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FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

Universidad de El Salvador
Hacia la libertad por la cultura

TOPIC:

"Factors that affect in the development of Reading Comprehension process of 4th year English major students when reading authentic texts"

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INTRODUCCTION

One of the most exasperated problems that students at the Foreign Language Department, at University of El Salvador face is that many of them come into their classrooms without the requisite knowledge, skills or disposition to read and comprehend the materials they have to deal with in their major. There is no doubt that the reading comprehension skill is necessary and important for the proper performance of any college student. It has been shown that students' reading achievement correlate with success in school and the amount of independent reading they do (Greaney 1980; Anderson, Fielding and Wilson 1988). In other words students who have developed excellent reading comprehension have great academic performance. This situation affects many students, but especially those of 4th year, since they are exposed to constantly reading authentic materials.

Because of the previous idea, it emerged the notion of starting this paper which attempted to find out about the different factors that affect the reading comprehension of a group of 69 students studying the major in English when they read authentic texts: essays, newspaper articles, textbooks. The factors that this research included were the cognitive, the background knowledge, the motivation, the anxiety, the environment, the complexity of the text, and the different reading strategies used to comprehend texts. In order to achieve this task the sample selected was asked to respond a questionnaire which contained questions that collected information about each factor. Then, the data obtained by the instrument was analyzed by quantitative method and the results were presented in graphics. Finally, by analyzing the results were taken the major findings and the conclusions of this study.

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Special Dedication by: Carlos Alfredo Landaverde.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Reading comprehension is an important skill that promotes the development of different academic activities of students. It helps them decoding a text, analyzing, interpreting and expressing their own opinions about any written material. The ability to read and understand written material is very important in the civilized world.

Today college students need to have developed a strong ability to comprehend, every kind of written information to struggle with the academic activities that professors at the university work with. The students, as they progress in their education, face expository or explanatory and argumentative texts, and this need grows, so they need to understand and produce in relation to what they read. But, the real fact was that most of a great number of Salvadorian college students had not well developed this skill .

It was not a secret, that, there were many students in the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador that had poor reading comprehension skills and had difficulties doing their analysis in reading tasks. Based on the last idea and the experience as students from "Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción: Enseñanza" and the different difficulties faced when being in the fourth academic year of the major, it was really difficult to understand written material which was not graded by the teachers; in other words, authentic texts. At this level, students had to deal with subjects where it was mandatory to read and analyze information from real context as for example to read some chapters of books written by academic writers.

It was evident that these students had problems when trying to cope with such material. This was worst if it was considered that there were two subjects related to the development of reading skills, and that had already been taken by the students and it was supposed they had developed these reading skills. It was assumed that students who had taken Reading and Conversation I and II had developed the critical thinking and were able to read all kind of written material. However the situation was different. Analyzing the Syllabi 2010, 2011, and 2012 of two subjects (Reading and Conversation I and II) from the major curriculum which were related with the reading comprehension development, it could be observed there was a minimum focus in order to develop reading comprehension; it means, the main focus was the speaking skill based on the reading of chunks of texts already graded and prepared to generate oral communication.

Similarly, students were unable to read authentic texts in order to create their own inferences about real life information, the following question emerged: What are the main factors affecting reading comprehension of 4th year major students when they have to read authentic texts in the "Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción: Enseñanza" at the Foreign Language Department in the University of El Salvador?

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were the following:

GENERAL OBJETIVE:

> ➢ To inquire about the different factors that affect in the development of reading comprehension process of 4th year English major students when reading authentic texts.

SPECIFIC OBJETIVES:

- ✓ To find out the major factors that have a great impact in the students' reading comprehension skill.
- ✓ To inform the professors about the different weaknesses students have, related to the reading comprehension skill to find strategies that can improve it.
- ✓ To discover the different reading strategies that 4th year major students put in practice to deal with the factors that affect their reading comprehension skill.

SIGNIFICANT OF THE PROBLEM

This research was important since it pretended to inquire about the factors affecting the process of the reading and comprehension skill of students who were studying their 4th year in the English major at the University of El Salvador. At the same time it explained why Reading Comprehension is an important skill that helps students to succeed, not only in their academic performance but also in their professional future fields. Recent researches on the subject of reading comprehension had shown that it existed as a complex cognitive activity indispensable for adequate functioning information in contemporary society (Alfassi, 2004, Zhang, 1993).

This research was focused on the idea that it was very important for foreign language learners to develop strong reading comprehension abilities to succeed in their major. It meant that, FLD students must understand the meaning of texts critically, evaluate messages, remember the context, and synthesize knowledge in English written materials. All of this matter, with the objective to respond efficiently to the demands required in the 4th year level. Most of the time, foreign language learners around the world had some problems and challenges when they read in a second language (Koda, 2007). For instance, lack of cultural knowledge, the influence of the students' mother tongue, insufficient vocabulary knowledge and as consequence students did not develop effective reading comprehension skills. Under these circumstances, it was certain that there were some factors causing these difficulties. This called the attention of the research team who wanted to know why this situation occurred.

In view of the above situation, an investigation was considered necessary to be done in order to identify those factors that affected reading comprehension not only in the students who were studying their 4th year in the English major but also the different second language learners. Thus, this research discovered and published the most relevant factors that inhibit the reading comprehension in 4th year major students at UES. Moreover, the results of this research could be taken into account as a help for the staff of professors (especially the ones who teach Reading and Conversation Courses I and II) at the Foreign Language Department to know what the weaknesses and strengths of the students related to reading comprehension are.

Finally, taking into account the curriculum adaptation that the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador was doing, this research could be taken as a parameter in order to identify different strategies for guaranteeing an excellent reading comprehension skill in the students before mentioned. Besides, professors would take into a count about the main factors affecting their students' reading comprehension during the different evaluations in order not only to help them to improve their academic performance but also to help them to develop a real reading comprehension skill when reading authentic texts.

LIMITATIONS

➢ One of the biggest limitations faced during the research was that there was not enough bibliographical information to consult on the University Campus about the selected research study.

➢ All the information for this bibliographical section in this research was to carry out from foreign sources, due to the fact that there was little research made related with this topic.

➢ There was a limitation the group had to face which concerned to the time for running the research instruments due to this time interrupted their normal classes.

➢ Another limitation was the one related with the fact that not all the professors where the survey was carried out wanted to interrupt their normal classes in order to pass the instrument in the selected sample.

➢ Unreliable and unmotivated responders. (Generally students who thought or believed they do not get any benefit   from this activity).

- Students usually   did not respond with true answers, just because they did not want to say, recognize, they had a problem to understand   reading texts.

- Not all the students attended classes the day scheduled to conduct the research instrument.

DELIMITATIONS

➤ For this study, it was not planned to do an experimental or an under-control group because there was not the viability to do it.

➤ There were taken the subjects' groups in which there were students who were attending subjects from the VIII term of the "Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés Opción: Enseñanza" because this research was focused on 4th year major students.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Reading comprehension

It is a complex, dynamic process in which a reader plays an active role in constructing meaning from the text by using available skills and strategies. (Block, 2004; Graves, Juel, & Graves, 1998).

Factor

One of the elements contributing to a particular result or situation or one of several things that cause or influence something: Poverty is only one of the factors in crime. (Oxford Advance Learner´s Dictionary).

Authentic   texts

"Written an oral communications produced by members of a language and culture group for members of the same language and culture group."These texts are prepared for native speakers,they reflect details of everyday life in a culture as well as its societal values".Shum&Glisan (2005).

Reliability

It is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results.

(Colin Phelan and Julie Wren, Graduate Assistants, UNI Office of

Assessment 2005-06)

Validity

It refers to how well a test measures what it is purported to measure.

(Colin Phelan and Julie Wren, Graduate Assistants, UNI Office of

Assessment 2005-06)

Schema

A **schema,** then, is a generalized description or a conceptual system for understanding

knowledge-how knowledge is represented and how it is used.

Schemata

(Plural of Schema) represent knowledge about concepts: objects and the relationships they

have with other objects, situations, events, sequences of events, actions, and sequences of

actions.

Reading Strategies

Reading strategies are purposeful, cognitive actions that students take when they are

reading to help them construct and maintain meaning. (Baker & Brown, 1984)

Bottom up

This Process focus on how readers extract information from the printed page, claiming that

readers deal with letters and words in a relatively complete and systematic fashion (Gough

1972).

Top down

Reading process holds that readers form hypotheses about which words they will encounter and take in only just enough visual information to test their hypotheses (Goodman 1967, Smith 1971)

Abbreviations

FLD Foreign Language Department

UES University of El Salvador

L1 Mother Tongue

L2 Second Language

ELL´s English Language Learners

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING COMPREHENSION

Reading could not be successful without comprehension. Comprehension is a complex, dynamic process in which a reader plays an active role in constructing meaning from the text by using available skills and strategies (Block, 2004; Graves, Juel, & Graves, 1998). There are a growing number of English language learners (ELLs) who are suffering difficulties in reading comprehension more than any other linguistic skill. Many students struggle during the reading process to understand a text into English, to express thoughts and ideas. This is a hard task for them. And the students from the Foreign Language Department (FLD) are not the exception. With the purpose of discovering how these difficulties are originated, the researchers have investigated some studies related to this topic in order to design some reading comprehension suggestions that allow teachers to give considerable assistance to their ELLs.

