



Perspectives of Reading Strategies in EFL Students: A Descriptive Study

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Abstract

The present descriptive study aimed to determine if EFL students apply reading strategies or not. This study included the learners' responses of a survey that collected quantitative and qualitative data. Participants were 52 students from different levels of education whose ages ranged from 14-20 years. The instrument applied was a survey to collect and analyze data of participants about reading strategies and difficulties in the EFL context, comprehension of texts and the issues they presented when reading. Results showed that most of the times, most students can understand single phrases at a time, with a mean of 2.58. It means, a clear comprehension of simple phrases. Participants, observe punctuation pauses that helps them understand the text, with a mean of 2.65. Additionally, it is also showed that learners can understand a long text by rereading it, with a mean of 2.94. Participants get the ideas after reading the texts more than once. Seeing these results, it is suggested that teachers and researchers consider some good strategies to guide and support learners' during their learning process before using them in a real implementation.

Keywords: reading, reading strategies, reading comprehension, reading difficulties, EFL.

Resumen

El presente estudio descriptivo tuvo como objetivo determinar si los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera aplican o no estrategias de lectura. Este estudio incluyó las respuestas de los alumnos una encuesta que recogía datos cuantitativos y cualitativos. Los participantes fueron 52 estudiantes de diferentes niveles educativos cuyas edades oscilaron entre los 14 y los 20 años. El instrumento aplicado fue una encuesta para recolectar y analizar los datos de los participantes sobre las estrategias y dificultades lectoras en el contexto del inglés como lengua extranjera, la comprensión de textos y los problemas que presentaban al leer. Los resultados mostraron que la mayoría de las veces, la mayoría de los estudiantes pueden comprender frases simples simultáneamente, con una media de 2,58, significa una clara comprensión de frases sencillas. Los participantes, la mayoría de las veces leen y observan pausas de puntuación que les ayudan a comprender el texto, con una media de 2,65. Además, también se demuestra que los alumnos pueden entender un texto extenso releyéndolo, con una media de 2,94. Los participantes captan las ideas, pero después de leer los textos más de una vez. Estos resultados sugieren que los profesores e investigadores podrían considerar algunas buenas estrategias para guiar y apoyar a los alumnos durante su proceso de aprendizaje antes de utilizarlas en una implementación real.

Palabras clave: lectura, estrategias lectoras, comprensión lectora, dificultades de lectura, EFL.

Perspectives of Reading Strategies in EFL Students: A Descriptive Study

The benefits of learning and understanding the English language widens the knowledge (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). Learning English as a foreign language allows individuals to develop their imagination, creativity, and thinking skills. It is vital to experience real communicative situations where students express their own views and opinions to authentically improve their English skills (Asma, 2016). Learning English helps learners develop listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills.

The Curriculum for EFL teaching in Ecuadorian schools is focused on the development of learners' reading skills. The aim is that students become independent readers to be capable of reading a diversity of authentic texts to find information, be conscious about the world, enhance reading comprehension, and communicate their ideas (Cabanilla, 2019). Reading is a dynamic ability, in which learners consciously and subconsciously apply numerous sub skills and reading strategies to acquire the new knowledge (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

Reading is one of the most successful skills to acquire a foreign language. This skill plays a pivotal role when learning the English language. People read an assortment of information for different aims. This skill helps them grow mentally, emotionally, and psychologically (Pinela, 2020). Reading skills are required for academic and professional purposes. Reading helps students to improve their understanding of the language and build their vocabulary. The problem is that learners who are learning the English language have issues using reading skills (Barr, 2006).

EFL learners aimed to develop good reading skills. For achieving this, language researchers have focused on searching for effective methods, techniques, and strategies to increase students' reading ability (Daradkeh, 2020). The results of some studies confirmed the importance of reading strategies. Mistar et al. (2016) explored the effect of reading strategies on reading comprehension. They discovered that those students who received training on reading strategies did better in literal and inferential reading comprehension tests than those who did not take any training.

Learners need to identify their reading objectives to use the best strategies toward general comprehension (Ministerio de Educación, 2016). Through reading strategies, readers keep connecting what they are reading to their previous knowledge and experience. Gamboa (2017) specified that implementing effective reading comprehension strategies inside the classroom might help students use efficient ways to read comprehensively in a foreign language. Strategies such as skimming allows students to get the main idea of the text, and scanning lets them get the exact information in a reading (Sinaga, & Simanullang, 2019, as cited in Perlaza, 2020).

