

**Fostering written and spoken expression in the EFL classroom: The role of comic strips in
acquiring the simple present and simple past**

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to the remarkable people who supported us along this academic process, guiding us and inspiring us to persevere.

To our God, Jehovah, for being our support, guide, and source of strength throughout this academic process. For showing us his loyal love and help when we needed it most. Thank you for being our Rock and imparting wisdom, understanding, and discernment in this academic achievement. Without his clear guidance, this achievement would not have been possible.

To our lovely parents, who constantly demonstrate their unconditional love and support to us. This achievement reflects their dedication and sacrifices to allow us to have a solid education.

Thank you for teaching us the value of hard work, responsibility, and commitment.

To our beloved students from Colegio El Divino Salvador, who, with their charismatic personalities, witty ideas, and dedicated spirit, strengthened our personal and professional skills and competencies, making our educational process more meaningful. Thank you for teaching, motivating, and inspiring us. Your questions, smiles, challenges, and achievements deeply shaped our vocation as educators.

Specialized Analytical Summary

Title	Fostering Written and Spoken Expression in the EFL Classroom: The Role of Comic Strips in Acquiring the Simple Present and Simple Past
Author(s)	Daniela Sofia Díaz Vanegas and Nailenn Meza Mendoza
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Keywords	English Foreign Language Teaching, Comic Strips, Written Expression, Spoken Expression, Contextualized Teaching Strategy.
Description	Applied Project
Sources	Primary Sources: Six (6) references. Secondary Sources: Twenty-four (24) references. Tertiary Sources: Eight (8) references.
Contents	<p>Este proyecto aplicado estudia la eficacia de las tiras cómicas como material didáctico para mejorar la expresión escrita y oral de estudiantes de 7.º y 8.º grado del Colegio El Divino Salvador (estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera). El objetivo fue mejorar las habilidades productivas de los estudiantes mediante el desarrollo de la fluidez oral, la coherencia textual y el uso de la gramática y el vocabulario, mediante la implementación de tiras cómicas alineadas con una estrategia de aprendizaje basado en tareas.</p> <p>Para lograrlo, el estudio empleó una metodología cualitativa de IAP y priorizó los datos recopilados a través de diarios de campo, planes de clase</p>

	<p>y trabajos escritos y orales de los estudiantes. Los datos se analizaron mediante un enfoque descriptivo-interpretativo para evaluar el progreso en la competencia comunicativa y la participación de los estudiantes. Según los hallazgos, las tiras cómicas contribuyeron significativamente al desarrollo de las habilidades productivas al mejorar el uso de la gramática, el enriquecimiento del vocabulario, la coherencia textual y la fluidez oral. Por lo tanto, el estudio concluye que las tiras cómicas promueven el aprendizaje centrado en el estudiante, fomentan la creatividad y fomentan la asunción de riesgos tanto en tareas orales como escritas.</p> <p>A la luz de estos resultados, las implicaciones sugieren que la implementación de tiras cómicas puede cerrar la brecha entre el conocimiento gramatical y la comunicación práctica en inglés como lengua extranjera, mejorando la confianza y la participación de los estudiantes. Por lo tanto, este estudio promueve la exploración de recursos creativos y de baja tecnología que enriquecen la enseñanza de idiomas y promueven el uso significativo del lenguaje en contextos extranjeros.</p>
<p>Research Line</p>	<p>This applied project is part of the ECEDU's line Pedagogía y Didácticas de las Lenguas and employs a qualitative research approach to explore and understand students' learning processes and responses to implementing comic strips as educational materials. Specifically, it is based on the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, which emphasizes collaboration, reflection, and continuous improvement within the</p>

	<p>classroom. The study prioritizes active engagement in planning, implementing, observing, and evaluating the intervention, considering the identified learning challenges and the proposed pedagogical solution.</p> <p>Data collection involved several sources: field diaries, which documented reflective observations and classroom experiences; lesson plans, which outlined the instructional design and pedagogical strategies; and students' work, which provided direct evidence of language use and progress. These sources were analyzed using a descriptive-interpretive qualitative approach to identify recurring themes, assess changes in student performance, and interpret the impact of the intervention on their communicative competence and understanding of grammar. This method enabled a thorough examination of students' behaviors, expressions, and outcomes, focusing on how they interacted with the content and activities designed to enhance their spoken and written English skills.</p>
Conclusions	<p>Implementing comic strips as visual and narrative materials supports the enhancement of written and spoken expression in EFL students. The study discovered that comic strips are effective teaching strategies for improving grammar and vocabulary use, textual coherence, and speaking fluency when addressing language functions. The didactic strategy implemented in the study enabled 7th-grade students to showcase progress in using the simple present tense for expressing routines and 8th-grade students to demonstrate improvement in narrating past experiences using the simple past tense.</p>

	<p>These outcomes indicate that comic strips aligned with student-centered methodologies can positively impact students' language proficiency since they facilitate the incorporation of students' life experiences into language tasks. Besides, comic strips were established as effective in addressing the application of grammar in real-life situations while fostering engagement and risk-taking in communication tasks, which are broader challenges in EFL contexts. In summary, the study demonstrated that comic strips are valuable materials for enhancing written and spoken expression in English language learning.</p>
Advisor	Professor Nelfy Rocio Hernandez Navarro

Abstract

Díaz, D & Meza, N. (2025). *Fostering Written and Spoken Expression in the EFL Classroom: The Role of Comic Strips in Acquiring the Simple Present and Simple Past*. Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con énfasis en Inglés. Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia.

This applied project studies the effectiveness of comic strips as teaching materials to enhance the written and spoken expression of 7th- and 8th-grade students from Colegio El Divino Salvador (EFL students). The purpose was to improve students' productive skills by addressing speaking fluency, textual coherence, and grammar and vocabulary use through the implementation of comic strips aligned with a task-based learning strategy.

To achieve this, the study employed a qualitative PAR methodology and prioritized data collected through field diaries, lesson plans, and students' written and spoken work. Data was analyzed using a descriptive-interpretive approach to assess progress in students' communicative competence and engagement. According to findings, comic strips significantly supported the enhancement of productive skills by improving grammar usage, vocabulary enrichment, textual coherence, and speaking fluency. Thus, the study concludes that comic strips promote student-centered learning, foster creativity, and encourage risk-taking in both oral and written tasks.

In light of these outcomes, the implications suggest that implementing comic strips enables students to transform grammatical knowledge into practical communication in EFL, while enhancing their confidence and engagement. Hence, this study supports the exploration of creative, low-tech resources that enrich language instruction and foster meaningful language.

Keywords: English Foreign Language Teaching, Comic Strips, Written Expression, Spoken Expression, Contextualized Teaching Strategy.

