UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

"The Impact of the Use of Focused Reading Strategies for the Improvement of A2

Level English Students' Reading Comprehension-Performance at the Foreign Language

Department of the University of El Salvador"

Presented by:

Maritza Elizabeth Flores Acosta   **FA07020**

Dora Lilian López de Meléndez   **LD07003**

Cledis Sugeidy Pérez López   **PL05013**

To obtain the degree of:

Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching

Advisor: Mauricio Salvador Contreras Cárcamo, MsD

Main Campus, April 4th, 2016

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RESEARCH ADVISOR

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God:

For providing us with wisdom, strength and knowledge along the development of the bachelor's degree program and along this research work.

To our beloved families and friends:

For supporting us with their constant advice.

To our co-workers and classmates:

For providing us with helpful academic comments.

To our advisor and professors:

For guiding us through the learning, process wisely.

Maritza Elizabeth Flores Acosta

Cledis Sugeidy Pérez López

Dora Lilian López de Meléndez

INDEX

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The main objective of this research project was to determine the impact of using focused reading comprehension strategies on a group of students of English Intermediate I from the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador, as our representative sample of this research, in order to find out if they helped them to improve their reading comprehension performance.

In the first chapter, we describe some details about the research topic, whose main interest is the implementation of reading comprehension strategies that could help A2 level students to improve their reading comprehension performance in this level. In addition, this study is based mainly on four research questionsas the basis of the whole project.

In chapter 2, we describe the theoretical framework which is the theory about the reading history, the different methods used throughout history to teach English as a foreign language; among these methods we can mention Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Audiovisual method, Communicative Language Teaching and Task-based Teaching. Moreover, this includes reading learning theories such as cognitive and interactive reading approaches: bottom–up and top-down, psycholinguistic reading approach, schema theory and brain gym exercises; from all of this reading learning theory emerged the focused reading strategies applied during the implementation process of this research which includes sensitive reception strategies and focused reception strategies for reading.

In chapter 3, we describe the research methodology in which this Quasi-experimental study was carried out in order to determine the impact of the use of focused reading strategies in A2 level students' improvement of their reading comprehension performance. This Mixed research was designed to get both qualitative and quantitative results, but priority was given to qualitative data (QUAL-quan DESIGN).

The convenience sampling was the method used to choose one group (group5) out of the seven English Intermediate I courses at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2015, and the sampling design orientation criteria used was the sample relationship criteria, based on the identical concurrent mixed sampling design.

The research consisted of three different phases: the diagnostic phase which used as instruments a survey and reading test as a diagnostic evaluation, the implementation phase of some focused reading strategies which includes 8 sessions and their corresponding reading activities executed in 4 stages (planning, execution, evaluation and repair, through six weeks during the first semester of 2015), and a validation phase which used a survey and a reading test as a validating evaluation.

In chapter 4, we show the results obtained from both qualitative and quantitative data analysis of our research. The findings reflect a positive impact of the focused reading strategies implementation, showing a significant improvement of focused reading comprehension performance on this group; these findings are strongly supported

by the results obtained from the data analysis that gave positive answers to the research questions.

In the final part of this research, we provide some conclusions and recommendations addressed to all the actors involved in the English teaching and learning process at the University ofEl Salvador. In this chapter, we conclude that because of the implementation of both focused reception strategies and sensitive reception strategies, English intermediate I students improved their reading comprehension performance. Besides, we recommend continuing applying these reading comprehension strategies in the English classes, among all suggestions offered in this final part of the research.

INTRODUCTION

The results of this type of research are expected to be useful and relevant to the researchers, the professors, the students and the co-workers. Critical reflection is the most important aspect of qualitative and quantitative research. Giving priority to qualitative data, which can provide to the foreign language educational field a significant information about the impact of focused reading strategies in the improvement of reading comprehension performance?

The goal of this research is to find out the impact of focused reading strategies in the improvement of A2 level English intermediate I students' reading comprehension performance and help learners to start coping with the difficulties that many students have when facing reading exercises and exams in the foreign language classroom and when reading for pleasure in their everyday lives. For this research, we will take into account the information proposed by The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (regarding the reading proficiency levels according to the CEFRL 2001, see annex 1) about reading comprehension of written texts and a number of strategies that can help students to overcome difficulties when developing this skill.

In the first chapter, we will expose the interest of this research. We will present the sample of students this research was based upon. In the second chapter, we begin with a theoretical justification. The third chapter presents the methodology which reports the experienced events during the implementation of a wide number of sensitive and focused reception strategies that can help overcome the problems that students face when working on a reading intensively or extensively inside and outside the classroom.

Then, we will present the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data in chapter four. Finally, in chapter five, we will expose our conclusions and recommendations as a result of this research.

OBJECTIVES

General Objective:

✓ To determine the impact of the use of focused reading strategies for the improvement of A2 level English students' reading comprehension performance at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador.

SpecificObjectives:

✓ To implement focused reading strategies in order to measure the impact on the improvement of A2 level English students' reading comprehension performance at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador.

✓ Help A2 level English students at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador to improve their reading comprehension performance by teaching reading strategies explicitly.

JUSTIFICATION

The reason that motivated this research topic comes from our own previous experiences when being assessed on reading exercises, or tests. Also, it is considered that some of the factors that could affect reading comprehension performance might be the lack or poor use of focused reading comprehension strategies within English Intermediate I groups. Besides, there are few studies centered on the importance of applying focused reading strategies in teaching-learning process for A2 level English students at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

In 2010, two teachers of the Foreign Language Department of University of El Salvador carried out an action research by implementing focused strategies centered on listening; the positive results of their research have motivated this research on reading.

The poor use of explicit focused reading comprehension strategies applied by English Intermediate I students could be one of the factors that affect reading comprehension performance. For that reason, the goal of this research is to find out the impact of the use of focused reading strategies in order to improve students' reading performance by teaching them explicitly.

Therefore, the center of interest to carry out this research is the focused reading strategies to improve students' reading comprehension performance.

CHAPTER I

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Regarding on the complexity of developing reading skill that many A2 level English students could find in their learning process, this research comes to rise a main interest by the possible implementation of focused reading strategies that could help students to improve their reading comprehension performance at English Intermediate I course of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. Besides, sometimes students are not able to understand neither short texts nor long readings; for example, students read books just for finishing books or for accomplishing an activity in which the teacher, but neglecting meaning, is evaluating them.

For that reason, it is necessary to analyze the impact of implementing focused reading strategies, which could help students to read intensively and extensively written texts efficiently. It is important to provide students with reading strategies that could help them to reach the proficiency needed at A2 level, proposed by the CEFRL.

Because of these main reasons, the following research questions have arisen:

1. Do English Intermediate I students at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador apply any focused reading strategies in order to comprehend better written texts?

2. Is there any explicit teaching for an efficient use of focused reading strategies in order to comprehend written texts at the Foreign Department of the University of El Salvador?

3. Is there an awareness of the importance of applying focused reading strategies that could be used by A2 level students of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador when reading?

4. Could the implementation of focused reading strategies help A2 level students to improve their reading comprehension performance at the Foreign Department of the University of El Salvador?

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We, as human beings, are a wonder of nature since we are blessed with the power of speech that helps us not only to communicate, but also to interact and develop ourselves along our lives. This power of speech is our main tool to develop different abilities in life all around the world; moreover, it is worth mentioning that such privilege has gifted us with oral and written communication since the beginning of human life history. This great issue of human life is still raising many researches focusing on human language development; since it involves a very complex process, which implies the abilities of speaking, listening, writing and reading.

It is important to know that some languages have remained through the time thanks to ancient people who recorded them on images or on written texts. The possession of such treasures contributed with studies of different languages around the world, rescuing and helping them to remain alive during the completely human history. It is necessary to add that many researchers have developed studies on how humans learn a language by focusing most of the times on speaking, prioritizing this skill over the other three language abilities, but it is important to study the four skills, since, there are two ways of using a language: spoken and written speech.

Therefore, this is one of the main reasons why this research is focused on reading as one of the two receptive skills (listening and reading) since they need to be studied, in order to help students to improve not only the listening skill, but also the reading one by implementing the most effective learning theories and methodologies and by selecting different reading comprehension strategies, techniques and methods that fulfill student's communicative necessities when interacting.

Since early times, human beings had felt the necessity for oral communication, but the necessity to share and preserve their knowledge and culture encouraged them to create rustic written texts that were going to be read and improved by future generations. Ancient people used to sing songs yet in elder times (B. C.), but there was no writing to record them during that time; later, written communication consisted on coding sounds, images, symbols and letters, appearing the first ways of recording them and then, there was a need to decode those symbol systems. At this point, reading and writing started to become essential in human life, for instance, there were found some ancient ways of writing that represented communication in many civilizations worldwide (about 3500 B. C.), an example of the earliest form of writing was called hieroglyphics, found in Egypt about the years 3,400 (B. C.). It consisted on images graved on stones, inside caves; these complex characters had to be memorized, but decoding them uniformly was very difficult.

Later, after the defeat of Egypt by Greece, Egyptians enlarged their alphabet by using the Greek alphabet for writing their spoken language, and "as a consequence, the knowledge of hieroglyphic writing declined" according to Helmut Brunner in the site of Encyclopedia Britannica. Nevertheless, writing was not only being developed in Greece, as reported by some historians, writing was being developed around the world. For instance, in China there were many characters in use already, during the Shang dynasty, which were so complex to be learnt (1400-1200 B. C.).

In Mesoamerica, before the colonization, there existed some writing forms; for example, the Maya commands were used (XVI), which was then improved by the colonists; with the colonization the use of the alphabet become more standardized in different places.

Another important contribution to literacy was the invention of the print, claimed by Gutenberg from Maguncia, Germany, in 1450.

During the fifteenth century, the print invention led to the mass-production of newspapers; books became widely available and affordable, and consequently, literature emerged with great impact in Europe.

Whereas the expansion of the knowledge through literacy started developing in Europe, the invasion and colonization by the British conquers took place imposing the English language and the British culture in North America.

The Protestant Reform during the XVI century caused the expansion of religious literature; as a result, The Bible was the most translated religious book.

During the period known as the Enlightenment (a European intellectual movement of the 17th and 18th centuries), writing and reading enriched and promoted developments in arts, philosophy and politics.

In the nineteenth century, Europe was considered the cradle of the writing development. However, reading and writing were not allowed for the population. Many governments were against the literacy; but as soon as they realized that reading and writing were necessary for any society that wanted to prevail in the future, they started to consent literacy for any social strata. (Robert McCole Wilson).

In the nineteenth century, in North America, a system of symbols for transcription called International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) that helped language students to record and learn sounds was created. Nowadays, It is helpful when reading aloud in order to pronounce accurately.

Besides, in the twentieth century, new views and ideas were introduced about learning of languages, this contributed to the improvement of the new teaching methodologies. An influential language linguist, representative of this time, was Ferdinand de Saussure from Switzerland.

Saussure stated that: "Language changes in the course of time". This means that methodology has to be up dated across time and space, as well. Therefore, teaching methodology has to be selected in order to accomplish the language learning objectives established; for instance, when teaching reading, strategies need to be chosen according not only to the learning theories and teaching methods, but also to the students' needs and their contexts.

In addition, he introduced two important terms used in linguistics, "parole" (French, meaning "speech"), and "langue" (French, meaning "language"). In "speech", the language is individualized; everyone possesses his or her own vocabulary, grammar, structures, pronunciation, etc. It is related to the distinction of each person's way to communicate; while "language" is the linguistic code, standardized and systematic, it is patterned by written grammar rules and syntactic norms.

Teachers need to manage these concepts when teaching productive skills (speaking and listening) and receptive skills (writing and reading) in order to help students to improve their interactions. For example, when teaching reading, it could help a teacher to take into account the context in which students are learning a language, the attractiveness, appropriateness, the complexity or simplicity of a reading text, and the student's level in order to provide a variety of resources and strategies that will develop their communicative proficiency.

