



Cooperative Skimming and Scanning to Improve Reading Comprehension

Lilia Alexandra Lira García

Guide: Prof. María Rossana Ramírez Ávila, MSc.

Presented as Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Magíster en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros con Mención en la Enseñanza de Inglés. CES: RPC-SE-01-N°. 014-2020. Cohort 2018 - 2020. Author's email: lilia.lira@casagrande.edu.ec Guayaquil August 17, 2021

Cooperative Skimming and Scanning to Improve Reading Comprehension

In Ecuador, the reality of English as a foreign language (EFL) is shown in a study completed by Education First (EF) about the level and English competence of language speakers in the country in 2019. This new study has shown that while there is an implementation of the 2016 curriculum, which is supposed to improve EFL in the country and there is a raising importance of EFL around the country, the actual level of knowledge of English has declined in the last few years and is currently ranked 19 out of 19 in English language proficiency compared to other Latin American countries (2019, EF).

Research discusses English language teaching and learning, focusing primarily on the various factors that can aid and impede EFL and English language teaching (ELT) in public school classrooms in Ecuador. However, Acosta and Cajas (2018) explain how Ecuador attempts to make EFL a top priority in Ecuadorian education. Many professionals from different regions in the world who work and complete research in EFL classrooms, such as Noom-ura (2013), Gulnaz, Ahmad & Mandouh (2016), Paker and Karaagac (2015), Dakhiel (2014), and Hjalmarsson (2015) discuss various factors that affect English language learning in different levels of schooling beginning with young children up to teenagers. Many of these points that have been previously discussed can be compared to the factors as they play a role in the success or difficulties of EFL when it is considered part of the curriculum in public and private schools in Ecuador and around the world.

English language has four important skills that students have to master in the target language. Those skills are speaking, listening, writing and reading. It is important to recognize that speaking and writing are productive skills, and listening and reading belong to receptive skills. Without underestimated the four skills, it is important to mention that reading

is fundamental for comprehension (Fauzi, 2018). This research focused on cooperative skimming and scanning to improve reading comprehension.

Reading skill is one of the four competences that students must strive for in classes. Most of the time, this skill make students feel stress because they try to read, understand and translate word by word to clarify their reading. This way of reading makes the students' anxiety comes out because of the lack of vocabulary, fluency, and decoding. So, it is significant to admit that reading skill in any language is an intellectual demanding procedure, because of the additional aspects that are relevant to consider like: language competence, cultural backgrounds, and peer motivation among others (Sellers, 2000).

Reading comprehension, on the other hand, is the ability to understand what we are reading. Nevertheless, most EFL learners in the Educational system confront problems in reading comprehension of texts when reading. Conforming to this, understanding the meaning of the text can be a huge challenge, because the learners can be competent to understand each word and even sentences, but unsuccessfully they achieve the meaning of the entire text. (Kagan, 1986)

Beale (2013), Macleod (2013), and Brown (1994) mentioned student's lack of strategies for reading comprehension, and they can help them to overcome their difficulties with this skill.

The use of skimming and scanning for reading comprehension is a strategy to promote reading comprehension. Both skimming and scanning are useful when learners need to find answers from a large piece of text, especially when they do not have the time to read it or just because the information in the text is not relevant or useful for the purpose. (Nuttall 1996) sated that skimming means fast reading to get general idea of the text, is rapidly moving eyes to locate specific details and already know what want to look for. It means this will give an

overview or main points of the text. When skimming content, learners let their eyes run along the pages, choose what to read and find a general description of the material.

The use of skimming and scanning allows all members in the group, giving ideas and suggestions between peers, collaboration, exchanging ideas, making the reading comprehensible. Nevertheless, skimming and scanning have been subject to some international research studies, there are not enough studies carried out in the English Foreign Language Ecuadorian higher education context. This proposal is encouraged in the implementation of cooperative skimming and scanning, improving reading comprehension. Mambua (2020) stated that the performance of skimming and scanning techniques significantly improve the students' reading comprehension of grade- eleven the students of Negeri 1 Tana Toraja. The data gathered from the indicator of effectiveness show that the skimming and scanning techniques are effective in improving students reading comprehension.