The first study found an important factor that affects the development of reading comprehension. It was related to translation. The students' first language (L1) is used to translate chunks of texts when they were reading in English into their native language, for this reason, it was too difficult for them to develop reading comprehension in their second language (L2). This study was released by Montes, B.A., Botero, B.S. &Pechthalt, B.A. (2010) the purpose of this research paper was to disseminate the results of 2 months study which focused on how (L1) reading comprehension skills affect the same skills in their L2. Based on the result of it, this study established that students showed more confidence when reading in their L1 than when reading a text in English. Another finding was that they

translated the concepts into English. The researchers also searched for cognates, manipulated prefixes, suffixes and root words. Therefore, in this way the students transferred their background and content knowledge from their L1 into their L2 to support them in interacting with the text.

Another important factor that really affected the development of reading comprehension was word knowledge, and the study that supported this idea was done by Scott (2010). This study was focused on how word knowledge affected reading comprehension especially to older readers; they needed to possess a basic knowledge of "how words work", in other words, the functions each word had in context and a set of strategies for approaching new words encountered when they were reading. The results of this study were that Reading Comprehension was influenced significantly by a student's level of word knowledge, which included vocabulary and spelling skills, as well as the ability to decode words in print. "Knowing words" involved understanding both the structure and meaning of words at various levels of complexity. Teachers could facilitate the growth of word knowledge through the explicit teaching of word patterns and word-solving strategies within the context of a word-rich classroom. The goal of instruction in reading, spelling, and vocabulary was to help students to develop "word consciousness" and became independent word-solvers in all subject areas.

Some theorists which sustained the latter idea were Paynter, Bodrova, & Doty (2005). In their study: "For the love of words: Vocabulary instruction that works" as well as Stanovich (1986) in his study: "Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy". They supported that people who possess word knowledge or vocabulary is really vital for readers in order to comprehend

what they read in L2. In their studies, they showed how this factor affected the understanding of the English readings. At the same time, Paynter, Bodrova& Doty in their study also found that Reading comprehension is a complex undertaking that involves many levels of processing. One of the most fundamental aspects of comprehension was the ability to deal with unfamiliar words faced in a text. Readers who struggled with word-level tasks used up valuable cognitive space that could be allotted to deeper levels of text analysis. It was not enough to rely on context cues to predict the meaning of new words, since this strategy often resulted in erroneous or superficial understandings of key terms, especially in content-area reading.

On the other hand, Stanovich (1986) described the cumulative effect of poor reading and vocabulary skills. Children who were poor readers usually also lacked a wide vocabulary. When young children struggled with reading, they quite naturally read less than their more able classmates, and therefore were exposed to fewer new words. This restriction on their vocabulary growth, in turn, made progress in reading even harder. The effect of these deficits made learning in general more difficult, and as children progressed through the grades, the gap between skilled and less skilled readers became increasingly pronounced.

In addition, other significant study that for years had become a key in reading comprehension was related to cognitive aspects; Torgesen (2006) established these aspects were linked to memory and motivation factors that really affected the comprehension of English reading materials. He carried out a study that was focused to found out about what factors were influenced on students' reading comprehension since the first years of

education (first to eleventh grade). The results showed evidence to support that memory and motivation played an important role on Reading Comprehension. Because of it, some students that presented memory problems had strong difficulties to comprehend texts. Saarnio, Oka, & Paris, (1990), Garrison, Long, &Dowaliby, (1997), Kintsch&Kintsch, (2005) also shared the opinion that working memory span impacted the understanding of text. Human Memory as a cognitive factor was a really vital factor in the understanding of reading passages, thanks to, it helped these students to get a better comprehension of texts while they were reading some materials.

Furthermore, motivation has been found to have a great impact on reading comprehension tasks but also in some students' performance on reading comprehension assessment. Concerning to the study made by Pressley & Hilden (2002) concluded that teachers could motivate students by providing them with interesting texts, this allowed them choices in reading and writing, and helped students to set authentic purposes for reading (e.g., generating reports, writing letters, demonstrating some new ability or skill). When students enjoyed what they read they felt really confident about texts, as a consequence they found it easier to understand.

On the other hand, it was important to mention another relevant study related to the development of reading comprehension of students. This research was done by Vazalwar, Associate Professor& Head, Department of Education & Guru GhasidasVishwavidyalaya (2011) It added that anxiety was another factor that influenced in a negative way the development of comprehension in a second language. Based on the purpose of this study it can be said that anxiety affected students´ reading comprehension. These findings were really astonishing because from the results of the study, it can be concluded that anxiety is

correlated negatively but insignificantly with reading comprehension in English in students in general. Anxiety was not a controlled feature in reading comprehension. As such, the normal level of anxiety should give positive effect in comprehension.

However, the values of higher anxiety in girls denoting low comprehension & lower anxiety in boys denoting high comprehension was a proof of the gender effect evidently affecting reading comprehension. Hence, efforts were made to manage anxiety aspect in our teaching in the English class. Besides, there were some studies that supported this idea as Madsen, Brown & Jones (1991); Gardner &MacIntyre (1993) found that anxiety was related negatively to reading comprehension. The anxiety was not considered an illness, it was just a feeling or an emotion similar to fear or happiness, and this emotion greatly impacted reading comprehension of students in their first years of study and likewise to adults. The control of it could be through some medication. Nonetheless, during the reading comprehension process it was not possible to control this type of feeling.

Moreover, it was meaningful to detail another factor that nowadays is indispensable in the development of reading comprehension in English, and this was related to the background knowledge. Several studies have demonstrated that prior knowledge has played an important role in the understanding of text. However, it was known that the lack of it could affect in a negative way reading comprehension. (Aebersold& Field, 2005; Carrell, Devine &Eskey, 1988, Hudson, 2007; Vacca&Vacca, 2008). Among numerous studies which had provided evidence in support of the positive impact of prior knowledge on reading comprehension.

Based on the last studies Nguyen 2007 realized a research which was focused to the impact that background knowledge had in English reading comprehension. The findings showed that students who read material which they had prior knowledge were easier for them to understand. However, when students were exposed to various readings that were unknown to them, they had many difficulties to comprehend them; so, they had to read more than once, in order to understand the materials.

To sum up, reading comprehension was a difficult skill to develop for students, especially when it was in L2. It was known that they had to struggle with many factors in order to understand some authentic materials. Moreover, when the students suffered the lack of several factors which were really vital for the comprehension of texts such as motivation, memory, background knowledge and others, it was more difficult for them to understand what they read and to express their own ideas or thoughts about it.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES RELATED TO THE READING COMPREHENSION SKILL

Effective Reading comprehension is an essential skill in order to learn a second language, because most of the material that Second Language learners have to deal with are textbooks, handouts, written assignments that students have to do and written examinations they must face. The success of reading material has to do with the effective reading comprehension that students have, at the moment they are working with a given text. The misunderstanding about any of the material mentioned before may cause low academic performance and might frustrate some students that did not understand the text as it was expected to.

To facilitate the comprehension of this paper, it was necessary to define the two main variables concerned with the research topic: Reading Comprehension in L2 (second language) and Authentic Texts. What is reading comprehension? According to Phakiti (2006) Second language (L2) reading comprehension has been known as a highly complex, dynamic, multi-componential and multi-dimensional activity because it involved multiple interactions among different factors that students dealt with, such as cultural background, language proficiency, background knowledge, knowledge of genre and pragmatics, metalinguistic knowledge, motivation, text topic and content, text type and genre, text readability, verbal and non-verbal communication, metacognition, and Reading Strategy use.

As it was expected, the reader should apply many strategies to reconstruct the meaning that the author tried to convey to the reader in the text. The reader compared the information in the text with the one is in his or her background knowledge and prior experience lived by him or herself. Now, regarding to Authentic Texts, there were slight differences among literature in defining authentic materials.Nunan (1988, p.99-102) provided the conventional definition of Authentic Texts like this: "Authentic materials are usually defined as those which have been produced for other purposes than to teach language", such kind of example included print materials like newspapers or timetables, or spoken materials like public announcements (McGrath, 2002).

Meanwhile, Shum &Glisan (2005) defined authentic text as "written and oral communications produced by members of a language and culture group for members of the same language and culture group. There was a naturalness of form and the context of the material was situational to the culture of the target language group. Through the use of

authentic text, novice L2 readers were able to see a purpose and motivation for their learning since they were exposed to real life situations through texts. According to Shum &Glisan (2005) "these texts are prepared for native speakers, they reflect details of everyday life in a culture as well as its societal values". Researches done in this area have demonstrated that when students used authentic texts, they are learning a target language as it was used outside the classroom (Kilickaya, 2004).