Perlaza (2020) carried out a study related to skimming and scanning strategies in a high school in Guayaquil. The results of this investigation demonstrated that by applying peer-assessment of skimming and scanning strategies, learners could improve their reading comprehension in a target language. Touriz (2020) accomplished a similar study about scanning strategies through collaboration facilitated by WhatsApp. Findings indicated that collaboration facilitated by technological tools were appropriate to enhance learners' reading comprehension in an EFL class in the Ecuadorian context.

Lack of effective reading strategies affects reading comprehension efficiency among EFL learners (Koda, 2007). Üstünbaş (2019) performed a descriptive study on EFL learners' use of cognitive strategies in reading. The study was conducted in Turkey, 30 students (15 high-level learners and 15 low-level learners) who were learning English in the language program of a state university. Three global reading strategies were applied: guessing, scanning, and skimming. Findings showed that the strategy used in reading was related to being a good or bad reader rather than language proficiency.

Another descriptive study about reading strategies was performed by Barr (2006). This study involved some secondary schools in Minnesota. Findings demonstrated that students in these educational centers have issues related to reading comprehension, reading fluency, decoding phonemic awareness, and lack of vocabulary.

The English proficiency level of participants of this descriptive study is A1 and some of them are A2. According to the Council of Europe (2018), learners in this level can understand and identify simple information, known names, words, and basic vocabulary. However, it is difficult for these students to get the main idea and details in texts because they do not have enough vocabulary and word knowledge to fulfill different activities.

Furthermore, this study pretends to know the gaps that learners need to overcome to improve reading comprehension, gaps linked to lack of word recognition, summarizing, decoding and encoding, including other issues that students must deal with. The survey for this study was taken in a public school in Playas, Canton Playas from Guayas Province, whose teachers apply the Ecuadorian standards for education. The participants have different levels of English but most of them are in A1 level. The chosen courses for this survey were first and third of Baccalaureate.

Literature Review

After searching different information such as articles, studies from some authors and researchers who presented their pieces of relevant evidence for the current descriptive study, meaningful concepts have been found. In this section of the literature review, primary studies about reading, reading comprehension, word recognition, and parts of speech are presented to support the current research. Furthermore, concepts about reading strategies and prior knowledge when reading will be described.

Reading

Reading is a fundamental component of each educational curriculum to be taught in the learning process of acquiring a native or target language (Barreiro, 2019). Reading is dynamic and focuses on the interaction between the reader, the text, and the activity (Koda, 2007; Snow, 2002). Reading is seen as a dynamic process, not merely a final product, which means that reading needs a wide variety of strategies that ineffective readers are unconscious of. Karademir and Ulucinar (2017) defined reading as a step-by-step development that fosters an increase of higher-order thinking skills (as cited in Chamba & Ramirez-Avila, 2021).

According to Nurhadi (2017), reading is the building of significance from a printed or written piece of information (as cited in Touriz, 2020). The reader's ability to construct meaning from a reading depends on using the data from it (Nurrohmah, 2019). Reading is viewed as a phase in which the learner uses previous knowledge to create meaning (Al Raqqad & Ismail, 2020). This prior learning can consist of the comprehension of the language to build awareness of the subject studied. It helps the students learn details, new vocabulary about a text to use the next time they read.

Vocabulary plays a significant function in constructing learning in terms of figuring out the meaning of new words, retention in long-term memory, recalling, understanding, and production (Griva, et al., 2009, as cited in Cabanilla, 2019). Word recognition increases students' skills to comprehend texts (Ordoñez, 2020). Learners can improve word recognition to overcome reading comprehension difficulties by classifying parts of speech (Contreras, 2019; Moreira, 2020). The parts of speech are indispensable because they show how the words are used in a sentence or phrase.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a skill of the highest importance for EFL learners. Reading comprehension skills permit readers to understand a text by processing the information and link it to their previous knowledge (Moreira, 2020). Marliasari (2017, as cited in Perlaza, 2020) affirmed that the reading comprehension process initiates with the information within each paragraph and ends with what the individual gets from it.

According to Mikulecky (2008, as cited in Marashi & Rahmati, 2017), for improving reading comprehension, learners can use texts, write, revise, develop vocabulary, acquire grammar, edit, and use technology. Furthermore, reading comprehension occurs fluently when some aspects of the process, such as word decoding and literal comprehension, are automatized (Zaccaron et al., 2017).