As any approach, skimming and scanning needs time and practice to learn how to do this reading strategy, because it is very useful to find specific information without underestimated the comprehension while reading.

Literature Review

This study proposes to demonstrate that cooperative skimming and scanning strategy improve reading comprehension. This section provides the principal themes as skimming and scanning strategy innovation for EFL students, reading comprehension, cooperative learning and jigsaw.

Cooperative Learning

According to Johnson, Johnson and Smith (2014), cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups in which students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning; it is completely about student-centered learning. As Weimer (2002)

pointed out, the responsibility for learning naturally transfers to the student in a learner centered setting. Learner-centered methods of content allow students the opportunity to control their learning; students take responsibility for their learning by being actively involved in the learning process rather than simply passively receiving information from a lecture (Slunt & Giancarlo, 2004).

A dominant benefit of CL is that this strategy makes students 'performance increment each learner's level, (Kagan 1986). Also, intensifies students' self-esteem, enhancing learner's participation in the learning process (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). When students work cooperatively, the effort between peer students is altogether higher for all the participants Slavin, (1987). To put it more concretely, cooperative learning situation makes maximum use of cooperative activities in classroom; each member of the group finds relevant information while skimming and scanning a text which is beneficial for themselves as well as for the group members.

Furthermore, students help each other and construct a complementary supportive association and indeed, this makes all students obtain higher self-esteem (Webb 1982).

One of the methods of starting the type of speed for an academic assignment is to do a general skimming of the text before beginning to read it in detail. Beale (2013 cited in Abdurrahman 2014) wrote ideas on speed reading strategies such as "people who know how to read and scan are flexible readers".

Skimming.

Maxwell (1969) defined skimming as getting the main idea or gist of a selection quickly in a written text where the students develop powers of inference through systematic practice which encourages them to anticipate the content of a text. Similarly (Allen, 1997) pointed out that the skimming technique is a useful tool to help students extract from the text

key words that permit them to infer the general sense of a text, which lets them interpret a text faster and advance in the reading process.

Scanning.

With this technique, the students look for specific information within a text such as dates, names, and places, among others. According to Maxwell (1970), 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.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is not just a receptive process, it implies a complex process in which the readers identify basic information and are able to predict, to infer, to argue and to recognize the writers' points of view. According to Partnership (2005), reading comprehension is about understanding a text which is read through the process of constructing meaning from a text. Comprehension is a constructing process because it involves all elements of the reading process working together as a text is read to create a representation of the text in the reader's mind.

Jigsaw

Reading is a complex process that concerns not only the readers' ability to read a text but also their experience to comprehend it. It is essential for students because, by reading, the students will get much information and knowledge in their everyday life. (Ifrianti, S. 2013).

The teacher has many techniques to teach reading comprehension which encourage and motivate students in class; one of them is the jigsaw technique. As an active learning technique, the most important benefit of the jigsaw approach is that it could be integrated into several classroom activities so that learners do not have to read a full work or even segments from the same outcome.

Developed by Elliot Aronson (1971), the jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy where each student in small groups takes responsibility for one piece of the content, then teaches it to the other group members. Like the pieces for a jigsaw puzzle, students fit their work together to form a complete body of knowledge. It is essential not to overestimated things. It is better to do a few things at once than too many. In addition, it is adaptable to a wide variety of curricular settings, and teachers will find it helpful in several respects.

In cooperative learning, the jigsaw method is an amply technique because students have to work in small groups. Each member has to become an expert on a giant academic puzzle. Finally, each group member teaches their part of the puzzle, and the result is that every group learns all components part. Lai, C. Y., & Wu, C. C. (2006).

Among the essential outcomes in the jigsaw, the approach involves discovering processes in applying findings and contributes to the development of higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, as well as elements of argumentation and critical argumentation thinking.

Previous studies found that using the Jigsaw technique may also reduce test-taking anxiety. Improve student attendance, and promote active participation in learning, considering students are also required to share information with peers during group discussions (Maloof, 2004).