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Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction.....	15
Significance of the Study.....	16
Statement of the Problem	17
Objectives	19
General Objective.....	19
Specific Objectives.....	19
Literature Review.....	20
History of Language Teaching Methods	20
Task-based Learning.....	22
Language Teaching Strategies	24
Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Learning: Productive Skills	
Development.....	25
Developing Writing Skills	25
Developing Speaking Skills.....	26
The Significance of Grammar in Foreign Language Learning	27
An Affective Approach to Fostering Productive Skills Enhancement.....	28
Employing Comic Strips as Pedagogical and Didactic Instruments.....	30
Boosting Writing Skills through Narrative Texts	31
Improving Speaking Skills through Storytelling	32

	10
Regulation of Foreign Languages Education in Colombia	33
Methodology	34
Research Approach.....	34
Research Method	35
Population.....	36
Sample	36
Characteristics of Participants.....	36
Data Collection Tools.....	38
Lesson Plans (Didactic Sequences)	38
Evidence Of Students’ Work Developed During Class	38
Field Diaries.....	38
Data Analysis Approach.....	39
Phases of the Research Process	40
First Phase (February 8 th – February 21 st): Problem Diagnosis.....	40
Second Phase (February 22 nd – April 23 rd): Didactic Strategy Determination and Implementation	40
Third Phase (April 24 th – April 30 th): Data Analysis.....	41
Fourth Phase (May 1 st – May 15 th): Consolidation.....	42
Timeline and Resources	43
Results and Discussion	45
Results	45

Strengthening Oral Communication through Descriptions of Daily Routines in 7th Grade.....	45
Developing Written Narratives through Recounts of Past Experiences in 8th Grade	47
Discussion	49
Grammar and Vocabulary Development	50
Writing and Speaking Skills Enhancement.....	51
Conclusions and Recommendations	54
References.....	57
Appendixes	63

List of Tables

Table 1 <i>Timeline</i>	43
Table 2 <i>Resources</i>	44

List of Figures

	Page
Figure 1 <i>Daily Routine Script</i>	45
Figure 2 <i>Daily Routine Mimicry Game</i>	46
Figure 3 <i>Oral Presentation</i>	47
Figure 4 <i>Grammar and Vocabulary Implementation in Comic Strips</i>	48
Figure 5 <i>Coherence and Cohesion in Narrative Texts Drafts</i>	49

List of Appendixes

Appendix A <i>Didactic Sequence – 7th Grade</i>	63
Appendix B <i>Didactic Sequence – 8th Grade</i>	64
Appendix C <i>Data Analysis Matrix – Didactic Sequence Implementation in 7th Grade</i>	65
Appendix D <i>Data Analysis Matrix – Didactic Sequence Implementation in 8th Grade</i>	66

Introduction

In learning English as a foreign language, students face diverse challenges and hurdles that hinder their language acquisition and proficiency, which involves linguistic skills mastery (reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking). Regarding productive skills (writing and speaking), students counteract fundamental hindrances, such as cross-linguistic transference, the lack of opportunities to practice, and the anxiety and apprehension to communicate in a foreign language, which affects their understanding and usage of grammatical tenses and vocabulary and the improvement of their fluency and pronunciation. These and other hindrances have drawn attention to teaching strategies that positively impact teaching practices, aiming to make the learning process more dynamic and efficient.

Although comic strips are commonly perceived as entertainment pieces, they can serve a crucial role in foreign language teaching by enhancing students' productive skills. As comic strips provide students with opportunities to express themselves confidently in a foreign language and foster an interactive understanding of grammar rules, they are practical assists in addressing narrative and storytelling. This applied project, rooted in the principles of Task-Based Learning and the Humanistic Learning Approach, centers on using comic strips as a dynamic educational tool. The aim is to enhance students' spoken expression about their daily routines and to inspire them to write about their past personal experiences. By integrating visual aids with language practice, this project seeks to create an engaging and supportive learning environment that fosters creativity and self-expression. Targeting 7th- and 8th-grade students from Colegio El Divino Salvador, the research aims to determine how effective comic strips are as teaching materials in fostering communicative competence.

Significance of the Study

In language education, students face challenges in comprehending and utilizing a foreign language due to the difficulty of adapting to a new set of rules after learning their first language and the limited opportunities for practically applying their classroom knowledge (Al Faruq and Nurhalimah, 2019). Consequently, foreign language teachers devote significant time to discovering methodologies and strategies to enhance and enrich the language learning experience. For example, teachers employ authentic resources (magazines, films, music, among others), digital platforms that facilitate interactive practice, or creative paper-based materials to enrich their lessons, boost students' motivation, and encourage participation.

Nowadays, paper-based comic strips have gained teachers' attention due to their unique ability to blend illustrations with text (Maldonado et al., 2020). As educational tools, comic strips have the potential to engage students in creatively exploring and expressing their ideas and experiences, thus providing more opportunities for meaningful language use. Additionally, they can promote a positive learning environment where cooperation and the sharing of insights and experiences take precedence over the immediate need for perfect grammar mastery. This approach encourages students to engage more enthusiastically in speaking and writing tasks without the pressure of expecting flawless results from the outset.

Thus, this research project is centered on determining the effectiveness of comic strips as a teaching strategy to enhance the written and spoken usage of the simple present and past tenses of 7th- and 8th-grade students from Colegio El Divino Salvador, considering the significant difficulties these students face in appropriating these grammar structures. In this sense, the activities planned for the development of this research will serve as a pedagogical solution to the discovered learning difficulties, and the data collected will be implemented as a source of

information for formative purposes. Therefore, developing this research project will result in professional growth that will directly influence the interest in searching for effective strategies and materials to enhance language learning processes.

Statement of the Problem

Colegio El Divino Salvador is a private institution located in Cartagena, Colombia, serving 245 students from middle-class families who can access private education. The school benefits from technological resources such as smart TVs and Wi-Fi, which support dynamic lessons. However, limited laptop availability and restrictions on smartphone use mean that technology is primarily utilized for whole-class activities rather than individual tasks.

While students are respectful, engaged, motivated, and contribute to a collaborative learning environment, teaching English as a foreign language at Colegio El Divino Salvador has presented considerable challenges, especially for 7th and 8th-grade students. Learners often struggle to set aside the grammar rules of their first language, which can impede their mastery of a foreign language. Besides, the school textbook activities, lacking engagement and realistic scenarios, further complicate the development of linguistic skills and make it difficult for students to invest effort into learning English.

Seventh-grade students face difficulties with vocabulary related to daily routines. They often repeat the same action verbs and struggle to express their thoughts spontaneously. On the other hand, eighth-grade students encounter challenges when discussing their past personal experiences. They often find it hard to form affirmative and negative sentences and frequently confuse the rules, resulting in limited familiarity with regular and irregular verbs.

To address these obstacles, this research project proposes the implementation of comic strips as a teaching strategy. Comic strips provide a dynamic and engaging alternative for

students to practice speaking and writing, aiming to transform the learning experience into a more enjoyable and effective process. Specifically, the project seeks to improve their appropriation of the simple present and simple past tenses alongside relevant vocabulary for daily routines and past experiences. Thus, the guiding research question focuses on how implementing comic strips about daily routines and past experiences can foster the written and spoken expression through the use of the simple present and simple past among 7th- and 8th-grade students at Colegio El Divino Salvador.

Objectives

General Objective

To analyze the role of comic strips in fostering written and spoken expression through the use of the simple present and simple past among 7th- and 8th-grade students at Colegio El Divino Salvador

Specific Objectives

To design comic strips as visual instruments for storytelling to enhance students' communicative competence, focusing on vocabulary and grammar usage in the context of daily routines and past experiences.

To foster spontaneity and fluency in the oral use of vocabulary and grammar related to daily routines by employing storytelling strategies in 7th grade at Colegio El Divino Salvador.

To develop textual coherence in writing by scripting narrative texts about personal experiences using the simple past tense in the 8th grade from Colegio El Divino Salvador.

Literature Review

This research project is centered on discussing the effectiveness of implementing comic strips to enhance students' writing and speaking skills interactively, considering students have had diverse difficulties appropriating the simple present and past tense. Indeed, this research aims to answer how implementing comic strips about daily routines and past experiences can foster the written and spoken expression through the use of the simple present and simple past among 7th- and 8th-grade students at Colegio El Divino Salvador. In that sense, it has been appropriate to define the topics that address essential aspects of the identified teaching-learning issue and support the proposed strategy.