Word Recognition

Word recognition is defined as the capacity to read isolated words (Adlof, et al., 2006). The term word recognition has mostly been related to tasks in which the number of words read correctly is measured (Cadime et al., 2017). Word recognition is necessary to

understand the texts and complete activities related to reading. Acquiring vocabulary through word recognition skills increases students' reading efficiency (Contreras, 2019). Chard and Osborn (2019, as cited in Pinela, 2020) stated that for improving students' word recognition, teachers should offer opportunities to become familiar with various characteristics of reading.

According to Wolf and Katzi-Cohen (2001), word recognition summarizes the accuracy and speed of meaning access through the decoding of written words. This definition tells us that word recognition involves two sub-processes:

1. Visual decoding of orthographic forms of words and activating links between graphic and phonological decoding.
2. Retrieving appropriate semantic resources through a word dictionary in mind is mentioned as a mental lexicon (Jeon, 2009; Perfetti & Hart, 2001).

Explicit and fluid word recognition positively influences students' reading skills (Cuadro et al., 2017, as cited in Contreras, 2019).

Vocabulary

Knowing a significant quantity of vocabulary is essential for comprehending reading texts. According to Pan, (2017) readers must know and understand a certain number of words, the so-called threshold level, to read in their L2. Additionally, (Mediha & Enisa, 2014) stated that communication could not take place without having enough vocabulary. Thus, there is an imperative need to empower learners with strategies to increase their word knowledge.

Oxford (1990) stated that some language use elements are at first conscious due to direct instruction but then become unconscious or automatic through practice. This situation highlights the necessity to use training to organize, interconnect, and link previous word knowledge to the new one to process further information. In doing so, learners can build up a store of words to be applied in passive and active ways with the help of different strategies to improve the reading level on learners.

Perez and Alvira, (2017) expressed that applying vocabulary strategies to students with low language levels requires thinking about the materials to use, the strategy itself to implement, and providing feedback to the learners. It is also necessary that the selection of reading materials should be based on the students' ages, language level, and interests to improve when applying the strategies.

Parts of Speech

Furthermore, parts of speech is one of the dimensions of vocabulary knowledge that allow readers to interpret the meaning of words written in sentences that form a text (Moreira, 2020). According to Harmer (2007, as cited in Chavez, 2020), parts of speech are viewed as essential components of a sentence. The significance of parts of speech or word classes for language processing is the vast amount of information they offer about a word (Almache & Ramirez-Avila, 2020). Learning parts of speech are essential for students because when they build a sentence or phrase, they need to use different types of words.

Ruiz (2019) stated that parts of speech are the words of a language divided into formal equivalents. Grammatically, the main parts of speech are nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Each speech component explains how the word is used since it can be a noun,

a verb, or an adjective. Nouns are words used for naming a person, animal, place, or thing. Verbs express an action, event, state of being, or occurrence. Adjectives describe or modify nouns and pronouns. An adjective comes before a noun or pronoun and modifies it. Adverbs are words that modify an adjective, verb, another adverb, or clause (Chavez, 2020; Pinela, 2020).

Reading Strategies

Reading strategies have been explained as plans and behaviors for solving problems in constructing meaning (Janzen, 2003). Reading strategies provide pivotal tools to help students to understand any text quickly. Afflerbach et al. (2008, as cited in Albiladi, 2018) defined reading strategies as thoughtful efforts to regulate and modify the reader's attempts to decode text, comprehend words, and build meanings of messages. Reading strategies will help learners overcome language barriers, become more conscious of the language's comprehension and learning method, and develop confidence in learning reading (Al Raqqad, & Ismail, 2020).

Strategies are pliable and can be adapted to find the demands of the reading task (Al Roomy & Alhawsawi, 2019). Good readers use plenty of strategies to facilitate themselves make sense of the text (Tovani, 2000). Helping students be aware of and master diverse reading strategies allows them to be proficient and independent readers (Booth & Swartz, 2004). Reading strategies are mental games through which learners interact with printed resources in several manners. These strategies include planning, determining the reading's objective, choosing what to read before reading, monitoring of understanding during reading, and assessing the reading experience (Meniado, 2016).

Skimming and scanning.