In addition to the advantages, the jigsaw approach has its limitations. Peer teaching as cooperative learning is learner-driven, so it may be disadvantageous for both shy students and dominant students prone to competition-based learning. Therefore, teachers must make sure that students with poor study skills do not present an inferior report to the jigsaw group. . (Kardaleska, 2013).

To avoid dominant and bright students becoming bored, they should be assigned roles such as leaders of the group, although this role should be assigned on a rotating basis.

However, the jigsaw approach allows time, space, and practice for the less articulate and less skillful students to learn the material and supplies an opportunity to make use of the more adept students as models regarding organizing and presenting their reports

With this proposal the researcher wants to answer the following research questions:

1. What are students' perspectives towards this innovation?
2. To what extent does the use of cooperative skimming and scanning improve reading comprehension?

Innovation

This innovation includes the introduction and practice of cooperative skimming and scanning. The objective is to improve reading comprehension of A2.1 level students. All the activities developed are explained step by step. The students will receive a form to scaffold these subskills in the text (see Appendix 1). A jigsaw technique (see Appendix 2) to improve vocabulary, it will be made first just by themselves, at the end of the activity the students will read their answers aloud, and compare their results with their peers.

The information is taken from the Modules Higher General Basic Information for 25 students in 10th grade. For the first week the researcher will make a brief explanation about what cooperative skimming and scanning is, and what is the right way to work with this strategy. The first week students will work with dictionaries, looking for the meaning for the unknown words, it is important for them to learn and increase their vocabulary for a better reading understanding.

All the activities in the lesson plan include reading aloud, jigsaw games, so, the students are going to work individually, in pairs or in small groups, depending of the activities and the times it is required. They have to read to find specific information, and find the main ideas of a text, searching the meanings for new words, make their own vocabulary and so on. At the end of the process, student will increase their reading comprehension, and

also will made of the reading a habit, because they will work with reading at least once a week.

Methodology

An action research was used in this study. According to Greenwood, D. & Levin, M. (1998) action research is a process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully, using the techniques of research. Qualitative and quantitative instruments were applied. The technique to collect qualitative data in this study was learning logs, and the quantitative technique to collect data was a pre and posttest.

Action research is particularly powerful for the researcher because it provides direct access to the area of investigation, which is of great importance for a researcher in a practical discipline (Coghlan, 2001).

Participants

The study will carry out in a rural area located in La Sequita – Montecristi. The ages of the students ranged from 14 to 15 years old. The study's sample is 25 students (15 males and 10 females) of 10th grade. Most of the students come from a low economic level, their families are very humble, but it is very important to highlight that most parents support the education of their children and feel grateful to see how the students advance with their academic studies. Despite their difficult economic factors, all the students have connections to virtual classes.

Data Collection and Analysis

The independent variable is cooperative skimming and scanning to improve reading comprehension as the dependent variable.

Instruments

Learning logs

To report the first research question: *What are students' perspectives towards this innovation?* Learning logs are going to be used to answer this question. The use of learning logs is a space for students record their thought, feelings and answers questions about what they are learning (see Appendix 4). The use of learning logs will encourage the participation of the students, clear evidence of what is understood and also enhance students self-confident.

To report the second research question: *To what extent does the use of cooperative skimming and scanning improve reading comprehension?* Skimming and scanning reading will be used at the beginning to measure the initial stage of reading and at the end of the innovation to be aware of the progress of the students in reading comprehension. Students will be encourage to read and finding specific information, key words, (scan) and also to identify the main ideas for the readings provides (skim).

Ethical Considerations

To carry out this study it is not going to be necessary to get written approval from the Principal of the institution Jorge Jeremy Cantos high school to carry out the present proposal, it is approved because it will be made in virtual classes. The students will feel excited to realize and learn this technique that is totally new for them. Ethical considerations such as authorization to take photographs, share screen, record the classes showing their faces, the approval of the parents for extra homework, the virtual assistance of the students as evidence of their performance during the process. All the students should participate in the entire process.

References

Acosta, H., & Cajas, D. (2018). Analysis of teaching resources used in EFL classes in selected Ecuadorian universities. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(1), 100- 109.