LEARNING THEORIES AND TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

Teaching Foreign Languages methodology has faced a variety of considerable modifications and improvements through time: from the most traditional ways to teach the four language skills to the most innovative methods.

During the XIX century, there were not enough theoretical foundations for teaching Foreign Languages; one of the traditional methodologies to teach languages was the Grammar Translation Method; this was also known as the Classical method, which was based on the techniques used to teach Latin and Greek from the XVI to the XIX century. (Brown 18)**.**The implementation of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) as a guide to teach reading and composition was helpful to translate literary texts of classical languages in which bilingual dictionaries and the mother tongue were used. Teachers used deductive methods to teach prescriptive grammar rules through long and elaborated explanations; they used grammar books and written exercises, reducing language to a grammatical system of simple and complex sentences, which frustrated students when they were not able to communicate in a foreign language.

In this methodology, students were asked to memorize vocabulary through lists of isolated words, postponing and underestimating conversation; as a result, present-day language was absent and consequently learning a foreign language was a tedious experience, according to Molina Perez and Luque (2005). The main purposes to teach a foreign language were not to speak the language, but to be well educated and proficient in reading; that is why pronunciation had little or no attention, causing a low motivation among students. This was a teacher center methodology that helped students to read in order to have knowledge of a foreign or second language. Few specialized skills were required for teachers, so they constructed easily tests of

grammar rules and translations attempting to evaluate only the capacity to understand written texts and translating sentences, and faults were not allowed.

Therefore, the direct method was created as a response to the non-efficient grammar translation methodology, which did not help students to understand the target language in conversations. For instance, in 1880, François Gouin, a French teacher of Latin, applied the Grammar Translation Method in his lessons when learning German, and "he studied grammar rules and a great amount of vocabulary, and even translated literary works. But, he could not understand a single word when he took part in conversations" (TEFL Secondary Educational 2005161). In addition, after observing how his 3 years old nephew acquired his mother tongue by just listening and then conceptualizing meaning, developing the capacity of thinking and speaking without any problem in that language, he concluded that the exclusive use of the target language and the association between concepts and their meanings were essential to learn to communicate. This method was based on the associative learning proposed by Sweet (TEFL 162) which emphasized association, repetition and memorization, teachers used synonyms, antonyms, gestures, draws, posters, real objects, etc. in order to give the meaning in a direct, concrete and natural way, taking the natural acquisition of the mother tongue as a model to the learning process of a foreign language.

In this method, the target language was the first goal, emphasizing listening and speaking skills by using "questions and answers for a graded oral progression", postponing the study of grammar. Reading and writing were disregarded, for example, reading aloud was important just to check the correct pronunciation, and writing was used as a memorization or transformation technique of a reading text presented as a model. The teachers (TEFL 161) did not neglect correction.

Besides, inductive techniques were applied in order to make learners discover grammatical rules and the most common sentences and idiomatic phrases such as dialogues, conversations,

descriptions and narratives were practiced in small groups being in touch with native speakers, following all of these techniques in a natural and easy way. The sequence recommended to improve writing skills was to start working with reproduced texts to free compositions. Evaluation was carried out through interview exams. As disadvantages, the use of direct techniques without taking into account the mother tongue caused sometimes students' misunderstandings of instructions, in basic levels, and low proficiency in reading because this method did not emphasize this skill.

In the mid-fifties of the XX century, the Audio-lingual Method emerged as a response to the faults of the Direct Method and to new technologies of that period. Listening, speaking, reading and writing were practiced separately, but since language was considered as speech and not as writing, the priority was given to oral skills. Recordings, visual filmstrips, and language laboratories had central roles that provided "accurate models for dialogues and drills", so students could listen to a dialogue, repeat the sentences in the dialogue line by line, etc.(Richards and Rodgers14).This method was based on Structuralism and the Behaviorism, theories belonging to Linguistics and psychology, respectively.

The Structuralism provided to this method a scientific descriptive analysis of the language "based on form and distribution without taking meaning into consideration" (TEFL165), which helped teaching methodologists to create a great deal of pattern drills that students were supposed to manipulate by substituting or transforming elements of isolated phrases and being able to construct an infinite range of grammatical sentences. However, these drills did not develop long-term communicative proficiency because meaning and the current spoken language were neglected and the description of the grammatical system was rather insufficient to help students to communicate in the target language in real life.

From the psychological theory, Skinner's behaviorism provided "an empirical perspective for language as a set of verbal habits" (TEFL165)stating that students could learn a language through a conditioning and habit-formation training based on stimulus, response and an appropriate reinforcement. Errors were seen as deviated behaviors that needed to be avoided and corrected, at all costs. However, the "incessant parroting of potentially rote material was not creating communicatively proficient learners."(Brown 24). Also, it models language by mimicking drills and pattern practices.

Even though, the Audio-lingual method contributed to the practice of speaking and listening, there were some aspects that did not fulfill student's needs. It applied direct simple techniques with little instructions, presenting simple and artificial dialogues to introduce and practice the language structures. All this limited students from what they wanted to say (Moulton 63).

One of the methods which emerged in France in the early sixties as a result of researches made by the CREDIF (Centre de Rechercheetd'étude pour la Diffusion du François, in French) was the Audiovisual Methodology. This methodology was based on the Gestalt psychology, contextual and semantic linguistics and the use of an imaginative technology in order to reinforce the receptive skills through sight and hearing senses (based on the Gestalt psychology theory) and to provide contextualized meaning to motivate students to communicate. The use of visual aids and listening recordings were the most representative resources of the audiovisual method. This method developed a global view of the learning process; its main purpose was communication. Students developed their perception through the implementation of technology, induced techniques, and the use of visual and hearing senses before they analyzed the language. It is important to mention that the use of technology was a great motivator for the students when applying this method.

One of the difficulties that this method presented for students in basic levels was the misinterpretation caused by inductive techniques and the connections they made between pictures and meaning (TEFL168). Another difficulty was that teachers followed a rigid and non-natural procedure to teach and learn a language: presentation of a dialogue, use of visual aids for meaning, explication of vocabulary, question and answers, repetition, memorization, and exploitation of the dialogue through role-plays and it was difficult for students to communicate spontaneously.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, teaching English perspectives aimed to a more effective, spontaneous and authentic communication. The foreign language learner became a central and active member in the learning process, in other words teaching became "learner-centered" instead of teacher-centered (TEFL187). As a result, the Communicative Language Teaching method (CLT) gained high acceptance among foreign language teachers around the world because it was focused on real-life communication and interaction in real context and with meaningful purposes. Errors were tolerated and seen as a natural outcome of the development of communicative skills and learners were in charge of their own learning process within a cooperative relationship in order to become autonomous users of the foreign language. Negotiation of meaning and reflections techniques as well as strategies to read and listen authentic material were some of the most useful tools for teachers who were the advisors, facilitators or guides during the development of activities such as "games, role plays and problem solving tasks" (Larsen 129).

The CLT approach was influenced by the theory of communication, particularly, the Speaking model of the sociolinguist Dell Hymes which emphasized the analysis of discourse taking into account the series of speech events, and speech acts within a cultural context: where and when

the interaction takes place, the participants of the interaction, the intention of the interaction, the speech acts of communication, the how or the manner to express the intensions, the channel and the norms to interact, and the genre of the discourse. Consequently, communicative competence became "the goal of language teaching", underlying the interdependence of language and communication. (Larsen122). The CLT approach was also influenced by the cognitive theory which took into account the understanding and thinking mechanisms of language learning process. It emphasized the inductive method used by children when they acquired a language and accepted errors as part of the learning process. The behavioral techniques such as memorization and repetition were rejected as well as the idealized language learners who were not supposed to commit errors when speaking, writing, reading or listening, when interacting with natives. Therefore, students work on the four skills from the beginning just as oral communication is seen to take place through negotiation between speaker and listener (Larsen 131).

The Task-Based Language (TBL) arises from the development of Cognitive theories including at the same time some characteristics of the CLT, resulting an approach focused on the process rather than the final product. This method emphasizes the importance in methodology and the development of lessons procedures. In the TBL, tasks are oriented to develop the communicative competence pointing at the learning of linguistics rules; therefore TBL takes into account specific sociolinguistics authentic situations: Problem solving activities with one or several solutions, taking as the starting point authentic situations.

The challenge for teachers in this method could be the selection of the most appropriate tasks to implement during a lesson, and the procedures to execute that activity.

Besides knowing about the main characteristics of the methods already mentioned, it is necessary to say that there were some innovative methods that contributed to the

development of the different skills, for example in the twenties The Community Language Learning (CLL), focused attention on the affective domains and in the speaking abilitytheSuggestopedia method emphasized the way in which students process information given the right conditions for learning (Brown 27); the Silent Way gave great importance about the cognitive and the affective factors as well as pronunciation; The Total Physical Response Method (Brown 29) was focused on associating language with physical activity in order to make the students respond to commands, this was done with the purpose of lowering anxiety in oral activities helping to develop the speaking ability; The Natural Approach (Brown 31) emphasized that the students affective filter plays an important role for communication to take place, paying most of the attention to listening, lectures, speaking and writing papers. Those new methods provided useful techniques for the improvement of English teaching methodology, but disregarding the reading skill. (Brown 25-32)**.**

It is worth mentioning that the already studied methods were selected for this research because they were the most used during the past to teach reading in a foreign language; also those have contributed in a way to the improvement of the recent English methodology to teach reading; but nowadays providing more specialized strategies for teaching this skill, with the purpose to benefit the English Intermediate I students with such essential strategies to achieve a better reading comprehension; that is why we are going to apply the Task-Based and Communicative Language Teaching methods.

SENSITIVE AND FOCUSED RECEPTION READING STRATEGIES: Theory of the focused reception strategies

As it was presented in the methodologies, reading has been taught as a passive receptive skill for different purposes, for instance, in Grammar-translation method, learners were asked to

read in order to translate literary texts of classical languages, to have linguistic knowledge about a foreign or second language and to become well-educated people; in the direct method, reading was relegated to a second place, giving more importance to pronunciation, for example, reading aloud was important just to check the correct pronunciation, therefore, there was a low proficiency in reading because this method did not emphasize on this skill. Then, from the Audiolingual to the audiovisual method, the written and oral skills were practiced separately, but the priority was given to oral skills, reading was a tool to learn new vocabulary and grammar rules and to pronounce correctly from isolated phrases or non-authentic texts. Fortunately, since the Communicative language teaching method, teachers started to implement negotiation of meaning and reflection techniques as well as strategies to read authentic material, taking into account the social context of the interaction. Then, with the emergence of the innovative Task-Based Language Method, not only the productive skills were important but also the receptive ones and both were finally considered as active skills. In 1988, Carrell, Devine and Eskey defined reading as "Interactive" rather than Active (TEFL 353),and to illustrate this characteristic of the reading skill, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain describe the "simultaneous tasks" that the reader has to perform when trying to understand a text: Decoding the message by recognizing the written signs, interpreting the message by assigning meaning to it, and understanding the author's intentions (TEFL 353), then, in an individual reading task, the reader is considered as one of the participants who interacts with the two other participants: the text, and the writer, and even more, in a group reading task at the classroom, he can also interact with his teacher and classmates, etc. Two of the great innovations of this approach are the awareness of the importance of the communicative components of the communicative competence (CEFRL 2001) for real life performance success and the practice of the three essential stages for all of the four skills:

pre, while and post stages (TEFL 191). The features of this approach make it appropriate to accomplish a task in reading, as it involves cognition, construction, reflection, creativity, focus, interaction, etc. For example, it promotes interaction before and while a written given task, as reception or input, and interaction after the reading task, as production or output, making reading more effective by integrating the four skills. Therefore, it is useful to know about the different theories, methodologies and approaches that can lead teachers to apply the most effective learning strategies that can help students to improve reading performance.