Skimming and scanning strategies can be applied to enhance students' reading comprehension in English Language (Touriz, 2020; Ulmi et al., 2015). In skimming, learners only have to pick up the most essential information and the key idea rather than read the whole text (Sutz & Weverka, 2009). Readers frequently skim when they have plenty of materials to read, but the time is limited.

Scanning is a reading strategy that supports the reader in finding out detailed information (keywords, phrases, facts, evidence) while reading a great text or a full reading (Brown, 2001). Scanning aims to extract specific information without reading all the text's words (Yusuf et al., 2017). Nuttall (1996) claimed that scanning and skimming do not take away the need for careful reading, but these strategies allow the reader to select the parts of the text where it is essential to spend time.

Summarizing.

Summarizing is reducing a text-based on the main and supporting ideas by the reader (Özdemir, 2018; Wormeli, 2005). When summarizing, the student tries to identify and condense reading features to understand and rephrase the feelings, thoughts, and projects of another author. Barreiro (2019) stated that summarizing helps learners describe the meaning of information and keep it in long-term memory.

The summarization strategy consists of four steps: review the passage, assess the paragraph, respond with a rewording, and define a passage summary (Zafarania & Kabgani, 2014). Summarizing is an effective strategy for readers who have issues recalling and writing about what they have read.

Decoding and encoding.

Decoding and encoding strategies have a common basis, initiating with phonological consciousness and comprehension of phonemes. Decoding is the process of converting a visual sign into a sound and subsequently synthesizing it into words (Hendriksen & Hakvoort, 2010). Learners acquire decoding skills when they combine sounds and identify words. The encoding uses individual sounds to build and write words. The encoding includes instruction to create new words according to their phoneme and grapheme letters (Weiser & Mathes, 2019). When students explore new words, are interested in letters, and are aware of sounds, they can improve their reading skills.

Prior knowledge when reading.

Previous knowledge refers to all of the experiences' readers have had during their lives. When learners activate their prior knowledge, they link what they already know to what they are currently reading (Alfaki1 & Siddiek, 2013). Brown (2001) pointed out that the readers bring information, knowledge, feelings, and culture that is a representation to the printed word.

Previous knowledge contains evidence of the content and the structure of the text (Kelly, 2014). It is a students' background knowledge of the topic, vocabulary, and grammar of a text. According to Almutairi (2018), readers who have more prior knowledge make relationships between their background learning and the new text effortlessly. The more prior experience a reader has, the better the text will be comprehended (Schurer et al., 2020).

Methodology

The descriptive study uses the data collecting and analysis techniques to find the existing variables, regardless of causality or other hypotheses in the required results (Machado, 2011). The study worked using a mixed research method methodology. Mixed methods means that there are qualitative and quantitative data in the same research (Gunnell, 2016).

The data were collected and analyzed in qualitatively and quantitatively form in the research. The researcher used a reading survey to find the frequencies, percentages, averages, and other statistical analyses to determine relationships and real aspects from the institution. Qualitative research, however, is more holistic and usually involves a rich collection of data from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants, including their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes.

The current descriptive study was conducted by the researcher with the use of a specific instrument that included the operational descriptions of the variables to establish guidelines and procedures to follow. This section describes the design, participants, instruments, data analysis, and ethical issues of the study.

Design

A descriptive study refers to the type of investigation question, design, and data analysis that will be applied to a particular topic or event. This means that through the survey, the participants demonstrated their information, which was taken by applying specific questions to obtain participants' perspectives about reading and reading strategies in EFL. In this study, qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed methodically.

Research questions:

Do participants read in English?

Do they use reading strategies?

What are their perspectives towards reading?

What are their perspectives towards summarizing a reading in English?

Participants

The population of this study was fifty-two participants who are in first and in the third year of baccalaureate. They are students of a public high school in Playas city in Guayas province. According students mentioned in the survey, their current English level is low; seven of them are beginners, twenty-eight of them have a basic level, sixteen of them are intermediate, and one of them has an advanced English level, it is related to the Common European Framework of Reference, the students'. The participants are twenty-seven females and twenty-five males whose ages ranged from 14 to 20. Most of them are teenagers, and a few of them are young adults.

All the participants are Ecuadorian. Thirty-three of the students are catholic, fourteen of them are Christians, four of them are Jehovah's Witnesses, and one of them has no religion. The participants' ethnicity is "mestizo." The survey results showed that twenty-three students have low incomes, and twenty-nine of them are middle-class students. All of them speak Spanish at home. Not all the participants have internet in their own houses, but fortunately, they get their connection using the city hall connection or some relative's Wi-Fi when it has been required.