History of Language Teaching Methods

Language learning has long been valued for its essential role in communication and social interaction, prompting researchers to seek methods that unite communities through shared languages. A major focus for scholars has been teaching methods, which significantly affect language instruction's effectiveness. As language learning needs have evolved, various methodologies have emerged, classified as traditional or modern, highlighting their differing views on language acquisition and the resources and activities they emphasize.

Historically, formal language teaching has been influenced by the belief that learning a new language enables access to knowledge unavailable in one's first language. It is exemplified by the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), which emphasized grammar rules and vocabulary memorization to support translation, believed to enhance intellectual growth (Sharma, Manjari, and Joshi, 2024, p. 23). However, GTM primarily developed reading and writing skills, overlooking essential communicative competencies like listening and speaking.

This limitation led to the popularity of the Direct Method and the Audio-Lingual Method, both of which emphasized oral communication and minimized grammar instruction. The Direct Method focused on immersive activities for spontaneous communication (Djauhar, 2021, pp. 86-87), while the Audio-Lingual Method aimed at improving productive skills and pronunciation through memorization and repetition (Djauhar, 2021, pp. 86-87).

In subsequent years, new methods such as Project-Based Learning (PBL), Task-Based Learning (TBL), and the Total Physical Response Method (TPR) emerged. PBL and TBL focused on allowing students to engage in meaningful activities with the language, helping them develop linguistic skills, acquire knowledge, and complete significant tasks—from small to large scales (Sharma, Manjari, and Joshi, 2024, p. 25). Meanwhile, TPR aimed to teach young children vocabulary by providing oral instructions that prompted physical responses (Sharma, Manjari, and Joshi, 2024, p. 25). Nowadays, many teachers incorporate these traditional methods, adapting specific activities to meet students' needs and the context in which they teach.

However, the demands of 21st-century society have shaped language teaching and fostered the emergence of modern methods, particularly through the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Consequently, innovative methodologies have been developed to enhance the efficacy of English language teaching (Üstünbaş & İpek, 2021, p. 988).

Among these modern methods is Game-Based Learning (GBL). This language teaching method aims to provide EFL learners with access to contemporary science, information, and communication within motivating and didactic learning environments. GBL significantly contributes to the process of acquiring a foreign language, as "it can help language learners enhance their motivation and communication abilities while [playing] and learning a language

[...] encouraging them to participate in class through a competitive environment" (Ismaizam et al., 2022, p. 1210).

Currently, the shift in technology and internet usage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic transformed information access and interaction, prompting a significant change in English teaching and leading to an emphasis on communication skills, collaborative learning, and technological integration (Üstünbaş & İpek, 2021). As a result, several methods have emerged in response to these developments, including "computer-assisted language learning (CALL), blended learning (BL), flipped classrooms (FC), online learning, and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL)" (Üstünbaş & İpek, 2021, p.989).

In contrast to traditional methods, these contemporary approaches empower students to assume an active role in learning, engage with their peers, and enhance their communication skills. Furthermore, teachers transition into facilitators, encouraging critical thinking and autonomy while creating safe and supportive learning environments that cater to students' needs and preferences (Marsevani et al., 2024).

Task-based Learning

Although Task-based Learning (TBL) is considered a traditional teaching methodology that involves tasks to stimulate language acquisition, its implementation has evolved into modern times because of its effectiveness in promoting contextualized language learning. (Sholeh et al., 2021, p. 136). This approach promotes meaningful learning experiences by engaging students in practical, task-based activities that enable them to develop language proficiency and acquire transversal skills that extend beyond the scope of language learning (Sholeh et al., 2021, pp. 137-138).

As Task-based Learning prioritizes student-centered teaching, it enables teachers to plan and involve students in contextualized tasks that address language components while tackling their preferences, needs, and experiences, providing students with more opportunities to take the lead and engage in the learning process (Sholeh et al., 2021, pp. 137-138). In this sense, TBL can significantly impact the English foreign language classroom by bringing more dynamism and collaboration, ensuring that teacher-student interactions are meaningful and lead to significant outcomes.

Implementing the Task-based Learning approach requires teachers to consider the following three crucial phases: pre-task, during-task, and post-task (Sholeh et al., 2021, pp. 138-141). The pre-task phase involves preparation activities that should be completed before starting the main task. The during-task phase focuses on implementing the task's primary activities. Finally, the post-task phase emphasizes analyzing the activities completed during the task and evaluating students' performance.

A practical manner to build Task-based Learning lessons is the implementation of comic strip-based tasks since these multimodal materials engage students in purpose-driven language use and promote linguistic development through real-world communicative tasks (Vita et al., 2023, pp. 127-129). For instance, students might be asked to create comic strips about their daily routine or past experiences, which requires them to brainstorm ideas (pre-task), build coherent narratives using appropriate grammar and vocabulary (during-task), and share or reflect on their work (post-task).

Hence, the TBL approach enables students to apply language in creative and contextualized ways, reinforcing the relationship between form and function while motivating them to engage in both written and oral communication in the target language (Sholeh et al.,

2021). As illustrated in the example above, creating comic strips about daily routines and past experiences allows EFL students to practice the simple present and simple past tenses through meaningful application. In this way, students progressively develop fluency and accuracy as they communicate within a natural, context-rich linguistic environment, demonstrating how TBL tasks can foster both linguistic and communicative competence when supported by visual and narrative resources, such as comic strips (Sholeh et al., 2021).

Language Teaching Strategies

Language teaching strategies are the integration of varied didactic instruments, materials, or activities that serve instructional purposes even when they were not especially generated for education matters. Some examples of interactive instruments, materials, and activities are games (Hangman, Hot potato, or imitation games), digital games, role-play activities, songs, movies, cartoons, and comic strips, among others (Maldonado et al., 2020, pp. 35-37).

Although language learning strategies could be primarily associated with increasing learners' motivation, they can effectively promote significant learning experiences and improve language acquisition due to their potential to stimulate learners' active participation and engagement in classroom activities. It has been the case of diverse researchers whose main objective was to implement specific didactic instruments to increase learners' motivation but ended up achieving significant learning outcomes (Córdoba-Baldrich and Maturana, 2022; Maldonado et al., 2020).

It is fundamental for teachers to analyze their teaching contexts to identify opportunities to implement physical or digital didactic instruments, materials, and activities that can make their teaching practices more effective and appealing. Likewise, it is crucial to recognize learners'

learning styles to know which strategies are more suitable and adequate to implement to enable learners to achieve the expected learning results.

Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Learning: Productive Skills

Development

The need to acquire communicative competence has increased in recent years due to the demands of today's world. Globalization requires English learners to have a quality level of accuracy and fluency to be prepared to succeed in today's society (Malavika, 2021). Moreover, communicative competence allows people to establish social relationships, discover new cultures, and reach personal goals, whether academic or professional, since it consists of understanding the language system to comprehend every single piece of information we receive and transmit our thoughts using words and sounds (Dwika-Herdiawan, 2020). Thus, achieving this fundamental language learning competence requires mastering writing and speaking skills.

Communicating appropriately in English can enrich students' learning process and equip them with the "necessary language skills and cultural understanding to succeed in this new globalized society" (Pascalau et al., 2023, p. 151). However, to succeed in this objective, teachers must understand how learners acquire a language, identify the most effective classroom activities for facilitating this learning, and clearly define their own roles as well as the roles of the students in the classroom. Considering "students' pragmatic knowledge, [teachers will] enable them to convey the information or messages appropriately" (Dwika-Herdiawan, 2020, p.49).

Developing Writing Skills

Writing is considered an active-productive ability to convey messages —ideas, beliefs, or thoughts— employing a language-defined set of symbols —letters— (Harmer, 2001, as cited in

Sa'adah, 2020, p. 22). Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation are four essential elements of writing, which are crucial to building well-organized and comprehensible written productions (Chicho, 2022, pp. 28-29).