In the last three decades, several studies have been conducted in Second Language Reading Comprehension to identify the factors either fostering or impeding the effective development of this important skill. As research on this area has grown, it has studied what makes L2 readers to understand the different texts; in this context different theories and models of reading processing have explained how reading comprehension occurs. In this paper have been summarized certain theories and models of reading comprehension process, since there are many, but it has been detailed only those considered more applicable to this research topic that is being made.

SCHEMA THEORY MODEL

One of the theories that dealt with the reading process was the Schema Theory, it was first introduced in Psychology area by Jean Piaget in 1927, he stated that as experiences happen and new information is presented, new Schemata (plural of Schema) is developed and old Schemata is changed or modified. In other words, knowledge is organized into units that are stored in our brain (old Schemata about everything people have experienced) then, when new information comes, this pre-existing schemata is changed for the new ones.

In this sense; this new knowledge became theories about the current reality. These theories not only affected the way information is interpreted, thus affecting comprehension, but also it continued to change as new information is received (Rumelhart (1980). The importance of Schema Theory to reading comprehension lay in how the reader used Schemata. What this meant is that an interactive process took place internally between, the text and reader´s background knowledge to fulfill comprehension. Although, this aspect has not been resolved by the researches, investigators in this area agreed that some mechanism activates just those Schemata most relevant to the reader's task.

Schemata theorists have studied different functions of Schemata such as: to disambiguate, elaborate, filter and compensate meaning to decode a text. For example it was commonly used by the reader to disambiguate a text , what is more, it is explained in the following: in order to illustrate this function of schemata, the work of Anderson et. al. (1976) must be cited. Her work was based on a text that she gave to students in their L1 (English). The two passages could have been identified as either that of a prison or of wrestling, or about cards or music, respectively. The prison/wrestling passage held key words and phrases such as "mat", "planning his escape", and "considered his present situation". The cards/music text contained principle words and phrases such as "notes", "gathered the cards", couldn't agree on what to play". It was found that physical education majors interpreted the first passage as a text about wrestling, while the second passage was considered to be about playing music according to music majors. This demonstrated how strong known schemata are for students in their L1, which held the promise for the

importance of schemata for disambiguating a L2 text. This also pointed to a schema's importance for decoding or disambiguating a piece of text.

On the other hand, the function of Schemata to elaborate meaning has been explained by several authors. According to Lee & Van Pattern (1999, p. 193), they explained that the readers fill in gaps either in things they did not comprehend or in things that were not in the passage". Perkins (1983) went on to indicate that after reading a text, what could be logically inferred (taking into account a reader's schema) is logically connected to said text by the reader. Riley (1990) showed this implication in L2 readers using fairy tales as the genre of choice. The L2 readers in her studies have demonstrated sensitivity to the information presented to them in the fairy tales. For example, since a "fairy tale" is usually made for the audience of children, the stories were free of serious adult issues. Therefore, when the students in the study read about a wife who was married twice in the same story, the students included in their recount that she had divorced her first husband. This was because, logically, in a fairy tale, it can be inferred that is what happened. However, without this schema knowledge of the structure of a fairy tale, a reader would not be able to make the inference.

Another Schemata's function is the filtering meaning in a text that was searched as follow by Steffenson, Joag-Dev, and Anderson (1979). These researchers demonstrated, when reading letters about different marriage ceremonies to both Indians and Americans, how information in these letters was filtered differently due to culturally generated schematic filters. An example of their study was related to a part of the passage which was about how an heirloom wedding dress is an acceptable custom for Americans. However, the Indian reader inferred, from the completely unambiguous sentence presented to

him/her, that this meant that the dress was out of fashion (since culturally there is an emphasis in India on financial power of the two families in a wedding). We can therefore see the impact that a schema has when it came to filtering information and "grasping" the meaning, or concept, of a passage.

METACOGNITIVE MODEL

Another well-known model of reading process is the Metacognitive Model, which stated that readers use one or more Metacognitive strategies (readers monitor their thinking while reading, draw conclusions, make connections, predictions, and to formulate opinions) to comprehend a text. The use of such strategies has developed over time as the reader learns which ones are best suited to aid in comprehension (Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Mistretta-Hampston, &Echevarria, 1998).It means that   effective readers get control on their ability to understand a text. This control has referred to as metacognition by Block in 1992. Metacognition involves thinking about what a person is doing while reading. Metacognition as Flavelldeclared (1971) is a mental processing mechanism that helps individuals to complete cognitive tasks. Phakiti (2006) mentioned the importance for the reading when developing a successful metacognitive competence as a direct monitoring of their thinking and performance; they consequently regulated other cognitive processes to achieve cognitive goals.

The knowledge of cognition is an individual's awareness of his/her own nature and the nature of others as cognitive processors or thinkers, a task, its demands and how to achieve these demands under varying conditions and strategies to use in order to accomplish the task. Phakiti (2006) mentioned in his study where this knowledge is located, he explained in the long-term memory (LTM). According to an investigation ran by Flavell in 1992, metacognitive knowledge can be found in tasks and strategy variables. Pressley (1998) found that students' comprehension was not enhanced by merely reading more text. He stated, if the students used even one of the strategies, for example summarizing, comprehension was improved. But also, if students were given a variety of strategies that they can apply at their discretion, as consequence comprehension was greatly improved.

COGNITIVE PROCESS MODEL

Another model of reading process is the one concerned to cognitive processes which differ in the emphasis that they place on two approaches. The Bottom up processing focus on how readers extract information from the printed page, claiming that readers deal with letters and words in a relatively complete and systematic fashion (Gough 1972).In fact, the reader relies primarily on textual features, she or he processes all of the letters, words and sentences, in order to understand the whole text.

TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP MODELS

Top down reading process holds that readers form hypotheses about which words they will encounter and take in only just enough visual information to test their hypotheses (Goodman 1967, Smith 1971) the reader uses his or her pre-existing   knowledge to decode the text, usually he or she tries to guess the meaning of words, predicts what will come next, tests his or her predictions and adjusts or confirms them. For this purpose, the reader

constantly compares the words with the ones, he already knows, uses background knowledge to create inferences and decodes symbols only when is needed for comprehension.

Some researchers in L2 reading comprehension agreed that both processes are regarded as equally important. The extent to which Top-down or Bottom-up reading process is involved more or less in aparticular reading context depends on the nature of the reading text, the readers' readingpurposes, their language proficiency, their attitudes toward reading, their interests inreading a particular text, and their available background knowledge associated with thetext they read (Alderson, 2000; Koda, 2005).

READING STRATEGIES

Other researchers that have worked on reading comprehension in a second language, have the idea that readers get a better reading comprehension when they are empowered with knowledge of particular reading strategies. According to Anderson (2005) the way this strategy instruction is used can better increase reader´s reading comprehension. This idea is also supported by Pressley (2002) in his research; he made emphasis on the idea that readers should be taught comprehension strategies: "teaching people how to construct meaning from the text rather than simply finding the meaning put there by the author".

As it was mentioned, this notion is widely supported by some researchers that stated: " the student has to be engaged in utilizing strategies to construct meaning form text, using text information to build conceptual understanding, effectively communicating ideas orally and writing." (Gambrell, Malloy, &Mazzoni, 2007, p.13) This method promised to

increase reading comprehension by formally, explicitly and directly teaching reading strategies. Students who know and are conscious of using reading strategies are more likely to understand the reading materials.

READING COMPREHENSION FACTORS

Dennis (2008) established that reading comprehension is a complex balance between recognizing printed symbols and internally interpreting the meaning behind the symbols. Comprehension abilities vary among the different factors that students are exposed to. These factors are explained in detail below:

COMPLEXITY OF THE READING TEXT

Another factor that have been affecting students' reading comprehension was related to the complexity of the texts; this factor was influenced by the reader's strength and fluency in language and his or her understanding of its uses and variant meanings. Oral language skills also played an important part in determining how proficient a reader can be because students hear words and gain a larger vocabulary. A larger vocabulary can help a student interpret, unknown words, by using the idea of context.

ENVIROMENTAL INFLUENCES

Another factor having with the environmental conditions that affect the students attempting to read a piece while in a frenetic or unorganized environment will find it more difficult to understand it than readers who read in a quiet and a controlled space. Safety is also another factor. If the student is in an unsafe home environment, he or she may find it difficult to concentrate on homework or reading. When a reader is placed in safe

environments, his or her reading comprehension skills may improve. Loud noise such as televisions or radios or loud conversations can also serve as distractions for readers. This author also mentioned that the importance of the reason behind the reading task can also influence the student's ability to understand the material.

