

READ ALOUD: A CLASSROOM STRATEGY TO DEVELOP  
READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH AS A  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE SECOND GRADERS  
AT LICEO DEL VALLE, PALMIRA,  
VALLE DEL CAUCA

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## ABSTRACT

This research project observed the effects of using Read Aloud exercises in a Second-Grade Classroom, as a strategy to develop English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading comprehension. The pre-reading strategies, during reading strategies, and after-reading strategies that complemented the study, included predicting; visualizing; inferring; making connections; and summarizing. Using a qualitative model of data collection, the researcher proposed to give support for the reading aloud strategy to develop reading comprehension skill. The study was carried out at the facilities of “Liceo del Valle”, an educative institution in Palmira, Valle del Cauca, with eight second-grade children from seven to eight years old. The first part of this work reviews different theories and former research related to reading aloud, reading comprehension, and teaching and reading strategies. Other important literature refers to the practical effect of classroom reading on the learning achievement of primary school children. The second part deals with the methodological processes and classroom activities designed to develop reading comprehension. Observation instruments intended to record advances, behaviors, and performances, are included in this section, along with a comparative achievement chart of general performance comprehension vs. strategies at the end of the study. There is also a general conclusion on the observed results, in addition to references and Annexes.

Keywords: Read Aloud, Reading Comprehension, Learning and Teaching Strategies, Learning Theories.

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*Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding* (Proverbs 23:23. New American Standard Bible).

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Going back to the University in my fifties, and then to the English Pedagogical Practice, working with elementary school children, posed a challenge which seemed impossible to overcome. One day I found myself in front of a group of small children who appeared to know no more than a few words in the English language. Everything was new for me: classrooms, teaching, standards, curriculums, lesson plans, and classes. My young learners were full of energy and seemed interested in doing a lot of things at the same time, rather than learning a second language. I wondered how I was going to engage them in English learning. After a careful review of available literature on teaching English, I found the reading skill an interesting topic to study. Sometimes, during my English classes, I used to apply the reading aloud strategy and the obtained results were satisfactory. The final decision came alone, when recalling the motivation and engagement I had observed in those spare opportunities of short interesting story reading.

Duhnn (2013) states that all young language learning children understand more of what they can express through words; to acquire a language, children need to understand what they hear. If they recognize the occurring situations and can give a language meaning, it is not necessary for them to understand the whole context. Galda & Cullinam (1991), quoting other authors, affirm that reading aloud provides opportunities for children to hear fluent reading. It

develops children vocabulary, and provides students with models and ideas for their own writing and storytelling. Furthermore, children enhance their storehouse of experiences. They also state that read-aloud time is probably the most memorable experience for young children in school. I do believe that these reminiscences, related to reading aloud at early ages, last forever. As a mother of five, I have seen how the reading seed, sown in the lives of my own children, have produced its long-lasting fruits. Currently, I keep thinking in the same way, that now it is the time to plant again in the lives of my students. Magic dreams, colorful places, wonder animals, and a lifelong knowledge of English as a Foreign Language, is possible through the classroom reading aloud strategy.

I will start with a careful review of theories and authors' work related to the research topic, to guide the evolution of, and support the observations and driven conclusion. In a second section, the project presents the pre-reading, during reading, and after-reading strategies and classroom activities designed to develop reading comprehension. Data collection follow a qualitative model, with questionnaires, interviews, and in site observation instruments, used to record behaviors, advances, performances, and achievements. These, in addition to comparative information charts on knowledge, achievements, and difficulties, will help me to observe how reading aloud strategy is useful to develop the reading comprehension skill in second graders. At the end, the document affords a general conclusion on the obtained results, in addition to references and Annexes.

### **Significance of the Study**

Teaching English as a Second Language to young children may look like a burdened project. In the author's perspective and experience, this viewpoint changed a short time after, while gaining practice as a language teacher. This research project observed the effects of using

read aloud exercises in a second-grade classroom, as a strategy to develop English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading comprehension. During reading sessions, children learned to identify alphabet, words, and simple reading topics. They came to be familiar with printed stories, written texts, and children's books. Classes changed from tiresome and demanding, to a pleasant time where teacher and children shared laughs, questions, and learning funny times. The achieved abilities represent a foundation for students' lifelong reading skill, and written language comprehension. I hope that some educational institutions --which by the Colombian Ministry of Education are officially required to teach their students a foreign language-- would find this study's experience, as an effective tool to integrate and implement within their Language curriculum. The first institution to be profited is the one where the study was executed. Another group that will gain from the results obtained in this study is that of educators. English as a second language, ESL, and EFL primary school teachers, particularly, will find practical and proven information. This work will encourage them to develop reading comprehension strategies, and apply them in classroom environments. In this research, guided, individual, and group, reading aloud, demonstrated to be useful in engaging and motivating students in short story readings; reading comprehension; and, therefore, in the learning process. This is just a first step that would motivate other researchers, committed to the educational practice, to continue deeper studies on the topic, and improve the strategies applied in this work. The impact of this study may reach educational institutions, educators, young students, and even parents. Because of this study, and the strategies used to develop reading comprehension, reading will become a pleasurable skill to be enjoyed.

### **Statement of the Problem**

English Language learning and improvement of communicative competence levels has

become significant to communication in most of the countries all over the world. It increases the possibilities of social mobility and more egalitarian conditions for the integral development of communities. In consequence, general and overall dynamics of academic, cultural, and economic, fields consider English as an essential skill with a range of opportunities for English-speaking people.

The Colombian Ministry of Education Department recognized the importance of English as a foreign language when implemented the National Bilingual Program. This initiative targets “to have citizens who are capable of communicating in English, to insert the country within processes of universal communication, within the global economy and cultural openness, through the adopting of internationally comparable standards” (MEN, 2006). The expectation is to integrate the country into a level of capability, in accordance with the universal communication processes of a global economy and cultural openness. The accomplishment of these goals includes English proficiency standards; competence assessment for students, teachers, graduates of undergraduate programs and languages; teaching training programs, in both language and methodology; and incorporation of media and new technologies for English teaching and learning. Article 21 of the General Education Act (Act 115, 1994) provides that educational institutions are required to teach their students a foreign language. Consequently, the Ministry of Education has determined the competence standards for the teaching of English, which would regulate the instructional processes for primary and secondary education grades. Despite the invested efforts, diverse obstacles account for a low scoring on English language proficiency, in a considerable population of Colombian students. One important and generalized issue relates with reading skill. During school learning phase, students do not have enough classroom reading practices to allow fluency achievement, adequate level of reading ability, and

reading comprehension. Normally, students tend to perceive English language goals difficult to accomplish. In my experience as a new English language teacher for primary students in a small school in Palmira city, I have noticed that despite learning strategies; didactic materials; technology use; and attractive lesson plans, the language learning process seems a hard challenge for most of the children. Normally, they participated with an encouraging and eager attitude; however, on assessment days, I found them sad and struggling with simple topics. Thus, the classes would become testing. On occasions, I wrote my own texts and stories comprising the subjects I wanted them to focus and identify. I would give the children a handout with the written story and we read them aloud; first myself, and then together. Their participation and approach improved, compared to classes when we used exercise worksheets, dictation, and whiteboard writing. Additionally, they became motivated and enthusiastic to share their progress with peers; they also succeeded in understanding and assimilating the new topics taught. Homework tasks had also successfully completed; evaluation results changed; and students easily attained the proposed results.

Different authors and research studies highlight the importance of reading in the classroom and other settings to improve vocabulary learning, grammar, and related skills, which enhance a second language learning. Ratnawati (2003), provide evidence of remarkable growth on language use (oral language, reading comprehension, and writing); language knowledge (word recognition, vocabulary knowledge, and grammar); and academic performance, in primary school children. To determine how reading aloud during classroom sessions helps to develop reading comprehension, and through a descriptive method from an exploratory qualitative approach, this research study intended to verify the effectiveness of a read-aloud strategy for comprehension skills development. The approach involves reading teacher-written short stories,

and storybooks, aloud to students; guided group reading aloud; explaining of unfamiliar words; thoughtful discussions around the text; and a personal conclusion by each student.

## **Objectives**

### **General Objective**

To observe the effect of classroom reading aloud of short stories and children books, in second graders aged seven to eight, from Liceo del Valle, in Palmira, Valle del Cauca, as a teaching strategy for developing reading comprehension in young learners.

### **Specific Objectives**

To analyze available literature and theories that support the study, regarding the use of reading aloud to develop reading comprehension in young children.

To identify the role of classroom reading in the development of reading comprehension of English as a Foreign Language second graders.

To explore the role of teachers and the way how they can use reading aloud as a classroom strategy to develop reading comprehension in EFL on second graders.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This study had a Constructivist approach and was framed within the Cognitive Learning Theory, the Social Cognitive Theory and the Theory of Genetic Epistemology of Jean Piaget. Consistent with this last-mentioned theory, Constructivism is a theory about knowledge and learning, which defines knowing and the way how we learn or acquire knowledge. Fostnot (2005). Piaget's theory deals with structure and order, two important conceptions that teachers may contemplate when establishing their teaching goals. Educators may also consider the relevance of types, stages, and processes of knowledge development. Piaget (1997) considers that cognition and learning are the results of a mental construction; he also states that knowledge is the outcome of a personal reflection on experiences. We develop awareness in our head when we understand the surrounding environment, and when new information comes to integrate with what we already know. The constructivist conception of learning accepts that knowledge is individually constructed and socially "co-constructed" by learners, after their own interpretations of world experiences. Knowledge cannot be transmitted; instruction would consist of experiences that help the construction of knowledge.

Examination of relevant documents and authors to reading aloud, reading comprehension, teaching strategies, and English as a Foreign Language learning, allows for a wider awareness of the current project. This chapter reviews the key theories and research works that support the development of this study. To understand the purposes of this study, and the relation of the

reviewed theories to the main topic, the author identifies focal concepts representing the core body of this study. This characterization would be of value to judge the research method and the obtained results.

### **Reading aloud (RA)**

Reading is a process that associates word pronunciation with meaning; word meaning to sentences, and sentences to paragraphs. In this process, the reader identifies the letters and moves through words and sentences to higher levels of meaning understanding. The National Academy of Education (1985). Reading is a personal discipline that opens the mind to new worlds new experiences, and new knowledge. In primary school children reading skills embody a decisive role in learning accomplishment. Ever since their early stages of the educational development, and along their academic and personal life, persons are systematically required to deal with written text materials. It is a basic skill and an important component of the reading curriculum in emergent literacy, which is reinforced at school age. Fielding & Pearson (1994) affirm that reading instruction has an essential element that has become decisive during the last fifteen years. They refer to reading comprehension and to its basic function within the reading process. In earlier years, comprehension was considered as the natural result of the decoding and oral language association; presently, it is recognized as a wider and complex process involving knowledge, experience, thinking, and teaching. Reading comprehension goes farther of a merely literal reproduction of words printed in a text; comprehend a text, the reader makes use of an interpretive and evaluative thinking.

In the elementary school period, the young children teachers play a relevant role to develop reading comprehension, using reading strategies to guide learners through the reading experiences; they, basically are the ones who undertake this important effort. Moreover,



educators expose children to the language of literature and life, beyond their neighborhoods. Paley (1981).

Reading aloud is an interactive process where one person reads a text to another person; in the case of this study, I refer to a teacher and children reading interaction. The reader of the story guides the listener to become an active participant. During this process, that person may ask questions; clarify doubts; would answer inquiries related to pictures, meaning, and language. The reader also assists the listener in making connections between text and personal experiences. Consequently, teachers must have the ability and the capacity to choose effective and age-adequate texts for each reading aloud session, and arrange the best environment for learners. They should be conscious of his/her influence. Trelease (2006) states that while reading aloud, adults --in this case the teacher-- “condition the child’s brain to associate reading with pleasure; create background knowledge; build vocabulary; and provide a reading role model”. Fountas & Pinnell (as cited by Ruivo, 2006), assert that:

Reading aloud is the foundation of the early literacy framework. By being immersed in a variety of well-chosen texts, children not only learn to love stories and reading; they also learn about written language. Children assimilate a sense of structure of written language and can produce it in a way that sounds like reading, and approximates to text. It allows the teacher to demonstrate ways to make personal connections and comparisons with books that children use for interactions in literature circles, and forms a foundation for other reading and writing activities. Ruivo (2006).

Reading aloud interaction brings important long-term benefits to children: It helps to build vocabulary; to develop oral and written language; and to develop social and phonological skills. Lippman (1997) highlights positive results in the improvement of listening skills, reading

comprehension, writing abilities, and the quantity and quality of independent reading. The reading aloud strategy also helps learners to become better speakers.

It seems that there is not adequate research work in the field of reading stories aloud in the classroom. However, Elley (1989) thinks that this circumstance does not impede the approaching of assumptions on the topic, to discover useful links with existing theories. Reading materials may include stories focused on novelty, conflict, humor, and surprise. Those contents will raise the child's interest level, and grasp a motivated attention that results in a relatively easy way to learn from context. If the teaching goal is to guide students to processing language at deeper levels, it is important to guide children to focus on meaning and not in the form. They will learn and recall more from hearing read aloud entertaining stories than from working on repetitive exercises. Reading aloud by the teacher helps EFL readers to understand the text and find meaning. Students will progress in their achievement up to reach higher levels of comprehension and a confident ability to read extensive texts. The proper production of punctuation signals, stress, and intonation by the teacher, may play an important role in this process. Amer, A. A. (1997). The choice of proper reading content must be complemented with an interesting and comprehensible delivering of the story. In a study to assess the efficacy of reading aloud as an effective strategy, it was observed that interactively engaging of students in the learning process is one of the most important advantages of reading aloud. Güler (2013). Thought the opinion that teacher's reading aloud strategy has not been investigated in detail, Güler concluded that it may lead learners to discover a pleasant, meaningful, and social process, which provides the opportunity to exchange ideas and interact with others. Additional benefits of reading include getting aware of listening, debating, and decision making. To accomplish a full comprehension of a text, children must integrate all learning skills and use them in harmony; that

is why teachers and administrators may be conscious of the relevant role of reading to achieve literacy development.