INTERACTIVE APPROACHES

The Top-down (concept-driven) and the bottom-up approaches (data-driven) were developed by Goodman and Smith (TEFL 353). The first one was focused on understanding main ideas, decoding information from general information to the most specific one, using background linguistic and semantic knowledge for comprehension, making hypothesis or inferences about the incoming information. On the contrary, the second one focused on the text itself as input, decoding information from linguistic smallest units of meaning to larger units: letter, word, phrases, clauses, and sentences recognition in order to build meaning in a linear manner.

They were seen as separate reading processes at the beginning, but later, in 1977, Rumelhart (TEFL 354) presented the simultaneity of the top-down and bottom-up reading approaches while reading as a more balanced and interactive approach because both processes complement each other when a reader tries to interact with a text and his authors' intentions, as Nuttallpoints out "In practice, a reader continually shifts from one focus to another, now adopting a top-down approach to predict probable meaning, then moving to the bottom-up approach to check whether that is really what the writers says" (Brown 299).

Besides, another interactive approach is the Psycholinguistic-cognitive approach to reading which is centered on learner's cognitive development and text processing when he or she is trying to solve problems and makes hypothesis about the text as it was presented by Goodman's Top-down approach. In 1987, Wolff presented important ideas about "what the reader brings to the interpretation of text under the influence of cognitive psychology" (TEFL 355), for instance, he presents comprehension as a cognitive, active and constructive process because the reader becomes an active participant who interprets the text constructively by taking into account his background knowledge in order to solve problems by trying to predict the incoming information. Therefore, inferring is also an important process in reading comprehension because it is necessary to make the text coherent. The texts are not completely explicit and the reader is supposed to infer those facts which are not explicit (TEFL 356). This approach takes also into account the combination of Top-down and Bottom-up approaches as the Conceptual schemata or guiding structures in the comprehension process of a text.

Another interactive approach is the Schema Theory, Clarke and Sandra Silberstein (Brown 299) presented this approach by stating that "readers understand what they read because they are able to take the stimulus beyond its graphic representation and assign it membership to an appropriate group of concepts already stored in their memories […] skill in reading depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world." Then, Caroll (1983a/b) classified this mental model into three main schemata: linguistic schemata or background knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, spoken and written forms of language, etc., content schemata or background knowledge of the world and the subject matter of the text, and formal schemata or background knowledge of rhetorical organizational structures of texts. (TEFL 356). In addition, H. Douglas Brown restates that

"readers construct meaning by bringing linguistic knowledge (linguistic schemata), knowledge of the world (content schemata) and knowledge about discourse structure (formal schemata) to the printed text" (Brown 299).

READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

"A strategy is any organized, purposeful and regulated line of action chosen by an individual to carry out a task, which he or she sets for himself or herself or with which he or she is confronted" (CEFRL 159). Therefore, it is important to mention that reading comprehension is more than just asking students to read aloud, to pronounce words accurately or to be fluent when reading a text, reading comprehension means that learners understand what they read. Therefore, active readers need focused reading strategies in order to become proficient readers. These strategies make learners aware of the reading purpose: if it is for getting specific or general information, for a reading exercise or a test or just for pleasure. They also help them to make predictions, monitor or evaluate their reading, and, if necessary, to repair what is not making sense in order not only to comprehend the text, but also to understand the author's intention.

Reading shares two characteristics depending on the situation, for instance, in a conventional situation, readers read for pleasure, what they want to read, in any place or time they want to read, and there is not an institutional evaluation about what they read. On the contrary, in a non-conventional situation such as reading exercises or tests inside an institutional domain, the texts and the specific information to be identified are imposed by the teacher or the evaluator, then readers are evaluated depending on the answers they give to specific questions about the reading and most of the times there is a time limit to accomplish the task. Therefore, the distinction between conventional and non-conventional situations of reading

can help to identify the most appropriate reading strategies to be applied depending on the context in which reading takes place, in order to help students to be proficient in both situations. Thus, the psychological dimension of reading texts with the purpose of answering questions provided by reading exercises or tests in an educational domain is a reality and a variation of the ideal sociolinguistic dimension of reading texts with the purpose of entertainment or for personal growing. Consequently, this study is going to find out the impact of the implementation of focused reading strategies in order to improve reading comprehension performance.

READING STRATEGIES: Intensive and Extensive reading

Students need to develop reading comprehension strategies to understand the purpose of the reading. Alderson and Urquhart introduced two reading strategies which are: Extensive and Intensive reading (TEFL 359). In agreement with The Faculty of Education, from Granada, "Extensive Reading is more similar to real reading; it focuses on understanding the meaning of the text as quickly as possible". For that reason, exposing students to extensive reading is helpful, if they take into account the purpose of reading.

Moreover, it is important to make learners practice Intensive Reading. This strategy is applied to difficult and specific parts of a text; it is useful mainly for study purposes because it allows students to stop and look for new words in the dictionary (this view is also supported by Brumfit 83). We have to keep in mind that the purpose of the reading exercise can vary depending on the student's interest or on what the teacher asks the students to do.

It is necessary to provide students with these strategies; therefore, we provide the following chart:

	INTENSIVE READING	EXTENSIVE READING
PURPOSE	Language study	General understanding and enjoyment
LEVEL	Often difficult	Easy (graded readers)
AMOUNT	Not much	A lot
SPEED	Slowly	Fast and fluently

(TEFL, Alderson and Urquhart 360)

INTRODUCTION TO SENSITIVE AND RECEPTION READING STRATEGIES

Our research aims to improve students' reading comprehension performance by implementing some sensitive reception and focused reading strategies. This is going to be developed under two important aspects: the sensitive aspect that refers to the use of the visual sense; as well as the activation of a positive attitude toward reading; and the focus strategies which involve the cognitive aspect related to the process of interpreting meaning of what they read.

In addition, it is essential to know that reading is more than receiving and interpreting information because it involves the appropriate state, learners' own strategies, and the attitude toward receiving the written information through the visual sense and emotions. In addition, Harmer suggests that there is an interaction between top-down and bottom-up processing and that sometimes it is "our overview that allows us to process the details. Without good understanding of a reasonable proportion of the details gained throughout some bottom-up processing, we will be unable to get any clear general picture of what the text is about"(TEFL 201); therefore, is necessary to divide the reading strategies into two categories.

Sensitive reception strategies*:* Getting students prepared for reading (this category is the result of the regrouped top-down and bottom-up strategies, approaches, extensive

readingstrategies, and schema theory regarding to the emotional and volitional aspects in order to be prepared to receive written information.

Focused reception strategies*:* Paying attention to important details for reading comprehension, it involves strategies such as: pre-reading, predicting inferring, taking notes, scanning, skimming, looking for main ideas, looking for key words, getting meaning form context, summarizing, retelling, re-read.

These strategies are the result of the regrouped bottom-up and top-down approaches, and intensive reading strategies, regarding to the cognitive aspects to process and interpret meaning, as well as focused reading strategies. Therefore, these processes engage planning, execution, validation and repair before, during and after a reading exercise, as detailed:

FOCUSED READING STRATEGIES DEVELOPMENT

1) *Planning (framing):* it involves identifying the context and knowledge of the information to receive and having expectations of what is going to be received (schemata). We have tried to put into practice some reading strategies such as :

1.1 *Pre-reading strategies*. These strategies help learners to determine *what needs to be achieved* by reading a written text (broad information, specific information, opinions, reactions, instructions, facts, attitudes, or perspectives, etc.) and it will help to have better expectations about the quality and importance of the content(an author, a generalist, his background). These strategies involve *prediction* (by observing the headings; learners could predict the central theme, and guess the information). The *use of background knowledge* will make easier the understanding even if new ideas and concepts are introduced.

2. Execution (inferring): by practicing strategies such as:

2.1   Identifying visual cues (paying attention to visual aids, for example: pictures, charts, etc.)

2.2   Identifying written cues (paying attention to the organization of the reading text: introduction, body, linking words or expressions and the conclusion.).

2.3   Inferring from visual and written cues during the visual reception process from linguistic and non-linguistic context.

2.4   Practicing note taking: by writing down, briefly and clearly the relevant information that is being processed while reading a text: use of abbreviations in order to be brief, and paraphrasing, for instance. This strategy helps to understand, retain and use the information being received, and it is helpful to answer the questions of the reading exercise. The descriptor for A2 level for identifying cues and inferring establishes that the student in this level "*Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including reading for main points* and *checking comprehension by using contextual clues.*

3.   Evaluation:

3.1   Elaborating hypotheses about the communicative intention behind what is being said in the text in order to get the main ideas.

3.2   Summarizing (by checking predictions, and comprehension and remembering main ideas.).

4.   Repair: Sometimes readers can encounter some difficulties when inferring caused by linguistic restrictions, difficult receptive conditions, lack of background knowledge, or by assumed familiarity, obliqueness, understanding the writer's intention. If so, readers will need to :

4.1 ***Revise*** their hypotheses and schemata.

4.2 ***Returntostep one***.

4.3 ***Find alternative framing, inferring and evaluation*** in order to get the message of the reading text.

SENSITIVE RECEPTION READING STRATEGIES DEVELOPMENT:

1. Paying attention to the non-verbal communication for inferring through:

1.1 ***Paratextual features of a reading exercise or test:*** illustrations (photographs, drawings, etc.), charts, tables, diagrams, figures, etc.

1.2 ***Paralinguistic features*** (e.g. related to attitudes and states of the writer), which can be voluntary or involuntary, but they convey intention and circumstance (Harmer, 2004) such as paying attention to the punctuation and the writer's intention.

2. Doing some ***brain gym exercises*** before any reading takes place, in order to low anxiety, prepare students to read, activate their senses for information reception and enhance experience of whole-brain learning; for example, *The Neck Rolls, Earth Buttons, The Lazy 8,* among others.

3. ***Having a positive attitude*** during a reading exercise. This means enhancing personal aspects such as:

*3.1*Self-confidence

*3.2*Not worrying about answering correctly, incorrectly, or pronouncing accurately.

*3.3*Avoiding any negative thought about themselves regarding their reading ability.

4. ***Reading practice in autonomy*** in order to encourage students to read as much English as they can from different sources such as:

4.1   Reading texts outside the class (Magazine articles, newspapers, advertisements, formal invitations, etc.)

4.2   Reading books by pleasure (extensive reading)

GLOSSARY

PREDICTING: Making predictions is a strategy in which readers use information from a text (including titles, headings, pictures, and diagrams) and their own personal experiences to anticipate what they are about to read (or what comes next).

SKIMMMING: is a method of rapidly moving the eyes over the text with the purpose of getting only the main ideas and a general overview of the content.

SCANNING: rapidly covers a great deal of material in order to locate a specific or piece of information.

SUMMARIZING: This strategy for understanding and retaining information has been the subject of extensive research.

PARATEXTUAL FEATURES TO PREDICT: Before reading, students read the bold headings in the text and predict what kind of information they think they will find when they read.

KEY WORDS: readers use this strategy during reading to help them understand unfamiliar vocabulary. Students determine the meaning of the new word by looking at the words around it.

RETELLING: students verbally rehearse important story information by retelling a story to a partner, using an outline. The outline guides them to pick out important ideas and back them up with supporting information.

QUESTIONING: is a strategy that readers use to engage with the text Questioning techniques help the reader to clarify and comprehend what he is reading.

GETTING MEANING FROM CONTEXT: refers to the ability to infer the meaning of an expression using contextual clues.

INTENSIVE READING: read with concentration and great care in order to understand exactly the meaning of what you read. This is particularly necessary for legal documents, financial documents, academic reports and anything to do with business.

EXTENSIVE READING: read as many different kinds of books/journals/papers as you can, chiefly for pleasure, and only needing a general understanding of the content.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

As stated previously, this research was a Quasi-experimental study, and mixed research design (Qualitative and Quantitative methods) giving priority to Qualitative design. The sample was a group (group 5) of English Intermediate I course at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador, and it was chosen through the use of the convenience sampling. There were twenty two students. This group was scheduled from one to three p. m. from Monday to Thursday.

