiantes. En la segunda sección, los estudiantes tenían una escala Likert y preguntas abiertas sobre estrategias de lectura en EFL, comprensión, textos y problemas de tiempo de lectura. Los resultados demostraron que con una media de 1,55, y a pesar de que los estudiantes no han creado el hábito de leer en el segundo idioma, los participantes leen su texto en español en gran medida. También se demostró con una media de 2,03 que los estudiantes comprenden partes simples de los textos y una media de 2,91 que los estudiantes necesitan para leer los textos más de una vez. Además, una media de 2,96 demostró que los estudiantes necesitan mejorar en su estrategia de encontrar la idea principal. Para concluir, los estudiantes deben aplicar estrategias de lectura para mejorar su comprensión de textos. Por último, se recomienda que los profesores y los estudiantes de idiomas lean este documento para reforzar las estrategias de lectura para ayudar a los estudiantes durante el desarrollo de sus habilidades.

Palabras clave: inglés como lengua extranjera, habilidades de lectura, estrategias de lectura, estudio descriptivo.

Perspectives of EFL Students towards Reading Strategies in EFL: A Descriptive Study

Speaking, writing, listening, and reading allow to communicate effectively (Suraprajit, 2019). There are 1.4 billion among native and non-native people that use the English language. This means that 20% of the world population communicates in English with each other everywhere. English is by far the most commonly studied foreign language in the world, followed by French as a distant second (Lyons, 2017).

A significant second language acquisition class must develop four skills: writing, listening, speaking, and reading (Sadiku, 2015). Nevertheless, in most of the cases, the skills do not appear in the same way. Thus, it is required to reinforce and emphasize the skill that is not effectively developed. That is why it is necessary to implement strategies to enhance English language acquisition (Aydogan, 2014). In this document, the researcher described the strategies students' currently use and the difficulties they face when reading in English.

Reading is one of the essential language skills used for giving and receiving information (Lopera, 2015). The author expressed that reading is a learned process that has to be developed as a part of human educative development. Besides, Lopera (2012) defined reading as “an interactive process in which the writer and the reader dialog through a text” (p. 81). The learner interacts with the writer while he/she is reading and learning new ideas or just checking some passages and increasing their knowledge.

Language learners must be encouraged to develop their reading skills because it will facilitate the growth of other skills (Haupt, 2015). The author expressed that reading is a useful skill for people who want to develop writing, speaking, and listening. Albiladi (2018) commented that the reading skill as a second language has earned much

attention from researchers and second language educators these years. Different investigators have developed ways to increase and improve reading skills.

The reading instruction objectives are many, but certainly include that learners will read with confidence, understand what they read, and find reading a source of knowledge and pleasure (Chard & Osborn, 2020). These are some ideal goals to read, but in many cases, when learners are supposed to acquire a new language, misunderstandings are more common than expected. According to Touchie (1983), in previous times, English language teachers considered mistakes done by learners as something embarrassing, which they diligently sought to avoid from happening. This could be one reason why many learners do not have a good predisposition for improvement in their reading skills.

Richards et al. (2015) expressed that reading skills can improve English proficiency in struggling students. However, statistical results presented by a local institution (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, INEC, 2012) demonstrated that 27% of Ecuadorian have not developed reading habits, including students. This is a big concern for students and for teachers. As expressed in the Ecuadorian Curriculum (Ministerio de Educacion, 2012), students need to reach a B1 level as independent users when they finish their university studies in concordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The situation in classes is different. Results obtained from the diagnostic tests show that participants of the study struggle with pieces of reading at the university English courses.

Educational authorities (Ministerio de Educacion, 2016) expressed that the classroom is the most appropriate place for students to feel engaged and motivated to acquire a second language. The classroom is the place where the teaching and learning process can occur effectively. In situ, teachers and students have the opportunity to

correct and reorganize the teaching and learning process applying different strategies to make students acquire the right perspective to the written texts. They will have the chance to support, provide feedback, and proper resources to do it better every time, especially when learners practice their second language skills like speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

In their study, Musrafidin and Elida (2018) mentioned that after analyzing the data, they found that students' reading comprehension of descriptive text improved from the first meeting until the last meeting. It means that there was an improvement after applying a prediction strategy.

