Peer Assessment of Skimming and Scanning Facilitated by ICT and its Incidence

in the Improvement of Reading Comprehension.

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Currently, we live in a globalized world. This world demands the acquisition of English and its proper use in order to communicate, access to knowledge and information, and interact with a work environment (Su-Hie et al., 2017). Graddol (2006) affirmed this idea by stating that "In the last few years pedagogic practices have rapidly evolved to meet the needs of the rather different world in which global English is learned and used." (p. 85). Reading in English is one of the biggest challenges of schools because reading is complex, one of the hardest formative challenge that people face, which requires memory, knowledge of the language, and inspiration.

One of the most serious problems in higher education, but one which is often not recognized is the problem of reading comprehension (Dreyer & Nel, 2003, p. 349), this problem that seems to affect students' learning process transcends from school to the university. One of the consequences of the deficiency of reading comprehension is low academic performance. Low competence in reading comprehension in this language does not allow students or professionals to have more opportunities at the moment of developing their career at the university and the world of work. (Pitan, 2013).

Reading comprehension requires summarizing and reviewing what is expressed in a content, generating meaning, either exclusively built or agreed on by the larger part of readers (Randi et al., 2005). The need to make students thrive at reading comprehension is vital since of the skill takes part in creating academic processes.

In order to achieve this goal, the Ministry of Education has developed and implemented bilingual training programs, like the "Go Teacher", it is a program for teachers created in 2013, and English was taught for the first time in elementary schools around the country in 2016. One of the objectives of schools in Ecuador is to help

students become proficient in reading in English as a foreign language. However, it is important to recognize the difficulties that emerge when teaching any foreign language in schools.

Several studies and researches have shown that learners have problems when learning a new language, particularly when it comes to reading (Bernhardt, 2005; Fuchs et al., 2019; Josephs & Jolivette, 2016). On the other hand, teachers have faced the same problematic in their teaching process, when *reading* appears in an academic procedure. A few of these issues include the need of proficiency programs, the inaccurate use of methodologies, and need of reading comprehension exercises, particularly in their L1 which does not let students to exchange the information to a new language.

Additionally, learners who need improvement in English proficiency can also compensate this issue by expanding their mindfulness and knowledge of reading methods and learning how to utilize them fittingly to comprehend what they read (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). Nevertheless, this is often something that most English teachers do not tend to instruct their learners and undoubtedly, learners feel frustrated and commonly are not interested to take the control of comprehension processes while reading.

Peer Assessment allows students to assess each other's performance. According to Gielen et al. (2010), the bidirectional nature of giving and receiving feedback potentially enhances students' learning as students could learn from different examples and approaches in the process. It can be extremely valuable in helping students to learn from each other by listening, analyzing and solving problems. It gives students the opportunity to encounter diversity of opinions, critique, and ultimately, students learn how to be responsible for their own learning as students realize the value of doing comparison of their own and others' work (Wood & Kurzel, 2008)

Skimming and scanning skills and its effects on reading comprehension are widely documented. However, most studies focus on reading habits, rather than how reading strategies help students' comprehension (Jaramillo-Ponton et al., 2019). In conclusion, developing reading comprehension is generally considered a major objective of teaching reading programs. Although some investigators report significant gains in comprehension as a result of their programs (Rankin, 1971).

One of the foremost genuine issues in higher instruction, but one which is frequently overlooked is the issue of reading comprehension (Dreyer & Nel, 2003, p. 349), this issue that appears to influence students' learning process affects school and college levels. One of the results of the insufficiency of reading comprehension is low academic performance. Low competence in reading skills does not let learners or experts to have more ideas when choosing careers at college or work. (Pitan, 2013).

In conclusion, researchers have found available the idea of preparing our learners conscience and attitude about reading comprehension since they start school life, in order to inspire in them self-motivation and cognitive capabilities in reading comprehension. This research project aims to implement a pedagogical strategy by which teachers help and encourage students to improve their reading comprehension to have better academic and professional opportunities in the near and far future. To achieve this, the project aims to answer the following research questions.

1) To what extent does peer-assessment of skimming and scanning improve students' reading comprehension?

2) What are student's attitude when being assessed by their peers?

This project's goal is to execute an educational technique with which teachers and instructors offer assistance and motivate students to move forward and improve

reading comprehension in order to have better prospects in the future. To fulfill this, the goal of the research is to answer the following questions.