Acquiring writing skills in a foreign language can be significantly influenced by the output learners receive from reading or audio materials since they contain clear language examples (Chicho, 2022, pp. 30-31). However, its development is primarily influenced by practice, considering the most effective way to learn how to write is by writing. In this sense, teachers should not only offer students meaningful pieces of literature to draw upon but also provide opportunities for them to produce written work that aligns with their age and abilities (Chicho, 2022). Thus, students can apply and refine their knowledge (spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation).

A fundamental factor in developing writing and other linguistic skills is cross-linguistic transference. This phenomenon involves the influence of one's first language (L1) on the acquisition of a foreign language (L2) (Chaves, 2020, pp. 65-66). This transference can be beneficial when L1 facilitates the understanding or use of L2, such as when learners grasp similar grammar points between the two languages. On the other hand, it can be detrimental when it hinders the language learning process, for instance, by leading learners to assign incorrect meanings to L2 words based on similar L1 vocabulary (Chaves, 2020, pp. 65-66).

Developing Speaking Skills

Developing speaking skills in the language learning process is essential for student success. Mastering this skill equips them with the fundamental competencies for effective communication across various life situations, including academic, professional, and social environments. However, students often face difficulties in developing their speaking skills,

particularly in contexts where it is considered a foreign language. Therefore, teachers need to adopt effective strategies that promote the development of these skills and, consequently, improve students' communicative competence (Malavika, 2020).

Teachers must be interested in capturing students' attention and motivating them to speak. In this sense, the teacher's role is essential in the students' speaking skills acquisitions. He must “have the ability to create speaking materials tailored to their students' needs, interests, and proficiency levels” (Bertoli et al, 2025, p. 492). One productive approach to developing speaking skills is to include oral activities about real-life situations in the classroom regularly. This practice allows students to imitate the teacher, enhance their pronunciation and gradually helping them to overcome their fear of speaking in English. Additionally, role play, storytelling, acting, and sharing personal experiences are practical strategies for achieving this objective (Bertoli et al, 2025, p. 492).

On the other hand, vocabulary and grammar acquisition are essential for speaking skills development as they help students communicate fluently. Thus, to boost these skills, some strategies and techniques, such as roleplays, memory activities, and affective techniques, are fundamental since by “interacting with others to fix their speech [students] create mental processes, utilize imagery and music [...], and combine sounds and pictures in their brains to generate a graphical representation of the latest word, which [establish] a positive learning surrounding” (Alsaraireh, 2022, p. 376-377).

The Significance of Grammar in Foreign Language Learning

Despite the ongoing advances in language teaching methods and the current understanding of language acquisition, grammar remains a vital aspect of language learning. As a concept, grammar is an organized rules system formed by diverse structures that indicate how

language must be used to convey comprehensible messages (Ghafar and Sawalmeh, 2024, pp. 13-14). Simply put, it is “the way a language manipulates and combines words (bits of words) so as to express certain kinds of meaning, some of which cannot be conveyed adequately by vocabulary alone” (Ur, 2009, p. 3, as cited in Bhatt, 2020, p. 15).

Grammar is a significant component of language, along with vocabulary, since it is required to convey and receive messages, which means that it is fundamental to develop the currently recognized five linguistic skills —reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking— (Ghafar and Sawalmeh, 2024, pp. 14-15; Al Faruq and Nurhalimah, 2019). Thus, it would be nearly impossible to progress in language acquisition without understanding grammar since it provides individuals with the necessary resources and confidence to effectively understand oral or written language and communicate in verbal or written manners (Bhatt, 2020, p. 162; Ghafar and Sawalmeh, 2024, pp. 14-15).

Learning the grammar rules of a foreign language can be challenging and tedious due to the different grammatical systems of each language. Indeed, the difficulty of learning grammar is related to the differences between the first and foreign language patterns, the variety of verbal tenses in a language, and the narrow or wide differences between some language grammar rules (Chaves, 2020). Moreover, teachers’ practices play a key role in grammar appropriation since learning results greatly depend on the approaches they implement, whether they involve isolated language examples or prioritize meaningful scenarios (Ghafar and Sawalmeh, 2024, p. 15).

An Affective Approach to Fostering Productive Skills Enhancement

In language acquisition, affective factors have been a crucial matter of interest due to their powerful influence on language learning processes. Particularly, the Affective Filter Hypothesis established that motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety are emotional variables that

significantly affect a learner's ability to acquire a new language. According to Krashen (1982), students have optimal conditions for language acquisition when their affective filter is lower, i.e., they are 1) highly motivated, 2) confident about their abilities, and 3) experiencing low anxiety levels (p. 31). Conversely, a high affective filter appears when students undergo anxiety, demotivation, and fear of failure, which negatively affects language processing and acquisition (Krashen, 1982, p. 31).

The Affective Filter Hypothesis emphasizes that input must be comprehensible as well as engaging to "[create] a situation that encourages a low filter" and enable acquisition to occur (Krashen, 1982, p. 32). In this sense, a low affective filter allows more input to be processed and acquired, while a high filter blocks it, regardless of the quality or amount of instruction. Therefore, creating a favorable emotional climate in the classroom is as crucial as providing accurate linguistic content.

In the English Foreign Language context, students often experience high levels of anxiety in English classes due to the lack of exposure, limited speaking opportunities, and fear of making mistakes, which reduces their enthusiasm to conduct productive tasks like writing or speaking (Krashen, 1982, pp. 33-34). Thus, to lower these affective barriers, it becomes essential to implement teaching strategies and materials that foster enjoyment, creativity, and emotional safety to contribute to the three optimal conditions to be met (motivation, confidence, and low anxiety).

In this regard, incorporating multimodal materials, especially those that blend text with visual and narrative elements, can be particularly effective in lowering affective barriers in EFL contexts. Among these, comic strips stand out as pedagogical resources that, through their

engaging and interactive nature, can enhance students' confidence, promote engagement, and reduce anxiety.

Employing Comic Strips as Pedagogical and Didactic Instruments

Comic strips are a type of literature structured by a series of drawings and sentences or short texts; they follow a logical order to tell a story and present appealing illustrations that exemplify or expand text (Vita et al., 2023, p. 128). In Colombia, comic strips are a popular entertainment material usually presented in newspapers, which implies learners are aware of its basic structure and purposes (Maldonado et al., 2020). In line with the Affective Filter Hypothesis, comic strips have the potential to improve “students’ motivation and creative abilities and promote a creative learning process [since they are appealing, readable, popular, and genre-varied]” (Wijaya et al., 2021, p. 231).

Comic strips are an example of didactic instruments or multimodal materials that can be employed as language teaching strategies since teachers can utilize them to address the acquisition of linguistic skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking) or the learning of vocabulary and grammar tenses (Wijaya et al., 2021, pp. 231-232; Munir et al., 2023). For instance, teachers could present comic strips with incomplete sentences or short texts for learners to fill in the blanks with verbs that better describe the action illustrated by drawings (Wijaya et al., 2021, p. 238).

Although comic strips can be effective in presenting language examples to language learners, they can “help students generate their ideas and become a medium to develop and practice their target language, i.e., [students could design visual-written productions that can serve as speech aids]” (Wijaya et al., 2021, p. 231). Hence, students can engage in planning,

structuring, revising, and completing their comic strips while enhancing their language skills (Maldonado et al., 2020).