There are different stances about the effects of reading aloud. Some of them state that this strategy also benefits students with reading problems. In these cases, established classroom routine of reading aloud, especially in classes including struggling reading students, is a wise recommendation. Oueini, Bahous, & Nabhani (2008). Talking about books also gives children a “chance to say what they think; to share their connections with the text; and to collaborate in a group-constructed meaning” Martinez and Roser (as cited by Hanani et al., 2008). Lifelong use of reading aloud and reading behavior habits acquired in the early years, is another positive result of reading aloud. Students will use these habits throughout their life.

Comprehension, as well as vocabulary development, is a favorable effect of reading aloud; EFL readers understand the text and find meaning easier when the teacher reads aloud in the classroom. The student will progress in their achievement up to reach higher levels of comprehension and a confident ability to read extensive texts. In this process, the teacher may consider the importance of a correct production of punctuation signals, stress, and intonation, Amer, A. A. (1997). Teaching and reading aloud should have a close relationship within the scholar's curriculum, regardless the age of students. Reading comprehension improves when read-aloud is regularly used in the classroom; there is an acceptance that literacy is assembled in children's life over a reading aloud basis Saleh Al-Mansour & Abdulgader Al-Shorman (2011).

However, it is not enough for primary school children gather in a classroom read-aloud session; they must learn to independently read by themselves; this progression is necessary for their integral development. Individual reading and read-aloud goes beyond from taking leadership in classroom reading sessions. Reading is a continuous-developing skill and an

effective technique that will help children to grow up in the practice of understanding. It enhances the comprehension ability; foster motivation, self-esteem, and other literacy skills. Reading practice develops fluency; when a child is engaged in classroom and personal reading aloud, he/she is receiving more opportunities to gaining expertise. Words, sentences, and longer messages, become academic challenges easy to overcome. Giving opportunities to read aloud in classroom make sense to the young readers and motivate them to keep on learning. Their success is the motor that compels them to go further. Jim Trelease states that:

Reading is the ultimate weapon, destroying ignorance, poverty and despair before they can destroy us. A nation that doesn't read much, doesn't know much. And a nation that doesn't know much is more likely to make poor choices in the home, in the marketplace, the jury box, and the voting booth. And those decisions ultimately affect an entire nation –the literate and the illiterate–. (Trelease 2006 p. 25).

The above is a statement that should move educators to meditate on the scope of the teaching labor. The least we can do is trying to affect children by using reading aloud strategy at educative environments. The different studies and research works, some of which are mentioned in previous paragraphs, show the relevance and effective application of reading aloud in classroom settings. This author verified the positive effect of reading aloud to develop reading comprehension, with the second-grader children at Liceo del Valle. These results will be shown in the corresponding chapter.

### **Reading comprehension**

The Random House Webster's College Dictionary (Random, 1992), defines comprehension as “the capacity of the mind to perceive and understand; it is the power to grasp ideas”. Nicole Richardson (2010) alludes to some authors who previously determined a

definition of comprehension in their research works. Some of those definitions set up comprehension as the ability to understanding and inferring written texts; S. Sargent (2009). Interpretation, application, and self-monitoring, are integrated into these descriptions too. Reading comprehension is a complex skill that goes far and wide from text inferring. Its accomplishment requires decoding, comprehension, and evaluation abilities. Appropriate teaching strategies, practice, and personal effort are also necessary.

During the reading process children assemble up mental meaning representations, or mental models, related to the general information and ideas available from the text (Johnson-Laid, 1983). These mental models –which refer to events, people, places, and other facts contained in the text— connect, or associate with other stories already known by the child. Readers use mental imagery to infer what is in the characters’ mind, and predict and explain their actions and emotions (Gernsbacher, Goldsmith, & Robertson, 1992). A successful achieving of comprehension necessarily involves the occurrence of the situational mental models “If we are unable to imagine a situation in which an individual has the properties or relations of the properties indicated by the text, we fail to understand the text at all” (van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983, cited by Gernsbacher et all, 1992).

With the same grade of importance to reach an effective comprehension, appear the linguistic components and the cognitive, perceptual, attitudinal, and sociological factors; Alberto Angosto (2013). Comprehension is determined by the reader’s previous knowledge and working memory. The language processes, which also account for comprehension, include other components as basic reading skills; interpreting; vocabulary; awareness of text structure; inference; and motivation. Reading comprehension is reliant to listening comprehension; therefore, a poor listening comprehension would negatively affect the advance of reading

comprehension. Oakhill and Cain (as cited in Wooley, G. 2011). These authors found that in first and second grades, reading comprehension was motivated by a phonemic awareness and a previous knowledge of the text topic. They concluded that a deficient word level reading limits early comprehension; likewise, print awareness correlates with first-grade reading comprehension. In general, print awareness and early decoding skills are good predictors of later reading comprehension. Cain (2007).

Reading comprehension is also a cognitive process, in which written codes are transformed into meaningful language units and then into coherent and meaningful mental representations. Different authors, cited in the work of Kendeu Panayiota (2014), coincide in the importance of decoding, vocabulary knowledge, and reading fluency to achieve comprehension. Inference making --which allows the reader to make connections between different parts of the text, and to the background knowledge-- has also been established as a fundamental for reading comprehension. Paul van der Broeck (1996).

The sociocultural context is another factor to think about in relation to meaning production and reading comprehension. Educators must consider learner's traditions; beliefs; and social backgrounds; without neglecting the school, and classroom contexts. Wooly, G. (2011), thinks that literacy involves the understanding of specific codes --for example, alphabetic signs-- which have no real meaning outside the lesson's context; or the individual's social and cultural practices. This author also calls the attention to the recent introduction of electronic texts, and the significant changes they represent. Teachers may be aware of their importance as primary conveyors of meaning, since they include sound, images, and text. These, join to offer new ways of readings, writing, interpreting, and interacting (Hassett, 2006).

Reading comprehension is a complex activity that is mainly achieved in early school years. Children are the active participants in the process of making meaning, producing language, decoding information, and developing comprehension. They are in the capacity of discerning and concluding about a reading topic; they actively create new meanings by assimilating or accommodating old understanding structures with new knowledge. Therefore, teachers must recognize the diverse factors involved in the reading process and focus their efforts to reach the class goals. Educators can make possible that text; tasks; reader characteristics; activities; and class purposes; get together to make an accomplishment-impact of this skill.

### **Teaching strategies**

#### **Comprehension strategies**

Comprehension strategies are conscious or intentional plans that people use to meet a goal (Roit R. , 2005). These strategies are used in a purposeful way to attain specific goals within the teaching-learning process. As previously stated, achieving reading comprehension is not as easy as one could imagine. It places on educators the challenge of maximizing his/her own knowledge, the appropriate resources, and the strategies to aid learners to accomplish the proposed goals for each class. Reading is an art; and readers must be in the capacity of transforming incoming information. Special tools or strategies “are necessary to summarize, evaluate and synthesize. They help learners to make predictions; combine facts, ideas; and make inferences to formulate a hypothesis. They are also useful to establish connections, generalize, identify problems, and provide solutions. Readers consciously use strategies to make sense of the text; to remember critical ideas; and to integrate new learning into existing schema or prior knowledge. Students need to learn how to use the proper strategies independently; to recognize

and solve problems; and to dig deeper into a text to make connections and inferences” (Roit M. L., 2017, p. 2).

### **Activating previous knowledge**

Predicting. When a student “meet” new information, he/she may have some previous knowledge about the content. Research works and theorists refer to this feature as “background knowledge”. Most of the learners come to school having a wide gathering of previous knowledge, categorized by grades and extent. What students already know serves as an indicator of how well they will learn the new topic. The success of new content learning is determined by the teacher’s skill; the interest of the student; and the complexity of the content. Background, or previous knowledge, is an important factor in meaning production and giving a reading purpose to students. Activation of this knowledge before reading would facilitate the connection with new concepts or topics during reading (Manzano, 2004). This author considers that reading is one of the most important ways how people build prior knowledge.

Anderson and Pearson (1984) established that acquired knowledge, experiences, ideas, and other facts, are stored in memory, and organized in a network of structures called schemata. These structures activate to interpret new information, and to increase the data storage. The interaction of new information with old knowledge is relevant for comprehension. Prior knowledge enhances comprehension by enabling readers to better comprehend text; to make connections; to predict; and to develop inferences while reading. Students may have an incomplete or incorrect previous knowledge; it is necessary for the teacher to evaluate what they know, and establish the appropriate strategies to correct or improve the stored information. In these cases, it is advisable to calculate the overall or general knowledge --built through reading and writing activities, and represented by general experiences inside and outside the school—



and the topic-specific knowledge. The last one refers to specific information needed for an explicit subject in a reading session.

### **Pre-reading strategies**

Pre-reading strategies are, henceforth, necessary and useful to activate previous knowledge. As such, they, actively involve students in the text subjects, concepts, and vocabulary, before they start reading. They also stimulate students' schemata related to the topic to be read in the classroom. Consequently, making connections, predictions, and organizing tasks, are easier than the teacher could expect (Ruth Schoenbach, 1999). Free recall; recognition; structuring questions; word association; and non-structuring discussions, are strategies that would guide the teacher to assess what, how, and the knowledge extent about a next-to-read-topic. Free recall strategy inquires what the learners already know about some subject. Recognition allows the students to identify words related to the content they are about to read. Structuring questions serve to make elaborated questions about a topic. Word association helps to recognize specific details and opinions that learners can associate with the reading topic. Non-structuring questions pose open-ended questions about the topic (Shell Education, 2008).

### **Visualizing**

This strategy uses the student's ability to create in their heads pictures or images of ideas and features contained in the text they are going to read, or to the words they hear. In this way, comprehension is possible. This ability also helps students to make sense of the information, and understand the intention of the author. It allows the establishing of connections to prior knowledge and life experiences. As a more thoughtful practice, students gain from this skill, the more automatic turns out to be the text visualizing strategy. Students who visualize as they read have a richer reading experience and can recall what they have read for longer periods of time

(Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Visualizing comprise the five senses: hearing, seeing, smelling, touching, and tasting. Children can image, and relate to their minds, a fact with a sense; in this way, they experience the story by relating words to images, sounds, actions, dialogue, and feelings. Mind images give life to the text; turn the reading interesting; rise learner's motivation to continue the reading process. Therefore, it is logic to deduce that reading and thinking are closely related. Visualizing strengthen our inferential thinking (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000, pág. 132). These authors state that visualizing gives pleasure to reading tasks. Students can use visualization to create mental pictures of facts and concealed details that become their own treasure. Cunningham and Allington (1999).

Visualizing also brings to the memory the previous knowledge and experiences about the subject and melts it with the new information obtained from the text. This process results in perdurable and personalized images about the general circumstances and characteristics of the text. "Through visualization, students develop the characters, create the settings, personalize the information, stay engaged in the text, and are eager to read and learn more about the topic" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000, pp. 132-134).

When the teacher guides this strategy at classroom setting, the students will be able to use illustrations in a text to demonstrate their understanding of the text content. They will explain how visual images/imagery, aid in reading to understand, and will use the imagery strategy to creating their own visual images based on short texts.

### **Inference**

The ability to make inferences from a given information in a text, and from background knowledge, has been described as the heart of the reading process (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Drawing inferences in reading comprehension is a constructive cognitive process that supports

the understanding and the growth of stored knowledge. It is essential for text comprehension; it allows the reader and the listener to create mental representations and images, through the formulation and evaluation of hypotheses about the information contained in the text. Previous knowledge, along with information from the text, gather to establish associations, relations, and conclusions (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Some texts do not contain complete information and explicit descriptions about a topic, a character, a fact, or an event. Instead, they offer clues or suggestions that readers can use to “read between the lines”. Though deficient, they admit the inference making, based on the information in the text and/or on the reader’s own previous knowledge (Roit M. L., 2017).

Text-based inferences could naturally be drawn from the text; from ambiguous understanding; or just from speculations. Therefore, inferences are differentiated by the degree of the certainty with which they can be made. Elaborative inferences occur when the reader uses his or her knowledge about the topic --to register additional details not mentioned in the text, or to establish connections between the reading and related topics already known. Direct and regular training about drawing conclusions and making inferences, will help students to significantly improve their ability to get meaning from reading (Hansen & Pearson, 1983).

Making inferences intersect with other strategies: activating prior knowledge, making predictions and visualizing, clarifying, summarizing, and asking questions. When readers infer, they personally interact with the text. Skilled readers make inferences, almost subconsciously, by filling in the blanks, with logical assumptions based on text clues and prior knowledge. (Roit M. L., 2017).

Classroom activities related to inference making are diverse. Questions based on text and illustrations are useful to guide children to identify what is explicit and what is implied in the

text. Delivering conclusions based on information from text and pictures, are also activities to develop. Making judgments --easily identified, ambiguous, or from incomplete information-- about characters, events, and topics, are recommended. Other achievements include meaning explanations; recognizing of symbols; and explaining of motives, reasons, events, people, and situations. Finally, other suggested activities involve the development of empathy for the characters, and elaboration of theories about the events implication.

### **Making connections**

Making connections is a reading strategy used to help students to get an understanding of what they read. When students approach a new topic, a cognitive process occurs, to connect the new information with existing schemata. Learners can activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their own experiences. Keene and Zimmermann, (cited by Correia and Bleicher, 2008), assert that readers establish three types of connections: before, during, or after reading:

1) Text-to-self connections, bring meaning when the reader connects the ideas contained in the text with their own experiences, ideas, and beliefs. By activating prior knowledge about a reading subject, and connecting it with experiences, students create meaningful frameworks to comprehend texts (Levin & Presley, 1981). These authors refer that individuals have many stored experiences, withdrawn and generalized from specific episodes, referring to personal information. Such stored facts may be used to make connections, inferences, and to develop other strategies necessary to comprehend.