The research development was divided into three main phases:

1.   *The diagnostic phase*: the students were given a reading test and a survey containing questions about their experience when carrying out the reading test (see annex 2).

2.   *The implementation phase*: the students were given some focused reading strategies through eight sessions during the second semester, 2015 to improve their comprehension of written texts in order to put them into practice, and improve both their self-confidence when doing this kind of exercises and their level of performance in reading comprehension.

3.   *The validation phase*: at the end of the research, the students were given a validation test and a survey about their opinions on the issue (see annex 4).

THE DIAGNOSTIC PHASE

This phase was essential to get information about both proficiency levels from group 5 in reading skill and their opinions about the experience of taking a reading test.

The instruments used in this phase were a reading test (annex 2) and a survey (annex 3).

a)   *The Reading test:* The objective of this test was to identify the students' level of proficiency in the reading skill. We used a reading text from the students textbook "Open Mind Level 2" from MACMILLAN press. It consisted on a short reading and a True False reading exercise from the textbook with five predictive statements about the reading.

Students getting a grade from 6 to 10 (ten out of twenty two, the 45 %) were considered to have the competences described in A2 level of the CEFRL, and all of the students having a grade under 6 were considered not to have the required competences needed in this course.

b)   *A survey:* After the reading test, the students were asked to give their points of view about the experience regarding 4 aspects:

a.   *Their feelings during the reading test.*

b.   *The factors that affect their reading comprehension performance.*

c.   *The strategy or strategies they applied to succeed in the reading test.*

d.   *Their suggestions to specialists who design reading tests.*

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOCUSED READING STRATEGIES PHASE

We implemented the focused reading strategies explicitly; it means that we introduced the focused reading strategies to the students explaining the purpose of each one, (the sensitive reception strategies and the focused reception strategies) and then, we put them into practice through the reading activities presented in their textbooks "Open Mind, Level 2". Throughout the progress, we put into practice the strategies proposed by the textbook, and there was also the need to add new strategies according to the exercises and to their purposes. We mixed both types of strategies because emotions are always immersed in the cognitive process. Sometimes, students can have the cognitive ability, but it can be affected negatively if they have emotional difficulties or vice versa. The process was developed by starting from simple to complex reading activities, but it was a spiral progression because previous knowledge was taken into account and studied deeply in new sessions.

THE VALIDATION PHASE

This phase was essential to get the results about the improvement in reading comprehension of A2 level English students from group 5 and their opinions about their experience after the implementation of focused reading strategies along of the eight reading sessions.

The instruments used in this phase were a reading test (annex 4) and a survey (annex 5).

a) *The Reading test:* The objective of this test was to find out A2 level students' proficiency improvement in their reading comprehension performance. We used a reading text from the students textbook "Open Mind Level 2" from MACMILLAN press. It consisted on a short reading and a matching exercise. All the students getting a grade from 6 to 10 passed the exam (100%).

A survey: After the reading test, the students were asked to give their points of view about the experience regarding 4 aspects:

a.   *Their feelings during the reading test.*

b.   *The factors that affect their reading comprehension performance.*

c.   *The strategy or strategies they applied to succeed in the reading test.*

d.   *Their suggestions to specialists who design reading tests.*

FIRST SESSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Based on CEFRL 2001steps followed to teach and practice focused reading strategies:

1.   Planning: Brain gym exercises "Neck rolls", self-confidence encouragement (sensitive reception strategies) combined with schemata activation and reading instructions carefully (focused reception strategies):

 Before reading the text, we asked students to get relaxed by implementing the brain gym exercise Neck Rolls because it increases the level of relaxation and it activates the brain in a silent reading, it centers the attention in the ability to read in the midfield. Also they were encouraged to feel confident during the reading activity (**sensitive reception strategies**). Besides that, they were asked if they had previous knowledge about the type of reading they were going to read (a movie review), if they have read this kind of information before going to a movie and if so, if it has influenced their choice (schemata activation). Then, they were asked to read the instructions and at the same time to answer these questions in order to succeed in the readingactivity **(focused reception strategies)**.

Before completing the reading exercise, ask yourself:

a)   WHAT AM I EXACTLY ASKED TO DO? Read the movie review and answer the question: "Did the writer enjoy the Simpsons Movie?"

b)   HOW MANY ANSWERS AM I ASKED TO GIVE? One answer.

c)   WHAT KIND OF WRITTEN TEXT AM I GOING TO READ? A movie review.

By paying attention to the instructions before reading the text, students can feel more confident because they know exactly what they are asked to do and do not get lost or confused during the while-reading phase or execution phase. They are able to identify the type of reading, the context and they have some expectations of what they have to read (schemata activation). They are able

to determine *what they need to achieve* (broad information, specific information, opinions, reactions, instructions, facts, attitudes, or perspectives, etc.). Paying attention to the instructions before reading the written text helps students to comprehend and accomplish the reading task easier.

2. Execution: Paying attention to non-verbal communication through both Paratextual and paralinguistic features of a reading exercise *(sensitive reception strategies)* combined with underlining key words and taking notes (focused reception strategies).

3. We asked students to pay attention to paratextual features (illustrations) because it motivates the learners and help them to contextualize the reading easily *(**sensitive reception strategies).***

They also paid attention to paralinguistic features (punctuation) , they were asked to focus on tittles and subtitles and to underline key words that could help them to discover the writer's feelings and opinions about the movie and to take notes about the examples presented by the author. This helps them to discover the author's intentions and opinions (**focused reception strategies**).

4. Evaluation: Checking answers to confirm comprehension (focused reception strategies) combined with a proposal to read in autonomy *(sensitive reception strategies).*

After reading the text, students checked the answers with the class by giving supporting examples from the text (**focused reception strategies**) because it was necessary to check their reading comprehension about thereading. Finally, reading *practice in autonomy*(**sensitive reception strategies)** was suggested in order to encourage students to read as much English as they can from different sources such as interesting reading texts outside the classroom (Magazines, articles, newspapers, advertisements, formal invitations, etc.), (extensive reading strategy).

5. Repair: Encouraging students' self-confidence [by avoiding any negative thought about the reading exercise] (sensitive reception strategies) combined with revising and identifying the reading difficulties (focused reception strategies).

Students were encouraged to feel confident by avoiding any negative thought about their reading performance. Sometimes, students can have some difficulties when reading caused by poor reading habits, lack of background knowledge or complex linguistic features. If so, readers need to look back through the text in order to achieve comprehension.

SECOND SESSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

 Steps followed to teach and practice focused reading strategies:

1.   Planning: Brain gym exercise "the Calf pump" and self-confidence encouragement (sensitive reception strategies) combined with schemata activation and reading instructions carefully (focused reception strategies).

Before reading the text, we asked students to get relaxed by implementing the brain gym exercise the Calf Pump because it activates the brain for reading comprehension, for background knowledge and it helps to give answers, and also students can feel more confident because they feel more relaxed and prepared to start reading the article; also they were encouraged to feel confident during the reading activity **(sensitive reception strategies)**.

By paying attention to the instructions before reading the text, students can feel more confident because they know exactly what they are asked to do and do not get lost or confused during the while-reading phase or execution phase. Besides, they are able to identify the type of reading,

the context and they have some expectations of what they have to read (schemata activation) **(focused reception strategies)**.

Before completing the reading exercise, ask yourself:

a)   WHAT AM I EXACTLY ASKED TO DO? Read the article and answer the question: "Which of the facts surprises me the most?" by identifying and underlying the facts presented in the article and then, choosing the fact that surprises me the most.

b)   HOW MANY ANSWERS AM I ASKED TO GIVE? Just one answer.

c)   WHAT KIND OF WRITTEN TEXT AM I GOING TO READ? An article.

By paying attention to the instructions reading carefully, students are able to determine what they need to achieve and find the required information (broad information, specific information, opinions, reactions, instructions, facts, attitudes, or perspectives, etc.). They need to read the instructions before reading the complete written text in order to comprehend and accomplish the reading task **(focused reception strategy)**.

2. Execution: Paying attention to non-verbal communication through both Paratextualand paralinguistic features of the reading exercise *(sensitive reception strategies)* combined with reading the title, skimming the text, underlying, taking notes of the definition of the title"Personal Space: How close do you go?" and choosing the one that surprises the most (focused reception strategies).

We asked students to pay attention to paratextual features (the illustration, its funny phrase and title of the article) because it motivates the learners and help them to contextualize the reading easily; and paralinguistic features (punctuation), this helps them to discover the author's

intentions and opinions *(sensitive reception strategies)*. Then, they had to read the article quickly in order to find and take notes of the definition of "personal space", then, they were asked to read the article again, underlining and taking notes of any surprising fact in order to decide which the most surprising fact was (**focused reception strategies**).

3. Evaluation: Listen to students' opinions to confirm comprehension (focused reception strategies) combined with a proposal to read in autonomy *(sensitive reception strategies).*

After reading the text, students discussed in pairs the definition and the most surprising facts they found out in order to check comprehension through students' opinions. They were asked to share their finding with the class by giving supporting examples from the text **(focused reception strategies)**. Finally, reading **practicingautonomy*(sensitive reception strategies)*** was suggested in order to encourage students to read as much English as they could from different sources and in order to motivate them to read extensively, they were given some online reading sources or sites such as short stories, comics, magazines, newspapers, e-book, etc. (See annex 6).

4. Repair: Encouraging students' self-confidence (sensitive reception strategies) combined with revising and identifying the reading difficulties (focused reception strategies).

Students were encouraged to feel confident facing any difficulty from the reading text by telling them not to worry if they have not accomplished the reading exercise and by encouraging doing it again. Sometimes, students can find some difficulties when trying to identify main ideas; this could be caused by poor reading habits, lack of background knowledge, complex linguistic features or new vocabulary. If so, the students need to look back, go through the text in order to identify the difficulties and achieve the reading comprehension.

THIRD SESSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

 Steps followed to teach and practice focused reading strategies:

1.   **Planning: Brain gym "the Footflex" and self-confidence encouragement (sensitive reception strategies) combined with schemata activation, reading instructions; inferring and scanning (focused reception strategies).**

Before reading the text, we asked students to relax by implementing the Footflex brain gym exercise because it helps them to relax and also, it activates their brain for reading comprehension and the ability to follow through and to complete assignments. Moreover, they were encouraged to feel confident during the reading activity advising them to read at their own speed without worrying about the time (**sensitive reception strategies**). Besides these strategies, students were asked to share any traditional way they knew about predicting the future in different countries around the world and then in our country(schemata), it helps them to bring background information which is later connected with the text (**focused reception strategies**).

By paying attention to the picture, a paratextual feature of the reading, they can predict what the reading could be about. By implementing the Footflex brain gym exercise **(sensitive reception strategy)** students are prepared to receive information from a reading text and to develop the ability to follow through and to complete assignments and they feel more confident at the moment of reading when teachers recommend them not to worry and be relaxed before reading. By reading the heading of the text, they can infer what the reading could be about and by discussing about the topic before reading the text; they connect to their background knowledge (schemata activation) and get more focused and prepared to comprehend the reading**(focused reception strategies).**

Then, they were asked to read the instructions and to read these questions in order to succeed in the reading activity **(focused reception strategies)**.

Before completing the reading exercise, ask yourself:

a)   WHAT AM I EXACTLY ASKED TO DO?   Read the article to find out only one particular information: the country where fortune cookies come from, then to circle the correct choice presented at the beginning of the reading exercise.

b)   HOW MANY ANSWERS AM I ASKED TO GIVE? Just one answer.
WHAT KIND OF WRITTEN TEXT IM I GOING TO READ? An article

2. Execution: Paying attention to paratextual (pictures) and paralinguistic (punctuation) features of the reading exercises *(sensitive reception strategies)* combined with inferring by reading the title and scanning (focused reception strategies).

Students were asked to look at the picture and infer the title. Paying attention to the picture helps students to predict the title of the topic, and inferring the title helps them to kwon what the reading is going to be about. Then they are asked to read the question and its threeoptions in order to give one answer, scanning, this strategy helps the learners to find specific information when they are asked to give precise answers.