1) To what degree does peer-assessment of skimming and scanning help in the progress of students' reading comprehension?

2) What are student's responses and emotions when being assessed by other fellow students?

Literature Review

This part contains information that supports the practice of peer assessment of skimming and scanning facilitated by ICT to improve reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is a challenging academic procedure which basically implies understanding what is being studied (Moore et al., 2016). The independent variables are peer assessment, skimming and scanning and the dependent variable is reading comprehension. The literature that backs this is explained in this segment. Furthermore, the class plan will be based on in backwards design.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a communication procedure with which people transmit content graphically (Kingston, 1967, p. 72). Based on this, reading comprehension depends on the reader's elucidation of symbols. Reading comprehension is the understanding of something in nearly any circumstances. It involves summarizing and reviewing, producing meaning either independently or agreed on by the majority (Randi et al., 2005, p. 21). This is often an ability that learners will utilize all their life, and which will let them create exercises, and projects successfully, no matter the ranges of information. Reading comprehension is a dynamic process that requires a more profound engagement with meaning (Wooley, 2011, p. 176). Based on reading comprehension definitions, it has two parts: One is recognizing printed words and the

other is understanding the message that the prints convey (Wagner, 2009). These two steps of reading comprehension let readers get the message given to them and move forward utilizing what the reading provides.

Reading Strategies

Karbalaei, (2011). Reading strategies are conscious means by which students monitor their own reading processes including evaluating the effectiveness of cognitive strategies being used (Karbalaei, 2011). These strategies involve how to approach the reading of a text, testing, and revising according to purpose and time available. This author also refers to strategies as how to use tools for reading comprehension in a second or a foreign language as dictionaries, taking notes, or highlighting important parts of the text.

Skimming includes a through outline of a content and suggests a reading competence (Macleod, 2013). In this research it is intended that students learn and apply some of these strategies in order to comprehend a text in an easier and more effective way, to find and to discover all what the author of the text wants to express.

Some of the reading strategies are automatic: decoding, predicting, questioning, locating topic sentences, reading faster, adjusting reading rate and other strategies, however, are not automatic: inferring the main idea, guessing the meaning of unknown words, paraphrasing, drawing conclusions (Mikulecky, 1990).

The strategies are implemented depending on the stage in which the reader is, in this case, A1 and A2 EFL. Erten and Karakas (2007) established which strategies are appropriate in each stage; 'at the pre-reading stage, the strategies of predicting, pre-viewing and keywords activities provide opportunities for anticipating the content of the story, and activating linguistics background information. At the while reading stage, scanning, skimming, and clarifying activities help the reader to get the essence of the

text, locate, and clarify specific pieces of information. Finally, at the post reading stage, learners employ questions and drawing conclusions activities (Erten & Karakas, 2007, p. 126).

Skimming.

Skimming is the ability of getting the general idea of a text (Djuwarsih, 2006). This practice consists of observing the text to detect the general subject, without worrying about the details. It is a reading strategy that focuses on overall information and disregards "disposable" information by reading a piece of written text quickly, ignoring some information and using titles, subtitles, and the first line paragraphs. This strategy seeks to detect the general meaning of the text through tips such as cognates, false cognates, known words, highlighted terms.

When implementing skimming reading strategies the learners would get the main idea instead of the details, and they also have to ignore some parts of the text that do not seem useful to collect the information needed which might affect full comprehension of the material.

Scanning.

Scanning is a reading technique that consists of looking through the text until the readers find the specific information they want. Scanning is a more detailed view of the text where the reader's intention is to locate the information by carefully reading every single word. It is often used to locate details and specific information that may be asked at the end of the assignment (Casey, 2003). Scanning allows the reader to extract just the information needed from a written text, in order to be able to answer specific questions about a text. Scanning cannot be taken for granted. The instructor's intervention provides knowledge and facilitates mastery of the strategy, which leads toward reading success. "When a teacher instructs learners to look quickly through a

text to find keywords, without expecting them to understand everything, she is getting them to use the strategy of scanning" (Nunan, 2015, p. 36 70).