Boosting Writing Skills through Narrative Texts

Narrative texts focus on narrating or describing experiences or events, i.e., they tell a story (Sa'adah, 2020, p. 31; Reading Rockets, 2024). In narrative writing, stories can be fictional or nonfictional, which provides writers with opportunities to share a great variety of information (Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2020, p. 42). Fictional and nonfictional narrative texts require creativity from narrators since “how you tell a story ensures the effect you wish to have on your readers” (Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2020, p. 42).

The pattern narrative texts follow can be summarized in the following five segments: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution (Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2020, p. 45). Thus, it is fundamental for narrative texts to describe events following a logical sequence to ensure the ideas are effectively conveyed (Sa'adah, 2020, p. 31; Reading Rockets, 2024). Moreover, narrators must be aware that the information they share should be focused on a central topic, guaranteeing the progression or sequence of events is connected and comprehensible.

Therefore, it is crucial to note that narrative texts require coherence [consistency of ideas] and cohesion [unity of elements of the text] since they ask narrators for a great organization of ideas, proper use of grammar, and implementation of connectors, among other factors that provide texts with meaning and logic (Chicho, 2022, pp. 29-30). Hence, narrative texts are properly built when narrators logically present their ideas, use appropriate grammar structures, and implement connectors to join ideas.

Considering the discussed information, narrative texts can be determined as a powerful tool for enhancing writing skills because they require writers to develop and organize ideas clearly, creatively, and coherently, which are abilities that can be practical for writing other types of texts (Sa'adah, 2020). Besides, narrative texts' structure reinforces the importance of sequencing and supports the development of logical reasoning in written communication, enabling the students to learn how to link ideas, maintain tense consistency, and select vocabulary that enhances clarity (Chicho, 2022).

Improving Speaking Skills through Storytelling

Storytelling is a pedagogical strategy in language teaching that "works on language skills in a fun, engaging and contextualized manner, raising learners' interest in listening to stories, as well as in speaking," and allowing the communicative competence development (Siavichay & Guamán, 2021. p. 107). According to Siavichay & Guamán (2021), "stories boost students' linguistic and cultural diversity, allowing teachers to learn about their students' civilizations, experiences, and important interactions [...] and encourages active participation, imagination, creativity, cooperation, and verbal proficiency" (p. 110).

Furthermore, by offering a variety of stories, such as "comics, urban legends, fairy tales, own life experiences, and dreams," teachers can motivate students to speak using their preferred type of stories (Siavichay & Guamán 2021, p. 108). Indeed, story implementation allows students to learn vocabulary and grammar structures because " often introduce new words and expressions in useful context [and] present different tenses and sentence structure" (Bertoli et al, 2025, p. 493).

Thus, students can expand their vocabulary and learn how to use the grammar points explained in textbooks by implementing storytelling since they use it in contexts. Besides, the

implementation of ICT to create storytelling enriches "the exposition or delivery of stories through visual and auditory aids to motivate and engage students in EFL/ESL learning" (Siavichay & Guamán 2021, pp. 109-111).

Regulation of Foreign Languages Education in Colombia

To provide relevant and integral education in line with the demands of the new globalized era, the Colombian government has dedicated significant resources to enhancing foreign language education, specifically English as a foreign language. The Ministerio de Educación Nacional, as the primary authority, has designed and published several guiding tools, including the Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés, los Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje, and el Currículo Sugerido de Inglés. These resources aim to promote the development of communicative competencies that align with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (MEN, 2006; MEN, 2016).

These guides are based on important legislation, such as Ley 115 de 1994 (General Education Law) and Ley 1651 de 2013 (Law of Bilingualism). The focus is on training individuals who can effectively integrate into a global society where interaction in a foreign language is essential (Ley General de Educación, Article 5, 1994; Ley de Bilingüismo, 2013).

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological foundation of the applied project, providing a comprehensive overview of the qualitative approach, the participatory action research method, and the data collection tools and approaches employed. Additionally, it details the participants involved in the project and the phases during which it was conducted.

Research Approach

Qualitative research is an approach that focuses on “understanding [...] the way things are, why they are that way, and how the participants in the context perceive them” (Mahato, 2022, p. 10; Pathak, Jena, and Kalra, 2013). In that sense, qualitative research pursues a deep comprehension of significant issues (observations and the documentary and textual analysis of written records), which essentially requires meticulous and detailed exploration, reflection, analysis, and description of aspects involved in a subject (Pathak, Jena, and Kalra, 2013). As Lankshear and Knobel (2004) explained:

Qualitative [research] makes relatively little use of statistical forms of analysis and refuses to restrict data collection to the use of highly structured, replicable, and standardized instruments within decontextualized settings [since] qualitative researchers place much importance on data being gathered in natural or real-life settings as the ‘action’ happens— for instance, in playgrounds, classrooms, at a work area out on the school veranda, in communities and the like (p. 68).

Considering qualitative research focuses on the study of individuals and events in the environment, the researcher collects the data "using observational techniques, [...] to provide careful descriptions of learners' activities without excessively manipulating the events in which the learners are engaged" since the purpose of qualitative research is to analyze the interactions

between people and their circumstances in different settings (Almeida, Rosero, Chiluiza, and Castillo, 2021, pp. 102-103).

This applied project aims to assess the effectiveness of comic strips as teaching materials for fostering communicative competence. A qualitative approach is appropriate for this purpose. The descriptive nature of qualitative research will help provide accurate and unbiased insights into the use of comic strips in foreign language learning, serving as a reliable resource for evaluating their efficiency (Almeida, Rosero, Chiluiza, and Castillo, 2021).

Research Method

Participatory Action Research is a research method that centers on taking part in a specific setting to comprehend, reflect on, analyze, and explain the issues or matters presented in its processes, looking for strategies to counteract their negative effects and ensure an adequate development of its procedures (Ozanne and Saatcioglu, 2008; Mahato, 2022). As Reason and Bradbury (2008) state, Participatory Action Research (PAR) is “a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes” (p. 1, as cited in Ozanne and Saatcioglu, 2008, p. 2).

As it is a democratic process, the researcher-participant relationship is based on collaboration. In this sense, they both work as a team to construct the knowledge that will generate the transformation (Perez & Nieto, 1993). Therefore, researchers do not act as outside observers; instead, they are integrated into the situation to be investigated and consider participants' knowledge (Restrepo, 2004).

In an educational context, Participatory Action Research (PAR) contributes to understanding the teaching process of a defined institution to enhance learning results by implementing methodologies and strategies that suit learners' needs and characteristics. As this

applied project aims to answer how implementing comic strips about daily routines and past experiences can foster the written and spoken expression through the use of the simple present and simple past, it is appropriate to implement an involving method as PAR.

Population

The population of this study consists of 144 secondary students enrolled at Colegio El Divino Salvador during the 2024-1 academic year. These students are recognized for being receptive, active, and respectful learners, demonstrating a willingness to participate in class activities. Their English language proficiency ranges from basic (A1) to intermediate (B2), depending on their grade level. As English is taught as a foreign language in the curriculum, students primarily develop their receptive skills through classroom-based activities. While the mastery of productive skills is also addressed, the decontextualized nature of classroom activities and the lack of opportunities for meaningful practice limit the development of their speaking and writing skills.

Sample

The sample for this study includes two deliberately selected groups: 7th and 8th-grade students, each consisting of 25 students, for a total of 50 participants. The 7th-grade class includes 12 boys and 13 girls, while the 8th-grade class comprises 14 boys and 11 girls. These groups were purposefully chosen due to the specific challenges they are experiencing in relation to English language learning, which align with the study's focus on improving productive skills (speaking and writing) and grammar understanding through interactive methods. Their selection was based on their teachers' observations and academic performance throughout the year.