2) Text-to-text connections alludes to the manner how characters in the story relate to each other; it also indicates the relationship of common elements and ideas between stories. It comprises similarities or contradictions between new information in the text and to what the

student already knows. These text-to-text connections will help schoolchildren to gain comprehension of two different stories, and evaluate their content. It is likewise important to develop writing ability and discussion capacity. One benefit to highlight from text-to-text connection, is that it strengthens reading and writing abilities (Surber, 2017).

3) Text-to-world connections, compare different aspects of a story to contemporary characters. It relates the content of the text to the world, or with events happening in the real world. People get ideas about the world which goes far beyond their personal experiences; television, movies, magazines, and newspapers bring the world to the nearby circle (Draper, 2010).

Teachers must help students in this connection process, so they can combine the new information and make sense or meaning of the text. Effective teacher modeling and feedback, are necessary to guide students in their connections to the text.

### **Summarizing and evaluating**

This strategy helps students to integrate essential ideas, and fix important details contained in the reading. It permits students to focus on keywords, and phrases in each text, that students need to notice and remember. The achievement of summarizing respond to a specific purpose of teaching, established in the lesson plan or curriculum. The NRP analyses, found that summarizing increases engagement, as the students focus on the main ideas rather than the details. To summarize, students must consider the text while they read or reread it, to catch crucial details and relevant or irrelevant information. Effective readers do not wait until the end of a text to summarize, but rather create a series of summary statements as they are reading to check understanding and build meaning. The National Reading Panel, (2000).

### **Pre-reading comprehension strategies**

Activating previous knowledge and building text-specific information. As a student advances in the educative level system, the reading requirement is more demanding. Textbooks, guides, informational texts, are progressively added up, imposing a greater effort. Under these circumstances, reading may turn a difficult task because of higher-level vocabulary and concept based content (Dymoch & Nicholson, 2010). One important pre-reading strategy is the activation of prior knowledge about a topic, and relate it to the content to be read. This initial step is necessary to favor a productive and mindful use of what they already know. For example, before reading a text about alligators, it is wise to ask students, and promote discussion, about what they already know about this word, and character; what does it mean to them; how do learners understand it. Moreover, connecting the topic to students' lives motivates reading and eases understanding. In the case of the alligator, the students are questioned whether they have seen one of these animals in their lives, and include discussion about their feelings.

### **Pre-teaching vocabulary and key concepts**

Vocabulary learning is progressive and associated with previous experiences; it increases the conceptual representation of words in the expository text. Activating background vocabulary is required to understand the new vocabulary contained in the materials to be read. This, because expository texts include challenging words, which students may not have personally experienced (Dymoch & Nicholson, 2010). Vocabulary brings the meaning of new words and specially to the ones printed in the text. Pre-teaching vocabulary words include expressions that communicate concepts that learners already know. For instance, students may know one of the concepts contained in the reading, but not the specific word to describe that concept. Pre-teaching vocabulary to early readers implies assisting them to recognize the written version of words --

whose meaning they already know from oral language use (Beck, Mackeown, & Kucan, 2008). Teaching vocabulary as a pre-reading strategy is relevant. The previously mentioned authors, refer to other studies showing a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. To them, this aspect represents a predictor for long-term reading comprehension in young learners. Key concepts, as well as vocabulary teaching, help students to gain reading fluency, independence, and comprehension. The outcome is a better recall of the information (Shell Education, 2008). Difficult ideas or unknown concepts hinder comprehension. Giving examples is useful and fundamental to support students with the understanding and the establishing of appropriate relationships.

Making predictions, stimulates and engages readers; offers direction for reading; leads to deeper thinking about text; especially when these predictions are later confirmed. (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Predicting is not the same as guessing; it brings out the prior knowledge; make use of information in the text to make inferences; and anticipate the events that will happen next. Predictions are comparable to conjectures that would result in new learning; consequently, it is necessary to guide a consistent reflection on the topic. Roit M. L. (2017).

### **During reading strategies**

Good readers are strategic (Roit R., 2005). In this stage, students actively work on reading and keep track of their own comprehension of the text. Furthermore, they would meditate on the purpose of reading; visualize the new information; and make connections. Students will carefully explore the text; look answers for their earlier predictions. They make Inferences on the author's purpose, and generalizations about specific details in the text. During reading, teachers must be ready to identify and explain problems; to suggest the suitable actions, necessary to clarify some confuse word or sections. Effective readers always ask themselves

clarification questions to predict and to integrate information from different segments of the text. Therefore, children must be trained to effectively to ask questions about the text, and be given the opportunity to practice this strategy (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). To capitalize on this stage, teachers should draw student's attention on the objectives of the reading task. Reading purposes would be revised, and always grounded on the incoming information and prior knowledge.

During reading, new ideas, concepts, and perceptions incorporate to enhance prior knowledge and schemata. Good readers establish an interaction with the text; make conscious inferences; may try to, or, determine the author's intentions for writing the text; clarify the meaning of unknown words, and fill gaps with appropriate information. Moreover, learners create mental images in their minds that represent concepts; settings; and characters contained in the reading text. Accordingly, teachers should engage students in creating mental images to help them comprehend what they are reading. This strategy encourages a greater recall of the obtained information, and engages the student in the reading process. During reading children establish connections; the new information relates to their own schemata. That's why teachers should actively help children with this step, as the achievement establishes the necessary conditions for them to adequately synthesize the information (Clarck, et al., 2005).

### **After-reading strategies**

After reading, teachers play a relevant role to guide students through follow-up exercises, which encourage a personal consideration on what they have read. At this point, children (and teacher) would decide if they achieved the proposed goals, and would reflect on how text matched or not with their predictions. Normally, there is a comparison between characters, incidents, and contents, to themselves, to general life, and to other books. The learner can consider the new information; clarify new ideas; refine their thinking connecting what they have



learned to other ideas. By means of this procedure, they are ready to synthesize the new information. It is essential for the teacher to review the text with the students to demonstrate that reading is not a single event (Clarck, et al., 2005); (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007).

Students will also summarize the main ideas; explore for new information, and show personal reactions to what they have learned through reading. This is generally the moment when teachers assess the results by asking students about the recent activity. Their answers would serve the educator to evaluate the efficiency of learning or the need for additional instruction. It is recommended to implement after reading exercises to extend comprehension.

A significant aspect to pay attention at this stage is the critical thinking process. The Critical Thinking Community defines this term as the discipline to “actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (Scriven & Paul, 1987). More formal definitions characterize critical thinking as the intentional application of rational, higher order thinking skills, such as analysis; synthesis; problem recognition; problem-solving; inference; and evaluation Angelo (1995). In concordance, students use the critical thinking to evaluate the quality and importance of the content they have read. They synthesize the new information and integrate it with their prior experiences; they also analyze and evaluate the specific characteristics found in the text. Teacher support is fundamental to fuse the reading process. Children need to actively engage with a text, but they surely won't be able to do by themselves. Fostering the active reading skills, that will guarantee reading comprehension achievement, is an enterprise to be assumed by educators. Supervising and guiding students, as they process the information they have read, and helping them to systematically exercise their ability to clarify, connect, summarize, and evaluate are necessary

endeavors. The after reading process stage provide a good range of opportunities to exercise critical thinking (Teach for America, 2017).

### **English as a Foreign Language (EFL)**

Currently, teaching English as a Foreign Language is a growing requirement for primary school students in most countries. In Colombia EFL falls under the coverage of the National Education Ministry Law issued, in 1994, as the “Ley General de Educación (General Education Law) No. 115. Through this Act, the State Congress established the content standards for English teaching in public and private schools, from grade 1 of primary onwards. These standards follow the conventional levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). For primary school, the Article 20 in the letter “m”, defines the following objective: “Acquisition of reading and conversation elements in at least one foreign language” (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 1994). The expected proficiency levels for grades 1-3, as established in the above-mentioned framework, is A1 or beginner (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006).

However, teaching EFL to young children goes beyond the conventional standards or educational curriculums. Achievement of educative mission entails careful considerations. Children actively try to construct meaning; they need to make sense to understand what they are doing. They need to know the purpose for the activities or duties that adults ask them to fulfill. Constant and active interaction with the environment provide the child --within the framework of their incomplete experiences-- with a good range of situations and problem resolving that bring them new meanings and knowledge. Successful language teaching to young students necessarily implies a pedagogical understanding of the children’s development process and learning needs; teaching must be learner-centered. Learning needs are to be considered first rather than the

teacher's interests, or didactic sequences and demands (Cameron, 2001). This author calls the attention to the different contrasting aspects derived from linguistic, psychological, and social development of the learner. These processes, rather than the conventional approaches, should guide the teaching and classroom activities. Young learners recognize the teaching terms meaning in a different, and more complex way than educators. And this is a key factor that teachers may remember.

### **Cognitive Learning Theory**

The Cognitive Learning Theory grounds on the cognitive psychology; it focusses on the cognitive or mental learning processes of observing, categorizing, and generalizing. In this way, it gives sense to new information. Jean Piaget (1964) considers that learning is generated by situations, with the intervention of people and external factors. In line with his opinion, learning is not spontaneous; it is limited to a single problem or to a simple structure. The author assumes that learning is the result of a mental internal activity rather than external stimuli. Different factors, as prior knowledge, skills, and experiences conjugate to enabling the integration of new information. Piaget's also undertakes that the developmental stage sequence is the same for all children in different grades. One of the Piaget's stages of cognitive development, the concrete operational, embraces four years of the individual's life, from seven to eleven. During this time takes place the initiation of the internal symbolism, where understanding and experience go hand in hand. At this stage, logical operations are applied to concrete problems and numbers are understood. Two important processes, classification, and reversibility, occur at this stage. The first one relates to the ability of naming and identifying appearance, size or another characteristic in a group of objects. The second refers to the child's recognition that it is possible to change

numbers or objects, and take them back to their original state. We refer, for instance, to vital mathematical operations. Rice (2011).

In consonance with Lev S. Vygotsky (1896-1934), the mind is a psychological and cultural organ; a set of specific and independent abilities, rather than a complex system of general cognitive capabilities. He considers learning as the acquisition of many specialized thinking abilities; the learning develops many skills to focus attention on a wide range of topics. His definition of intelligence as “the capacity to learn from instruction”, implies the assistance from an MKO, that is, a “more knowledgeable other”. MKO is someone else --parents, adults, teachers, coaches, experts, professionals, and even other children and friends-- playing the role of teacher or trainer. This insight changes the traditional way to approach education as a process, to include the world itself as an important element in the development of learning. In conformity with Vygotsky theory, children interpret their own culture through the acquisition of language and other cultural tools or signs. These tools refer, for instance, to drawing objects “created over the course of history, which change with cultural development” (Corsaros, 2011, p. 15).

Vygotsky advocated language as the most important tool in the acquisition of social knowledge, since it is the way how children receive new information or teaching from other people. The child’s community conception affects his/her thinking. Consequently, human cognition and learning is not an individual process, but the result of a social and cultural integration and assimilation. Vygotsky strongly believed in the close relationship between learning development, and their sociocultural nature. He proposed that a child’s development depended on the interaction between his/her individual maturation, a system of symbolic tools, and activities arrogated from the surrounding sociocultural environment. Kozullin, Gindis, Ageyev, & Miller, (2003). Unlike Piaget, Vygotsky focused on developmental mechanisms, rather than stages. He

refers to the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD), in connection to the “distance between the actual developmental level, determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development, determined through problem under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peer” (Vygotsky, 1930). The ZPD defines prospective maturity functions, which are not fully matured yet.

Mind mediation is one relevant concept in Vygotsky Sociocultural theory. There is not a direct relationship between the individual and the world. Vygotsky (1978). Tools are subject-object mediators; furthermore, they are always necessary to control the world and accomplish learning and development. Vygotsky identified three kinds of mediators: material tools; psychological tools; and other human beings (Kozulin, 1998).

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) has its origins in the former social learning theory, which was founded on processes of established learning principles within the human social context (Bandura A., 1977). Time after, it incorporated concepts from cognitive psychology; that integration was necessary to fit into the developing understanding of human information processing. The new interpretations related to capacities and preconceptions about learning, experience, observation, and symbolic communication Bandura (1986). The Social Cognitive Theory considers the interaction of behavior, environment, and personal factors that favor learning occurrence and which are constantly affecting each other. Behavior is not only the result of environment and person interaction (Karen, Rimer, & Wiswanath, 2008). It refers to the human beliefs, ideas, and cognitive competencies, which modify the personal behavior. Changes are motivated by the physical and social environments, or external factors such as family; work; school; friends; climate; and others. The Social Cognitive Theory explains the way how people

acquire and maintain behavioral patterns; it also provides principles for intervention strategies. The goal of Social Cognitive Theory is to explain how people regulate their behavior through control and reinforcement, to achieve goal-directed behavior maintained over time. It includes six main concepts:

1. Reciprocal Determinism. Refers to the dynamic and reciprocal interaction of person (an individual with a set of learned experiences), environment (external social context), and behavior (responses to stimuli to achieve goals). This is the central concept of SCT.

Behavioral Capability. Denotes the personal ability to perform a behavior through essential knowledge and skills, knowing what to do and how to do it. People learn from the consequences of their behavior; these, in turn, affect their surroundings.

Observational learning. People can observe, retain, and then replicate behaviors or “models” from others. Most of the human behaviors are learnt by the effect of example. Modelling has an enormous influence; it is a type of social learning, having models and apprentices. It may happen at any stage, or age in life, but it is relevant in the childhood, when children are under the supervision and guidance of a caring adult. (Boundless Psychology, 2016).

Reinforcements. It is possible to acquire, retain and possess the capabilities for skillful execution of modeled behavior; nonetheless, the learning may not be activated because of negative or unfavorable attitudes from other people. Bandura (1971). That means that internal/external, or positive/negative responses of behavior affect the observational learning. This is the closest concept to the reciprocal relationship between behavior and environment.