Students learn to read the passages, skipping through irrelevant information. Students make the decision about what type of information to look for (words or numbers). It is not essential to read every detail included in the text with this strategy. This can be considered a time-saving language tool that is absolutely useful. Scanning is a reading strategy where the reader looks for key words or phrases in a text (Lucantoni, 2017). This strategy is more limited. It is used only to retrieve a specific piece of information relevant to the activity or the reader (Abdelrahman & Bsharah, 2014). Students find it easier to use this process since there is no need to understand every word or meaning, they do not need other resources that would take them away from the task (Deveci, 2018). Students "need to be able to scan the text for particular bits of information they are searching for" (Harmer, 2001, p.69).

To sum it up, scanning reading comprehension strategy needs to be explicitly instructed, implemented and practiced by the teacher so students are well trained to face its application for the benefit of their comprehension.

Peer Assessment

Peer assessment is a process where groups of individuals rate their peers' work or performance (Falchikov, 1995). Many times this strategy is used during formative assessments, where learners provide mostly qualitative comments and sometimes mark to provide feedback (Gielen et al., 2010).

Moreover, facilitators expect that students take on the role of assessors, developing in them the criteria of what counts as quality work while also increasing peer relations (Harris et al., 2014). However, as with many strategies there are positive and negative sides to take into consideration before applying them. Azarnoosh (2013)

argued that teachers must be aware of students' bias which could provide negative information, or excess of positive feedback due to their reluctance to fail their classmates.

Information and Communication Technologies

The term ICT is plural referring to a great many technologies and it is an all-encompassing term that includes the full gamut of electronic tools by means of which people gather, record and store information, and exchange and distribute information to others (García & Marin, 2013).

Different ICTs have the potential to contribute to different facets of educational development and effective learning, improving the quality of learning, enhancing the quality of teaching, and improving management systems (Haddad & Draxler, 2002). There is an increase in students' level of independence, participation, and motivation towards language learning when computer-assisted language teaching is applied in teachers' practices.

The use of technological tools opens up new possibilities for stimulating the development of reading skills which is key since teaching a foreign language has become an issue of importance in the country. To keep up with these current challenges and respond to the actual needs of the inhabitant's different efforts have been made, like the creation of the Escuelas del Milenio and International Baccalaureate programs, which depended on the implementation of these technologies and English in order to meet international standards.

Backward Design

Backward design has been useful for retraining teachers to design curriculum for scaffolding learning where the focus is on learning outcomes and assessment. It begins with a specification of learning outputs and the desired results. After clarifying the

results of learning, appropriate content and activities will be chosen and the methodology is designed to go hand in hand with the objectives. This model has re-emerged as a prominent education development approach in language teaching. Students may face difficulties in dealing with issues of validity and reliability. However, Unnecessary disruptions in the learning process are eliminated and they can focus on their goals. It was also described as 'ends-means' approach (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006).

In the point of view of backward design, teachers are designers. They design assessments to recognize student needs to guide their teaching and to enable themselves and their students to determine whether they have achieved their goals (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006, p.13). In designing the course, teachers should be mindful of their students' interests, developmental levels, class size, and previous achievements in order to shape their thinking about the learning activities, assignments, and assessments (Wiggnis & McTighe, 2006).

The review of the related literature is filled with various studies investigating different factors influencing reading comprehension; however, none had focused on reading comprehension strategies combined peer assessment, use of ICT or, skimming and scanning altogether. On this basis, the present study aimed to examine the extent to which a backward design of Peer assessment of skimming and scanning can improve students' reading comprehension can help intermediate EFL learners as well as the way they perceive the utility of this model compared with the conventional forward models of teaching reading comprehension.

Innovation

This pedagogical innovation was designed to improve student's reading comprehension through peer assessment of skimming and scanning facilitated by ICT. The implementation of the innovation will last four weeks with a total of 24 periods on campus. It includes the introduction and practice of peer-assessment of skimming and scanning. The activities will be explained step by step when introduced by the researcher the first day of application as well as the strategies to be used. Students had to complete different types of tasks; individual, in pairs and groups tasks will be fulfilled with the help of the teacher in order to get used to the strategies and the rubric for reading activities. Students will recognize the proper ways to ask question for skimming and scanning when assessing their peers. Students will also learn about the strategies used in the process and performed activities where they read questions only to recognize what strategy they will have to follow and they questioned each other to get possible options. Answers were provided by the teacher at the end of each activity and students will be motivated and encouraged to continue their work.