In a different study about reading skills difficulties, Harisma and Nasution, (2020) concluded that students, responses were more active, enthusiastic and enjoyable in reading descriptive texts by using feedback strategy and rainbow card as learning media. The authors stated that students' reading comprehension considerably increased.

The current descriptive study shows the results of a survey about the type of reading strategies EFL students currently use. Ninety-three lower intermediate-level students from a private university located in Manabí, Ecuador, fulfilled this survey to determine reading strategies and their difficulties when reading in L2. The survey was prepared in Google Forms and sent to learners by email.

Literature Review

This section provides the main concepts about the use and implementation of the reading strategies. Furthermore, this section reviews concepts and studies related to reading comprehension and strategies.

Reading Skills

Learning the reading skill is a relatively lengthy process that can start early in the development before entering the formal school process. The amount of language and

early literacy interactions practiced at the preschool time profoundly affect the acquisition of the language building blocks that back a trained reading (Snow et al., 1998).

Despite its significance, reading is one of the most challenging areas in the education system. The ever-increasing demand for high literacy levels in our technological society makes this problem even more pressing (Snow et al., 1998). To help students develop this skill, there are some strategies teachers can apply in their classes.

Reading Strategies

Reading strategies are divided into two principal categories: cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies (Ali & Razali, 2019). Cognitive strategies are mental processes involved in successfully reading a text, and they are divided into two subcategories: bottom-up strategies and top-down strategies.

Bottom-up strategies.

The bottom-up approach begins with specific information and moves to the general. Luckner and Urbach (2012) said that the bottom-up approach focuses on word recognition and improves reading ability by encouraging students to discover and then prioritize reading difficulties after scaffolding a passage.

Richards (2006) expressed that the bottom-up approach focuses on teaching students how to cope with authentic language and real-life situations as part of the communicative approach. Additionally, bottom-up reading activities can help learners understand linguistic elements of what they have read and then use their top-down skills to fill in the gaps with information that comes from the message itself (Villanueva, 2006). In other words, students relate their knowledge of the language step by step, and

according to their training they can understand the different phases that the language learning has.

Top-down strategies.

Top-down strategies work using background knowledge and schema to predict and make meaning from the text (readers skim, get the gist, and predict, among others). Suraprajit (2019) explained that this strategy's concept is about guessing the target reading material's meaning. This model is applied when readers interpret assumptions, draw an inference, find out the text's overall purpose or get the text's central ideas (Nuttall, 1996 as cited in Suraprajit, 2019). The top-down model has been recognized under the cognitive process. The text's processing begins in the reader's mind. This model is still considered concept-driven and dependent upon what the reader brings to the text, which could be their intelligence and experience to understand a text (Mohammad & Hamidreza, 2015).

Metacognitive strategies take into consideration the consciousness and awareness of what readers have learned. Abromitis (1994 as cited in Lopera, 2015) stated that metacognitive abilities "help students be more consciously aware of what they learn, situations where that knowledge may be used and the procedures for using it" (p. 4). Finally, metacognitive strategies monitor cognitive strategies. In this case, readers check to solve a problem, plan a move in a passage, and watch an action's effectiveness, which is very motivational for learners.

Skimming and scanning.

Skimming and scanning develop learners' speediness in reading and comprehension of texts and lectures (Touriz, 2020). According to (Maxwell, 1969, as cited in Diaz, & Laguado, 2013), skimming refers to the central concept or gist of a selection quickly in a written text where the learners increase their ability to infer

through a constant practice which motivates them to anticipate these ideas from the text. Asmawati (2015) mentioned that in skimming, the readers take important information and the main idea. Skimming is a process where the learner quickly discovers the key concepts (Brown, 2001, as cited in Luguana, 2019). This makes learners rapidly interpret their meaning faster and advance the reading process.