Instruments

To answer the research questions, the following instrument was applied:

Reading survey.

A reading survey (Appendix A) that was divided in three parts. The first part describes the participants' general characteristics, which included their age, gender, course, language, ethnic group, background, English level, access, and technology knowledge. The survey was in English and Spanish to avoid any misunderstandings. The second part, refers to reading and students, reading knowledge and strategies, and the third part asked for students' attitudes and perspectives towards reading and vocabulary.

The survey about reading was taken in Google Forms format, and the students answered it online. They received a link to complete this survey; it was sent by WhatsApp and Facebook. Additionally, the researcher applied to the Teams video platform's chat room to explain the study objective and purpose.

Ethical Considerations

The present descriptive study was implemented in a public institution in Playas. The participants were informed about the objectives of the reading survey (Appendix A). The researcher sent a letter to the authorities of the institution telling them about the descriptive study (Appendix B). Subsequently, the researcher received the consent letter (Appendix C) from the students' institution. The investigator prepared a document (Appendix D) for the students' parents to obtain their approval. The information of the participants was protected at all times. Their names and personal information do not appear anywhere. Instead of their names, codes to represent the information were assigned.

Data Analysis

The data analysis refers to collecting data from the reading survey. The results are displayed in a table with the means. A specific software and an excel data worksheet were developed with the students' answers to run descriptive statistics. The author implemented the instrument to get results for further analysis. The analysis was both qualitative and quantitative.

Results

The results of this descriptive study have been obtained through the survey data collection with the objective to answer the research questions showed in this section. The codes to interpret the results correctly were assigned in the next way: From 1 to 1.99 (To a great extent, *totalmente*), from 2 to 2.99 (Most of it, *en gran parte*), from 3 to 3.99 (Some, *algo*), from 4 to 4.99 (A little bit, *muy poco*), and finally from 5 to 5.99 (None, *nada - no*).

The research questions were: Do participants read in English? And do they use reading strategies?

As a general form, the results demonstrated that students were not adapted to read so much and most of them did it for necessity because it is mandatory for obtaining the required grade to overcome the school year. Moreover, the use of strategies help them to improve their comprehension.

According to the results, students can understand single phrases at a time, with a mean obtained of 2.58. It means that learners most of the times, have a clear comprehension of simple phrases. The results also demonstrated that the participants, most of times read, and observe punctuation pauses, with a mean of 2.65. With the same mean, learners

expressed that when they read, the punctuation helps them understand the text.

Additionally, results also showed that they can understand a long text by rereading it, with a mean 2.94. It demonstrated that the participants get the ideas, after reading the texts more than once.

In the other hand, the results demonstrated that some students can understand a long text with the first reading with a mean of 3.35, this means that the students' English level is diverse and previous knowledge differs considerable among learners. With the same mean was demonstrated the ability of scan in students. Besides, the outcomes also demonstrated that students in some cases, know the organization of the text. The score obtained was 3.39, which means that learners could have an idea about parts of speech to find in a text. Finally, for a clear understanding of the results, all the items are presented in the table below:

Table 1.

Survey results about reading and comprehension and strategies.

Items	N	Mean
I can understand a long, complex text.	52	3.12
I understand single phrases at a time.	52	2.58
I understand a long text with the first reading.	52	3.35
I understand a long text by rereading it.	52	2.94
I can Skim.	52	3.29
I can Scan.	52	3.35
I know the elements of a summary.	52	3.00
When I read I translate all the words.	52	3.06
I identify the type of texts I read.	52	3.29
I know the organization of the text.	52	3.39

I use my prior knowledge when I read.	52	3.02
I can classify words of a reading	52	3.00
When I read, I observe punctuation pauses.	52	2.65
When I read, the punctuation helps me understand the text.	52	2.65

The research questions number three and number four are designed to know the students’ perspectives about specific topics of the reading comprehension and strategies for summarizing texts. It is required to do a special process with a more detailed information to know how learners can express and manage their reading skills and strategies to apply them in real knowledge and learning context.

To obtain the results about the research question number three: What are students’ perspectives towards reading? The researcher had subdivided this RQ#3 in these two sub questions:

What are students’ perspectives when they see a passage in English?