Characteristics of Participants

The participants in this study share the following characteristics:

- **Age Range:** Students are between 11 and 14 years old.
- **English Proficiency:** The first academic term assessment marks demonstrated that, on average, the students have an A2 level of English proficiency.
- **Engagement:** While generally active and participative in class, many students are prone to distraction, which affects their sustained engagement in certain tasks.
- **Learning Needs:**
 - 7th-grade students struggle with spoken production, particularly using the simple present tense and vocabulary related to daily routines. These gaps limit their ability to express themselves spontaneously and fluently during conversations.
 - 8th-grade students face challenges in comprehending and using the simple past tense, especially after focusing primarily on present tenses in the prior academic year. They also show low motivation toward reading and writing tasks, possibly due to a lack of interactive and dynamic learning experiences.

These learning difficulties have resulted in limited progress in both groups, as students' skills have remained largely at the same level as at the beginning of the academic year. For this reason, the study aims to introduce comic strips as a pedagogical strategy to enhance their written and spoken expression related to everyday situations and personal experiences. It is expected that this creative approach will foster motivation, improve grammar understanding, and develop communicative competence.

Data Collection Tools

Lesson Plans (Didactic Sequences)

Lesson plans will be implemented to gather information, allowing us to compare planning with what occurred during class. Lesson plans will serve as a reference for assessing the alignment between the implemented procedures and the original intentions. These observations will clarify the reasons behind any adjustments and demonstrate how these modifications contributed to developing more effective classroom activities, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes.

Evidence Of Students' Work Developed During Class

The comic strip drafts and the final comic strips will be instruments to collect information concerning students' improvements (grammar implementation, vocabulary, coherence, cohesion, etc.). The interpretation of this information will result in the central data to support the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of implementing comic strips to enhance students' written expression about everyday situations and personal experiences, which involves implementing present and past tense structures.

Besides, the oral presentation of comic strips will be a source of information to determine the impact of this strategy on students' advancements (fluency, spontaneity, intonation, pronunciation, etc.). The interpretation of students' performance during the oral presentation will serve as crucial information to evaluate the helpfulness of comic strips as visual aids to support the implementation of grammar structures in spoken manners.

Field Diaries

Field diaries will be employed to collect information regarding the classes in which the strategy is implemented to document the dynamics within the classroom during the research

project, enabling the determination of the effectiveness of planning (didactic sequences). Most entries in the field diaries will consist of indirect observations, as it is challenging to guide students while taking notes. However, specific events that provide critical insights into the research will be recorded as direct observations, ensuring an accurate portrayal of what transpired (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 175).

Data Analysis Approach

The data analysis method that will be used is the Descriptive-Interpretive Qualitative Research, which is an approach that centers on “coming to a descriptive-interpretive understanding of experiences and observations by carefully representing their meaning [and] organizing these understandings into clusters of similar experiences and observations, [such as categories]” (Elliott and Timulak, 2021, p. 5).

Thus, this approach will be implemented to reflect on and analyze the description of the observed teaching-learning experiences collected in the field diaries to interpret how the proposed language teaching strategies impacted students learning, including significant details interpreted from the adjustments made to lesson plans and the perceived improvements in students’ work —the comic strip drafts and the final comic strips— (Maldonado et al., 2020, pp. 45-47).

This applied project will utilize data analysis matrices to facilitate a thorough interpretation of the information collected from each tool. These matrices will contribute to understanding the data more comprehensively by highlighting how each tool offers unique insights that address the research question and fulfill the study objectives.

Phases of the Research Process

First Phase (February 8th – February 21st): Problem Diagnosis

While reflecting on diverse aspects of the language teaching processes carried out at Colegio El Divino Salvador during previous academic terms, it was possible to determine specific areas of improvement in foreign language teaching strategies. The exploration contributed to identifying a shortcoming in addressing productive skills, reflecting on students' grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and textual coherence mastery. Thus, the research question that emerged from the reflection is how implementing comic strips about daily routines and past experiences can enhance the written and spoken expression of 7th- and 8th-grade students from Colegio El Divino Salvador.

Second Phase (February 22nd – April 23rd): Didactic Strategy Determination and Implementation

By analyzing the theoretical background, it was determined that the Task-based Learning approach would fit properly with the implementation of comic strips as instructional materials for language teaching. In this sense, two task-based didactic sequences were developed to enhance the productive skills of 7th and 8th-grade students. Based on their characteristics and needs, it was established that comic strips should be used in slightly different manners to address writing and speaking skills separately.

On one hand, it was determined that comic strips could be integrated with the storytelling strategy as visual aids to support confident and spontaneous spoken expression about everyday situations, promoting fluent and effortless vocabulary usage. On the other hand, it was settled that creating handmade comic strips about personal experiences could improve students' textual

coherence while facilitating the practical application of past-tense grammatical structures and vocabulary.

Consequently, the two didactic sequences were designed to outline the steps that 7th and 8th-grade students should follow to create comic strips based on everyday situations and personal experiences. These sequences were carefully tailored to address the specific learning needs of each group, align with the grade-level grammatical focus, and develop the targeted productive skills, speaking for 7th grade and writing for 8th grade (see Annexes A and B to read the didactic sequences).

The implementation phase took place from March 12th to April 23rd, during which students were progressively introduced to the activity, supported in the design of their comic strips, guided through preparation for oral presentations, and assessed during their final expositions

Third Phase (April 24th – April 30th): Data Analysis

Field diaries served as the primary source of information for documenting the processes involved in implementing the didactic sequences. The data collected from these diaries provided robust evidence regarding the significance of the strategy and its impact on enhancing students' productive skills. This facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the elements related to the research question. Furthermore, evidence of students' work was employed to evaluate the improvements they made throughout the proposed activities, considering both their narrative texts or scripts and their performance during oral presentations. To carry out an in-depth analysis, data analysis matrices were employed to present and interpret the data collected through lesson plans, field diaries, and students' work (see Annexes C and D for the data analysis matrices used to compare the collected data).

Fourth Phase (May 1st – May 15th): Consolidation

Through the collection of evidence and analysis of data, we were able to assess the project's outcomes and evaluate the extent to which the proposed objectives of the research study were met. Additionally, the research process was meticulously documented in a logical and organized format, ensuring a clear and comprehensible report for future researchers interested in similar language teaching strategies.

Timeline and Resources

Table 1

Timeline

Activity / Time	2024			2025	
	February	March	April	May	June
Defining the research topic and subject.	X				
Proposing research questions.	X				
Defining the research's general and specific objectives.	X				
Developing literature review.		X			
Defining the research methodology, approach, and data collection tools.		X			
Conducting the research project's planned activities.			X		
Implementing the data collection tools.			X		
Analyzing the collected data to present the results, discussion, and conclusions.			X		
Defining the hypotheses of the research.			X		
Determining the title of the research project.			X		
Condensing the research into a document.				X	X

Note. This chart displays the schedule that was implemented to complete the project activities.

Table 2*Resources*

Type of resource	Description	Budget
Human resources	Teachers in training and Seventh- and Eighth-grade students from Colegio El Divino Salvador.	\$ 0.00
Equipment and software	Laptops, monitors, Canva, and YouTube.	\$ 0.00
Infrastructural resources	Classrooms, desks, chairs, among others.	\$ 0.00
Materials and supplies	Cardboard, pencils, colored pencils, rulers, markers, dictionaries, and candies raffle bag.	\$ 25.000
References	Free-access articles, research, and books.	\$ 0.00

Note. This chart displays the resources employed to carry out the project and the budget implied.