Diaz and Laguado (2013) commented that “scanning is defined as the ability to locate specific facts and details quickly, is regarded as a desirable reading skill and is taught in most developmental reading courses” (p. 138). When the scanning strategy is applied, the learner reads until the information is found to respond to a particular requirement such as dates, names, and places, among others (Jose & Dharma Raja, 2011, as cited in Chamba & Ramirez-Avila, 2021). Scanning is unlike skimming because the readers do not focus on general information of the text but in the details.

Summarizing.

Buckley (2004) defined summarizing as reducing the text to one-third or one-quarter its original size, clearly articulating the author’s meaning, and retaining main ideas. Hacker (2019), on her part, commented that summarizing involves stating a work’s thesis and main ideas “simply, briefly, and accurately” (p. 62). The summarizing process briefly shows the essential aspects of a text or passage to provide relevant information of the arguments. For the learner who reads a lecture, the summarizing strategy helps to find essential ideas, deleting irrelevant amount of information, and building original paragraphs (Ozdemir, 2018).

A practical summary is a manner of transmitting to the reader what the reading talks about (Prozesky, 2000). It also identifies the writer's point of view, and it is crucial to know what the reader can add to the new paper. The author also expressed that a

scholarly article is rarely about a straightforward thing, and to know what the reader or writer is discussing will help him/her determine the most crucial source for the paper.

Decoding and encoding.

Terry (2020) said that encoding and decoding combine the components of auditory and visual processing. In other words, pull the sounds apart within a word and match letters to the sounds. Developing decoding and encoding skills is vital for a firm understanding of the reading skill. With encoding, students construct a word orally from a spoken or pictured word. With decoding, students start the reading process by using the visual center of the brain, the right hemisphere. With encoding, students start the reading process with the listening and speaking parts of the brain, the left hemisphere.

Most learners present lack of decoding and encoding skills; it is not helpful for them to read and understand unknown words better (Oakhill et al., 2015). Early in development, decoding is more closely associated with reading comprehension than linguistic competence, but once decoding is mastered, linguistic comprehension becomes a better predictor of reading comprehension (Catts et al., 2006).

Prior knowledge when reading.

The prior knowledge usage is an essential part of reading comprehension for children. Students relate the written word to their previous experiences to make reading more personal, helping them to both understand and remember what they have read. Some experts believe that activating prior knowledge is the most critical aspect of the reading experience (Bailey, 2020). Students learn better when they first check what they already know, which improves English language learners' academic literacy (Ferlazzo & Sypniewski, 2018). Activating prior knowledge means both eliciting from students

what they already know and building initial knowledge that they need to access upcoming content.

Word Recognition

Word recognition refers to the instant or automatic recall of words without any strategy, skill, or cognitive mechanism. In this section, the brain automatically processes and transforms the words in a code that learners can understand in the passage. This happens when the learner is doing the reading activities, they acquire most of the words in the passage (Johnson, 2016). If learners find the words as many times as they can, they will store the information in someplace in their long term memory.

Two essential components in the simple view of reading, automatic word recognition and strategic language comprehension, contribute to teaching reading's ultimate goal: skilled reading comprehension. According to Garnett (2011), fluent execution of the underlying elements involves "teaching...accompanied by supported and properly framed interactive practice" (p. 311). When word recognition becomes effortless and automatic, a conscious effort is no longer needed to read the words, and instead, it can be devoted to comprehension of the text. Accuracy and effortlessness, or fluency, in reading words serves to clear the way for successful reading comprehension.