Outcome expectancy. It is understood as the opinion about the outcomes produced by a given behavior. Expectation of personal skill affects the generation of, and the persistence in a behavior replication. When the learner is convinced of his/her own capacity, and effectiveness,

the way how he/she will try or cope with a situation, is likely to be affected. In the presence of fear, learners try to avoid what they consider a threatening situation; if they believe that a certain circumstance exceeds their coping skills, they will prefer to evade them. On the contrary, they get involved in activities and behave assuredly when they judge themselves capable of handling situations that would otherwise be intimidating Bandura (1977).

Self-efficacy. Known as personal efficacy, it relates to the confidence in the personal capacities to execute a task and achieve goals; it has a significant impact on every area of human efforts. Self-efficacy empowers learners to engage in their learning process with motivation, concentrating their abilities and behaviors in the accomplishments of a new knowledge. Besides skill and knowledge, Self-efficacy has a significant role in determining the learners' achievements. It might explain why different individual performances differ markedly despite a similar knowledge and skills, Bandura (1986), or why the same learners perform differently at different times. Bouffard-Bpuchard (2001).

### **The Schema Theory**

This theory, also known as “Schema Perspective”, is a relatively recent concept, which has important implication for EFL reading in classroom development. The term was introduced to Psychology by Sir Frederic Barlett in 1932 (Anderson & Pearson, 1984), to bring up the topic of structures of memory content. Piaget (1951) uses this concept to refer to the action-related aspect of thinking and intelligence. Cognitive schemata are complex patterns of perception, assessment, thinking, planning, and action, constituting the source of personal experience and behavior. By means of assimilation and accommodation processes, these schemata are responsible for processing, organizing, and storing information. They change in interaction with environments, producing new experiences, and bringing cognitive changes at the same time. In

consonance with the schema theory, the text is merely a guide, since the reader activates previous schemata to give a meaning to the incoming information (Brown, 2001). There is a researcher who considers that one of the most important schemas that generates immediate pressure to students is content, or topical schema Al-Issa (2006). She cites another author Aebbersol (1997) who asserts that when a topic is outside the student's range of previous knowledge, he will feel lost as in an "unknown sea". In this logic, previous schemata play a relevant role in reading comprehension. This prior knowledge, related to the topic, determines the result of the text content-reader interaction; therefore, it defines the comprehension level to achieve. The most associated schema the reader partakes, the more comprehension he obtains.

Content schema alludes to reader's acquaintance with the text topic and the abilities to interpret it. In view of John Barnitz (1985), poor familiarity with the text demands a greater effort to construct reading comprehension. Al-Issa states the importance of content schema in the following paragraph:

The content schema is associated to the learner's culture. Some of these cultural elements raise questions such as: what types of text people read? What is the purpose of reading? How is reading perceived? How readers identify themselves in relation to the writer of the text? Do they feel superior? Inferior? Are they active participants? Passive participants? What is the level of textual engagement people expect? What is the value of the spoken word in relation to the written word? And, what topics are worthy of reading? Answers to all these questions are usually culturally determined, learnt, understood, and put into practice (p. 42).

It has been suggested that text comprehension is achieved when the reader conveys his own language and knowledge of the world and to the meaning interpretation (R.J.Spiro, 1980). Interaction between previous knowledge of the world, language, and text content makes possible



comprehension. Schema theory configures an important approach to reading comprehension and gives light to the teacher's work. It would help educators to understand the importance of learners' schemata, or previous knowledge; language; text; and reader interaction; to activate and develop reading comprehension. The positive effect is more probable when the reading materials and text topics are known by students; their response to teaching strategies and classroom reading activities will exceed the expectations.

### **The Input Hypothesis**

Stephen Krashen (2003) states that language acquisition is only possible when we understand a language that contains structure. Different factors coincide to the occurrence of understanding language in normal life. We can name linguistic competences; context; Cosmovision; and extra linguistic information. The input hypothesis assumes that learning is a progression stage that needs a previous condition to move from the input stage to the acquisition one. In this way, the learner gets focused on the meaning of the received message, and not in its form. The common belief is that we first learn structures; the next step is practicing using those structures in communication; the result is the development of fluency (Hatch, 1978). In contradiction, the input hypothesis states that we acquire by "going for meaning" first (Krashen S., 1982). This theory assumes that the production ability emerges in a natural manner and not by direct teaching. Its main assumption of learning is related to the acquisition. Language acquisition deals with comprehensible input (CI) and understanding of messages. The author postulates the process that allows learners to move from predictable sequences of grammatical structures acquisition to higher levels of achievement. Krashen (1982) uses simple principles to represent the elements of the theory. For instance: Current competence is represented by  $i$ ; the next level is  $i+1$ . To be useful for language acquisition, the input must contain  $i + 1$ ; not

necessarily in an isolated form. When the input is adequate, communication is successful, and the acquirer understands it,  $i + 1$  will automatically be achieved.

One important aspect of the Input theory to the development of this study, is the author's claim regarding the role of the understanding input. He states that spoken fluency may occur by listening and reading practices. He theoretically assumes that it is possible to acquire language without ever talking. Understanding spoken and written language input, is the only mechanism that results in the increase of underlying linguistic competence. In one of his lectures (2013), this author shares evidence of reading positive results obtained for vocabulary acquisition. He also reflects on the use of storytelling reading aloud for the same purpose of developing vocabulary. Though vocabulary is not the subject of this research, the scopes of Krashen and other authors' studies may extrapolate to classroom reading aloud to young children to develop reading comprehension. He stimulates reading activities; in this sense, he states that:

If reading is so enjoyable, do we have to worry about motivating students to read? I think we do, but the task is much simpler than we thought. There is good evidence that rewards and incentives play no role in increasing the amount of reading done, nor does it impact gains in reading comprehension the simpler solution is to provide students with access to plenty of interesting and comprehensible reading material and provide some time for them to read. There is evidence that this works (Krashen S., 2003, pág. 24).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The present research is an exploratory study, intended to observe the effectiveness of reading aloud strategy in the development of reading comprehension. A qualitative approach model was chosen to frame the research, data collection, interviews, and observation methods. “A qualitative approach aims to explore and understand the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures; the data are typically collected in the participant’s setting, data analysis has an inductive structure going from specific to general themes, and the researcher interprets the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure” (Creswell, 2014, pág. 32). To verify the usefulness of the strategy to develop reading comprehension, the researcher carried out weekly reading-aloud sessions with young students. For each meeting the researcher created a field diary to register behaviors, advancement achievements, difficulties and performances. Denzin & Lincoln (2011) assert that qualitative research changes the world into a “series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self” (p .3). Interpretive, naturalistic approaches and natural settings are important elements of the qualitative research, to observe people in their normal development environment.

The study work followed the “Childhood, Education, and Diversity” investigation line established by the Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia UNAD. This specific line created

a special environment to foster a careful consideration and construction of knowledge about childhood, diversity and educational areas. The topics under this research line are related to the social representations of childhood and educative contexts. Moreover, it also considers the pedagogical and didactic essentials related to diversity; educative agents in childhood; education; and inclusion.

### **Research Consents**

Prior to the beginning of the study, the researcher was granted approval to work at the school's classroom with second graders, from the principal of the school (see Annex A). Parents and caring adults were asked to sign an Informed Consent form, allowing their children to participate in the study. All the forms sent by the elementary general teacher were accepted and signed (see Annex B).

### **Setting**

The study was accomplished during a 2016-2017 ten-week period, from September to November. The author produced the observations at the Liceo del Valle settings, a small educative institution located in Palmira, the second middle sized city, in the Valle del Cauca Department, with a population of about 350.000 inhabitants. The chosen school is in the downtown, surrounded by five larger schools; one of them is a state official, and the other four are private. Though the English language is one of the curriculum subjects in most of the state and private schools in the city, in practice only four or five private schools are recognized as bilingual. The total school's population makes up 50 students; twenty for the primary grades, including two preschoolers, and thirty for the secondary. The English curriculum follows the Basic Standards of Competencies of English provided by the MEN.

### Population

The group of participants consisted of eight second-grade Spanish-speaking children; five girls and three boys aged 7-8 years old. One girl and one boy show a mild special cognitive condition, which did not seem to hinder their participation in the study. One of the boys dropped the study at the third session because her parents moved him to another school. Children came from low-to-medium economic income families. Almost all of them lived with one parent who works the whole day; it is the grandmother or an adult relative who takes care of them. Their school schedule went from 6:40 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., from Monday to Friday. They studied English one and a half hour, once a week.

*Table 1*

*General context of the participants group*

<b>Category</b>	<b>General Information</b>	<b>Specific Details</b>	<b>Additional aspects</b>
School	Small private institution having a total of 50 students. It offers preschooler, primary, secondary, and preparatory grades.	Student absenteeism and general days off difficult the fulfillment and achievement of academic plans.	
Location	Carrera 30 No. 27-44		Downtown
English literacy level	Low	Absence; lack of proficient teachers	
Students	Medium income; dysfunctional families,	High absenteeism level. Failing care adults.	One of the girls has a mild cognitive disability condition. One of the boys has a mild cognitive disability condition.

Source: The Researcher

The study group, and the whole school are academically behind, because of frequent absenteeism and general days off, authorized by the administrative staff; these circumstances affect their educational advancement. Moreover, it seems that children are not encouraged at home to fulfill their school responsibilities, neither guided to bring the materials required to conform to the schedule, subject, and activities, accordingly to the day of the week. Recurrently, children miss their English and other subjects' notebooks; therefore, under these circumstances, it is hard for them to keep the appropriate record and continuousness of the general classes, including the one for EFL. Knowledge of the English language was virtually inexistent. The school has a general teacher for primary grades, who had previously taught them to write and name colors and some fruits'. Before the research study, English classes were scheduled for one and a half hour, once a week. Children have not had the opportunity to practice reading, listening, and speaking; only limited writing of isolated words. Regrettably, as they did not have a caring adult to help them at home, they were not able to easily remember the topics taught in the former class; in consequence, they advanced at a very slow step. The general teacher for primary grades, Mrs. Góngora, was a special assistant in the development of this work. She helped children with picture cards, writing, and drawings, when necessary.

Table 2

*Research study participants*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>
M. J. Rodríguez M	#1	Girl	9
J. D. Solís P	#2	Boy	7
H. I. Sánchez	#3	Girl	9
E. T. Sinisterra	#4	Girl	8
D. A. Vásquez	#5	Girl	8
S. D. Velásquez	#6	Boy	8
I. Escobar	#7	Girl	9

Source: The Researcher

### **Instruments**

The instruments employed in this study to collect the data comprised a preliminary interview conducted in Spanish to the school principal, the general teacher of primary grades and the secretary. They intended to identify their conception about English learning, language teaching needs, and expectations in this area (see Annex C). An initial and test about simple topics, as family, animals, fruits, colors, and simple sentences using the verb to be, was used to evaluate the knowledge of children (see Annex D). Lesson plans were also planned to register date, topic, objective, materials to be used, activities, and assessment of each class (see Annex E). An example of a reading story session is presented in the Annex Eb. One more instrument, the field diary entry from the researcher, recorded observations related to the class development; reading aloud difficulties; achievements, special behaviors, and results observed in each child (see Annex F). The evaluation rubric integrated reading comprehension and strategies (see Annex G). At the end of study, the participants answered a simple interview to summarize and understand the children perception about the whole project; their learning; and personal feelings about the effect of the reading aloud exercises on their comprehension and English learning. (See Annex H.)

### **Procedure**

The study took place in the natural grade-2 classroom environment. Meetings were held once a week for one and a half hour. The children did not have a previous and consistent language knowledge to respond to the requirements of the National Bilingual Program Standards. Previously, the researcher had been their English teacher in fulfillment of a pedagogical practice. At that time, the teacher carried out an initial test to have a general idea about their level of English language knowledge and started a simple teaching plan for them.

One circumstance that had to be carefully considered for the development of this study, was the deficient level of children's literacy in L1, which would affect their learning process in EFL. When analyzing the materials to use during the reading aloud exercises, the researcher believed that they would not satisfy the expectations to the proposed goal. It was necessary to organize the readings to follow a sequence, from basic and simple topics to more "elaborated" ones. The teacher wrote the stories based on what the children already knew, having a comprehension goal for each one of the classes. Individual worksheets were administered to each child at the beginning of the class. The reading sessions scheme followed this pattern: children identified simple words printed and pictured on the reading sheet and written on the board. The teacher read aloud the story twice, while children followed in silence their worksheets. Thereafter, the children's group and the teacher read aloud together; next, each child would read with the teacher assistance to correct pronunciation mistakes and give the student confidence. After the reading time, the teacher and children would discuss the topic; questions and answers about what they understood; main idea; characters; and the story details, were included in this talking time. Children would express their feelings; opinions; beliefs; what they knew, what they learned; and what they understood. After this first stage, they received a reading comprehension and/or strategy exercise handout, with questions intended to assess their understanding of the topic. In most of the classes the children were enthusiastic to participate and give feedback; they tried to explain the story in English or "Spanglish". Before finishing of class the children wrote the topic on their notebooks — this step was necessary for them to follow with school and curriculum standards requirements.

Reading sessions began with a small talking about the last meeting topic. Children could participate telling what they remembered. Class topics included greetings; numbers from one to



ten; animals and colors; the family; the house; and my cat Michin. (See Annex Eb.) Each class included strategy activities; progressively, they were more demanding; always considering the capacity and knowledge acquired by the children.

## CHAPTER 4

## RESULTS

This chapter provides the results obtained from the six-week's reading sessions, where the researcher collected the necessary data to support the purpose of the research work. During the six-week study, six reading sessions included topics planned to follow a sequence from simple to somewhat complex level.