3. Evaluation: Checking the answer with the class to confirm comprehension (focused reception strategies) combined with a proposal to read in autonomy *(sensitive reception strategies).*

After reading the text, students shared their answer with the class in order to check the correct option (the U.S). Then, they were encouraged to say which phrases helped them to find the answer **(focused reception strategies)**. Finally, we continued advising students to practice reading in autonomy from different sources such as reading texts outside the class (Magazines, articles, newspapers, advertisements, formal invitations, etc.). They were asked to practice the focus reading strategies practiced in these three previous sessions in their extensive reading for pleasure when reading those kinds of sources **(Sensitive reception strategy)**.

4. Repair: Encouraging students' self-confidence (sensitive reception strategies) combined with revising and identifying the reading difficulties (**focused reception strategies).**

Students were encouraged to feel confident about facing any difficulty from the reading exercise by telling them not to worry about the time or if they have not accomplished the reading exercise by encouraging them to do it again. Sometimes, students can face some difficulties when trying to find out specific information, this could be caused by lack of reading strategies, poor reading habits, lack of background knowledge or complex linguistic features, and the use of complex new vocabulary. If so, students are asked to go back through the text in order to identify the difficulties and achieve the reading comprehension proficiency **(focused reception strategy).**

FOURTH SESSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Steps followed to teach and practice focused reading strategies:

1. Planning: Brain gym exercise "the Grounder" with self-confidence encouragement (sensitive reception strategies) combined with schemata activation, predicting and reading instructions carefully (focused reception strategies).

We asked students to relax by implementing the "The Grounder" brain gym exercise. By implementing this brain gym exercise, students activate their brain for reading comprehension, long-term recall, and short-term memory storage before reading a text;besides, they were asked to feel confident before reading the text **(sensitive reception strategy).**

After that, by reading the title, the headings and look at the pictures students can predict what the text is going to be about this prepares students to read the text, and helps them to confirm their previous guesses when reading**(focused reception strategies)**. Then the students were asked to read the instructions carefully in order to succeed in the reading activity.

Before completing the reading exercise, ask yourself:

a) WHAT AM I EXACTLY ASKED TO DO? Look at the paratextual features of the text, recall my background knowledge or experiences about the topic and make predictions about the information of the text, and then, decide which of the phrases presented in the exercise are true or false by circling the letter "T" or "F".

b) HOW MANY ANSWERS AM I ASKED TO GIVE? Five.

c) WHERE AM I ASKED TO WRITE THE ANSWER?

In the textbook, for exercise A

d)   WHAT KIND OF WRITTEN TEXT IM I GOING TO READ? An article from a magazine.

2.   Execution: paying attention to non-verbal communication throughParatextual features of the reading exercise and self-confidence encouragement *(sensitive reception strategies)* combined with schemata activation and prediction (focused reception strategies).

In this stage, they were asked to pay attention to paratextual features of the text such as the title and headings of the reading to recall their previous knowledge on the topic in order to make predictions about what they were going to read, thistime without reading the text. Then, they were asked to read the instructions carefully in order to succeed in the reading activity **(focused reception strategies)**.

Moreover, they were asked to pay attention to paratextual features of the reading text, and then they had to read the text individually and carefully, focusing on words or phrases that could help them to find and choose the right answers (True or False), this time in order to confirm their predictions **(focused reception strategies)**.

1.   Evaluation: Pre checking answers, scanning the text, confirming predictions (Focused reception strategy) combined with self-confidenceencouragementand proposal to read in autonomy *(sensitive reception strategies).*

They were asked to compare their answers in pairs in order to discuss about the strategies that helped them to choose "true" or "false" to reinforce the importance of the use of background knowledge, previous experiences and predictions. Then, they scanned the text in order to confirm their predictions and to find out how many answers they had predicted correctly **(focused reception strategies)**, without feeling bad if they had few correct answers by telling

them that this is their first exercise using the prediction strategy; besides, by telling them that errors can also help us to learn, and finally, by encouraging them to practice reading in autonomy, reading just for pleasure in their leisure time from different sources such magazines, articles, newspapers, advertisements, formal invitations, etc. and to apply the previously learnt strategies when reading any kind of text *(sensitive reception strategies)*.

2.   Repair: Encouraging students' self-confidence to face any difficulty from the reading exercise (sensitive reception strategies) combined with correcting wrong answers, revising and identifying the reading difficulties (focused reception strategies).

Students were encouraged to feel confident about facing any difficulty from the reading exercise by telling them not to worry about the time or if they have not accomplished the reading exercise by encouraging them to do it again. Sometimes, students can face some difficulties when trying to find out specific information, this could be caused by lack of reading strategies, poor reading habits, lack of background knowledge or complex linguistic features, and the use of complex new vocabulary or the content of the text. If so, students are asked to go back through the text with the teacher's help and identify the difficulties to achieve a better reading comprehension performance.

FIFTH SESSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Steps followed to teach and practice focused reading comprehension strategies:

1.   Planning: Self-confidence encouragement and paratextual features (sensitive reception strategies) combined with schemata activation and the play-based activity "Hangman" (focused reception strategies).

Students were encouraged to feel confident during the reading activity advising them to read at their own speed without worrying about the time because being relaxed makes the learning process easier. Moreover, by paying attention to the illustration, a paratextual feature of the reading exercise, they can predict what the reading could be about, and at the same time they connect their previous knowledge with the topic; furthermore, teachers can share some cultural information to enrich the discussion as an introduction to the readingexercise (**sensitive reception strategies**).

Then, students elicited the words "*virtual* "and"*world* "from the Hangman play-based activity. The play-based activities help to motivate students, activate students' background knowledge related to the content of the text and increase their interest to read a text (**focused reception strategy**); after that, they were asked to share their opinions about any "virtual world" on the Internet, ifthey have already visited**.** Then, they were asked to explain the illustration of the text (**sensitive reception strategy**). Finally, the teacher shared some "cultural information" about the topic.

2. Execution: Brain gym "the Elephant" *(sensitive receptionstrategy)* **combined with scanning, finding key words and reading instructions carefully**(focused reception strategies).

Before reading the text, we asked students to relax by implementing "The Elephant" brain gym exercise (**sensitive reception strategy**) in order to prepare students to receive information from a reading text and to develop the ability to follow through and to complete assignments. After that, they were asked to read the two letters in order of the exercise in order to find specific key

words and phrases by implementing the scanning strategy. (**focused reception strategy).** Then, they read the two letters completely.

After that, they were asked to read the instructions in order to succeed in the reading activity **(focused reception strategies)**.

Before completing the reading exercise, ask yourself:

a) WHAT AM I EXACTLY ASKED TO DO? Read two opinion letters sent to the editor of a magazine and decide which letter is in favor of virtual worlds and which one is not.

b) HOW MANY ANSWERS AM I ASKED TO GIVE? Two.

c) WHAT KIND OF WRITTEN TEXT AM I GOING TO READ? Opinion letters.

3. Evaluation: Checking the answer with the class to confirm comprehension (focused reception strategy) combined with a proposal to read in autonomy *(sensitive reception strategy).*

After reading the text, students were asked to compare their answers in pairs, and then check the answer **(focused reception strategy)**. Besides that, students were asked about words, phrases or sentences that helped them to decide which opinion was in favor and which one was not**(focused reception strategy)**. Finally, we continued advising students to practice reading in autonomy from different sources such as reading texts outside the class (Magazines, articles, newspapers, advertisements, formal invitations, etc.). In addition, they were asked to practice the reading comprehension strategies already given when reading these kinds of sources, and to apply the previously learnt strategies when reading any text for pleasure **(Sensitive reception strategy)**.

4.   Repair: Encouraging students' self-confidence to face any difficulty from the reading exercise (sensitive reception strategy) combined with revising and identifying the reading difficulties (**focused reception strategies).**

Students were encouraged to feel confident about facing any difficulty from the reading exercise by telling them not to worry about the time or if they have not accomplished the reading exercise by encouraging them to do it again. Sometimes, students can face some difficulties when trying to find out specific information, this could be caused by lack of reading strategies, poor reading habits, lack of background knowledge or complex linguistic features, and the use of complex new vocabulary. If so, students are asked to say what the difficulty is and go back through the text in order to achieve the reading comprehension proficiency (**focused reception strategy**).

SIXTH SESSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Steps followed to teach and practice focused reading strategies:

1.   Planning: Self-confidence encouragement and personal growing reflection (sensitive reception strategies) combinedwith schemata activation, a memory game play-based activity and a saying (focused reception strategies).

Students were encouraged to feel confident during the reading activity advising them to read at their own speed without worrying about the time or about their classmates' reading performancebecause they feel more confident when teachers recommend them not to worry and be relaxed before reading (**sensitive reception strategies**). Then, some personality traits were introduced through the played-based activity "Memory game" , the played-based activities help

to introduce, indirectly, important information included in the reading and motivate students, and increase their interest to read the text**(sensitive reception strategy)**. Then, students were asked to think about situations in which they have to make decisions in groups (e.g. deciding where to go out at night), besides that, if they find easy to make decisions by themselves or in groups, and finally, the following saying in English was shared with them: *"Two heads are better than one"*. Students were asked if there is a similar expression in their language **(focused reception strategy)**. It was helpful to elicit the benefits of collaborating with other people in decision making; moreover, the questions about decision making helped to motivate students to work in groups, to activate tolerance and to increase their interpersonal relationship with their classmates; besides, the discussion about the saying helped them to get prepared to connect their background knowledge with this reading experience (**sensitive reception strategies**).

2. Execution: Brain gym exercise "The Cross Crawl" with encouraging a positive attitude (sensitive reception strategies) combined with schemata activation, scanning, and underlining specific information, besides reading instructions carefully(focused reception strategies).

Before reading the text, we asked students to relax and enjoy the brain gym exercise "The Cross Crawl" **(Sensitive reception strategy)**.This helped students to be prepared to receive information from the reading text and to develop the ability to follow through and to complete assignments. Then, we followed a three-step focused reading strategy: read the text, look for specific information, and share the decision made in group to the class, by giving a justification of that decision. So, they were asked to read the paragraph about the show, and the following questions were asked in order to verify if they had comprehended the information presented in the first paragraph of the article: When does it start? Do the people in the show know each

other? And where are the cameras? By asking students if there was a similar show in their country helped students to connect their reading information with their background knowledge about the topic (**focused reception strategies**). Then, they read the description of the six participants in two stages: first, they put into practice scanning by reading the information about the three women, circling their positive characteristics and underlying their negative ones. Then, they had to do the same with the three texts about the men (**focused reception strategies**).

Then, they were asked to read the instructions from exercise A carefully in order to succeed in the activity **(focused reception strategies)**.

Before completing the reading exercise, ask yourself:

a)   WHAT AM I EXACTLY ASKED TO DO IN EXERCISE A? Read individually the description of the reality TV show and the information about the six participants and at the same time circle the positive characteristics and underline the negative ones for each participant.

b)   WHAT KIND OF WRITTEN TEXT AM I GOING TO READ? A TV guide article.

3. Evaluation: Short-term memory, linguistic features and checking students' answers with the class (focused reception strategies) combined with working in group and a proposal to read in autonomy *(sensitive reception strategies).*

They read the last information "Recent Events" and they were asked to recall the information about each participant presented in this last section of text (**Focus reception strategy).** Besides that, students were asked to work in groups *(**sensitive reception strategies)***, to make a decision, to justify their decision, and to tell the words, phrases or sentences that helped them to make the decision (**focused receptive strategy**). Then, they were asked to share the group's answers to the class in order to check their answers and their justifications.

They were asked to read the instructions from exercise B carefully in order to succeed in the second reading activity **(focused reception strategies)**.

Before completing the reading exercise, ask yourself:

a) WHAT AM I EXACTLY ASKED TO DO IN EXERCISE B? Write the name of the person I would like to eliminate and justify this decision.

b) HOW MANY ANSWERS AM I ASKED TO GIVE? Two: my decision made and the reason that helped me to take my decision.