Can students skim and scan? Explain the process.

The explanation of these sub questions are detailed in the next tables below:

Table 2

Results about students’ perspectives when they see a passage in English.

Answers	Frequency	Percent
<i>I see a reading in English and I feel anxious not to understand</i>	11	21%
<i>I get bored because I have to translate the words</i>	15	29%
<i>I do not read.</i>	9	17%

<i>I need to analyze the reading deeply more than once</i>	6	12%
<i>I do not feel anxious.</i>	11	21%
Total	52	100%

To answer this question, 21% of participants mentioned that they feel anxious for not understanding the text when they see a passage in English. However, the most significant percentage was the 29% obtained in the item that demonstrated that students get bored because they have to translate the words. One of the answers textually said, *"For me, it is very frustrating to translate every word to know about the text."* That means that the student wanted to do his/her task, but the lack of knowledge provokes some participants' anxiety.

Additionally, results demonstrated that 12% of the students need to analyze the reading deeply more than once to understand the texts. This means that students could understand ideas from passages, but it is necessary to do it more than once. One student responded: *"I have the possibility to understand the majority of the passage, but I need to read it more than once, or even in some cases more than twice."* A 21% of the participants answered they do not feel anxious, just they need to practice.

The second sub question is: Can students skim and scan? Explain the process. This is another question that also involves the research question number three. The explanation of this sub question is detailed in the table below:

Table 3

Results about if students can students skim and scan

Answers	Frequency	Percent
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<i>I can skim the text very well</i>	4	8%
<i>Skimming is difficult for me</i>	9	17%
<i>Skimming takes a lot of time for me.</i>	6	12%
<i>I can scan very well.</i>	10	19%
<i>I can scan because I know what I have to look for.</i>	13	25%
<i>I prefer scanning than skimming.</i>	8	15%
<i>I don't feel comfortable with these strategies</i>	2	4%
Total	52	100%

Results have demonstrated that the 59% of answers are in favor of the scanning strategy. From this result, the 19% mentioned that they scan very well. One student said: *“I appreciate this technique very much because it helps me to understand specific parts of the reading.” I know what I have to do. The work is exact.*” There is a 25% that mentioned that they applied the scanning because they know what to look for. One of their answer was: *“When I know what I have to look for, the reading process is more productive for my learning.”* A 15% of participants pointed out that the preferred scanning rather than skimming.

A 29% of participants expressed that skimming was harder for leaning than they expected, and a 4% also told that they did not feel comfortable working with these strategies. Conversely, an 8% of students expressed that they skimmed the texts very well. Some student said: *“When I like the texts to read, it is easier for me to find the ideas and concepts.”*

To obtain the results about the research question number four: What are their perspectives towards vocabulary? The researcher had subdivided this RQ#4 in these two specific items:

I feel my knowledge of vocabulary in English is...

I think learning vocabulary is complex... The explanation of these two items are detailed in the next tables below:

Table 4

Results about students' knowledge of English vocabulary.

Answers	Frequency	Percent
<i>The knowledge of my vocabulary in English is fluent and comprehensible.</i>	15	29%
<i>My vocabulary knowledge is limited to summarize.</i>	18	35%
<i>I have a reduced knowledge of English grammar, but I do my best when I summarize.</i>	11	21%
<i>I do not have any knowledge of English.</i>	8	15%
Total	52	100%

Results showed that a 15% of students do not have any English knowledge, so it is impossible to summarize any text. Some students manifested that their classes were boring and they were not interested into learn anything about the subject. Also, the participants' answers demonstrated that a 35% of them have a very limited knowledge of English vocabulary. This means that students have a reduced vocabulary and it is complicated for them to understand the texts and summarize the required task. Additionally, a 21% of them expressed that they have a reduced English knowledge, but they do their best. One of them said: *“Even though I do not have a fluent English knowledge, I do my best when it is*

required. Summarizing texts is interesting, but I need some more training.” In the other hand, there is a 29% of participants whose results expressed that their English knowledge is understandable and comprehensible.

The second item: I think learning vocabulary is complex... This is the other part that also involves the research question number four. The explanation of this item is detailed in the table below:

Table 5

Results about students' learning vocabulary perspectives.