Table 3

*Reading Sessions*

<b>Date – 2016</b>	<b>Reading Session</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Sept.23	No. 1	Meeting new friends	Reading aloud. Previous knowledge activation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading aloud</li> <li>• Previous knowledge exercise</li> <li>• Reading comprehension</li> </ul>
Sept. 30	No. 2	I like the numbers, how about you?	Reading aloud. Making predictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading aloud</li> <li>• Making predictions exercise</li> <li>• Reading comprehension exercise</li> </ul>
October 7	No.3	Animals and colors	Reading aloud. Making connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading aloud</li> <li>• Making connections exercise</li> <li>• Reading comprehension exercise</li> </ul>
October 21	No. 4	A special day with my family	Reading aloud. Visualizing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading aloud</li> <li>• Visualizing exercise</li> <li>• Reading comprehension exercise</li> </ul>
October 28	No. 5	The house	Reading aloud. Summarizing – main idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading aloud</li> <li>• Reading comprehension exercise</li> </ul>

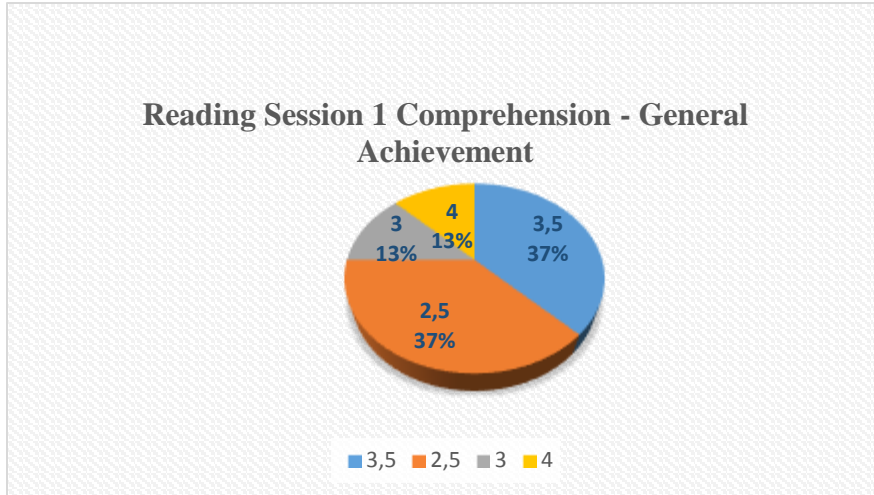
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main idea-summarizing exercise</li> </ul>
Nov. 1	No. 6	This is my cat Michin	Reading aloud Summarizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading aloud</li> <li>• Reading comprehension exercise</li> <li>• Summarizing exercise</li> </ul>

Source: The Researcher

Results are presented in two categories: Reading comprehension and reading strategies. These categories include information on the students' number identification code, within the study, the scores, and general achievement per reading session. The assessment is based on a general reading rubric, which include the reading strategies used in the study. The scores integrate the range established by the MEN and an equivalent number designation for the level of achievement. The comprehension scores follow the Colombian standard of evaluation from a 00 to 5.0 number scale. They are coded as S = Superior 5.0 - 4.5; A= High: 4.4- 4.0; BS = Basic: 3.9- 3.5; and BJ = Low: 3.4 - 0.0. The reading strategies use an equivalent score number from 1 to 4. Numbers can be measured as insufficient, beginner, or minimal (1); partial (2); adequate (3); and high (see Annex G).

The Figure 1 shows the general achievement in reading comprehension. The score distribution per participant are also expressed in percentages: It is observed that in the first class three students obtained a (BJ) 2,5 score, occupying a wide range; a (A) 4,0 score, which was obtained by one student, occupies the lower percentage.

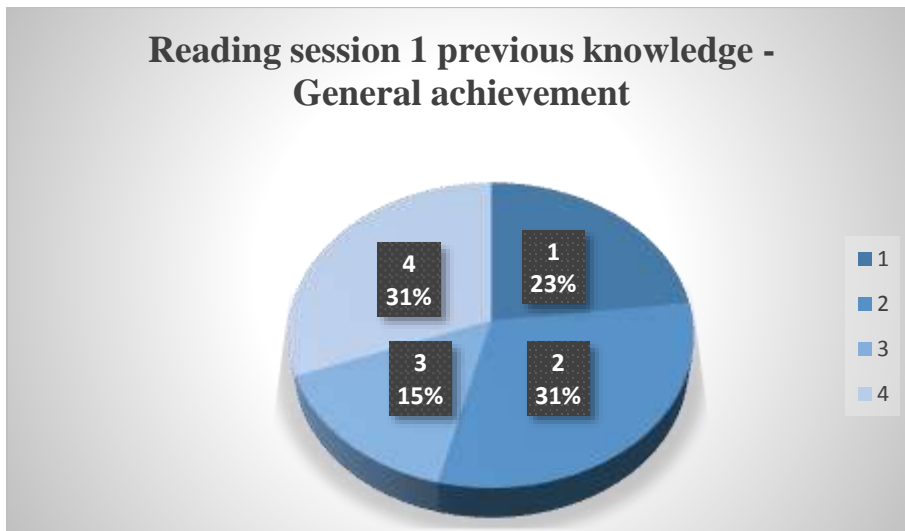
Figure 1. Reading comprehension achievement for session 1



Source: The Researcher

The next figure displays the results corresponding to the general achievement on previous knowledge exercise developed in the same reading session.

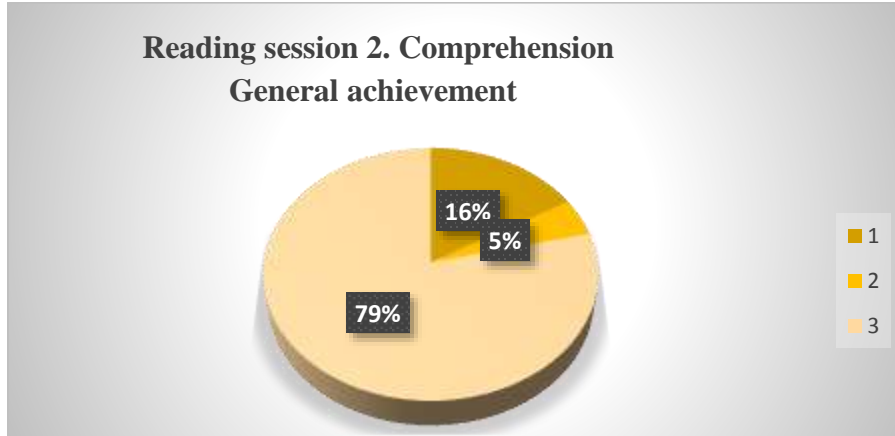
Figure 1A. General achievement for previous knowledge in session 1



Source: The Researcher

In this activity, two of the students had A; three BJ; and three more a BS. On the next week, the reading session 2 delivered the following results.

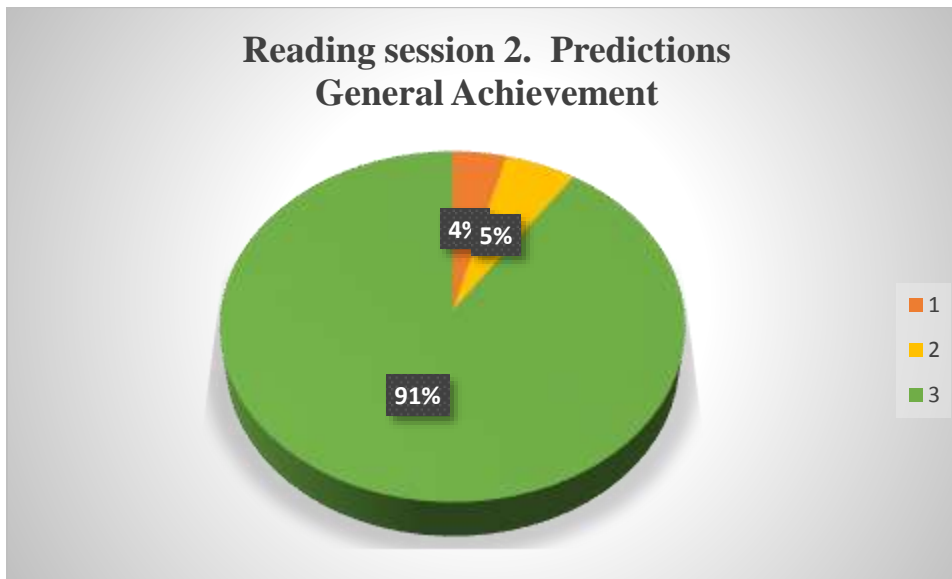
Figure 2. Reading comprehension achievement for session 2



Source: The Researcher

In this session three students obtained an A (4); one a BS; and two a BJ score.

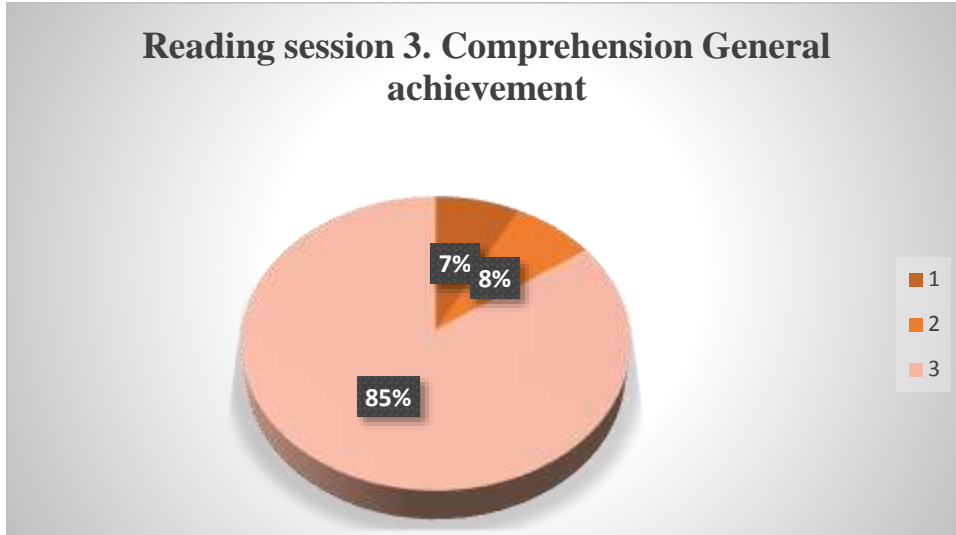
Figure 2A. General achievement for prediction in session 2



Source: The Researcher

The results show the same performance as the comprehension data obtained. In relation to the previous session a slight improvement is notorious.

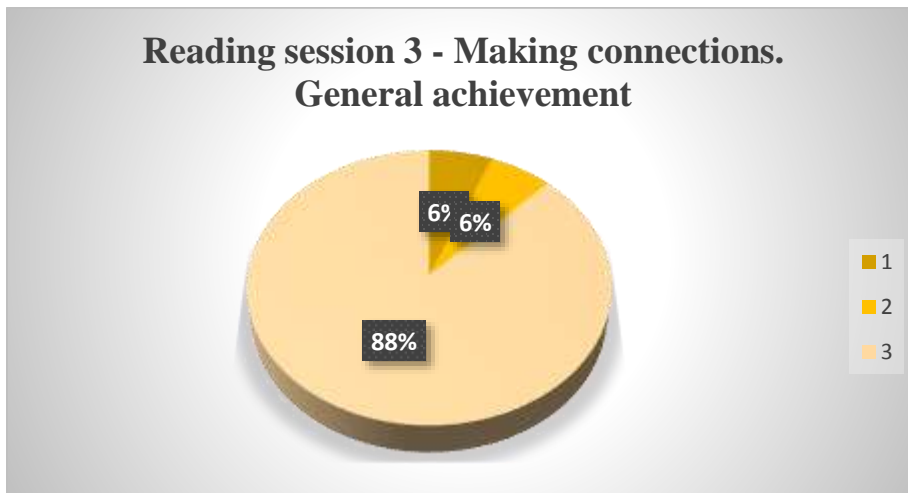
Figure 3. Reading comprehension achievement for session 3



Source: The Researcher

Four students obtained an A (4,0) score; one had a BS (3,0) and two had a BJ (2,0) score in this reading session.

Figure 3A. General achievements for making connections in session 3

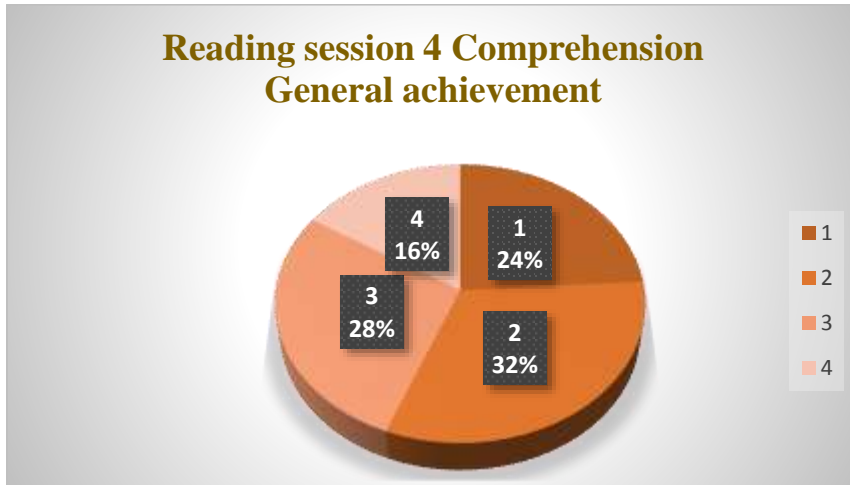


Source: The Researcher

In this activity, only one of the student who scored high in comprehension, obtained an A (4) score; three had a BS (3); and two a BJ (2). This seven years old student was unaware of the

English language when we started the classes. The figures reflect his achievements in relation to his classmates.