There are six ways to identify words during the act of reading:

1. Context clues (semantics)
2. Word order and grammar (syntax)
3. Word parts or analyzing words
4. Morphemic analysis (prefixes, suffixes, and root words)
5. Sight words

6. Phonics.

Traditionally, students were taught one way to identify unknown words (phonics) mentioned Dahl et al., (1999). Instead, students should be provided instruction and activities to develop all six word identification strategies (Eick-Eliason, 2016). If students are taught just phonics, they receive one sixth of a reading education.

Parts of Speech

Nouns or subjects are names of people, places, and things; verbs are separated into main verbs and auxiliary verbs; adjectives and adverbs are seen as modifiers. They modify other words in a sentence (Haslam, 2019). The use of parts of speech approach is the information extraction that attracts significant attention due to its significant potential in multilingual applications. Since the only language pre-processing required for it is part of speech (POS)-tagging, which is often more reliable and is available for a more significant number of languages than, for example, syntactic parsers (Zhila & Gelbukh, 2016).

Parts of speech have both semantic and structural aspects. Lehmann (2013) commented that the two sets of features are essentially significant but different since the semantic features derive from language functions in communication and cognition. On the other hand, the structural elements are essentially based on the combinatorial potential of signs in a text. Therefore, the two sets of features are mostly independent of each other.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is how to get information in the reading (Peñañiel, 2018). Students understand or comprehend the content of the text they read. Indrayani (2014) stated that reading comprehension is the process of understanding the writer's

message with a simultaneous extracting of ideas and constructing a new meaning where it is possible a better interaction and involvement between the texts and the reader.

Reading comprehension is one complicated task in which humans engage. Reading theorists have grappled with how to comprehensively and meaningfully portray reading comprehension, and many different theoretical models have been proposed in recent decades (McNamara & Magliano, 2009; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). These models range from broad theoretical models depicting the relationships and interactions among comprehension subcomponents to models of specific comprehension processes. Reading comprehension can be explained by individual differences in these two components, though the relative relationship of the components changes over time (Catts, 2018).

Purpose for reading.

The reading's purpose is to gain comprehension and understanding from the written texts. The reader needs to get what the research tells him/her about the active process of acquiring meaning to apply comprehension strategies (Texas Educational Agency, 2002). The purpose of reading is to develop the current communication to something that the reader can express in his/her real-life context (Sangia, 2018). If the communication between reader and writer is significant, there will be a close relationship between them, so the message will generate a positive improvement. It is always possible for the reader to enforce the information obtained from written texts, so that interaction will result more natural.

Methodology

The present descriptive study applied a quantitative and qualitative method to determine the reading strategies students use to comprehend texts. The survey was

applied to students of the second level of Law and the third level of Communication students in an Ecuadorian private university. The research questions are:

1. Do participants read in English?
2. Do they use reading strategies?
3. What are their perspectives towards vocabulary?
4. What are their perspectives towards reading in English?

Participants

The survey was answered by ninety-three students from a private University in Portoviejo, Manabí. Their ages ranged from 18 to 35 years. The university campus is located in the urban zone in the capital of the province. Students indicated they belong to middle social status. Their learning styles are different among them. The participants are 65 females that represent the 69.9% of the study, and 28 males that represent the 30.1%. Most of them (98.92%) are Ecuadorian. The 1.08% have the Spanish nationality. They are students from different English levels like second, third, fifth, and sixth. Their English level is low and varied, it ranges from A1 (28 = 30%), A2 (51 = 55%) to B1 (14 = 15%) according to CEFR, and based on their perspectives obtained through the survey fulfillment.

Instruments

A reading survey (Appendix A) was the instrument applied to collect information to answer the research questions, and get results about reading strategies in EFL students. This survey has different types of questions that include some demographic questions and some reading skills questions. There was a total of 22 questions. It was made in English and in Spanish to avoid misunderstandings.

Ethical Considerations

Before beginning with the work, the researcher talked to the students and explained them about the descriptive study to develop. As they were adults, it was not necessary to ask for a consent letter from their parents, but it was a requirement to converse with the institution about the work to do. In this conversation the authorities of the university knew that the students just needed to fulfill a survey (Appendix A) to participate in this study. The information of the participants was protected all the time. Their names and personal information do not appear anywhere. Instead of that, codes that represent the information were assigned. Besides this, students were free to accept or deny the participation in the research.