 Finally, we advised students to practice reading in autonomy from different sources such as reading texts outside the class (Magazines, articles, newspapers, advertisements, formal invitations, etc.). Also, they were asked to practice the reading comprehension strategies already given when reading these kinds of sources ant to apply the previously learnt strategies when reading any text for pleasure **(sensitive reception strategy)**.

4. Repair: Encouraging students' self-confidence to face any difficulty from the reading exercise (sensitive reception strategies) combined with revising and identifying the reading difficulties (focused reception strategies).

Students were encouraged to feel confident about facing any difficulty from the reading exercise by telling them not to worry about the time or if they have not accomplished the reading exercise by encouraging them to do it again. Sometimes, students can face some difficulties when trying to find out specific information, this could be caused by lack of reading strategies, poor reading habits, lack of background knowledge or complex linguistic features, and the use of complex new vocabulary. If so, students are asked to say what the difficulty is

and go back through the text in order to achieve the reading comprehension proficiency **(focused reception strategy.)**

SEVENTH SESSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Steps followed to teach and practice focused reading strategies:

1. Planning: Paying attention to paratextual features: illustrations (sensitive reception strategies) combined with schemata activation and prediction (focused reception strategies).

Students were guided to remember the importance to predict when reading by connecting their previous knowledge about the importance of predicting a reading text (students had already practiced this strategy in the fourth session of this research), reading can be easier and faster because they can get some ideas of what the text is about (**Focused reception strategy**).

We asked students to pay attention to the illustrations and the title of the story, non-verbal and verbal communication respectively or paratextual features of a reading text paying attention to the illustrations, in order to predict what this text was about *(combining both* **sensitive reception strategies and focused reception strategies).** Then, students read the skills box and elicited new information about predicting why the last sentence in a paragraph is important when predicting what the next paragraph could be about in order to teach them advanced techniques of prediction. In addition, following spiral progression learning, students were asked what the red color represents to people (passion, love, angriness, war, spicy food, etc.). Then, they connected this color to the word *"hot"* (which is in red in the title of the text) and elicited that the red color refers to hot food. **(focused reception strategy)**

2. Execution: Brain gym exercise "The Cross Crawl" *(sensitive reception strategies)* **combined with skimming and predicting** (**focused reception strategies).**

Before reading the text, we helped students to feel relax by implementing the "Cross Crawl" brain gym exercise which activates the brain for reading comprehension for students to be prepared to receive information from a reading text and complete assignments. They were encouraged to feel confident during the reading activity advising them to read at their own speed without worrying about the time or answering incorrectly (**sensitive reception strategies**).

Then in exercise A, they had to skim each paragraph of the text in order to predict the topic and identify the main idea of the next paragraph before reading it, by choosing one option presented for each paragraph (**focused reception strategies**); then, they read the next paragraph and confirmed or corrected their predictions and they repeated this procedure with each paragraph, they were asked to do this task individually.

 In addition, students answered the next questions in order to succeed the exercise B: Before completing the reading exercise, ask yourself:

a)   WHAT AM I EXACTLY ASKED TO DO? Read each paragraph in order to predict the topic and main idea for the next paragraph before reading it and circle one of the options for each paragraph.

b)   HOW MANY ANSWERS AM I ASKED TO GIVE? Three.

c)   WHAT KIND OF WRITTEN TEXT AM I GOING TO READ? A story.

Finally, they read the third paragraph again in order to predict and choose the ending of the story, before reading the final paragraph. They read the ending of the story to find out if their

prediction was correct. Then, they were asked to mention what evidence helped them to justify their answer.

Students answered the next questions in order to succeed the exercise C.

Before completing the reading exercise, ask yourself:

a)   WHAT AM I EXACTLY ASKED TO DO? To choose the ending that I think is the most appropriate, out of three options presented in this exercise and to find evidence in exercise B to justify my answer.

b)   HOW MANY ANSWERS AM I ASKED TO GIVE? One.

c)   WHAT KIND OF WRITTEN TEXT AM I GOING TO READ? A story.

3. Evaluation: Checking the answers with the class to confirm predictions and comprehension (focused reception strategies) combined with students reading in autonomy encouragement *(sensitive reception strategies).*

After reading the text, students were asked to share their predictions about the topic paragraphs by justifying their answers and they were asked if making predictions like this helped them to read the text more easily. Finally, we asked students if they read in autonomy in order to practice the different reading strategies applied in the sessions **(Sensitive reception strategy)**.

4. Repair: Encouraging students' self-confidence to face any difficulty from the reading exercise (sensitive reception strategies) combined with revising and identifying the reading difficulties (focused reception strategies).

Students were encouraged to feel confident about facing any difficulty from the reading exercise by telling them not to worry about the time or if they have not accomplished the

reading exercise by encouraging them to do it again. Sometimes, students can face some difficulties when trying to predict what the text is about and choose a wrong option, this could be caused by lack of reading strategies, poor reading habits, lack of background knowledge or complex linguistic features, and the use of complex new vocabulary or the content of the text. If so, students are asked to go back through the text with the teacher's help and identify what and where the difficulties can be in order to achieve the reading proficiently (**focused reception strategy).**

EIGHTH SESSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

Steps followed to teach and practice focused reading comprehension strategies:

1. Planning: Brain gym exercise "The Positive Points" and self-confidence (sensitive reception strategies) combined with giving opinions (focused reception strategies).

Before reading the text, students were asked to feel relax by implementing The "Positive Points" brain gym exercise; which helped them to get relaxed, at the same time; activates the brain in order to act without thinking under stress when long-term memory is required to concentrate during the reading; besides that, they were encouraged to feel confident during the reading activity, advising them to read at their own speed without worrying about the time or their classmates' reading speed (**sensitive reception strategies**). Students feel more confident at the moment of reading when teachers recommend them not to worry and be relaxed before reading. Then, students explained where they can find advice columns, if they ever read this kind of information, and if they think advice columns are "genuine" or if they think that both

the letters and their responses are written by journalists. Besides, connecting to previous information about the topic "advice column" helps to motivate students, activate students' background knowledge related to the content of the text and increase their interest to read the text **(focused receptive strategy).** Finally, they were asked to focus on the illustration of the reading and describe them without reading the texts next to them paying attention to the illustration, a paratextual feature of the reading exercise, these strategies help students to predict what the reading could be about because it connects their previous knowledge with the illustration of the reading **(sensitive receptive strategy)**.

2. Execution: Brain gym exercise "The Gravity Glider" and paratextual features: pictures *(sensitive reception strategies*) combined with skimming, scanning, taking notes and looking for key words (focused reception strategies).

Before reading the text, we asked students to feel relax by implementing "The Gravity Glider" brain gym exercise **(sensitive reception strategy)** in order to prepare students to receive information from a reading text and to develop the ability to follow through and to complete assignments. Then, we showed them a picture of the person that was in charge of the Advice Column "ABBY" Pauline Friedman Phillips (better known by her pen name, Abigail Van Buren, she died in 2013) **(sensitive reception strategy)** and told them that she started responding to letters in an Advice column in1956 and that she was very famous because her replies to the letters were flippant (superficial, frivolously, and disrespectful) and occasionally risqué (indecent, daringlyclose to indelicacyorimpropriety). Then, students read some of the answers she gave to the letters to verify this fact and to have some fun before doing the reading exercise of their books. **(focused reception strategy)**

Then, we asked students to read the instruction of the reading exercise individually. They were encouraged to take notes about possible solutions to the two problems for both letters (they were free to choose to give a serious solution or a flipping and risqué solution). Then, students were asked to skim each letter in order to find out the problem of each letter, and then, they read again and paid attention to key words such as *upset, fight, but, mad, problem, break up,* and to *comparisons in the texts* -scanning strategy, in order to help them to identify the problems. (**focused reception strategy).**

Then, they were asked to read the instructions in order to succeed in the reading activity (**focused reception strategies**):

Before completing the reading exercise, ask yourself:

a)   WHAT AM I EXACTLY ASKED TO DO? Read two letters and think about possible solutions to the problems presented in these two letters.

b)   HOW MANY ANSWERS AM I ASKED TO GIVE? Two.

c)   WHAT KIND OF WRITTEN TEXT AM I GOING TO READ? Letters published on "Dear Debby", an advice column from Days magazine.

3. Evaluation: Share the answers with the class to confirm comprehension (focused reception strategies) combined with a proposal to have fun when reading in autonomy (sensitive reception strategies).

After reading the text, students were asked to explain the problem of each letter in order to check reading comprehension and to share their possible serious or flipping solutions to the problems (**focused receptive strategy**). Finally, we continue encouraging students to practice

reading in autonomy, outside the classroom from different sources such as magazines, articles, newspapers, advertisements, formal invitations, etc. and we reminded them that we could have fun when reading, too. They were asked to practice focused reading strategies already given in the classroom when reading these kinds of sources, and to apply them when reading any text for pleasure or when doing a reading exercises or exams.

4   **Repair:** *encouraging students' self-confidence to face any difficulty from the reading exercise (***sensitive reception strategies***) combined with revising and identifying the reading difficulties* (**focused reception strategies).**

Students were encouraged to feel confident about facing any difficulty from the reading exercise by telling them not to worry about the time or if they have not accomplished the reading exercise by encouraging them to do it again. Sometimes, students can face some difficulties when trying to find out specific information, this could be caused by lack of reading strategies, poor reading habits, lack of background knowledge or complex linguistic features, and the use of complex new vocabulary. If so, students are asked to avoid any anxiety, to make some brain-gym exercises before rereading the texts **(sensitive reception strategies)** and put into practice the focused reading strategies learnt in order to identify the difficulties they had and to go back through the text in order to achieve the reading comprehension proficiency **(focused reception strategy).**

CHAPTER IV

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

This research has led to interesting findings about the important role that teaching focused reading strategies has in the English as a foreign language teaching-learning process. We present them through a quantitative and through a qualitative analysis. After administering the diagnostic test and the validation test, we present the quantitative results analysis and interpretation as follows:

STUDENTS	Diagnostic test	Validation test
Student 1	5	6
Student 2	4	6
Student 3	5	10
Student 4	1	10
Student 5	5	10
Student 6	4	10
Student 7	5	10
Student 8	8	10
Student 9	6	10
Student 10	6	10
Student 11	9	10
Student 12	3	10
Student 13	7	10
Student 14	4	10
Student 15	6	10
Student 16	8	10
Student 17	6	10
Student 18	4	10
Student 19	4	10
Student 20	2	10
Student 21	7	10
Student 22	8	10

Figure 1. Diagnostic and validating tests results

We used the t-paired-samples test and took into account the significance level (α=.05) in order to determine, statistically, if the results obtained were due to the two-point mean difference between the diagnostic test and validation test (related to the strategy implementation) or if there was no significant difference.

T-Test forPairedSamples

PairedSampleStatistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Pair 1	Diagnostic test	**5,32**	**22**	**2,033**	**,433**
	Validation test	**9,64**	**22**	**1,177**	**,251**

Figure 2 PairedSamplesStatistics

As observed in figure 2, the mean of the diagnostic test and validation test concentrates in the acceptance rank of the standard deviation (-2.12 to 2.12). In the diagnostic test we obtained a standard deviation of 2.033, and in the validation test it was 1.177. This means that after the implementation of the strategies, the results were less dispersed than before this implementation. Therefore, the focused reading strategies taught helped A2 level students to improve their reading comprehension performance.

PairedSample Test

		PairedDifferences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig. (2-
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	Df	tailed)
Pair 1	Diagnostic test Validation test	-4,31 8	2,212	,472	-5,299	-3,337	-9,156	21	,000

Figure 3 Paired Samples Test

As noted in figure 3, the T value is negative (-9.156) indicating that the mean of the diagnostic test was less than the mean of the validation test. Our sample was 22 and subtracting 1, we get 21 which is the degree of freedom that is calculated by the sample size minus 1 (N-1). Finally, the significant difference spot in the chart shows that the probability of failure of the implementation of the reading comprehension strategies is null (.000) compared to the significant level (.05). Therefore, we can say again that the implementation of the focused reading strategies of this research had a positive impact at improving A2 level learners' reading performance.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

This type of research provides useful findings about the importance of teaching focused reading strategies; the results are reflected in the students opinions obtained from the qualitative data analysis surveys.