ANXIETY DURING READING COMPREHENSION

Testing, class work or homework situations had greater consequences than reading for pleasure. Some students can react positively in testing and school situations, while others can be overwhelmed by the pressure to perform to a certain standard. Students suffering this anxiety may rush through the reading or not fully understand the instructions, resulting in confusion and poor comprehension of the material. Other students may force themselves to focus on the reading more closely, and be better able to comprehend it (Dennis, 2008).

INTEREST AND MOTIVATION

Dennis (2008) also suggested that the students' interest and motivation has been crucial factor when developing reading comprehension. She said "if the reader finds the material uninteresting or dry, he or she will have a more difficult time focusing on the reading". This inattention could result in a lowering of reading comprehension levels. If they find the material interesting they can understand it and can remember it more clearly. Educators can keep readers motivated by providing interesting pieces throughout the student's class time (Dennis, 2008).

DECODING OR WORD RECOGNITION SPEED

Additionally, Black (2013) referred to decoding and word recognition speed as factors that affect the students' reading comprehension. The word recognition speed is regarded to the way the reader decodes and recognizes different words. Also, decoding refers to the reader's ability to make sense of letter-sound relationships, including proper word pronunciation and noticing common letter combinations, in order to quickly recognize familiar words. Readers who experience difficulty with decoding and recognizing words read at a much slower pace and find it more difficult to comprehend the meaning or reading passages that their peers without decoding difficulties. She also established that the kind of vocabulary affects the reading comprehension because the readers use decoding skills to figure out the pronunciation and approximate meaning of words they have not seen before, but this process takes far more time recognition of a familiar word. Individuals with a wider vocabulary can interpret the meaning or reading passages faster and more thoroughly than individuals who must guess at the meanings of unfamiliar words based on context clues (Black 2013).

MEDICAL PROBLEMS

Finally, Hollowell (2013) considered a factor that no other researcher cited. Hollowell in her investigation with children established that "poor reading comprehension may also be caused by a medical problem that does not get addressed until the child is older". Her example includes undiagnosed ADD (attention deficit disorder), speech difficulties and hearing impairments. Students with speech and hearing problems are less likely to participate in oral reading or class discussions about the text, two activities that improve comprehension.

To gather the information related to the purpose of this study, there was a field research that included the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. To obtain the data required, it was used the survey method, owing to, this type of study was focused on quantitative research. This method provided all the necessary instruments in order to achieve the purpose of the study. During the research, the written survey (questionnaire) was administrated to the following sample.

<div align="center">SAMPLE</div>

✓ *Students:*

From the universe of 560 students who were studying "Métodos de Investigación, GramáticaAvanzada, EstadísticaAplicada a la Educación and PracticaDocente II" were taken 69 students because all of them were the same students who were registered in the four subjects before mentioned, it means that the universe was divided by 4. Also, this sample was selected from "Métodos de Investigación" course groups 01 and 02; in other words, a Cluster sampling because this population had homogenous groups, in this way, only two groups were chosen at random, according to the following chart:

SUBJECT	GROUP	LOCATION	SCHEDULE	PROFESSOR IN CHARGE	STUDENTS FOR THE SAMPLE
Métodos de Investigación	01	IF 10	Tuesday and Thursdays from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.	Miguel Mata	45

Métodos de Investigación	02	IF 10	Wednesdays from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. and Fridays from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.	Miguel Mata	24

This sample was selected because the researchers considered that in these subjects the students were more exposed to read authentic materials , owing to they began the process of investigation about different research methods and other topics related to different scientific and demographic studies, than in others subjects from the FLD's curriculum. The success ofthe implementation about this projectdepended on the availabilityof the professors in chargesince they arethe ones whogave the time to the researchersin theirsubjects.

TYPE OF RESEARCH

Based on the purpose of this study, this investigation was conducted under the guidelines of the Survey Method because in this type of studies, the participants answered questions and the researchers described the responses given by questionnaires. This research was a quantitative descriptive one since it can involve collections of quantitative information that was tabulated a long a continuum in numerical form. Also, it attempted to examine situations in order to establish what is normal – what can be predicted to happen again under the same circumstances (Clark, 2005).

However, the analysis of the instrument was done by using the quantitative method. So, this method provided all the necessary instruments in order to achieve the main objective of the study. The instrument that was applied during the study is the questionnaire.

INSTRUMENTATION

This research had a main goal, which was to explore the main factors that were affecting the development of students' reading comprehension when they were exposed to read authentic material. In this sense, the best instrument to collect the information was the questionnaire.

The reasons why questionnaire was chosen for collecting the information in this study was because they were very practical, it means that they can get a variety of information(factual, behavioral an attitudinal) factual, because questionnaires could find out who responders were, these questions respond about, age, occupation, level of education, as well as any other background information that may be relevant to interpreting the finding of the survey. Behavioral questions were used to find out how people react to certain situations. Attitudinal questions concerns to the attitudes, beliefs, opinions interests and values that people had. Besides, questionnaires took less time than other instruments and they could collect a huge amount of information with a little money; and thus, the researcher had more serious information about the sample study chosen.

DATA COLLECTION

There was an instrument for getting different type of information; this questionnaire contained 22 closed-ended likert questions that inquired about the students' opinions about

the different factors they considered affect their reading comprehension when having to read authentic texts. Also, it explored about the reading strategies these students applied when reading. Moreover, this questionnaire had a socio demographic section in which some of their personal information as students was asked.

DATA ANALYSIS

In this step, the researchers analyzed all the information that was gathered. First, there was a demographic analysis about the sample's information such as their gender, their ages, and the type of school they studied high school. Also, if they studied extra English courses before or meanwhile this research is conducted.

Moreover, for the questions where the choices were long to present in the chart legend, the researchers gave a code to them since the questionnaire was created with likert questions, it was essential to code them for the statistical procedures and analysis.

This analysis was displayed by using pie charts and their corresponding explanation about the findings, those statistical analyses and graphics explanation were divided in three sections. In the first section, there were the tables and graphics about the socio demographic information. In the second sections, there were tables and graphs about the different factors that affect the students' reading comprehension during the development of the reading comprehension skill. In the third section, the tables and graphics about the reading strategies that students used for developing a successful reading comprehension skill were presented.

Finally, this chapter provided a chronogram for the activities in which the data was collected during the second term in 2013 from "MÉTODOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN course, groups 01 and 02 with the activities presented in as following:

CHRONONOGRAM

University of El Salvador
School of Arts and Sciences
Foreign Language Department
CHRONOGRAM

UES

N°	ACTIVITY/MONTH	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
5	Corrections to the Chapter I			■								
6	Endorsement of the Chapter I			■								
7	**Preparation of the Chapter II- Threoretical Framework**			■	■	■						
8	Corrections to the Chapter II						■					
9	Endorsement of the Chapter II						■					
10	**Preparation of Chapter III-Research Methodology**						■	■	■			
11	Preparation of the Pilot Instrument						■					
12	Corrections and Endorsement of the Pilot Instrument.						■					
13	Address a questionnaire as a pilot instrument to students outside the classrooms.						■					
14	Analysis of the information gathered from the pilot insturment for correcting the questions that were not so understandable for the students selected randomly.						■					
15	Preparation of the instrument.							■				
16	Corrections and Endorsement of the Instrument.							■				
17	Send the letters to the professors for the application of the instrument.							■				
18	Implementation of the instrument to Research Method Course groups 01 and 02.							■				
19	Corrections and Endorsement of Chapter III.								■			
20	**Preparation of Chapter IV- Data Analysis.**								■	■		
21	Corrections and Endorsement of Chapter IV.								■			
22	**Preparation of Chapter V- Major Findings and Conclusions.**										■	
23	Corrections and Endorsement of Chapter V										■	
24	**Preparation of Chapter VI - Recommendations.**										■	
25	Corrections and Endorsement of Chapter VI										■	
26	**Preparation of Chapter VII- References.**										■	
27	Corrections and Endorsement of Chapter VII.										■	
28	*Presentation and Endorsement of the Research Project.*											■
29	*Oral Presentation of the Research Project.*											■

SECTION I: SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC AREA

➢ GENDER OF THE SAMPLE

| Class limit	Frequency	Percentage
Male	24	35%
Female	45	65%
TOTAL	69	100%
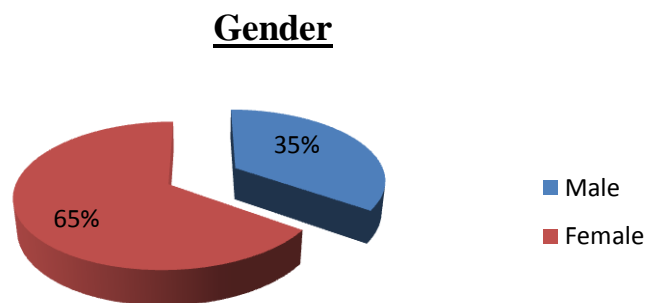
<u>Gender</u>

Based on the results gotten in the research, it is important to mention that it was found that the highest percent of students surveyed were women with a 65% and only a 35% of the population belonged to the male gender.

| Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Study	47	68%
Work and Study	22	32%
TOTAL	69	100%

Occupation
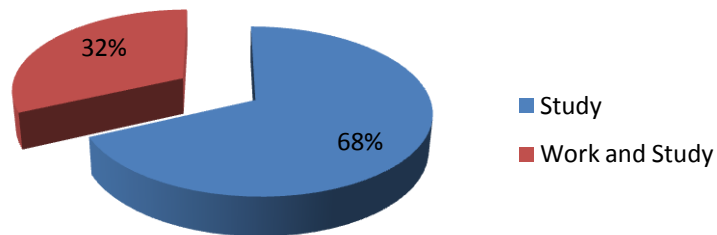
All the individuals in the selected sample belonged to "Licenciatura en IdiomaInglésOpción: Enseñanza", which is one of the majors in FLD at the University of El Salvador that has different schedules that gives its students the opportunity to both study and work. Nevertheless, a 32% of the students surveyed did both activities and the 68% of them were full time students.