Results and Discussion

Results

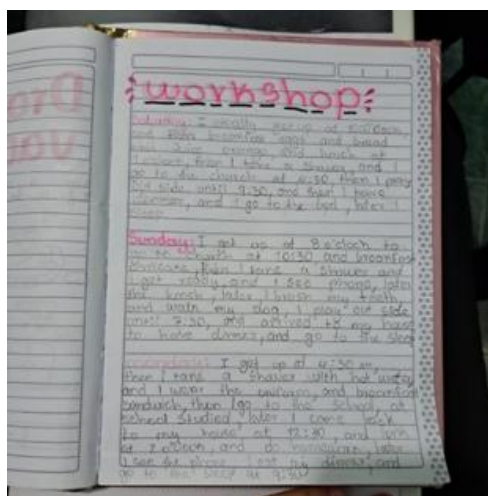
This section reports the outcomes of the didactic sequences implemented with 7th- and 8th-grade students at Colegio El Divino Salvador. The findings are organized by the language functions addressed in each group, emphasizing the development of specific productive skills.

Strengthening Oral Communication through Descriptions of Daily Routines in 7th Grade

The data analysis evidenced that using comic strips articulated with storytelling about daily routines led to improvements in grammar usage and vocabulary acquisition among 7th-grade students. Students demonstrated significant progress in constructing affirmative sentences in the simple present tense, particularly in sentence structure, which follows the pattern: noun + base verb + complement. This improvement was noted in students' scripts about their daily routines and the oral narration, which showcased coherent speech. However, difficulties were observed in correctly applying grammatical rules related to the third person singular (he, she, it).

Figure 1

Daily Routine Script



Note. The image features a script written by a student that outlines her daily routine, highlighting her schedule and personal habits.

In terms of vocabulary, the spontaneous and continuous creation of stories and mimicry games about routine contributed to expanding students' vocabulary, not only about daily routines and verbs in the present but also about other topics immersed in the learning of the simple present, such as adverbs of frequency, prepositions of time, the time, and linking words.

Figure 2

Daily Routine Mimicry Game



Note. The image illustrates students creating a spontaneous daily routine story using mimicry.

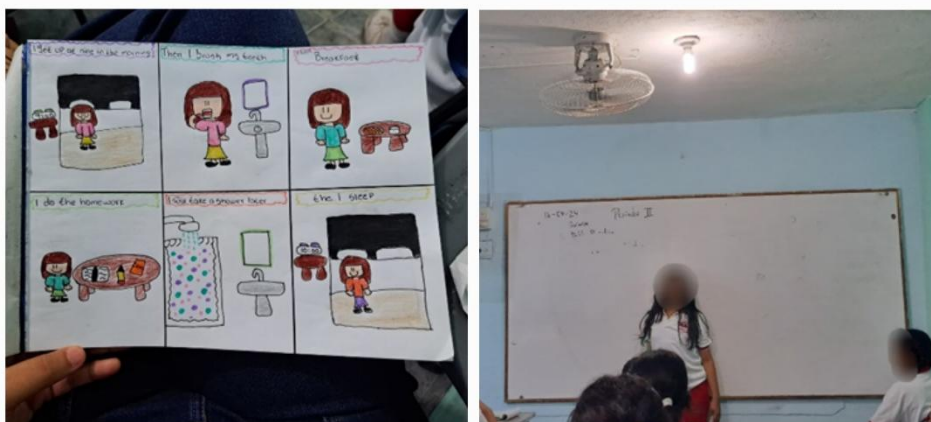
Regarding fluency and motivation, creating personal and others' routine stories had varying effects. On the one hand, all 25 students felt motivated to participate in creating spontaneous stories. They expressed their ideas, used varied vocabulary, and applied the learned grammar, demonstrating effective verb conjugation based on the subject and maintaining appropriate grammatical structures. On the other hand, when they created and shared stories about their routines, some students felt insecure about using the present simple tense. Since these stories were based on their realities, they tended to rely on familiar vocabulary. As a result, out of the 25 students, three chose not to participate.

Although the students' confidence varied depending on the types of stories they created, it is clear that comic strips played a significant role in enhancing their creativity. While using

comic strips as visual aids for their oral expression of routines, all 25 students felt confident in sharing their stories and delivering well-organized presentations.

Figure 3

Oral Presentation



Note. The image illustrates the use of comic strips as effective visual aids during oral presentations about daily routine.

Finally, participation data showed that 21 out of 25 students engaged actively in all stages of the English project and demonstrated significant progress in their speaking skills. The remaining 4 students participated partially and showed limited progress.

Developing Written Narratives through Recounts of Past Experiences in 8th Grade

The meticulous analysis of students' comic strips revealed noteworthy improvement in their usage of simple past-tense grammar. It was discovered most students accurately structured affirmative and negative sentences using the expected forms (noun + past verb + complement for affirmatives and noun + auxiliary "did not" + base verb + complement for negatives). Similarly, it was noted that some students appropriately incorporated the past continuous tense to describe progressive actions despite the grammar point not being part of the instructional focus.

Moreover, in terms of vocabulary, students expanded their expressions beyond the provided keywords to incorporate additional verbs, aiming to communicate with more details and accuracy. Some action verbs students incorporated are keep, roll, text, chat, trip, hold, throw up, strike, cross, and arrive. Although students showcased independence in vocabulary development and expansion, a few required teacher assistance to ensure correct usage.

Figure 4

Grammar and Vocabulary Implementation in Comic Strips



Note. The images illustrate the correct application of the simple past and past continuous tenses, as well as the enhancement of students' vocabulary.

Furthermore, significant progress was documented in the areas of coherence and cohesion within students' writing. The narrative texts produced by the students demonstrated a clear and logical sequence, enabling readers to follow the narrative smoothly and engage with their experiences. By focusing on a singular experience, students immersed readers into their journeys and fostered a deep emotional engagement.

Besides, to enhance the organization of their narrative text draft, some students effectively utilized commonly used connectors such as and, also, when, then, and after. These linguistic tools not only linked events seamlessly but also helped to create a more fluid reading

language functions and contextualized tasks —such as describing daily routines in the present simple tense and narrating past experiences in the simple past tense— showed notable improvements in grammar use, vocabulary development, fluency, textual coherence, spontaneity, and learner motivation.

Grammar and Vocabulary Development

Foremost, the research findings suggest that comic strips contribute to students' grammar understanding, appropriation, and implementation since their development provides students with meaningful opportunities to practice language usage. In fact, 7th- and 8th-grade students from Colegio El Divino Salvador progressed significantly in using the simple present and simple past structures. This progress enabled them to incorporate more complex grammar tenses and expressions into their spoken and written narration, enhancing their ability to articulate their ideas accurately. As learners encountered and produced language in emotionally safe, visually supported tasks, their affective filters were lowered, enabling them to internalize and use grammatical structures with greater ease (Krashen, 1982).

Furthermore, the implementation of comic strips as pedagogical materials revealed their remarkable potential for facilitating vocabulary acquisition, considering 7th- and 8th-grade students exhibited an increased enthusiasm for incorporating diverse action verbs, adjectives, and prepositions into their narratives. As discussed by Davis (2006), comic strips can support students in familiarizing themselves with the vocabulary they employ since illustrations and texts or speech complement each other (as cited in Vita et al., 2023, p. 130). Hence, it is feasible to conclude the engaging format of comic strips can inspire more creative use of language, fostering an enriched writing style and more expressive oral communication.