Diagnostic Survey

Question 1: *How did you feel while doing this reading test?*

The results of the qualitative data analysis obtained from question one, during the diagnostic phase, demonstrated that most of the students (73%) felt confusion, stress, anxiety and worriedness before and while doing a reading test. It seems that these states are obstacles to demonstrate their true reading abilities at the moment of taking an evaluation. Therefore, we decided to select and implement focused reading strategies in order to help them to overcome such problems and improve their A2 level reading comprehension performance. This fact led us to implement the use of sensitive reception strategies (paying attention to non-verbal communication, doing some brain gym exercises**,** having a positive attitude, and self-confidence practicing reading in autonomy) in order to diminish students' low self-confidence, stress, anxiety, worriedness and confusion, to make them feel more confident, relaxed and concentrated at the moment of taking a reading comprehension exercises or tests.

Validation Survey

Question 1: *How did you feel while doing this reading test?*

Most of the students (73%) manifested that they were more confident, relaxed, calmed, interested, able to analyze, focused, more concentrated while doing this reading test. These results showed that students felt that they had improved their self-confidence, their positive attitude towards reading and their reading comprehension performance. In addition, these students affirmed that they understood almost everything in the text of this test because they made use of the focused reading strategies. Only one student still said that he felt confused because of the vocabulary complexity in the reading test and just three students expressed that they felt stressed and nervous because their classmates were answering the exam faster than them and because the low quality of the copy of the exam (blurred). This information is important because the stress was not caused by a low level reading proficiency, but it was caused by new external factors: the bad quality of the material and when students compare their reading speed with others, even though there was still enough time to continue answering the exam.

Diagnostic Survey

Question 2: *Which factors do you consider that affect your reading comprehension performance?*

More than a half of the students (59%) mentioned that they felt affected by the lack of vocabulary, the complexity of grammar structures, lack of reading habits, and the noise outside the classroom. This was reflected on this question because many of them gave

inappropriateanswers and some of them did not answer this question, showing that they did not understand the question.

Validation Survey

Question 2: *Which external and internal factors do you consider influenced your reading comprehension performance in this test?*

Only seven students (32%) manifested that they felt stressed because they felt that they needed more time to complete the exam due to the low quality of the copies, however the weather conditions advantaged them because they considered that a fresh day made them feel more relaxed; therefore, they felt the reading process easier. Another external factor that influenced their self-confidence was the advices provided during the implementation of this research which empowered their reading performance.

Diagnostic Survey

Question 3*: What personal reading strategies do you use when taking reading exercises or tests?*

More than a half of the students (55%) reported that they use personal strategies such as focus on new words, try to identify main ideas, get meaning from the context, read and re-read, look information from the author's text, and reading slowly, and 10 students out of 22 (45%) said that they did not use any reading strategy.

Validation Survey

Question 3: *In your opinion, which reading strategies provided during this research do you consider helped you the most when doing this reading test?*

All of the students (100%) stated that they used both reading comprehension strategies: focused reception strategies and sensitive reception strategies. Most of the students (77%) mentioned that they had applied more than one of the focused reading strategies such as predicting, scanning, questioning, summarizing, retelling, using background knowledge, getting meaning for context, identifying key words, reading the title and comprehending the instructions of the reading exercises or test. They mentioned that these focused reception strategies helped them to comprehend the text in a better way and to read faster. Some of the students (27%) manifested that getting some relaxation exercises or brain gym exercises, focusing on images or paratextual features, being concentrated before doing a reading exercise or a test helped them to be more relaxed and concentrated.

Diagnostic Survey

Question 4: *Did you receive any explicit teaching about reading comprehension strategies during your last course? If you answered affirmatively, could you mention those strategies you learnt during that course?*

Only a few students (14%) reported they had received some reading comprehension strategies. On the contrary, most of them (68%) said that they did not receive any reading comprehension strategy during their last course and 4 (18%) students did not answer this question.

Validation Survey

Question 4: *Which focused reading strategies applied during this research will you continue using in future tests and in reading exercises?*

Most of the students (96 %) said that they will continue using the sensitive reception strategies: the brain gym exercise and practicing reading in autonomy, only one student said that he would not use any of the focused reading strategies applied during this research. Regarding to sensitive receptive strategies, some of the students (33%) expressed that they will continue applying brain gym exercises, comprehending instructions and paratextual features in order to be relaxed and prepared for reading. Most of the students (67%) said that the most useful reading strategies for them were: predicting, questioning, scanning, retelling, summarizing, getting meaning from context, background knowledge, reading the title, rereading, reading in autonomy. Therefore, they affirmed that they will continue applying both focused reading strategies in the future.

Diagnostic Survey

Question 5: *What suggestions would you give to specialists who design reading tests?*

Most of the students (77%) suggested that specialists should take into account the level of the reading, using simple texts containing paratextual features, real life, attractive and relevant topics, basic vocabulary and simple grammar structures. Besides, they suggested that teachers should make them put into practice reading comprehension exercises according to their level during their classes in order to get prepared for the reading final evaluations.

Validation Survey

Question 5: *What suggestions would you give to specialists who design reading test?*

All of the students (100%) give suggestions to the specialists who design reading tests, for example, they suggested to design reading exams according to the level of the reader which should be supported by paratextual features, updated and multicultural topics according to the

students ages related to real life experiences containing relevant content, clear instructions, concrete questions, attractive and interesting exams, basic vocabulary, and high quality of the copies. Besides, they proposed that specialist should schedule reading exams within appropriate hours. Moreover, students suggested that the specialists should consider including relaxation exercises or play-based activities and an adequate time limit when assigning a reading exercise or a test.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Teaching sensitive reception strategies and focused reception strategies to twenty-two students of one of the five English Intermediate I courses was planned and executed in order to identify their impact in order to help students to improve their A2 level reading comprehension performance. First of all, the results showed that most of them were not conscious of the importance of learning focused reading strategies. So, they welcomed the researchers' proposal of implementing focused reading strategies explicitly. Moreover, those students supported this research enthusiastically and willing to improve their reading skill. Therefore, they participated actively during the implementation of these reading strategies, showing in this way the effects of the volitional aspect of their learning process. Indeed, these students improved their reading comprehension performance significantly from the diagnostic test to the validation test, as shown in the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis proving that the implementation of sensitive reception strategies and focused reception strategies had a positive impact on the A2 level students' reading comprehension performance by helping them to improve their reading comprehension ability (See annex 7).

After the implementation of the focused reading strategies in the English Intermediate I group from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, we can conclude the following:

✓ These strategies helped students to improve their A2 level reading comprehension performance as shown through the final results obtained which indicate that all of the students

improved their reading comprehension abilities because all of them obtained higher grades in the validation test (see figure 1). Besides, all of the students affirmed in the validation survey that they improved their reading comprehension abilities because they applied both focused and sensitive reception strategies learnt during this research; for example, they mentioned that these strategies helped them to comprehend the text in a better way and to be more relaxed and concentrated.

✓ Moreover, we can confirm that the low reading performance in this group was influenced by the lack of knowledge about focused and sensitive reception strategies (45% of students said that they did not use any reading strategy). Stress, anxiety, confusion, nervousness, low self-confidence, poor reading habits, lack of linguistic knowledge were also factors that affected their reading comprehension performance. All those aspects were overcome, thanks to the implementation phase of this research in which were instructed regarding the importance and effectiveness of the application of the focused and sensitive reception reading strategies. According to Chamot (Celce& Murcia, 2001), "Strategies need to be controlled consciously if learners are to maintain awareness of different learning conditions and select the strategy most appropriate for specific tasks". Before the implementation phase, students knew very little about the focused reading strategies. They also had unawareness about the positive impact these strategies could have on the improvement of their reading performance, their unawareness happened because most of them were not provided with any explicit instruction on reading comprehension strategies in their previous English courses (the 68% of students said that they did not receive any reading comprehension strategy during their last course). After the implementation phase, most of the students became aware of the importance and effectiveness of

applying such strategies; this process helped them to become more proficient in reading. Besides that, they even offered essential suggestion for improving their reading comprehension performance such as continuing applying brain gym exercises before any reading exercise or exams.

✓   We can confirm that the implementation of the focused reading strategies had a positive impact on students from the English Intermediate I course because it helped them to improve their A2 level reading comprehension performance. This essential fact was reflected in the statistical results, in which students showed a considerable improvement, for example, the majority of the students (91%) found that both kind of focused reading strategies were very helpful for them at the moment of understanding a written text. In addition, to reinforce such results, the final grades of these students showed their academic improvement because the majority of the students took advantages from both types of strategies learnt during this research period; while the 9% of the students approved this exam but with lower grades.(See figure 1).

✓   We can determine that the implementation of focused reading strategies had a positive impact in the improvement of A2 level English Intermediate I students reading comprehension performance at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador because 91% of the students passed the validation test; and the most important fact was that 55% of the students who failed in the diagnostic reading comprehension test, passed with excellent grades in the validation test.(See annex 7)

✓   It can be concluded that A2 level English Intermediate I students at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador achieved a relevant improvement of the reading comprehension performance as it is shown through the grades in the validation test: 12 students got grades from 1 to 5 in the diagnostic test and 10 students got grades from 6 to 10, and all of them succeed the validation test: 20 students got 10 and only 2 students got 6.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the whole process of this research study and its findings, we can recommend the following:

✓ Future researchers of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador should continue investigating about researches that include sensitive reception strategies and focused reception strategies to aid the A2 level students in their pursuit to improve their reading skills. Also, they should research the possibility of improving the other major skills (listening, writing and speaking), and implement explicit learning strategies suitable for that purpose.

✓ The Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador should make sure that teachers own the appropriate classroom conditions, for example, wide lightened and noiseless classrooms with air conditioner or with electric fans in order to implement the different strategies effectively in a comfortable and appropriate learning environment with the purpose of obtaining the expected improvements.

✓ The Foreign Language Department should provide students with the appropriate tools such as free libraries, free internet connection in the classrooms, reading comprehension clubs for students to read for pleasure, all of this, in order to implement intensive and extensive reading and all types of focused reading strategies that activate reading comprehension.

✓ Future English teachers from the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador teaching English courses at the beginning of the major should implement different types of focused reading strategies in their classrooms, by teaching them explicitly; and also, they should implement some sensitive receptions strategies in order to support their learning process.

There is a vast list of bibliography that goes beyond the strategies for teaching reading, contained in the teacher's guides of regular textbooks.

✓ Based on the students' suggestions obtained through the diagnostic and validation tests, we recommend teachers to be aware of the fact that developing a reading exercise or a reading test is a complex task to carry out; therefore, students need to be given enough time to read instructions and check their choices in order to help students to show their true reading proficiency.

Carrying out this research has been an innovative and helpful experience for our professional development since we were exposed to a vast array of strategies (that we occasionally used implicitly and randomly before taking this research) essential for the completion of our daily reading experiences. We can state this because we had the opportunity to interact with different types of students directly, and work with their different learning styles. Teaching students the focused reading strategies, made us realize that the students needed to learn and apply those strategies while doing reading comprehension exercises or taking tests. This led us to reflect about the sensitive dimension that teachers do not normally see, and tried to help students to become aware of the importance of applying the different focused reading strategies. Finally, we learned from the impact of this research that including focused reception and sensitive reception reading strategies in the curriculum can help students to have significant improvements on their reading performance and increase their self-esteem, self-confidence and their attitude towards reading.