Data Analysis

The data analysis refers to how the data are collected from the instrument and how the analysis is interpreted by the researcher to go beyond with the investigation. The results are displayed in specific tables with the means that represent students' answers. The IBM Statistics version 24 software, and the Excel application were applied with the students' answers to manage and establish the quantitative results. The appropriate analysis of the outcomes is determinant to know how the real knowledge situation of the participants is.

For the qualitative results, the data collected are presented in some tables where the information appears in sections which describe and answer the research questions related to students' perspectives. The answers display frequency and percentages that indicate the repetition and quantity of the responses.

Results

The results were obtained through the data collected in the survey. The research questions were: Do participants read in English? Do they use reading strategies? What

are their perspectives towards vocabulary?, and What are their perspectives towards reading in English?

The participants' results show that students do not have the English reading habit, although most of them do their tasks because it is necessary for approving their careers, but not for their real learning. According to the results, most of the participants read in English; the mean obtained from the survey is 1.55, which means that despite learners have not created a reading habit in the second language, they also demonstrated in a great extent that practicing their readings in the source language, it will be helpful to understand texts better. Students expressed in the survey that they can understand single phrases at a time with an average of 2.03, which means that learners, most of the time, get the idea, but just in single phrases.

On the other hand, it is necessary to mention that students cannot understand a long text they read for their first time ($m = 2.91$). Additionally, the item "I can skim" obtained the lowest grade from the survey results. Its mean was 2.96. The item graded skimming strategy and how students are familiar with using this strategy to apply it in a reading. The results showed that even though this item got the lowest rate in the usage of the reading strategies, the scores were not bad. To have a better understanding of the results, all the items are presented in the Table 1 below:

Table 1.

Survey results about reading and comprehension and strategies.

Descriptive Statistics	N = 93
Items	Mean
I read in English.	1.55
I can understand a long, complex text.	2.67

I understand single phrases at a time.	2.03
I understand a long text with the first reading.	2.91
I understand a long text by rereading it.	2.43
I can skim.	2.96
I can scan.	2.85
I know the elements of a summary.	2.68
When I read I translate all the words.	2.66
I identify the type of texts I read.	2.76
I know the organization of the text.	2.86
I use my prior knowledge when I read.	2.59
I can classify words of a reading	2.66
When I read, I observe punctuation pauses.	2.54
Punctuation helps me understand the text.	2.51

There are some qualitative questions that do not appear in Table 1. In this new table is explained the students' perspectives towards vocabulary, and towards reading in English, with the percentages obtained from the mentioned items. Students were asked: Why they read? All the results are written here below in the Table 2:

Table 2

Results of students' perspectives about why they read

Students Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Because I like it or it is interesting.	29	31.19%
Because it is necessary for classes	16	17.20%

Because I need to improve my skills	14	15.05%
Because I do not understand so much	11	11.83%
Because I do not know the language.	15	16.13%
Because I do not like it	8	8.60%
Total	93	100.00%

Table 3 explains how participants feel when they see an English passage. Some of their answers were: “I feel anxious because I do not understanding, or they get bored, or just they do not read. All the results are written in the Table 3:

Table 3

Results of students’ perspectives about how students feel when they read?