Particularly, 7th-grade students demonstrated substantial progress in their understanding of grammar rules for expressing daily routines, specifically in the affirmative forms of the present simple tense. Comic strips integrated into storytelling principles improved students' sentence structuring (noun + verb base + complement) and increased their vocabulary on daily activities, adverbs of frequency, prepositions of time, and linking words. This event supports previous research by Bertoli et al. (2025) and Siavichay & Guamán (2021), which highlights that this strategy can foster grammar acquisition and enrich vocabulary by presenting new words and expressions in relevant contexts and encouraging creativity and imagination. Although there has been progress in mastering grammar, some students still struggle to apply third-person singular rules accurately, which makes it somewhat rugged to narrate other people's daily routines.

Similarly, 8th-grade students progressed meaningfully in implementing grammar rules for narrating past experiences, which especially involved the affirmative and negative forms of the simple past tense. Thus, Wijaya et al. (2021) research regarding the influence of comic strips in language learning can be confirmed, considering they served as a means for students to practice and improve their language usage (p. 231). Indeed, the design of multimodal literature enabled students to achieve a more competent level of command in basic grammatical usage (Munir et al., 2023, p. 449). Nonetheless, it is crucial to continuously engage students in meaningful practice, allowing them to become acquainted with verbs that are unfamiliar to them.

Writing and Speaking Skills Enhancement

Concerning writing skills, it was observed that the sequential structure of comic strips encouraged students to craft narrative texts with the clear intention of conveying a captivating story coherently and logically. In this sense, 8th-grade students put significant effort into planning before scripting their narrative texts, which enabled them to create engaging and well-

organized narratives and facilitated a smooth flow of ideas. This finding supports Sa'adah's (2020) perspective that writing is a process involving planning, drafting, reviewing, and editing to ensure quality and effective communication of ideas (p. 22).

Moreover, comic strips' narrative style enabled students to write more thoughtfully and logically, which significantly improved their coherence and cohesion. Chicho (2022) emphasized that coherence and cohesion are crucial factors in writing skills since they require information to be presented logically and sequentially, allowing readers to perceive the harmony and unity of ideas (p. 30). As the results indicated, 8th-grade students displayed textual coherence in their writing by effectively using diverse connectors to link sentences in their narrative texts. Similarly, they expressed interest in discovering new connectors that enhanced the readability and comprehensibility of their paragraphs.

Regarding speaking skills, the strategies employed provided seventh-grade students with several opportunities to express themselves confidently in a foreign language. Students created both spontaneous and well-prepared daily routine stories, which helped foster their creativity, verbal fluency, and cognitive sequence. Thus, even though there was a noticeable preference for expressing others' routines rather than their own, students presented appropriate oral performance within a low-anxiety environment and a coherent sequence due to the effective use of comic strips as visual aids.

Ultimately, this research supports the notion that integrating narrative tasks into the EFL classroom promotes writing accuracy and speaking fluency. Indeed, implementing multimodal materials in supportive and emotionally safe classroom environments contributes to developing productive skills. These materials encourage students to engage in writing and speaking tasks, allowing them to share their life experiences rather than simply practicing language structures. In

this sense, by targeting relevant language functions from a student-centered focus and allowing room for creativity in context-driven tasks, the implementation of comic strips as pedagogical materials offers students an engaging way to practice grammar, enhance vocabulary, develop textual coherence, and build confidence in expressing themselves in English.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research study has established that implementing comic strips as visual and narrative materials for written and spoken expression can significantly support the development of productive skills in students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). This assertion is supported by the tangible effectiveness of utilizing these multimodal materials to address language functions related to daily routines and past experiences among 7th- and 8th-grade students at Colegio El Divino Salvador, considering their contributions to grammar usage, vocabulary enrichment, writing coherence, and speaking fluency.

The didactic strategy developed and applied in the research process effectively aligned with the objectives aimed at enhancing written and spoken expression through comic strips about daily routines and past experiences. On the one hand, 7th-grade students showcased notable progress in applying the simple present tense in authentic communicative contexts, such as constructing sentences like “I wake up at six and help my mother prepare breakfast” or “She plays soccer every afternoon.” These examples illustrate how students moved beyond isolated drills to fluently describe their own routines using accurate structures. On the other hand, 8th-grade students strengthened their ability to narrate past experiences coherently, producing sentences such as “Last weekend, I visited my grandmother and cooked with her” or “We played football at the park and then watched a movie.” Here, learners demonstrated their mastery of the simple past tense by integrating a range of verbs and linking words to recount personal events meaningfully.

These achievements demonstrate that comic strips are not merely supplementary resources but essential instructional materials that support student-centered methodologies. By combining visual scaffolds with narrative sequencing, they allowed students to bridge the gap

between grammatical knowledge and practical communication, using grammar not as an end in itself but as a tool for expressing personal meaning. Therefore, it can be concluded that incorporating students' life experiences into English tasks positively impacts their language proficiency while also promoting engagement and ownership of learning.

This discovery is fundamental because it not only emphasizes the significance of this research study but also offers a broader perspective on the use of comic strips as instructional materials, considering their effectiveness in tackling challenges faced by teachers and students in EFL contexts nationally and internationally. These challenges include the difficulty of transferring grammatical knowledge into real-life communicative situations. As demonstrated, comic strips provide EFL learners with the opportunity to creatively use language to express and explore their life experiences. This approach fosters student engagement, encourages spontaneous expression, promotes a positive learning environment, and stimulates risk-taking in both written and oral tasks.

Overall, the study's outcomes indicate that using comic strips while considering students' emotional needs and linguistic objectives is effective in addressing language learning challenges. This approach fosters a more inclusive and motivating classroom environment, enabling students to confidently and creatively share their ideas without the pressure of achieving immediate linguistic perfection. Maintaining low affective filters is crucial not only for language development but also for enhancing learners' sense of autonomy and voice in a foreign language.

Therefore, it is recommended to continue exploring efficient ways in which comic strips can connect language form and language use, reinforcing the value of incorporating creative, low-tech materials that are both accessible and impactful, especially in contexts where students benefit from visual support and structured narration. In this sense, future research might explore

the long-term impacts of comic strip-based instruction across diverse EFL contexts. While designing personalized lesson plans tailored to various language functions and students' proficiency levels is suggested, the didactic sequences presented here can be implemented or adapted in other EFL classrooms. In doing so, teachers can refine their practices to foster linguistic competence while encouraging confidence, creativity, and meaningful communication in the EFL classroom.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Didactic Sequence – 7th Grade

https://unadvirtualedu-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/nmezam_unadvirtual_edu_co/EcWQWmMP-UJLqaPZZUaw1yUB4Zfi8hrlgv57VySxdUnHGQ?e=1LOvBk

Appendix B

Didactic Sequence – 8th Grade

https://unadvirtualedu-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/nmezam_unadvirtual_edu_co/EW9fP-nBDEdImZ3fGG_N2aABzCLJ4qwPuyZFItQBPjsYsQ?e=uuW4K3

Appendix C

Data Analysis Matrix – Didactic Sequence Implementation in 7th Grade

<https://unadvirtualedu->

[my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/nmezam_unadvirtual_edu_co/EYFnOZICuFpIlnUOcUPnPuk](https://unadvirtualedu-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/nmezam_unadvirtual_edu_co/EYFnOZICuFpIlnUOcUPnPuk)

[B4XfLOlarI-ZmnI59FZJLww?e=TozMXw](https://unadvirtualedu-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/nmezam_unadvirtual_edu_co/EYFnOZICuFpIlnUOcUPnPuk/B4XfLOlarI-ZmnI59FZJLww?e=TozMXw)

Appendix D

Data Analysis Matrix – Didactic Sequence Implementation in 8th Grade

https://unadvirtualedu-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/nmezam_unadvirtual_edu_co/EZd5-5EcvhJJkxLXtthT9XsBd1Zfhs2C-K0bzeQqQ4Cjtw?e=r0Nh6P