Answers	Frequency	Percent
<i>Learning vocabulary is very complicated for me.</i>	11	21%
<i>Learning vocabulary is a hard task but possible to obtain.</i>	16	31%
<i>Learning vocabulary is impossible to learn at my age.</i>	8	15%
<i>It is necessary to have more training to learn vocabulary.</i>	17	33%
Total	52	100%

The results demonstrated that a 15% of the participants mentioned that the vocabulary is impossible to learn in their teenage ages. One student said: *“English is difficult to learn at my age, I think if I would have had the opportunity to learn it before, it would be better.”* A 21% also expressed that learning vocabulary is simply complicated for them. In the other hand, a 33% of results demonstrated that for learning vocabulary is necessary to develop an effective training. *“Reading interesting passages is highly*

beneficial for my learning.” mentioned one student. Finally, a 31% of the participants said that learning vocabulary is a hard to develop task but possible to get.

Discussion

The results of this descriptive study revealed students’ experience related to reading comprehension which is described in each question.

The first question: Do participants read in English? It demonstrates that the participants were not so much adapted to read. Students have to read because it is mandatory for them. In this way, students just fulfill the homework and tasks to complete their requirements, but without the opportunity to have real contact and interaction with the English language, so it is necessary to implement some effective strategies to create a real interaction between the reader and texts. Reading is dynamic and focuses on the interaction between the reader, the text, and the activity (Koda, 2007; Snow, 2002). When learners activate their prior knowledge, they link what they already know to what they are currently reading (Alfaki1 & Siddiek, 2013). Students also understood simple texts because they used their previous knowledge and related it with some words found in the passage. Reading is viewed as a phase in which the learner uses previous experience to create meaning (Al Raqqad & Ismail, 2020).

Students expressed that they observed punctuation pauses that helped them to understand texts better. Marliasari (2017, as cited in Perlaza, 2020) affirmed that the reading comprehension process initiates with the information within each paragraph and ends with what the individual gets from it. However, some students could not understand these types of codes, and it makes them impossible to analyze the texts according to their

reading steps. In a general view, the participants' reading comprehension needs to be improved; also, their abilities to comprehend a text require some training to develop this skill and English as a second language.

The second question: Do they use reading strategies? The results show that participants have a low English learning due to the poor use of reading strategies. Reading strategies will help learners overcome language barriers, and will allow learners to be more conscious of the language's comprehension and learning method developing confidence in the reading learning (Al Raqqad, & Ismail, 2020). Applying reading strategies in the learning students' process will help to conduct in a safer learning path. In his descriptive study on EFL learners' use of cognitive strategies in reading, Üstünbaş (2019) stated that the three global reading strategies were applied: guessing, scanning, and skimming, and findings showed that the strategy used in reading was related to being a good or bad reader rather than language proficiency. The study was conducted in Turkey, 30 students who were learning English in the language program of a state university.

In the results, it is also evident that the implementation of scanning and skimming made students to take longer periods because they were not adapted to use these strategies. Nuttall (1996) claimed that these strategies allow the reader to select the parts of the text where it is essential to spend time. Moreover, students recognized that they most of the time have to translate the majority or all the words, but these words were not memorized for learners. Barreiro (2019) stated that summarizing helps learners describe the meaning of information and keep it in long-term memory.

The third question: What are their perspectives towards reading? It was divided in two sub questions. The first was: What are students' perspectives when they see a passage

in English? And the second: Can students skim and scan? Results demonstrate that students' perspectives towards reading are not so good, but neither so bad. Most of the students get bored when they read. It happens due to the lack of training that they receive in their classes, so it provokes the problem that students who are learning the English language have issues using reading skills (Barr, 2006).

There is another part of the students who do not feel anxious and also need to have their time to understand the texts. It is comprehensible, and happens when the learner receives an effective training applying different effective strategies. The encoding uses individual sounds to build and write words. The encoding includes instruction to create new words according to their phoneme and grapheme letters (Weiser & Mathes, 2019). When students explore new words, are interested in letters, and are aware of sounds, they can improve their reading skills.

The second sub question refers about the use of skim and scan. Results demonstrated that students applied these strategies, but without the specific knowledge about how to use them. According to results displayed and what most of the students mentioned, they preferred to use scanning rather than skimming. Nuttall (1996) claimed that scanning and skimming do not take away the need for careful reading, but these strategies allow the reader to select the parts of the text where it is essential to spend time. In this descriptive study, students said that the use of the scanning helped them to look for specific facts, and valuable information to use in their learning. Scanning aims to extract specific information without reading all the text's words (Yusuf et al., 2017).