As stated at the beginning of this research, we believe that it is very important to teach focused reading strategies explicitly to the students because they help them not only to improve their ability to read, but also to empower their confidence, improving their reading ability to comprehend any written texts through the application of both reading strategies: focused and sensitive reception reading strategies. The CEFRL (2001) refers to the "*abilities to learn how*" as language learning abilities that enable the learner to deal more effectively and independently with new language learning challenges to see what options exist and to make better use of opportunities. Therefore, we proposed teachers to continue further research on strategies that help students to improve their language abilities, especially on reading comprehension.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

DESCRIPTORS FOR A2 LEVEL

Students having *A2 level of competence in reading skill* should have already reached the following abilities according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching Assessment: 2001:

Characteristics of an A2 level English student's competence.

Figure 1.

(Table 2. Common Reference Levels: **self-assessment grid**)
UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE
Reading:
✓ Read very short simple texts. ✓ Find specific predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables. ✓ Understand simple short personal letters.

Figure 2.

(Table.4.4.2.2 Common Reference levels : *visual reception (reading)*
OVERALL READING COMPREHENSION
✓ Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency every day or job-related language. ✓ Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.
READING CORRESPONDENCE

✓ Can understand basic types of standard routine letters and faxes (enquiries, orders, letters of confirmation etc.) on familiar topics.   ✓ Can understand short simple personal letters.

READING FOR ORIENTATION

✓ Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables.   ✓ Can locate specific information in lists and isolate the information required (e.g. use the 'Yellow Pages' to find a service or tradesman).   ✓ Can understand everyday signs and notices: in public places, such as streets, restaurants, railway stations; in workplaces, such as directions, instructions, hazard warnings.

READING FOR INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT

✓ Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.

READING INSTRUCTIONS

✓ Can understand regulations, for example safety, when expressed in simple language.   ✓ Can understand simple instructions on equipment encountered in everyday life – such as a public telephone.

DIAGNOSTIC TEST: Quantitative instrument.

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Objective: To find out A2 level students' proficiency in reading comprehension, at the Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

Reading is faster and easier if you make some predictions about the text before you read it. Use titles, headings, pictures, and what you already know about the topic to make predictions.

DIRECTIONS:
A. Look at the title, the headings and the pictures in Exercise B. Think about what you know about musical genress. Circle T (true) or F (false).

1-Musical fusion is the combination of musical styles to create a new style.	T	F
2-American music had an influyence on rock and roll.	T	F
3-Religious music had an influence on rock and roll.	T	F
4-Paul Simon´s album Graceland is a fusion of American styles.	T	F
5-All fusion music combines American styles with Latin or African music.	T	F

Musical Fusion

Rock + blues + pop + country + hip-hop = American fusion
Country + blues + gospel = rock & roll

Going international
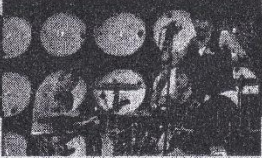
Check it out
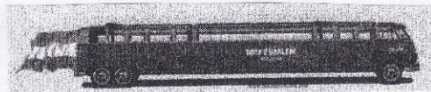
B. Now read the text and check your answers in exercises A. How many the answers did you predict correctly?

Musical Fusion

Rock + blues + pop + country + hip-hop = American fusion
Country + blues + gospel = rock & roll

What do blues, country, and gospel music have in common? Separately, not much, but these three American musical genres came together in the 1950s to form rock and roll. Since then, many popular musical styles have fused to create different genres. There are alternative country bands like The Dixie Chicks, with a fusion of country, rock, and pop music. Funk rock artists like The Red Hot Chili Peppers and Lenny Kravitz successfully mix rock, R&B, and soul music to create their own style. Nu metal artists like Korn and Linkin Park fuse heavy metal, alternative rock, and hip-hop.

Going International

In the 1980s, fusion music began to include the fusion of music from different countries. Two musicians were primarily responsible for introducing music from other countries to the U.S. In 1986, Paul Simon made an album called *Graceland*. He worked with African musicians to create a fusion of rock and African rhythms, and the album was a huge success. Then in 1989, David Byrne made *Rei Momo*. The album combines rock with different Latin American rhythms and it was also an enormous success.

Check It out

Today, there is fusion music from all over the world. If you haven't heard much international music, you ought to try it. Search for "world fusion music" on the Internet to listen to samples. Here are some artists and albums you should know about:

- Al-Yaman, *Hurriya* (Prague, Czech Republic): Middle-Eastern and electronic music.
- Andrea Echeverri, *Andrea Echeverri* (Colombia): alternative rock and traditional Colombian music.
- Bole2Harlem, *Bole2Harlem, Vol. 1* (Ethiopia-U.S.): rap/hip-hop and traditional African music.
- Ex-Centric Sound System, *West Nile Funk* (U.S.): hip-hop, funk, West African, and Caribbean music.

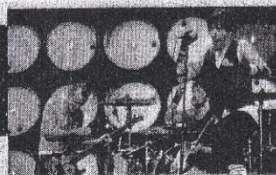|		
1-Musical fusion is the combination of musical styles to create a new style.	T	F
2-American music had an influyence on rock and roll.	T	F
3-Religious music had an influence on rock and roll.	T	F
4-Paul Simon´s album Graceland is a fusion of American styles.	T	F
5-All fusion music combines American styles with Latin or African music.	T	F

Reading: prediction

9

Reading is faster and easier if you make some predictions about the text before you read it. Use titles, headings, pictures, and what you already know about the topic to make predictions.

A Look at the title, the headings, and the pictures in Exercise B. Think about what you know about musical genres. Circle *T* (true) or *F* (false).

1 Musical fusion is the combination of musical styles to create a new style. (T) F
2 American music often uses fusion. (T) F
3 Religious music had an influence on rock and roll. (T) F
4 Paul Simon's album *Graceland* is a fusion of American styles. T (F)
5 All fusion music combines American styles with Latin or African music. T (F)

B Now read the text and check your answers in Exercise A. How many of the answers did you predict correctly?

Musical Fusion

Rock + blues + pop + country + hip-hop = American fusion
Country + blues + gospel = rock & roll

What do blues, country, and gospel music have in common? Separately, not much, but these three American musical genres came together in the 1950s to form rock and roll. Since then, many popular musical styles have fused to create different genres. There are alternative country bands like The Dixie Chicks, with a fusion of country, rock, and pop music. Funk rock artists like The Red Hot Chili Peppers and Lenny Kravitz successfully mix rock, R&B, and soul music to create their own style. Nu metal artists like Korn and Linkin Park fuse heavy metal, alternative rock, and hip-hop.

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• Ex-Centric Sound System, *West Nile Funk* (U.S.): hip-hop, funk, West African, and Caribbean music.

Source: Open Mind level 2 teacher's edition, MACMILLAN

OPINION DIAGNOSTIC TEST: Qualitative instrument.

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Student's name: _____

Objectives:

To identify A2 level students` feelings when carrying out a reading test, at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador.

To find out A2 level students` opinions about the factors and reading strategies that influences their reading comprehension performance.

Instructions: please answer sincerely and objectively the following questions. If you have any doubt, you can ask the administrators of this survey to help you.

1. How did you feel while doing the Reading exam?

2. Which of the factors, internal and external, do you consider that could affect your Reading comprehension performance?

3. Which Reading strategies do you apply when taking Reading exercises or exams?

4. Did you receive any explicit Reading strategy during the last semester?   If your answer is positive, could you mention those strategies you learnt along of this course?

5.   What would you suggest to the Reading exams´ designers?

ANNEX 4

VALIDITY TEST: Quantitative instrument.

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Student's name: _____

Objective: To find out A2 level students' proficiency improvement in their reading comprehension performance, at the Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

DIRECTIONS:

A. Read this article, using the reading comprehension strategies learnt in class.

PARTIES AROUND THE WORLD

Different countries around the world have different party customs. In Germany, for example, check your invitation carefully. If it says, "The party starts at nine," make sure you arrive on time. It's not polite to be late. Don't worry if you're in Greece, however. Most guests arrive late, and it's not a problem!

Should you take a gift? The answer is often yes. In Turkey, it's polite to bring snacks, and make sure you take something for the children! People in China like to receive gifts from guests, too, especially if they're red—a lucky color.

During the party, you may need to be careful about what you talk about with other guests. In some countries, it's fine to ask people how much money they earn. In the U.K., it's better to talk about more neutral topics such as what job a person does or their hobbies.

Finally, if you're at a party in a Scandinavian country such as Norway or Sweden, make sure you say goodbye to each guest individually. However, in some other countries, it's enough just to wave goodbye to everyone as you leave.

B. Match each country to its corresponding custom, according to the text above.

1 Germany   a) Say good bye to each guest.
2 Greece   b) Take something red.
3 China   c) Be on time.
4 The U.K.   d) Don't talk about some subjects.
5 Norway   e) You can be late.

Language use: reading a magazine article

A Read this article and match each custom to the correct country.

PARTIES AROUND THE WORLD

Different countries around the world have different party customs. In Germany, for example, check your invitation carefully. If it says, "The party starts at nine," make sure you arrive on time. It's not polite to be late. Don't worry if you're in Greece, however. Most guests arrive late, and it's not a problem!

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Finally, if you're at a party in a Scandinavian country such as Norway or Sweden, make sure you say goodbye to each guest individually. However, in some other countries, it's enough just to wave goodbye to everyone as you leave.

1 Germany   a) Say goodbye to each guest.
2 Greece   b) Take something red.
3 China   c) Be on time.
4 the U.K.   d) Don't talk about some subjects.
5 Norway   e) You can be late.

Source: Open Mind level 2 teacher's edition, MACMILLAN

ANNEX 5

OPINION VALIDITY TEST: Qualitative instrument.

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Student's name: _____

Objectives: To find out the impact of the implementation sensitive and focused reception strategies in a group of English Intermediate I in the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador.
To find out A2 level students' opinions about the factors and reading strategies that influenced their reading comprehension performance.

Instructions: Answer objectively the following questions.

1. How did you feel while answering the last reading exam?

2. Which of the factors, external and internal, do you consider that influenced your performance in Reading comprehension during the last exam?

3. In your opinion, which of the Reading strategies provided do you consider were the most useful when reading the text in the exam?

4. What would you suggest for Reading exam's designers?

5. Which of the applied reading strategies are you going to continue using in future Reading comprehension exams or exercises?

ANNEX 6: site sources of reading proposed to students

SITE	WHAT CAN WE FIND IN THIS SITE?	HOMI
http://storystar.com/	A Totally FREE site for short story lovers everywhere!	
http://www.thisisliteracy.ca/teenagers/resources/407	**Magazines for teens - online!** Check out these online magazines! Find your favorites and visit the sites regularly to see what is new.	
http://www.makeuseof.com/	MakeUseOf is the world's leading destination for learning more about technology and the many ways that it can improve your life.	
http://www.timeforkids.com/	TIME For Kids is a weekly classroom news magazine that motivates kids to read!	
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/	Its interests include geography, archaeology and natural science, and	

ANNEX 7

Data analysis pie charts of the diagnostic test and validation test results

Results of the Diagnostic test	
Students	**Number of students**
Studentswhopassed	10
Studentswhofailed	12
Total of thesample	22
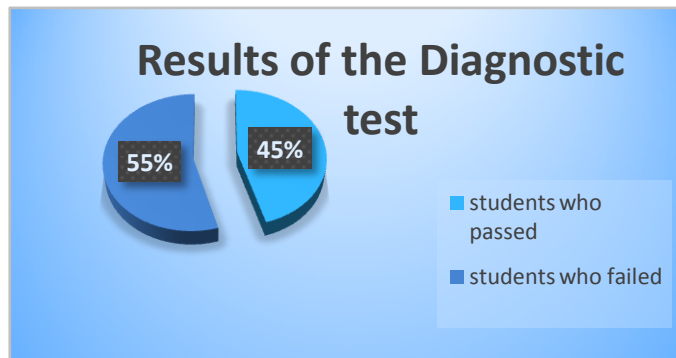
Students	**Number of students**
Studentswhopassed with 10.0.	20
Studentswhopassed with 6.0.	2
Total of thesample	22