➢ HIGH SCHOOL STUDY

| Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
PublicSchool	25	36%
PrivateSchool	44	64%
Total	69	100%

Academic background
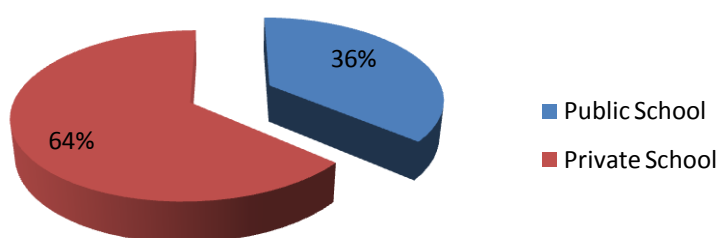
Based that the University of El Salvador is the unique public University in El Salvador, it is opened to all kind of students from the different educational sectors in the Salvadorian society. Even though, it is important to highlight that from the sample there was a 64% of it who were students who studied their high school at private schools, and only a 36% of them did in publics ones.

➢ HAVE YOU TAKEN EXTRA ENGLISH COURSES?

| Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	23	33%
No	46	67%
TOTAL	69	100%

Extra English Courses
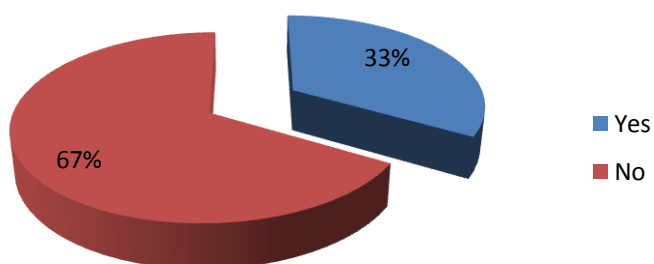
Sometimes, students take extra English courses before or when they are studying the major in order to strengthen their English skills. In this study, it was found that only a 33% of students from the sample had taken extra courses; and it is really important to mention that the 67% of the sample haven't taken any extra English course neither before nor during this research.

> AGE

RAW DATA					
26	23	28	21	22	23
27	23	26	24	25	23
22	23	28	23	23	23
24	24	29	25	25	23
20	23	25	22	22	21
22	24	22	21	21	21
22	24	25	22	20	28
30	21	24	22	22	26
26	26	23	23	23	24
22	22	22	22	23	23
31	39	28			

Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
From 20 to 23	37	59%
From 24 to 27	18	29%
From 28 to 31	7	11%
From 32 to 35	0	0%
From 36 to 39	1	2%
TOTAL	63	100%

Age
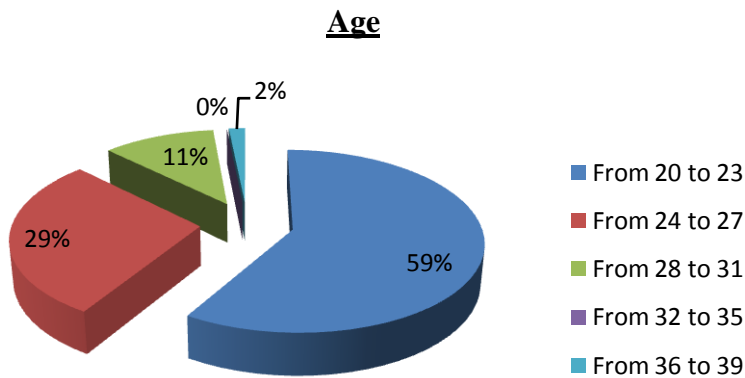
It is important to mention that the average age in the sample investigated was 24 years old. Also a great number of the sample was between 20 and 23 years old, nevertheless, there was an outstanding data which was 39 years old.

SECTION II: FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE STUDENTS READING

COMPREHENSION

✓ COGNITIVE FACTORS

1. When did you begin reading magazines, online newspaper articles, arguments, essays, textbooks, or any reading not graded by the professor written in English?

Code	Frequency	Percentage
CF1.1	36	52%
CF1.2	25	36%
CF1.3	7	10%
CF4.1	1	1%
TOTAL	69	100%

CODE MEANING
CF1.1 When starting the major.
CF1.2 When taking a subject in which you had to.
CF1.3 When finding an interesting reading.
CF1.4 When doing an assigned homework.

Graphic 1
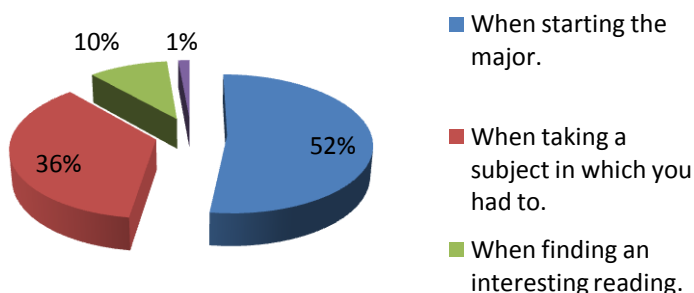
A 52% of the students surveyed began reading authentic readings in English when they started the major, and a 36% when taking a subject where they had to. A 10% began reading those kinds of reading written in the language before mentioned when finding an interesting reading; and only a 1% when having to do a homework assigned by the professor.

2. How often do you read online articles, essays, textbooks, magazines, or any reading not graded by the professor written in English?

Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Always	14	20%
Usually	12	17%
Seldom	40	58%
Never	3	4%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 2
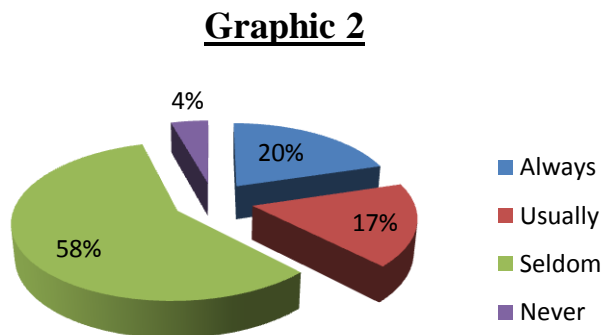
A 58% of the students surveyed seldom read in online articles, essays, magazines, textbooks, or different types of text in English language. A 20% of them always read them; the 17% of the sample usually did it. And only a 4% never read those kinds of readings.

3. What is necessary to understand authentic texts?

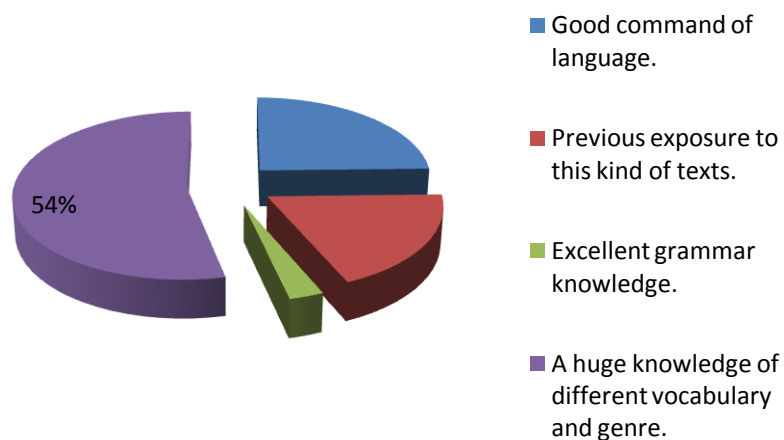| Code	Frequency	Percentage
CF2.1	17	25%
CF2.2	13	19%
CF2.3	2	3%
CF2.4	37	54%
CF2.5	0	0%
TOTAL	69	100%

CODE MEANING
CF2.1 Good command of language.
CF2.2 Previous exposure to this kind of texts.
CF2.3 Excellent grammar knowledge.
CF2.4 A huge knowledge of different vocabulary and genre.
CF2.5 Anotherreason

Graphic 3

It is important to stand out that the three aspects that the students surveyed considered the most important were the huge of knowledge of different vocabulary and genre. Also, the good command of language, and a previous exposure to this kind of texts.