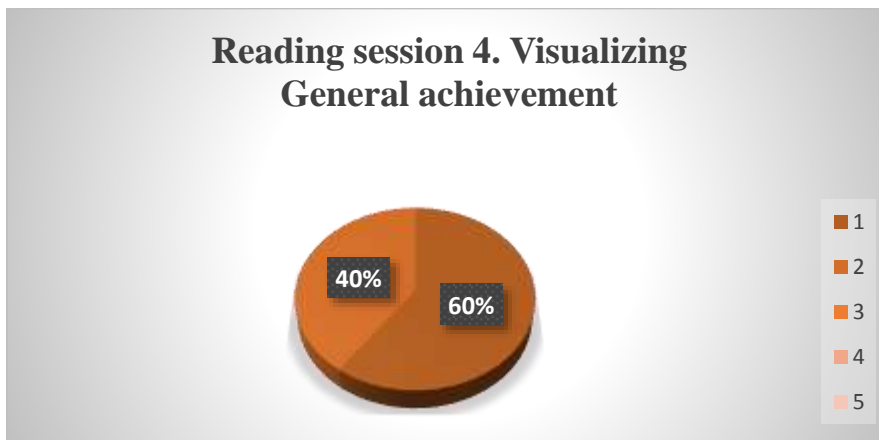
*Figure 4. Reading comprehension achievement for session 4*



Source: The Researcher

One student had an A (4,0); two had BS (3,5); one had a BJ (3,0); and two others had a BJ (2,0). These last two students present a mild cognitive condition and require the teacher assistance during the exercises accomplishment.

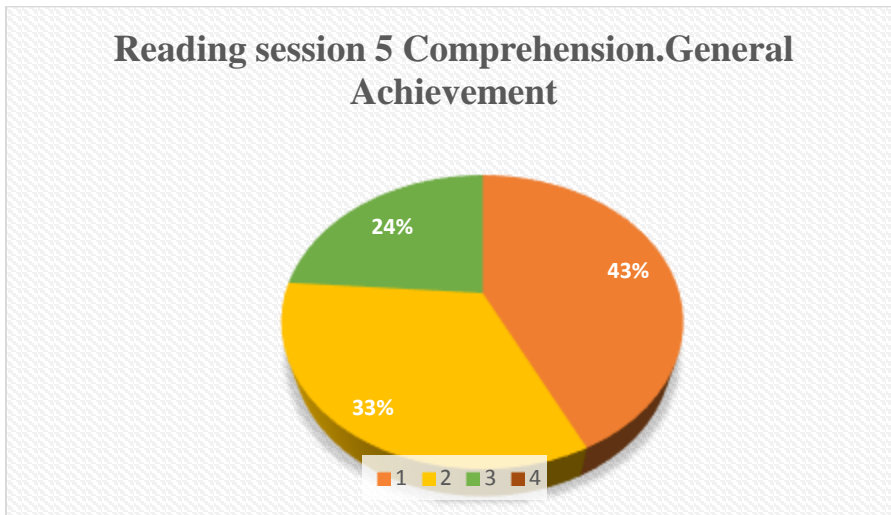
*Figure 4A. General achievement for visualizing in session 4*



Source: The Researcher

In this activity the children demonstrate a more uniform performance; one group obtained a BJ (3) equivalent to an adequate score, while the other group positioned on the BJ (2,0) equivalent to partial score.

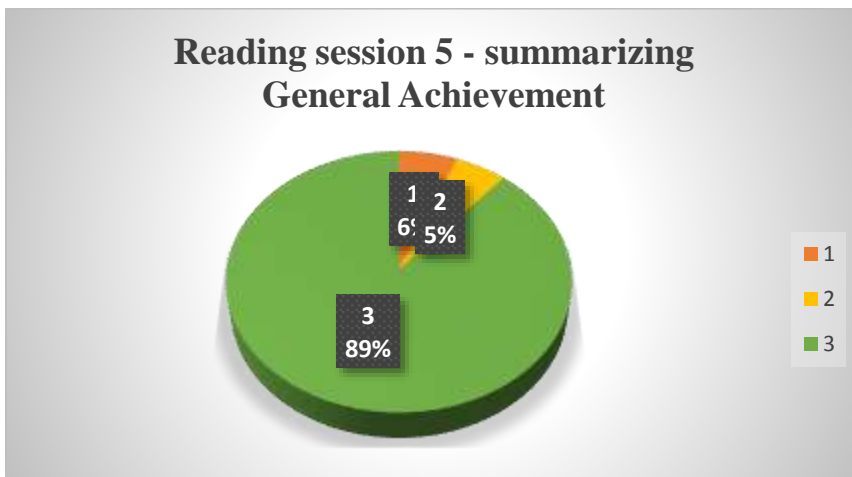
Figure 5. Reading comprehension achievement for session 5



Source: The Researcher

In this session four students scored superior S (4, 5); one obtained a BS (3,5); one had a BJ (2,5). The figure shows the improvement in reading comprehension.

Figure 5A. General achievement for summarizing in session 5

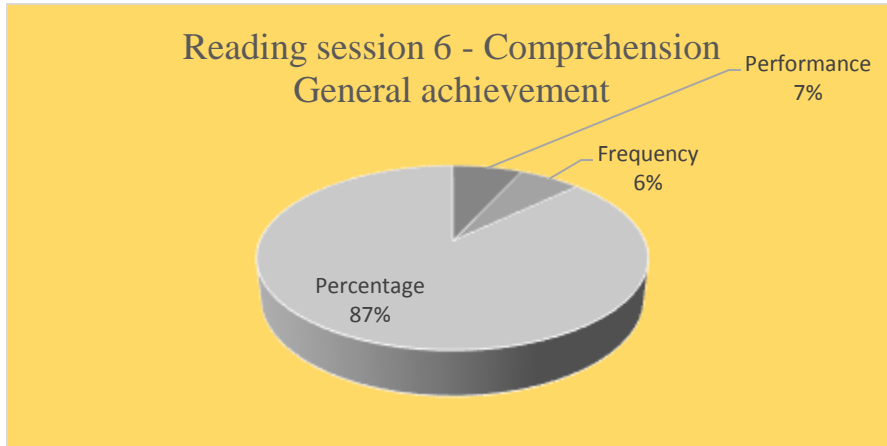


Source: The Researcher



The higher percentage represents two students scoring a BJ-adequate (3), and two more who had an A-high (4). Two children obtained a BJ-minimum (2,0) score.

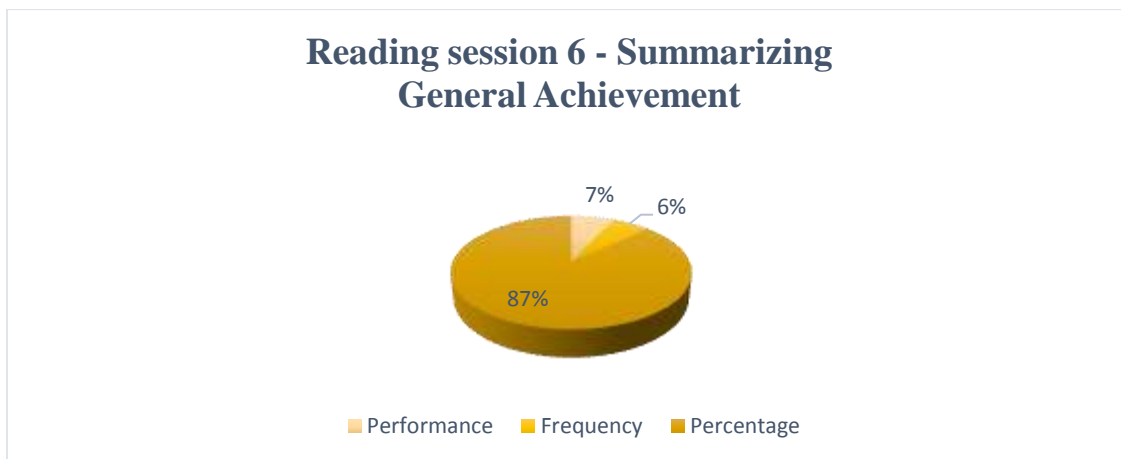
*Figure 6 Reading comprehension achievement for session 6.*



Source: The Researcher

The four children who had improved during the reading session now obtain a S-superior (4, 5) score; There is a comprehension advancement in the students who scored BJ along the study. One of these kids has a mild cognitive condition. The girl who scored low in former sessions, now shows a BJ (3, 0) improvement.

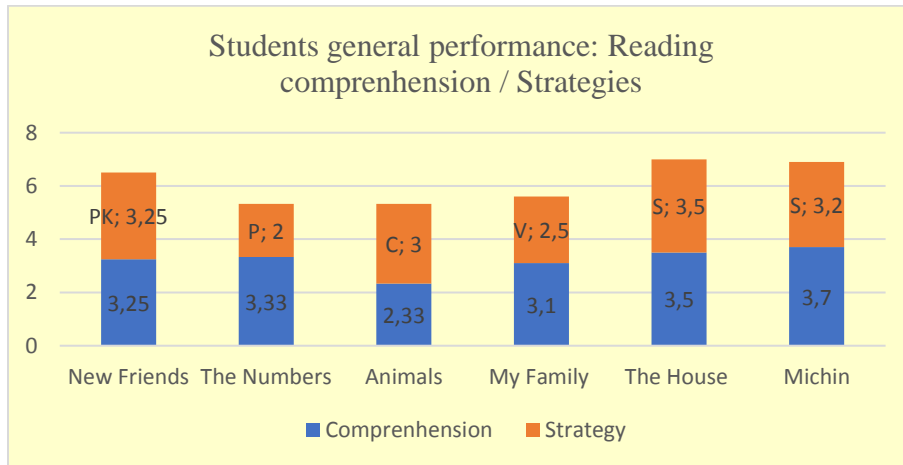
*Figure 6A. General achievement for summarizing in session 6.*



Source: The Researcher

In this last session, the scoring retain uniformity with the reading comprehension achievement. Children obtained high, adequate, and partial developments.

*Figure 7: General performance of students: comprehension vs. strategies.*



PK = previous knowledge; P = predictions; C = making connections; V = visualizing; S = summarizing.

Source: The Researcher

The chart shows us the students' evolution across the activities regarding with reading and the strategies used to reaffirm the learning. The information was obtained applying a media arithmetic formula over the general achievement in each lesson. As observed, in the last activity (Michin), the students obtained a better scoring in reading comprehension competence than in the first lesson (Friends). Prediction, used in the reading session 2, was the poorer scoring obtained in the learning strategies. However, in this same lesson the kids had a good comprehension; it is possibly that poor results are due to a lack of experience in this ability. One important aspect to consider is the association of vocabulary summary with the result of the last reading session. In this case, the lesson was written in a way to include all the concepts learned in the former classes. The results show the learning progression, confirming the opinion, which declare that students will progress in their achievement up to reach higher levels of comprehension and a confident ability to read extensive texts (Amer, 1997).

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

The final goal of this research study was finding an answer the following questions: “To what extent, classroom reading aloud becomes an effective tool for the development of reading comprehension in EFL second-graders?” and “In which ways can teachers use classroom reading aloud as a motivating strategy to engage children’s participation during English classes?”

The analysis of the data collected during the period of the study, revealed the proven benefits of reading aloud in the development of reading comprehension in young learners, in this case, the second graders. As observed in the graphics, the solid correlation between reading comprehension and reading strategies, afford for some important assertions. As seen in the literature review, reading is fundamental in literacy development in early learners; attainment of reading ability must be a relevant objective within the curricular standards. In agreement with the observations and results obtained in this study, it can be said that reading aloud represents a powerful tool to develop reading comprehension. Additional benefits observed in this study were

- 1) Vocabulary development. Children acquired and enhanced a vocabulary level, enough to communicate in English language, thoughts, needs, ideas, and decisions, in a simple and fluent way.
- 2) Listening comprehension. The results obtained in this study agree with the statement of Duhnn (2013). To acquire a language, children need to understand what they hear. If children can understand what they hear, it is easier for them to understand what they read, as they

associate the text content with listened words or sentences, easier. If the content is complemented with pictures or drawings, there is a high probability of achieving comprehension. The relationship between listening and reading comprehension was verified; children understood many of the words of each story and related them to the whole content. They even translated into Spanish those words and then make a general conclusion for each reading. 3) Phonemic awareness. Amer, A. A. (1997) believes that a proper production of punctuation signals, stress, and intonation by the teacher, may play an important role in comprehension. When children listen a person to read aloud to them, they progressively become aware of word pronunciation. They can naturally identify the sounds, and assimilate it to their stock of information. It was seen a special and progressive improvement on pronunciation and sound identification. 4) Personal confidence. Children felt more confident as the reading sessions advanced. Each one could read aloud and assured assistance and personal support. They asked for their turn to read aloud alone and participated with enthusiasm and motivation. 5) Additional help to children with special educative needs. One important observation about reading aloud was the results obtained with two children with special cognitive conditions. Though it was not the purpose of this study, observations confirmed that the reading aloud sessions motivated and attracted the attention of these two students to participate and accomplish, at their own pace, the activities designed for each class. The researcher thinks that a special teaching process of reading aloud, intended for these children, would give positive outcomes in their learning progress.

Another important question linked to the general objective of this work relates to the ways how teachers may use classroom reading aloud to motivate and engage children's participation during English classes. In this study, reading aloud was used as the main approach accompanied by reading strategies and activities. Reading contents were also central; the

researcher designed the stories to fit the age, needs, interests and previous knowledge of the young students. These teacher-written stories became special for reading comprehension development; each one had a personal hook for children. Children felt identified, and easily recognized the events, the characters, the places. Woolly, G. (2011) stated the importance of considering the sociocultural context of students in the planning and organizing of reading topics and general classes. It is necessary to go beyond the wide array of impersonal teaching materials and contextualize the educative process. The main strategy was complemented with other ones, as activation of previous knowledge; predicting; visualizing, and summarizing. For each one, the exercises were also appealing, simple, clear and concrete. In every segment, the student learning needs were the log that guided the project (Cameron, 2001).