The activities will start with the acquisition of new vocabulary using the words from the readings. Then, the strategies will be explained and the reading activities where they will have to get the main idea as well as specific information by questioning their peers will be completed. The readings will be increasing their level of difficulty as time goes by and students were improving. The role of the researcher will be to monitor the effects of teaching and adjusting the instructions accordingly. The implemented rubric will have three categories which will be: Identifying main information and details, questioning and responding. It will be applied in the reading comprehension tasks. The teacher will be an observer and the one who will conduct the research, but at the same time, the one who will implement the intended strategies and tools, trying to

create a change, observing the impact of that implementation, grasping the opportunity to interact with the learners, implement a pedagogical intervention and collect data through field notes.

Methodology

This is an action research. All the data collected during the innovation will be through by field notes and pre and post-test which will provide quantitative data. The data will be analyzed and interpreted to answer the research questions. This section introduced the participants as well as the instruments that will be utilized in the innovation, the way in which the data will be analyzed and ethical considerations that were considered before carrying out the study.

The study will be conducted with 25 students from a private university in Portoviejo. The participants are at A1and A2 level according to CEFR. Most of them are able to understand simple written and spoken sentences about daily life and commands in class.

Description of Participants

Students from a private university in Portoviejo will participate in this study through a convenience selection of the sample. There is a total of 25 students. Ages ranged between 19 and 25 years old. Their economic level ranges from middle to high, and they come from modest families in the northern sector of the city of Portoviejo. In the course, 60% are women while 40% are men.

The ethnicity of the students is mestizo. Their mother tongue is Spanish. The selection was made in accordance with the needs of the school and research. The majority of the participants have access to internet, many of them have smartphones. Students' weakest ability is reading comprehension. Additionally, their knowledge of

the English language is limited, due to not having previous significant English instruction.

Instruments

The data collection instruments were designed to gather information about the contribution of peer assessment of scanning and skimming in students' reading comprehension through ICT. The instruments designed for this purpose are field notes, as well as a pre and post-test created by the teacher.

Pre and Post-test

A pre and posttest will be applied to be able to answer the question: To what extent does peer-assessment of skimming and scanning improve students reading comprehension? In this evaluation, the following parameters, in accordance with the applied rubric, were taken into account: readings with short and longer texts with multiple choice questions, a short paragraph with specific information. Each test had a maximum grade of 10 points.

Rubric

Rubrics are plans that are developed by evaluators to direct the examination of the items or forms. The rubric that will be implemented has three categories which are: Identifying main information and details, questioning and responding. It will be applied in the reading comprehension tasks.

Field Notes

Field notes will be used to record data from observation of the learners' reactions when they were assessed by their peers to answer the question: What are student's reactions when being assessed by their peers? This instrument will be used each time the reading activities are performed to report the process that students will concluded and how they feel while completing it.

Data Analysis

Perhaps the most important and recent use of impact is in the process of academic evaluation (Thompson Scientific, 2007). Quantitative data of the pre and posttest will be gathered and entered in Excel to confirm the results and obtain descriptive statistics of the skimming and scanning processes. A quantitative analysis of each test was done to report the first question: To what extent does peer-assessment of skimming and scanning improve students' reading comprehension?

The information gathered in the field notes will be organized according to frequent reactions experienced by students to answer the second research question: What are student's reactions when being assessed by their peers?

Ethical considerations

To achieve reliable and true data and also to observe the ethical considerations involved in a research project, the teacher asked for permission to the institution where the study will be conducted. Likewise, the researcher will send a consent letter (Appendix 2) to students to ask for permission to conduct the study and to use the data collected. The teacher will inform the participants what this study intends to implement, specifying the aim, the resources, strategy and tools to be used. In the consent letter, all participants will allow the teacher to use their performance and work as evidence of the study confidentiality provided. They will also agree to participate in the study freely, willfully and with an understanding of the study. The researcher agrees to keep private any information provided that will enable others to identify participants.

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Appendix 1

Lesson Plan

Available upon request.

Appendix 2

Consent letter

Available upon request.

Appendix 3

Pre-Test

Available upon request.

Appendix 4

PEER ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Available upon request.

Appendix 5

FIELD NOTES

Available upon request.

Appendix 6

Post-Test

Available upon request.