4. How many times do you need for reading and understanding a text?

| Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Once	8	12%
Twice	39	57%
Three times	18	26%
Four times	3	4%
Five times	1	1%
More thanfive times	0	0%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 4
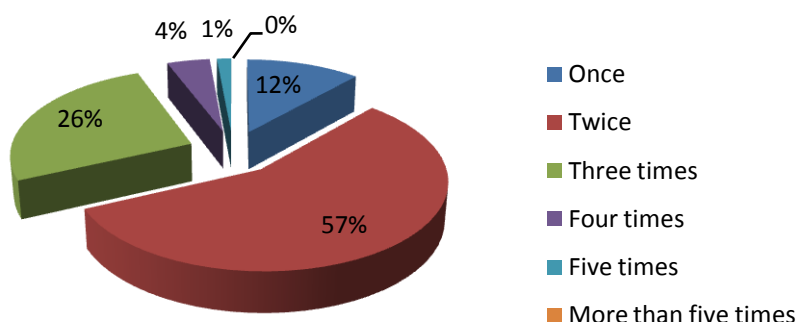
It is really significant to stand out that most of the students needed twice (57%) or three times (26%) for understanding a text. Nevertheless, it is important to indicate that the 12% of the students needed to read the text just once to understand it. Finally, it is evident that in the level of study in which the students were, only a 4% needed four times and the 1% needed five times in order to get a good comprehension of a text.

5. Do you consider that your English language proficiency level is adequate to comprehend any kind of authentic text?

| Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Stronglyagree	8	12%
Agree	51	74%
Neitheragreenordisagree	6	9%
Disagree	4	6%
Stronglydisagree	0	0%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 5
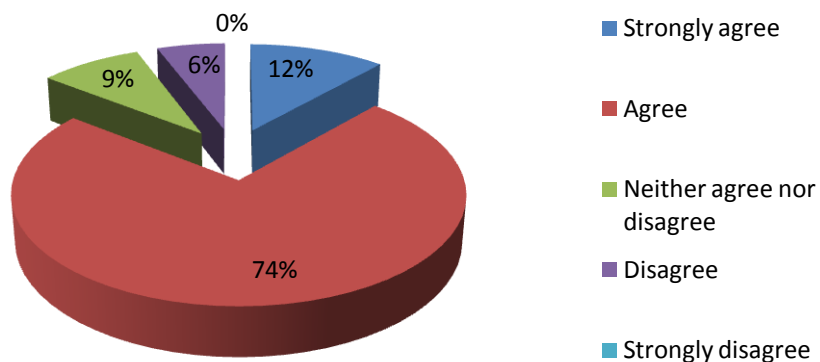
It is essential to emphasize that a great number of the students surveyed (the 86%) considered that their English language proficiency was adequate to comprehend any kind of authentic text. However, the 9% of the sample was neither agreed nor disagreed, it means, that this aspect was something they did not care about. What is more, the 6% of the students admitted that their English language proficiency was not adequate to read essays, online newspaper articles, magazines, textbooks, any text not graded by the professor.

6. When the professor in a subject assigns you a reading as homework, do you read it completely?

Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	43	62%
No	26	38%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 6
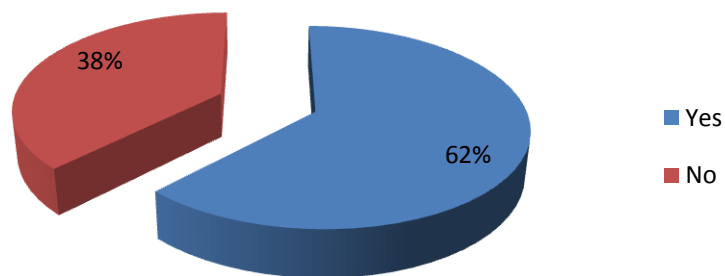
It is relevant to mention that the 62% of the students surveyed read completely the different reading assignments the professor gave them as homework; it means they read the text because there was an obligation to do it in order to participate or to understand the following classes the professor developed. Nevertheless, the 38% of them read their reading assignments partially.

7. What is the reason why you did not read it completely?

Code	Frequency	Percentage
RS1.1	14	54%
RS1.2	6	23%
RS1.3	1	4%
RS1.4	5	19%
RS1.5	0	0%
TOTAL	26	100%

CODE   MEANING
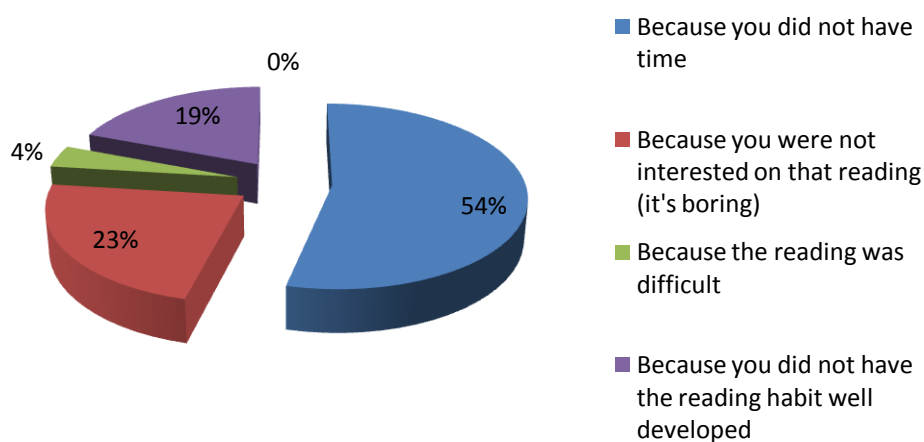RS1.1   Because you did not have time
RS1.2   Because you were not interested on that reading (it's boring)
RS1.3   Because the reading was difficult
RS1.4   Because you did not have the reading habit well developed
RS1.5   Anotherreason:

Graphic 7

In relation with the questions before presented, the researchers wanted to discover the reason why those students who read their reading assignments did not read them completely. And it is essential to stand out that a 54% of the students surveyed said that they read their reading assignments partially because they did not have enough time to do it. The 23% of the sample read their reading assignments partially because they found them not interesting. Moreover, the 19% of the sample read their assignments in

the form before mentioned because they did not have the reading habit well developed. Finally, only a 4% of the sample read their reading assignment partially under reason that the text was complex and difficult to understand.

✓ BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

8.-Do you consider that is easier for you to understand a text, if there are just a few unknown words in the reading?

| Class limit	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	46	67%
Agree	17	25%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	3%
Disagree	4	6%
Stronglydisagree	0	0%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 8
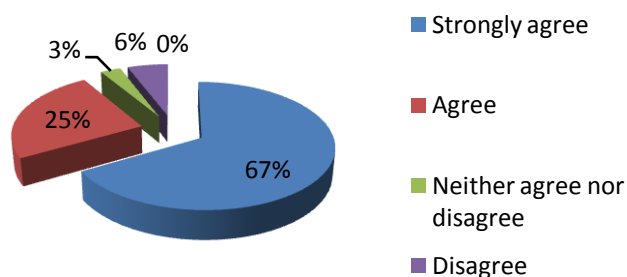
It is important to stand out that a 67% of the students were strongly in agreement that a text with a few unknown words is easier to comprehend. Besides that, the 25% of the sample was agreed in the statement before mentioned. Nevertheless, the 6% of the students were disagreed. And only the 3% of them were neither agreed nor disagreed.

9. Before reading a text, do you consider what you already know about the subject?

| Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Always	19	28%
Sometimes	42	61%
Seldom	5	7%
Never	3	4%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 9
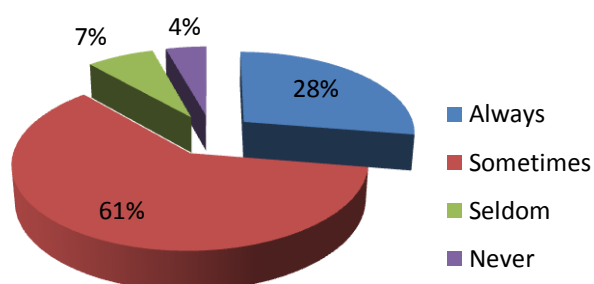
It is eminent to mention that a 61% of the sample took under consideration that the previous knowledge they have about a reading is essential to understand a written text. Also, a 28% of the sample always considers this factor before reading a text. Moreover, the 7% of the students surveyed indicated that seldom consider it. On the other hand, a 4% of the sample showed that never take it into account before reading a text.