Teacher assistance is necessary for them during working activities; most of the students had questions, uncertainties, and even fears. The helpful guidance was enough to encourage them to go back over their activities. The class environment is also relevant. Young children are restless; they need movement and action. Therefore, the teacher must contemplate and reflect on the social, emotional and physical conditions for class development. The material tools, psychological tools, and other human tools are the teaching mediators, as Vygotsky acknowledged. Kozulin (1998). These must be present during the progress of each process of teaching and learning a new language, as it was the case of EFL second graders of Liceo del Valle.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

This research work implied a long way walked; many satisfactory experiences are attached to the development of this experience. It can be said at the end of this project, that the most important outcome has been personally proved. By means of an accountable and compliant work, reading aloud came to be, without a doubt, one of the best strategies that the researcher could ever use to help young children, and students in general, to achieving reading comprehension and enhancing their learning process.

One important aspect to highlight in this research study was the classroom environment; each class was like a feast; without neglecting discipline and responsibility, children felt that English reading was an enjoyable time. Every class section was attractive, simple, free of pressures, and natural; in consequence, the students responded with enthusiasm and gradually they did show comprehension improvement. This strategy has an important impact on reading comprehension, vocabulary growth, fluency, self-confidence, and other important additional benefits. Continuous and well-designed classroom routines of reading aloud, in early school years, can build a complete and solid literacy ability. One important conclusion from the researcher, susceptible of deeper investigation, is the use of reading aloud to help the population of students with some degree of cognitive deficiency. It might be a valuable tool to assist these populations in the acquisition of English language reading comprehension abilities. Teachers

should be aware of the benefits of this strategy and the different factors associated. Each new generation must be better than the former one. Guiding the children, the future of society, is a privilege; and this is a challenge that current professionals may assume. Reading represents the open door to new ways of thinking and living; English represents the opportunity to know other cultures and other worlds. Not many of the young children in the schools today enjoy to reading aloud about those worlds. The benefits of reading aloud are extensive, diverse and available to educators. This is a tool that teachers may not disregard.

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## APPENDIX A: APPROVAL LETTERS

Palmira, Septiembre 20 de 2016

Señores  
INSTITUCIÓN EDUCATIVA LICEO DEL VALLE  
Att.  
Lic. Bertha Mabel Vásquez D.


Ref. Solicitud autorización para trabajo de investigación.

Cordial Saludo. Por la presente estoy solicitando su autorización para adelantar en el Liceo del Valle, la institución educativa que usted dirige, el trabajo correspondiente a la investigación sobre "El uso de la lectura en voz alta dentro del salón de clase, como una estrategia para desarrollar la comprensión lectora en los niños de segundo grado de primaria". En este estudio estarán participando los niños autorizados por sus padres o acudientes.

El trabajo es de tipo cualitativo y se desarrollará dentro de las horas asignadas para la clase de inglés, esto es, una hora y media semanales, aplicando la estrategia de lectura en voz alta. Se hará un seguimiento utilizando instrumentos de observación y cuestionarios para los padres, la dirección y los estudiantes. El trabajo tendrá una duración de seis semanas.

Agradezco de antemano su valiosa colaboración.

Atentamente,

  
Carmen Esperanza Castañeda N.

Docente de Inglés.  
CC.30710617





**LICEO DEL VALLE LTDA**

Resolucion 3220-0200-652 de abril del 2008.S.E.M

Codigo del DANE 376520003479 Nit.8150019345

Carrera 30 No.27-44 Telefono. 2709186

[LICEODELVALLE.EDU@GMAIL.COM](mailto:LICEODELVALLE.EDU@GMAIL.COM)

**Palmira, septiembre 22 del 2.016**

**Señora:**

**Carmen Esperanza Castañeda**

**Cordial Saludo:**

**Dando respuesta a su correspondencia enviada el día 20 de septiembre del 2.016.**

**Se le autoriza que Usted realice su practica con los educandos del grado segundo de básica primaria en la asignatura ingles con una intensidad horaria de dos horas semanales.**

**Atentamente.**

**Bertha Mabel Vásquez Dussan**  
**Rectora.**

## ANNEX B: EXAMPLE OF THE RESEARCH INFORMED CONSENT

<b>CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN</b>
<b>Fecha:</b> Septiembre 13, 2016
<b>Título del Proyecto de Investigación:</b> Read Aloud Classroom Reading: A Strategy to Develop Reading Comprehension on English as a Foreign Language Second Graders at Liceo del Valle, Palmira - Valle del Cauca.
<b>Universidad:</b> Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia UNAD
<b>Investigadora:</b> Carmen Esperanza Castañeda N.
<b>Celular:</b> 3177833359
<b>Lugar donde se realiza el Estudio:</b> Institución Educativa Liceo del Valle.
<b>Dirección:</b> Carrera 30 No. 27-44
<b>Teléfono:</b> 2709186
Cualquier aspecto del presente Consentimiento Informado que usted no entienda, por favor pregunte a la Investigadora para que le aclare las dudas que pueda tener al respecto de los términos y condiciones en el que trabajo de investigación se realizará y el papel de su autorizado dentro del desarrollo de esta investigación. Una copia de este Consentimiento quedara en su poder y además tiene la autorización para enterarse del desarrollo del trabajo y de la participación de su hijo- hija en el mismo.
Usted ha sido invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación. Antes de que usted decida participar en el estudio por favor lea este consentimiento cuidadosamente. Haga todas las preguntas que usted tenga, para asegurarse de que entienda los procedimientos del estudio, incluyendo los riesgos y los beneficios.
<b>Propósito del estudio:</b> Este proyecto pretende estudiar la efectividad de la lectura en voz alta en el salón de clase, como estrategia para desarrollar la comprensión lectora en inglés como lengua extranjera en niños y niñas de 2º. Grado de primaria.
<b>Participantes del estudio:</b> La participación de este estudio es completamente voluntaria y sujeta a la aprobación del padre de familia del menor invitado a participar. Las actividades se desarrollarán durante el tiempo de clases establecido para la asignatura de Inglés.
<b>Condiciones especiales</b> La participación de su hijo - hija no implica una remuneración o beneficio económico. La docente investigadora pondrá todo su empeño en el avance académico del niño - niña involucrado-a y en alcanzar un nivel satisfactorio de desarrollo de su comprensión lectora en el idioma Inglés.
<u>Isabella Escobar Perez</u> Nombre del Participante

Diana M<sup>a</sup> Pérez Zubala

Firma del padre/madre o acudiente  
CC. No. 211661672

Bertha M. V. D.

Firma de la Directora de la Institución Educativa  
CC.

Chaperón/ma

Firma de la Investigadora Principal  
CC.

Stani  
Flora Flores Pérez  
E S M

## ANNEX C: EXAMPLE OF THE INTERVIEW TO STAFF

Initial semi-structured interview to general teacher – principal – and secretary

Name: Bertha Nabel Vassquez Position: Rectora - Docente

1. Usted cree que la enseñanza del inglés es una asignatura importante en el currículo escolar?

Si, porque las educandas necesitan de un segundo idioma, practicamente para todas las asignaturas del conocimiento.

2. Cuál ha sido la experiencia de esta institución en la inclusión de esta asignatura?

Es una asignatura muy importante y para nosotros es gratificante que nuestros estudiantes puedan tener un inglés fluido, y nuestra gran experiencia es que a ellos les gusta.

3) Como califica usted el desarrollo de la enseñanza de inglés en la institución en los últimos cinco años

ha sido muy buena porque hemos tenido docenas de cupos para esta asignatura y han llegado a nuestros educandos.

4) Usted cree que es importante que los niños de esta institución reciban una formación sólida? ¿Por qué?

Claro que si debido a que es un idioma universal, donde ellos en el futuro pueden

4) Como compararia la experiencia de la enseñanza de inglés en este último año, discente

Pienso que ha sido excelente porque el docente a cargo es muy bueno y el estado actual de la enseñanza y aprendizaje de inglés a nivel de la primaria, y específicamente en el grado 2º Excelente

5) Con respecto a los años anteriores, ¿cómo calificaria el proceso actual de enseñanza y aprendizaje de inglés a nivel de la primaria, y específicamente en el grado 2º Excelente

6) ¿Cuáles son sus expectativas en el desarrollo del proceso de enseñanza de inglés en la institución?

Mi expectativas que nuestros educandos de pre-escolar a undecimo tengan un inglés fluido.

Comentarios adicionales Hay que destacar que la docente se le vio muy buen desempeño con los educandos.

pienso que es una persona muy comprometida con su labor como docente.

Closed interview to the general teacher, principal and secretary.

Nombre: *Beatrix Mabel Vasquez Dussan*

Preguntas	Si	No
¿Usted cree que el inglés es esencial para el desarrollo profesional de los individuos?	✓	
¿La inclusión del inglés ha sido una prioridad en la institución en años anteriores?	✓	
¿Desde su perspectiva, la experiencia institucional de enseñanza del inglés durante los cinco años anteriores ha sido satisfactoria?	✓	
¿Usted cree que es importante que los estudiantes de la institución reciban una formación sólida en el conocimiento del idioma inglés?	✓	
¿Ha visto cambios sustanciales en la enseñanza del idioma en el último año?	✓	
¿El proceso actual de enseñanza de la asignatura cumple con los estándares esperados?	✓	
¿A su manera de ver, ha percibido cambios positivos en los estudiantes con respecto a la enseñanza del inglés?	✓	
¿Con respecto al antes y al ahora considera que los cambios son positivos?	✓	

## ANNEX D: EXAMPLE OF PLACEMENT TEST

## Read the text and answer the questions.

This is Megan. She is two. She is little. She is happy.  
This is Ned. He is eight. He is big. He is sad.  
This is Kate. She is ten. She is big. She is happy.

---

Megan is .....

Q.1

- two
- ten

---

Megan is .....

Q.2

- big
- little

---

Ned is .....

Q.3

- 9
- 8

---

Ned is .....

Q.4

- :)
- :(

---

Kate is .....

Q.5

- 10
  - 9
-

**Placement: READING A1. (i)**

Read these words.

Draw a line from each word to the matching picture.

1. door



2. bag



3. hand



4. dog



5. apple



6. coat





## ANNEX E: EXAMPLE OF A LESSON PLAN

<b>Liceo del Valle, Palmira. Lesson Plan – Research project</b>			
<b>Teacher: Carmen Esperanza Castañeda</b>		30.710.617	
<b>Groups: 2d grade</b>	Hour: 10:11:30.	<b>September 30, 2016</b>	
<b>Topic: I like the numbers (Reading comprehension)</b>		<b>Reading session 2</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectives:</li> <li>• To make predictions on the story based on the comprehension of the reading.</li> <li>• To confirm predictions based on the information provided in the story</li> <li>• To demonstrate comprehension on the story by identifying the numbers 1-10</li> </ul>			
Activity description	Resources	Timing	Sources
<b>Warm-Up.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greet children and talk about the last class.</li> <li>• Invite children to share their experience with that learning.</li> <li>• Review their notebooks.</li> </ul>	Personal notebooks; pencils, colors.	10 minutes	
<b>Previous knowledge:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paste flashcards with colored numbers, ask them up to what number they can count, and if they know how to write them.</li> <li>• Show the first picture and ask if they can figure what topic our class is going to be.</li> <li>• Write a list on the board with their names and predictions about the story.</li> </ul>	Board, color markers; flashcards	10 Minutes	Teacher's production
<b>Presentation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the story for today and be sure they are ready before start reading.</li> <li>• Read the story, making emphasis in pronunciation. Be ready to answer questions.</li> </ul>	Reading Worksheet	10 minute	Teacher's written text and design.
<b>Practice:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite the children to read aloud with you, not to repeat what you read.</li> <li>• Correct spelling, pronunciation, and be ready to help the kids in this process.</li> <li>• Invite the children to individual reading. Give them confidence to read alone. Assist them and answer their questions if necessary</li> </ul>	Exercise worksheets	20 Minutes	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Note: if there is time: ask them to dictate the story. You or other child may write on the board.</b></li> </ul>	Board, Color markers		
<b>Feedback:</b> Review with them the reading content; ask about characters and details. Ask and answer questions if necessary. Help them, keep a comfortable environment.	Worksheets, talking time	10	
<b>Production:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give them the prediction exercise handout. In the first part, children will write their answers to the prediction questions.</li> <li>• Help them to work with the next 2 sections. Make them feel confident in this process.</li> </ul>	Worksheets, pens, colors.	10 minutes.	
<b>Assessment:</b> Work with the comprehension handout. Guide them to carefully read the questions. Let them work freely; they may not think this is an assessment.	Comprehension exercises.	15 minutes	
<b>Closure:</b> Congratulate them for their performance. Give the time to write on their notebooks. Ask them to finish this step at home.			

Materials and worksheets:

- 1 Reading story
- 2 Drawings
- 3 Prediction exercise
- 4 Comprehension assessment.

## ANNEX F: EXAMPLE OF A READING STORY SESSION

**I like the numbers, how about you?**



One day the numbers had a party. All of their friends came with the best colored dresses. Each one talked about what number they liked most.

I like the number one, said the pink flower. I like the number two, said the elegant orange color. We like the number three said the turtles. The little children came singing: “the number four is is nice, nice, nice, nice”.

No, no, no, said the fishes, the number five is the most beautiful. The happy six was dancing, waiting for the number seven to come. But the number eight came before greeting to everyone. Hellooo!!! How are you???

We are happy, and brought apples for everyone, answered the number nine.  
Finally, the number ten entered into the room. All the numbers said a respectful  
“wellcome Mr. Number ten”. It was the older number of the party.