<https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v8i1.11469>

Beale, A. M. (2013). *Anne Arundal Community College*.

Brown, H. Douglas. (1994). Upper Saddle River, Prentice Hall Regents. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*.

Coghlan, D., & Casey, M. (2001). Action research from the inside: issues and challenges in doing action research in your own hospital. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 35(5), 674-682.

EF English Proficiency Index, Ecuador. (2020). Retrieved January 10, 2020 from <https://www.ef.com/wwen/epi/regions/latin-america/ecuador/>

Greenwood, D. J. & Levin, M. (1998). *Introduction to action research: Social research for social change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gulnaz, F., Ahmad, A., & Mandouh, S. Y. (2016). An Exploration of the demotivational Factors Affecting Teaching and Learning of English as a Foreign Language of EFL Learners in Gulf Countries. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(1), 17-32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2016.21.17-32>

Hjalmarsson, H. (2015). The effects of ICT on affective factors and teaching practices in the EFL and ESL classroom, 1-23. Retrieved July 20, 2019 from https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/38731/1/gupea_2077_38731_1.pdf

Hong, Ng Chiew. (2013). *Teaching of Skimming at Tertiary Level: Theoretical and Pedagogical Issues*. Published on International Journal of Bilingual & Multilingual Teachers of English. Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1-7. University of Bahrain.

Ifrianti, S. (2013). Increasing students' reading comprehension by using jigsaw technique. *English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris*, 5(1), 144-161.

<http://103.88.229.8/index.php/ENGEDU/article/view/539/392>

Johnson, R. T., and Johnson, D. W. *Cooperation and Competition Theory and Research*. Edina, Minn.: Interaction, 1989.

Kagan, S. *Cooperative Learning and Sociological Factors in Schooling*. In C. Cortes (ed.), *Beyond Language: Social and Cultural Factors in Schooling Language-Minority Students*.

Kardaleska, L. (2013). *the impact of jigsaw approach on reading comprehension in the esp classroom*. *Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, 1(1), 53-58.

Kintsch, W., & Rawson, K. A. (2005). *Comprehension*. In M. J. Snowling & C. Hulme (Eds.), *The science of reading: A handbook* (pp. 209-226). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Lai, C. Y., & Wu, C. C. (2006). Using handhelds in a Jigsaw cooperative learning environment. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 22(4), 284-297.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2006.00176.x>

Los Angeles: California State University Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center, 1986.

Macleod, M. (2013). *Types of Reading*.

Maloof J. (2004) *Using the jigsaw method of cooperative learning to teach from primary sources*. *Inventio* 6. Available at: <http://www.doit.gmu.edu/inventio/issue>.

Maxwell (1970) *Skimming and Scanning Improvement: The Needs, Assumptions And Knowledge Base Journal of Reading Behavior*, Vol. 5, No. 1 Retrieved April6th 2012, from: <http://jlr.sagepub.com/content/5/1/47.full.pdf>

Nuttall, C.1996. London: Heinemann Educational Books

Pfost, M., Dörfler, T., & Artelt, C. (2013). *Students' extracurricular reading behavior and the development of vocabulary and reading comprehension*. Learning and Individual Differences, 26, 89-102.

Retrieved from fis.ucalgary.ca/Brian/611/readingtype.html

Retrieved from www.aacc.ed/tutoring/file/skimming.pdf

Schmitt, N. (2000). *Vocabulary in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Simanjuntak, E. G. (1989). *Developing Reading Skill for EFL Students*. Jakarta: P2LPTK.

Slavin, R. E. *Cooperative Learning: Student Teams. (2nd ed.)*

Slunt, K. M., & Giancarlo, L. C. (2004). Student centered learning: A comparison of two different methods of instruction. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 81(7), 985-9

Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language.

Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1987.

Webb, N. M. *Group Composition, Group Interaction, and Achievement in Small Groups*. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1982, 74 (4), 475–484

Weimer, M. (2002). *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Appendix A

Design from Your Goals

Available upon request.

Appendix B

Pre-test/Post-test

Available upon request.

Appendix C

Learning Logs

Available upon request.