✓ MOTIVATION AND ANXIETY

10.-When reading a text that calls your attention, do you comprehend it easily?

| Class limit	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	26	38%
Agree	32	46%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	3%
Disagree	9	13%
Stronglydisagree	0	0%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 10
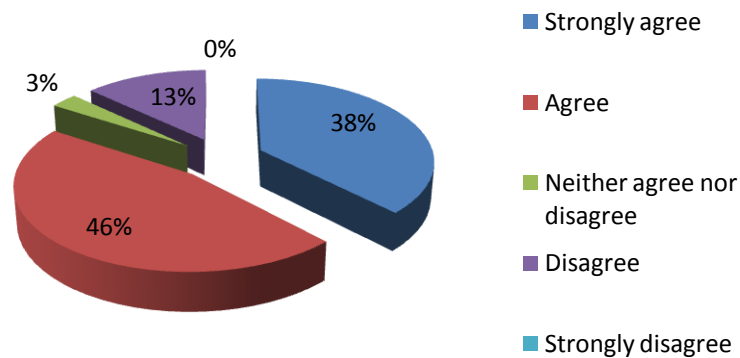
It is really substantial to highlight that a 46% of the students considered that reading a text that called their attention is really easy to understand. Furthermore, a 38% believed it is important in order to have a good understanding of a text. Nevertheless, a 13% considered that the interest about a text is not important. And only a 3% of the sample was neither in agreement nor in disagreement.

11.-When the teacher asks you to read a text aloud and then give your understanding about this. How do you feel?

Class limit	Frequency	Percentage
Comfortable	32	46%
Afraid	10	14%
Anxious	18	26%
Frustrated	3	4%
Self-confident	6	9%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 11
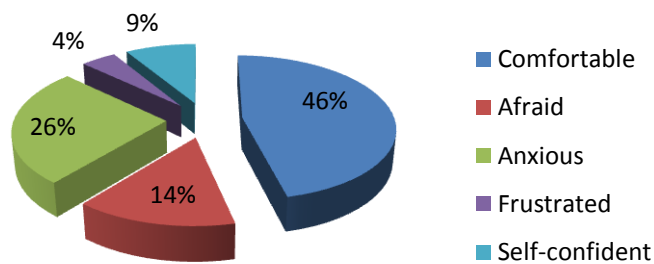
It is crucial to indicate that a 46% of the sample felt comfortable when the professor asked them to read a text out loud and then giving their understandings about it. The 26% of the students felt anxious when doing it. A 14% of them experienced a sense of fear when reading talking in front of their classmates. A 9% of them were self-confident, and only a 4% felt frustrated when reading and saying what they understood during the classes.

✓ ENVIRONMENT

12.-When there are interruptions such as noise, loud music, heat and other factors, do you consider your reading comprehension is lower than reading in a peaceful place?

Class limit	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	39	57%
Agree	20	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1%
Disagree	6	9%
Stronglydisagree	3	4%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 12
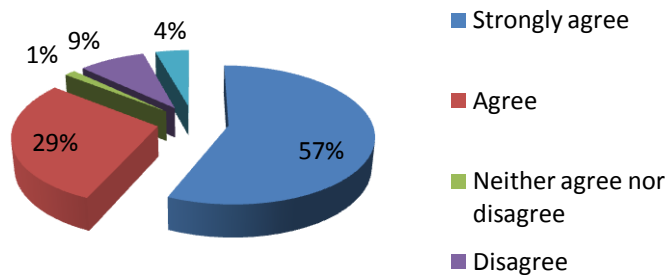
It is significant to highlight that a 57% of the students were strongly in agreement that different aspects such as the noise, the loud music, the heat, and other factors affect their comprehension when reading a text. A 29% agreed with the statement. The 9% of them were in disagreement with it. The 4% of the sample was strongly in disagreement and only 1% was not in agreement nor in disagreement.

✓ COMPLEXITY OF THE TEXT

13.-Do you consider that a complex and not well organized reading is difficult to understand?

Class limit	Frequency	Percentage
Always	43	62%
Usually	20	29%
Seldom	6	9%
Never	0	0%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 13
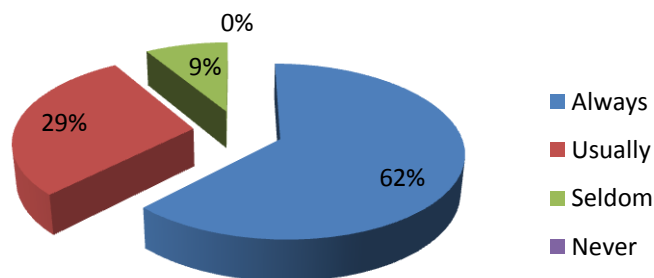
Based on the results of the survey, it is essential to mention that a 62% of the students considered that a complex and not well organized reading material was a factor that always made difficult their understanding. While the 29% of them said that those kinds of texts are usually difficult to comprehend. On the other hand, a 9 % of the sample believed that those readings are seldom difficult for them.

14.-Do you consider that the length and complexity of a text make it more difficult to understand?

Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Always	49	71%
Usually	14	20%
Seldom	5	7%
Never	1	1%
TOTAL	69	100%

<u>Graphic 14</u>
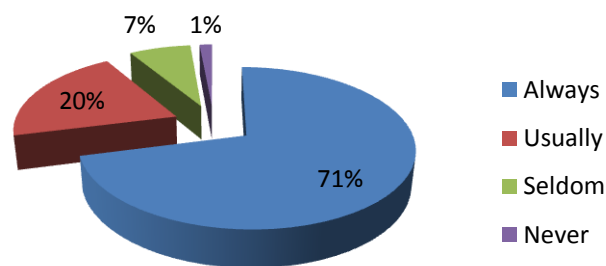
It is really important to denote that a71% of the students considered that the length and complexity of a reading material is always a factor that affects their reading comprehension. Also, the 20% of them believed this a factor that interfered in their understanding. Furthermore, a 7% of the sample deliberated that those aspects seldom interfered in the reading comprehension. Besides that, a 1% of the students wondered that the aspects before mentioned never affected their reading comprehension.

15.-What kind of reading do you consider more difficult to understand: fiction readings (novels, short stories, fables, tales, etc.) or non-fiction readings (newspapers and scientific articles, essays, textbooks, etc.)?

| Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Fictionreadings	19	28%
Non-fictionreadings	50	72%
TOTAL	69	100%

<u>Graphic 15</u>
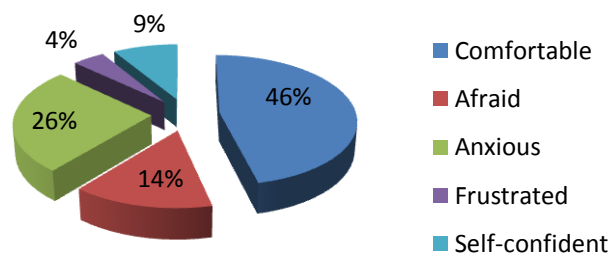
It is crucial to indicate that a 72% of the sample determined that reading non-fiction readings is more difficult to understand, and the 28% considered that fiction readings are more difficult to comprehend.

16.-Before reading a text, do you pay attention to its title and images?

Class limit	Frequency	Percentage
Always	41	59%
Usually	24	35%
Seldom	3	4%
Never	1	1%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 16
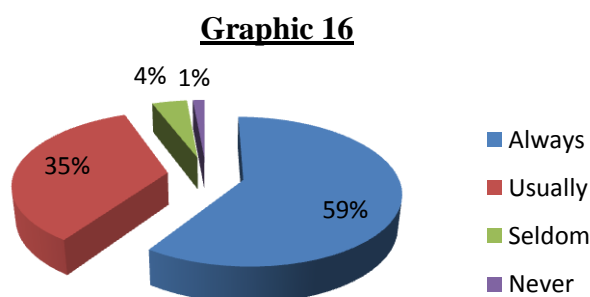
It is essential to indicate that it was found that a 59% of the students always pay attention to the reading's title and images in order to understand it. Also, a 35% of them usually do it. Otherwise, a 4% of them seldom take into account this reading strategy before reading a text. However, a 1% of the sample never pays attention to the title and images that a reading contains for understanding it.

17. Before reading a text, do you guess what it is going to be about?

Classlimit	Frequenct	Percentage
Always	11	16%
Usually	40	58%
Seldom	14	20%
Never	4	6%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 17
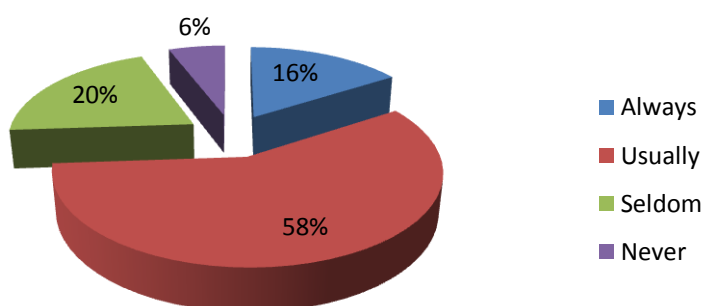
It is significant to mention that a 58% of the students said that they sometimes guess what the text is going to be about before reading the whole text. Also, a 20% of them said that they seldom use this reading strategy to understand a written material. Furthermore, the 16% of the sample said that always made use of this strategy to comprehend a text, and a 6% said never considered this reading strategy.