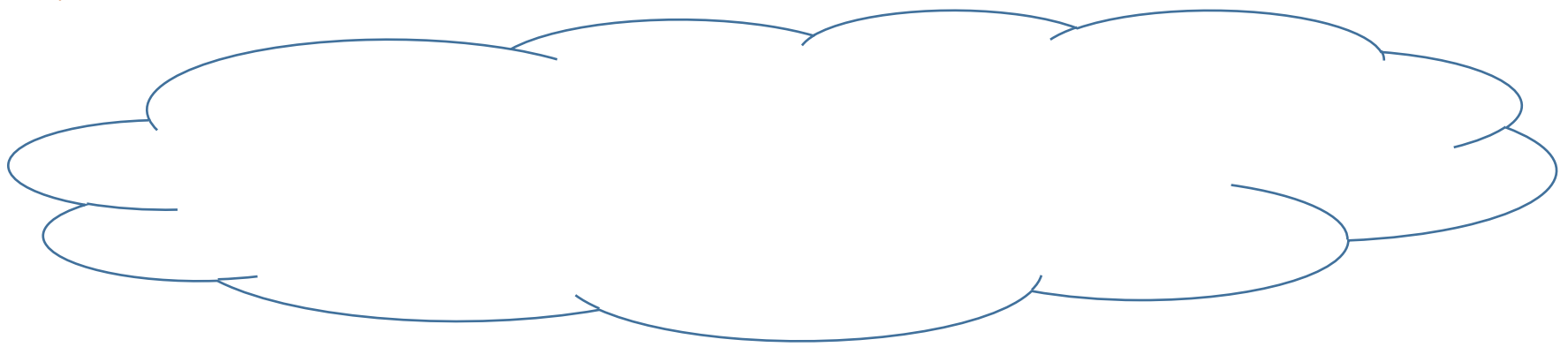
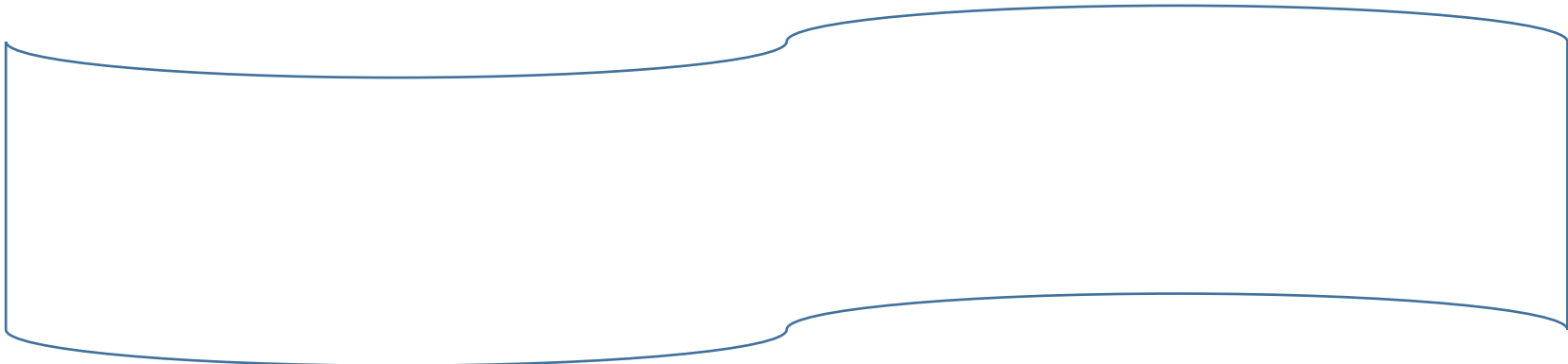


Making predictions exercise: **I like the numbers, how about you?**

I think that this story is going to be about...

I think this because.....

This story makes me remember of..



**Comprehension exercise.**

What color does the flower like -----?

The number three is for the -----

The fishes are for the number \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. elegant orange dress is \_\_\_\_\_

Nice, nice, nice, nice, said the \_\_\_\_\_

The happy \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_

The stars are inside the \_\_\_\_\_

The purple number \_\_\_\_\_ has a pair of glasses

The green frog is the \_\_\_\_\_

The older in the party is \_\_\_\_\_

Write the story on your notebook, cut the drawings of page 2, and paste the numbers in front of the corresponding sentence.

## ANNEX G: EXAMPLE OF THE FIELD DIARY

<b>Educative Institution</b>		Liceo del Valle	
<b>Grade:</b> 2 <sup>o</sup> .		<b>Number of students:</b> 6	
Date: September 30, 2016		Field Diary No. 3	
<b>Address</b>	Calle 30 No. 27-44. Palmira, Valle	<b>Phone:</b> <b>E-mail:</b>	2709186
<b>Researcher:</b> Carmen Esperanza Castañeda			
<b>Reading aloud session:</b> The numbers.			
<b>Story:</b> I like the numbers, how about you?			
<b>Class development observation:</b>			
<b>Objectives:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make predictions on the story based on the comprehension of the reading.</li> <li>• To confirm predictions based on the information provided in the story</li> <li>• To demonstrate comprehension on the story by identifying the numbers 1-10</li> <li>• To write down correctly the numbers 1-10 on their notebook</li> </ul>			
<b>Activities:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I paste some pictures on the board. I invite the children to look at the pictures and imagine what we are going to talk about. They are asked how many numbers they can recall and write; what do they think when hear the numbers 1-10. I also ask them if they can figure out what would the end of the story. They say: “we are going to count from number one to ten, and then write on the notebook those numbers and put color on them”. They participate answering in Spanish. I am ready to correct them and invite to learn the words in English.</li> <li>• I read the story aloud, twice and then invite the students to read aloud in choir while I help them with pronunciation. Next, each child reads the story, or a section of the story, following the sequence.</li> <li>• I ask questions related to the story to confirm their understanding and help with doubts. Children can make questions and share their insights about the content.</li> </ul>			
<b>General description of the group:</b>			
The group is composed by eight children but today two of them (Elizabeth and Samuel) are missing.			
<b>Behaviors:</b> (participation, motivation, frustration, concern, engagement)			
Today children are tranquil and motivated to start with the reading session. One of the girls (Elizabeth) and one of the boys (Samuel) is missing our group. After the first activity, each one receives the story hand-out. I ask them to follow the reading as they normally do in Spanish, that is, they can put a finger, a pencil, if			



necessary, to keep the sequence of words. Also, I ask them to read the word even if they do not know how to pronounce it. I try to give them confidence telling that surely I am going to correct and help them with pronunciation, and that the most important is for them to try to understand what we are reading.

They read aloud, and though the obvious pronunciation mistakes, they engage merrily and enjoy the reading. They show satisfaction when they feel they understand what they are reading.

**Difficulties:**

The group did not show notorious difficulties. They already know some numbers and that make them feel confident. They go ahead with reading after the teacher correct pronunciation errors.

**Achievements:**

They could read the whole story. When I asked them if they were right when they thought the story was going to be about numbers, they answered:

**María José:** I thought we were going to count from 1 to 10

**Hanna Isabel:** I also thought that

**Dayra:** I also thought we were going to draw the numbers

**Isabella:** Numbers (Isabella has a mild cognitive deficiency)

**Juan David:** I thought we were going to count dinosaurs because there are numbers and one “dino”.

**Nicolas:** did not answer.

**Overall comments:** The reading session was a nice time; the children actively participated, they were happy because they understood the story and could confirm that what they thought were right.

**Results:** measured by the reading comprehension and prediction exercises.

**Hannah, Juan David, Dayra, and María José.** Had and adequate comprehension: they told most of events of the story.

**Nicolas.** Had some comprehension: He could understand some of the events.

**Isabella.** Had little comprehension: She could understand the numbers, the flower, and the turtles.

**Assessment 1) Reading comprehension**

#1 María José = 3.5 (BS)

#2 Juan David; #3 Hannah; #5 Dayra = (A) 4.0

#7 Isabella = (BJ) 2.5

# 8 Nicolas = BJ 2.5

**Reading comprehension rubric:**

S = Accurate understanding of important information in the text by focusing on the key ideas and facts presented explicitly and implicitly Makes simple predictions about a story

A = Accurate understanding of important information by focusing on many of the key ideas and facts.

BS = Somewhat accurate understanding of the important information by focusing on a few ideas and facts.

BJ = little or no understanding of the text due to lack of focus on key ideas and facts.

**The scores follow the Colombian standard for evaluation from 0-5**

S = Superior 5.0 – 4.5

A= High: 4.4- 4.0

BS = Basic: 3.9- 3.5

BJ = Low: 3.4 – 0.0

**2) Making predictions - rubric**

Prediction (3-4) and justifications about possible events in story is clearly presented. = 4

Prediction (2-3) and justification about possible events in story is somewhat unclear, or incomplete = 3

Prediction (2-1) about possible events in story is incomplete, very unclear, and the justification is somewhat wrong = 2

Prediction and justification about possible events in story is missing. = 1

**#1 MJ. = 3.0; #2 JD; #3 Hannah; #5 Dayra = 3**

**#7 Isabella = 1**

**# 8 Nicolas = 1**

## ANNEX H: EVALUATION RUBRIC

**Reading Comprehension Rubric. 2º. Grade – Liceo del Valle. Palmira  
Research Work. – C. Esperanza Castañeda-**

Ability/strategy	Evaluation Criteria			
Understanding	Superior (S) High (4)	High (A) Adequate (3)	Basic (BS) Partial (2)	Low (BJ) Minimal (1)
	Accurate understanding of important information. Focus on the explicit main ideas	Accurate understanding of important information. Focus on many of the explicit main ideas.	Some understanding of important information. Focus on one-two of the explicit main ideas.	Little or no understanding of the text. Lack of focus on the main ideas.
<b>Prior knowledge</b>	Relates prior knowledge/experience to. Talks about what he/she learned in the session and relate the topic with own prior knowledge	Relates prior knowledge/experience to text. Gives some explanation of what he/she learned in the session. Makes some relation of the topic with own prior knowledge.	Relates prior knowledge/experience to text. Cannot explain what he/she learned in the session. Cannot relate the topic with own prior knowledge	Fail to relate, explain and relate the topic with own prior knowledge.
<b>Making predictions</b>	Clear prediction and confirmation about possible events in story	Unclear prediction and confirmation about possible events in story	Unclear and confuse prediction about possible events in story. Lack of confirmation.	Unable to predict and confirm possible events in story
<b>Making Connections</b> (text-to self; tex-to-text; text-to world)	Easy, unaided, discerning connection in the three levels.	Easy, unaided, appropriate connections in two levels.	Appropriate, simple connections in one level.	Superficial, limited connections.
<b>Visualizing</b>	Clearly visualizes key elements from the text, refer and illustrate them in a detailed draw.	Visualizes and represents in a draw some elements specially the character.	Visualizes and draw Some secondary elements. The main concepts are missing.	Unable to visualize; unable to draw. elements, or they have not

				relationship to the topic
<b>Summarizing</b>	The student summarized including complete details of important events and sequence of the story.	The student summarized including the important events and sequence of the story.	The student told some of the story but did not include the most important events. Unable to follow sequence.	Unable to summarize, describe or tell the sequence of events in the story.

## ANNEX I: EXAMPLE OF THE FINAL INTERVIEW TO CHILDREN

Juan David Solís Portocarrero, 7c

## Final Interview to chosen participants – Open answers

Preguntas	Respuestas
¿Qué es lo más te gusta de las clases de Inglés?	travolar
¿Qué te gustó de las lecturas?	leer textos
¿Las ilustraciones (dibujos) te ayudaron a entender la lectura?	la familia
¿Qué piensas de la manera como hemos leído las historias en inglés?	están bien
Con respecto a la pregunta anterior, ¿fue difícil, fácil, y por qué?	fue fácil
¿Te gustó que la profesora leyera primero en voz alta y luego lo hicieras tú?	me gustó mucho me ayudó mucho
¿Cómo te sentiste leyendo en voz alta?	lo hice bien
¿Crees que leer las historias en voz alta te ha ayudado a entender los temas de la clase?	me ayudó mucho a entender
¿Te gustaría seguir leyendo historias o libros en inglés?	si me encanta
¿Crees que es más fácil entender el tema de una historia si la leemos en voz alta?	si genial

Isabella  
8

Final Interview to chosen participants – Open answers

Preguntas	Respuestas
¿Qué es lo más te gusta de las clases de inglés?	dibujos
¿Qué te gustó de las lecturas?	historia de numeros
¿Las ilustraciones (dibujos) te ayudaron a entender la lectura?	si me ayuda
¿Qué piensas de la manera como hemos leído las historias en inglés?	yo leo
Con respecto a la pregunta anterior, ¿fue difícil, fácil, y por qué?	mañil
¿Te gustó que la profesora leyera primero en voz alta y luego lo hicieras tú?	si yo lei
¿Cómo te sentiste leyendo en voz alta?	yo puedo
¿Crees que leer las historias en voz alta te ha ayudado a entender los temas de la clase?	si el gato
¿Te gustaría seguir leyendo historias o libros en inglés?	si con mi profesora
¿Crees que es más fácil entender el tema de una historia si la leemos en voz alta?	si voz alta

Camila Alejandra Vazquez Laguna  
7 años

Final Interview to chosen participants -- Open answers

Preguntas	Respuestas
¿Qué es lo más te gusta de las clases de inglés?	Las historias
¿Qué te gustó de las lecturas?	Los dibujos y las palabras
¿Las ilustraciones (dibujos) te ayudaron a entender la lectura?	si,
¿Qué piensas de la manera como hemos leído las historias en inglés?	que están bien, lo entendi
Con respecto a la pregunta anterior, ¿fue difícil, fácil, y por qué?	fue fácil
¿Te gustó que la profesora leyera primero en voz alta y luego lo hicieras tú?	si
¿Cómo te sentiste leyendo en voz alta?	mejor bien yo pude leer
¿Crees que leer las historias en voz alta te ha ayudado a entender los temas de la clase?	entendi la historia de Michih
¿Te gustaría seguir leyendo historias o libros en inglés?	si claro
¿Crees que es más fácil entender el tema de una historia si la leemos en voz alta?	si sech+ichae faci porque porque la profe nos repite