Students Responses	Frequency	Percentage
“I feel Anxious”	19	20.43%
“I feel bored”	9	9.68%
“I do not read”	11	11.83%
“I feel good”	30	32.26%
“I translate words”	7	7.53%
“I don’t like it. It is not interesting”	8	8.60%
“Sometimes, a couple of times”	9	9.68%
Total.	93	100.00%

Some of their extended answers were: *“I feel anxious because I do not understand anything related to English.”* Other answer was: *“I don’t have the reading habit created. That is why I don’t read.”* Most of them said that *“It feels good when I read.”*

Table 4 explains if participants can skim and scan. They have to explain the process of each part, and how they complete the process. All the results are displayed in the Table 4:

Table 4

Results of students' perspectives about if they can skim and scan

Students Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Just, yes!	19	20.43%
Just no!	15	16.13%
More or less, sometimes	8	8.60%
Reading the text more than once	14	15.05%
Reading the text more than twice and very slowly	7	7.53%
Summarizing the text	6	6.45%
Looking for the main idea	5	5.38%
I cannot do it, I don't understand	7	7.53%
Underline specific words	7	7.53%
Translating every word	5	5.38%
Total.	93	100,00%

A few number of participants can skim and scan by themselves. The 20.43% of the participants mentioned that they can skim and scan texts. Learning to skim and scan can become a hard and long process that teachers and learners need to develop through the

implement of effective skills to increase the reading comprehension. In other way, it is necessary to develop an effective lesson plan with useful reading strategies that motivates learners to be involved in the reading learning process to do their training more attractive to understand and more significant to apply in real context.

Table 5 explains how the participants’ knowledge of vocabulary in English is. They have some options that are described in the Table 5:

Table 5

Results of participants’ knowledge of vocabulary in English.

Students Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very Low	10	10.75%
Basic, Low	23	24.73%
Intermediate	46	49.46%
Advanced	14	15.05%
Total.	93	100.00%

Table 6 explains how the participants’ knowledge of vocabulary in English is. They just have to answer the question in the Table 6:

Table 6

Results of participants who think that learning English vocabulary is complex.

Students Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Just yes!	5	5.38%
Just no!	7	7.53%
Lack of practice	26	27.96%

Lack of pronunciation	9	9.68%
Too many words	7	7.53%
Too much grammar	6	6.45%
Lack of commitment	11	11.83%
Homophones words	2	2.15%
I do all best and I learn	15	16.13%
It is easy if the student trains and practices	5	5.38%
Total.	93	100.00%

Discussion

Results obtained in this descriptive study demonstrated students' experience related to reading comprehension and understanding.

Research question number one: Do participants read in English? Results demonstrate that even though students have not created a reading habit, they read and understand single phrases. They only read when it is necessary to fulfill the academic work, but this action does not work out to develop the reading skill. Reading is an interactive process in which the writer and the reader dialog through a text (Lopera, 2012). Students need to understand what they do, meanwhile read the texts, and it is how they improve their reading skills.

Richards et al. (2015) expressed that reading skills can improve English proficiency in struggling students. The study participants mentioned that they did not read in some cases due to a lack of understanding and motivation. Language learners must be encouraged to develop their reading skills to facilitate further skills growth (Haupt, 2015). One of the reading objectives includes reading with confidence,

understanding what they read, and finding reading a source of knowledge and pleasure (Chard & Osborn, 2020). On an average of the results, the students' reading comprehension needs more training and the application of some strategies to increase their reading skills.

Research question number two: Do they use reading strategies? As results show, the participants do not use reading strategies, but to improve this skill, it is necessary to implement strategies to enhance English language acquisition (Aydogan, 2014). Students should be able to find important information and understand texts in the first reading and forward. The reader needs to get what the research tells him/her about the active process of acquiring meaning to apply comprehension strategies (Texas Educational Agency, 2002). The participants do not use skimming or scanning strategies so much, or they use them when are needed.

The Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, 2016) expressed that students can correct and reorganize the classroom's teaching and learning process by applying different strategies to make students acquire the right perspective to the written texts. Additionally, results also demonstrate that learners do not recognize the type of texts they read, and more than it, students cannot organize texts. Luckner and Urbach (2012) said that the bottom-up approach focuses on word recognition and improves reading ability by encouraging students to discover and then prioritize reading difficulties after scaffolding a passage.