The fourth question: What are their perspectives towards vocabulary? It was divided in two items. The first was: I feel my knowledge of vocabulary in English is, and the second

was: I think learning vocabulary is complex. Students' results show that their English knowledge is diverse and it varies according to the necessities and the quantity of vocabulary which they have. Despite their vocabulary is limited, many of the students present good predisposition to learn. (Mediha & Enisa, 2014) stated that communication could not take place without having enough vocabulary. Thus, there is an imperative need to empower learners with strategies to increase their word knowledge.

There is a considerable 15% of participants who manifest that they do not have any knowledge about vocabulary; due to this, it is impossible to summarize texts. For this reason, these learners cannot have a clear idea about the different parts of speech to apply and use in the task. Parts of speech is one of the dimensions of vocabulary knowledge that allow readers to interpret the meaning of words written in sentences that form a text (Moreira, 2020). Students do not understand many words in context. It is that the translation is required many times. If students summarize they may retain some words as Barreiro (2019) stated that summarizing helps learners describe the meaning of information and keep it in long-term memory.

The second item asked if "I think learning vocabulary is complex." The results demonstrate that students' knowledge to learn vocabulary is very varied. The majority of the percentages show that vocabulary learning is complicated to obtain, inside this majority, there is a little part who commented that through an effective training, the learning could be reachable with an excellent efficacy to retain the information for a long term. Vocabulary plays a significant function in constructing learning in terms of figuring out the meaning of new words, retention in long-term memory, recalling, understanding, and production (Griva, et al., 2009, as cited in Cabanilla, 2019). To make learners better readers, and making them

comprehend texts, it is require to create a reading habit where some reading strategies could be implemented. It is also a priority to take advantages of their predisposition for the learning, applying their prior knowledge and have a clear purpose to improve.

Conclusions

This descriptive study focused on the reading challenges that learners face during their English activities. Previous studies have demonstrated that strategies are an essential part of the academic learning. It is necessary to adapt the new strategies to connect them to the innovative teaching and learning process. Additionally, there is an important percentage of students who are not adapted to read, this shows that learners are required to have an effective training and a good preparation to develop their reading skills and their language comprehension.

Students have some difficulties to read in English, they get easily bored and also feel anxious. In many cases, the lack of knowledge makes learners, perspectives about reading, farther to reach their academic goals. It is necessary to apply some specific lesson plans to help them to build and scaffold their skills effectively. Some strategies like skimming and scanning that are not used at all by the students will be useful options to make learners to orientate their learning objectives and possible improvement. In the current time, students cannot read faster and they have to translate all the passages of the activities.

The reading activities are supposed to be the most used activities in class, but unfortunately, according to the results, most students are not taking this advantage to learn as it is required. It is necessary that teachers implement authentic resources and materials to make learners feel motivated and attracted to develop their English skills.

Limitations

This investigation has had the biggest limitation possible; it is the COVID-19. The pandemic situation, that lives the country and the world, has changed the way of teaching and learning. Learners and teachers were not prepared to be adapted to the new educative online system, and it was noticeable that not all the students got the same learning opportunities. There was a misunderstanding at the beginning of the study, but it was overcome very fast. Other limitation found was that the students have not adapted to read and they neither have a clear motivation to read, it is why it is necessary to implement some attractive and effective reading strategies to develop their English learning related to the reading comprehension.

Recommendations.

It is recommendable to take into consideration this descriptive study as a reference to at the time to implement some reading strategies in low English level students. Also, the researcher must be sure all students have a total understanding of the questions presented in the survey. Besides this, it is essential that all parents get the complete information about the research that involves their children.

It is recommendable to foster reading skills and to implement good strategies to develop and reinforce students' English knowledge. This will make students be able to understand and comprehend the texts, with big possibilities to recognize parts of speech and summarize texts. Moreover, it is recommendable to design a specific plan to work with real contexts activities that allow students scaffold and increase their reading skills learning through the use effective strategies. To conclude, it could be recommendable to set these

types of descriptive studies as part of the curriculum in the academic year, by using different strategies to get positive solutions that motivate learners to give an opportunity to acquire the reading skills and comprehension.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Available upon request.

Appendix B

Letter for the School

Available upon request.

Appendix C

Carta de Aceptación de los Padres de Familia.

Available upon request.

Appendix D

Consent Letter from School

Available upon request.