Research question number three: What are their perspectives towards vocabulary? Students' perspectives towards vocabulary are not so deficient at all. Some students feel good; they comprehend parts of the texts after reading more than once. This happens when the learner is doing the reading activities, they acquire most of the words in the passage (Johnson, 2016). Students have some knowledge of the vocabulary

in the target language. Activating prior knowledge is the most critical aspect of the reading experience (Bailey, 2020). Other students feel anxious when reading in their second language because they do not understand a passage completely. Other parts of the participants get bored translating each word, and finally, some of them do not read.

Most of the students have a proper vocabulary in a great quantity of the passages even though they have to read and reread the texts. Learners acquire most of the words in the reading (Johnson, 2016). Most of them think English is interesting, but the training is mandatory for those who want to improve their reading skills using real-life contexts strategies. The purpose of reading is to develop the current communication to something that the reader can express in his/her real-life context (Sangia, 2018).

Research question number four: What are their perspectives towards reading in English? Results demonstrate that a considerable part of the students like English or see it as interesting, necessary for their classes, and reading skills improvement. Albiladi (2018) commented that the reading skill in the (ESL) context had gained much attention from researchers and second language educators these years. Nevertheless, another part of the students has shown their lack of practice, lack of commitment, and lower self-confidence for accomplishing the work that is the primary constraint against reading skill improvement. Before, English language teachers considered mistakes done by learners as something embarrassing, and many students avoided to participate (Touchie, 1983).

Moreover, results showed that students understand the passages by reading more than once and frequently translating them. Hence, it was more challenging for learners to find main ideas or specific information on the passages. It made students' reading skills slower, and learners get bored easier. Skimming and scanning develop learners' speediness in reading and comprehension of texts (Touriz, 2020).

Finally, it is essential to mention that this descriptive study reports some positive and significant results. These results give the researcher, participants, and future readers a clear opportunity to develop the reading skills effectively and implementing the correct strategies to reach the B1 level as independent users, as expressed in the Ecuadorian Curriculum (Ministerio de Educacion, 2012).

Conclusion

The current descriptive study aimed to recognize students' weaknesses and strengths in their reading skills. According to the results, it is noticeable that students need to improve their reading skills development. It is essential to mention that this skill is necessary to let students be independent learners and language users through giving and receiving information.

Results also demonstrated that a significant quantity of students is not adapted to use the reading strategies. In most cases, students do not know any of them, and their learning was lower and noticeable due to lack of knowledge. For this reason, some students were worried about finding the central ideas or specific details in the passages. Their lack of vocabulary has been shown, especially at the texts' comprehension time; that is why they translated every word. It happened when students wrote the survey, and they did not comprehend the directions, even though they were also in Spanish. The situation is that students do not read the directions at all. It is necessary to teach them properly to make learners increase new words to develop the reading skill.

Additionally, it is necessary to mention that students expressed their perspectives at the end of the study. As a result of this, it was clear to understand every single answer that learners wrote in the survey. To conclude, it was found that some of them have a significant English level and used their prior knowledge to follow the

survey instructions. On the other hand, some learners did not understand the survey at all despite it was done in English and in Spanish.

Limitations

The principal limitation was the students' commitment to fulfilling the survey. A few students did not complete the survey on time, but the survey was filled out for more than the required people during the study development. This happened because students did not read their messages on time, and the information was spread uncontrolled. Many learners have some appropriate English level, but they do not practice so much to improve their reading skills. They have not developed any reading habits. The COVID 19 situation has made a few students work on their studies, but they have left their studies apart in most cases.

Recommendations.

It is recommendable to implement these types of descriptive study as part of the formal education in universities. The curriculum should be enriched with practice examples of innovations to make our learners more autonomous and critical thinkers. It is also recommendable to know students' difficulties in reading skills to make plans to reinforce students learning. Moreover, if the study is supposed to be still longer online. In that case, the researcher must pay attention to students' understanding and comprehension of the directions to follow to complete the work as soon as possible.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Survey

Available upon request.