18. When reading a text, do you pay attention to words that are synonyms of a specific unknown word?

| Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Always	12	17%
Usually	45	65%
Seldom	8	12%
Never	4	6%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 18
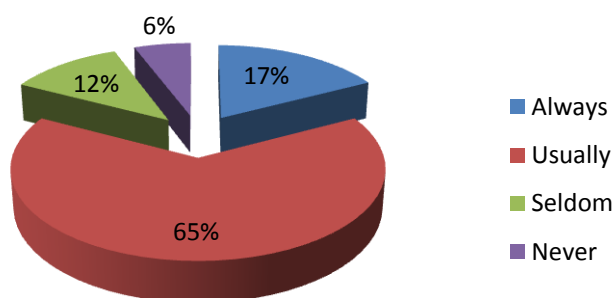
It is essential to mention that a 65% of the students said that they usually pay attention to words those synonyms. Furthermore, a 17% of them said that they always take into account this reading strategy for understanding a text. Otherwise, the 12% of the sample considered that they seldom put in practice this strategy to have a better perception about the texts they read.

19. When the meaning of a word is not clear in a text, do you look it up in the context, so that you can understand it?

Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Always	32	46%
Usually	35	51%
Seldom	0	0%
Never	2	3%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 19
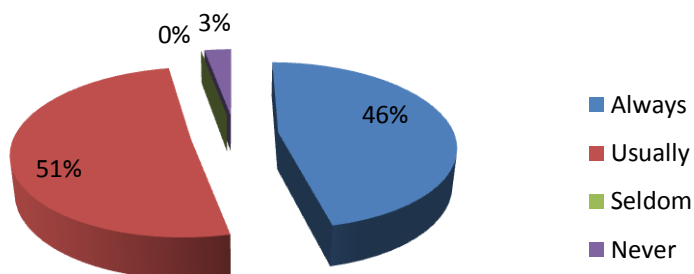
It is relevant to denote that a 51% of the students said that they usually use this reading strategy to find the meaning of a word just by looking it up through the context. Moreover, a 46% of them said they always use it. Nevertheless, a 3% of the sample said that never uses this reading strategy when reading a text.

20. When the text you read is not so clear, do you ask yourself what the text was about?

Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Always	19	28%
Usually	41	59%
Seldom	5	7%
Never	4	6%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 20
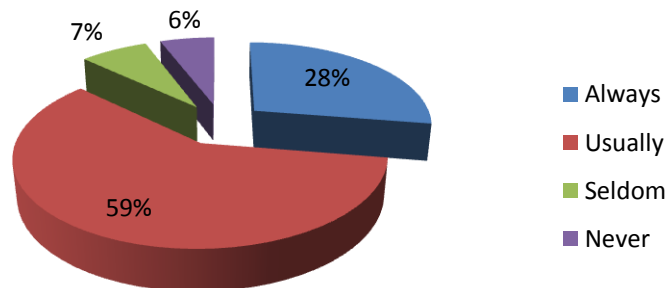
It is important to denote that a 59% of the sample said that usually used this reading strategy for having a better understanding about the text they read. Also, a 28% of the students said that they always practiced it. Besides, a 7% of them said that they seldom used it. However, a 6% of the sample said that never used this reading strategy.

21.-. When finish reading a text, do you keep track of what you have learned from it?

Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Always	11	16%
Usually	52	75%
Seldom	2	3%
Never	4	6%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 21
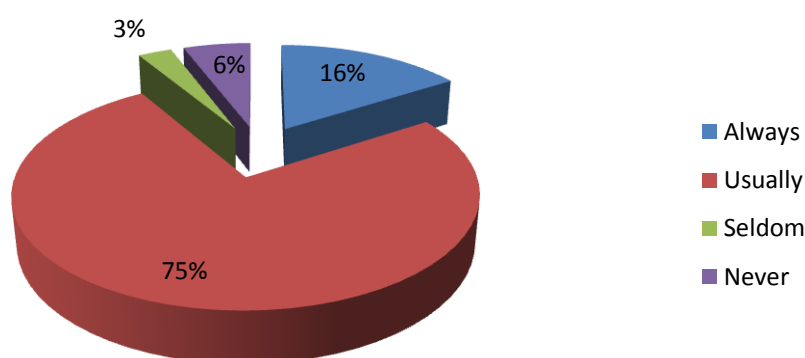
It is significant to highlight that the 75% of the students surveyed said that they usually used this reading strategy of keeping track of what somebody has learned form a reading. Moreover, the 16% of them said they always did it. Nevertheless, a 6% of the sample said that never used this strategy for learning from reading a text. Furthermore, the 3% of it said that seldom used this reading strategy.

22. When finish reading a text, do you make a list of everything you already knew about the topic and joint it with something new you read?

Classlimit	Frequency	Percentage
Always	4	6%
Usually	21	30%
Seldom	11	16%
Never	33	48%
TOTAL	69	100%

Graphic 22
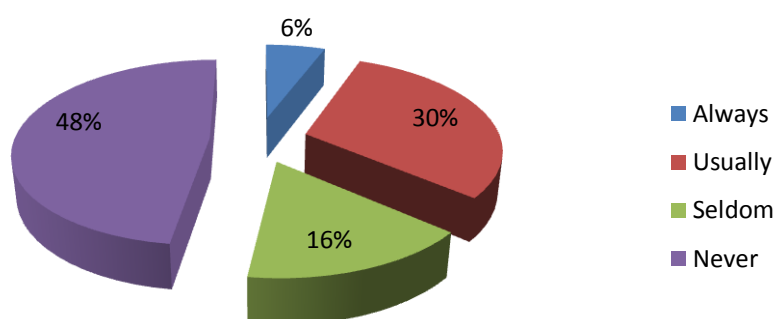
It is significant to mention that the 48% of the students said that they never make a list of everything they already knew about a topic and joint it with something new they learned by a reading, it means, they did not active their prior knowledge. On the other hand, a 30 of the sample said that usually used this reading strategy. The 16% of this sample said they seldom practiced it. And only a 6% of the students said that they always used this reading strategy.

GENERAL ANALYSIS

The development of reading comprehensionskill involves some factors that play an important role during the comprehension of any reading material such as cognitive, background knowledge, motivation, environment and complexity of reading material.

According to the results of the survey in relation to the cognitive factor, which is closely related with memory, perception, attention, critical analytic ability, and the use of reading strategies that students applied in order to understand a text, the result showed that memory as an internal process has to do with reading comprehension and affected directly the way students understand a text. So in this way, the cognitive factor greatly affected students' reading comprehension. A great portion of the sample said that learning and memorizing a vast of different vocabulary help to understand all kind of texts. According to some researchers, "Vocabulary Knowledge" is one of the best predictors of reading achievements (Rickek, 2005).Bromley (2004), in a comprehensive review of research on vocabulary development, concluded that vocabulary knowledge promoted reading fluency, booted reading comprehension, and enhanced thinking and communication. "Words you are unfamiliar with become little holes in the text, preventing you from reaching a complete understanding of what you are reading".

Also, the use of reading strategies was another aspect related to cognitive factor. This because the reader had to think what the appropriate reading strategies to find the meaning of unknown words or the main concepts in a reading are. Gambrell, Malloy, &Mazzoni,(2007) Students who know and are conscious of using reading strategies are more likely to understand the reading materials. The sample restated this idea since most of them used images, titles captions to predict about the reading (prediction) Besides, they mentioned that they tried to guess the meaning of words

through the context, monitor understanding(metacognitive strategy) and usually kept track about important aspects to get the main points of the reading (synthesizing).

On the other hand, background knowledge is another important factor that really affected students' reading comprehension. It has to do with the activation of students` knowledge to link all they already know with the information they read. It was noticed through the survey that students were able to understand and recognize the important or unfamiliar ideas and concepts when they understand the patterns that writers use to organize the texts. Based on the results, the students read a text more than two times to understand it, but this usually happened when they found unknown words or when the text was long and complex. But, when students read familiar topics, it was easier for them to understand them.

Furthermore, the motivation is another factor that fostered students' reading comprehension dueto the reader's purpose, perspectives, emotions and mood reader at the moment they are doing the reading activity. Dennis D.V (2008). The interest and motivation is crucial when developing reading comprehension. She said "if the reader finds the material uninteresting or dry, he or she will have a more difficult time focusing on the reading. "The result on the sample expressed that students felt more motivated to read when it is an attractive and interesting reading such as short stories, fables anecdotes and fairy tales; so, it was easier for them to understand them. They mentioned that arguments, essays, scientific articles, textbooks about different subjects are more complex readings because these readings take more time and require more cognitive aspects to understand them, due to the fact that they contain complex academic language and abstract concepts. As a result a lowering of reading comprehension levels occurred.

Additionally, the environment is a factor that interfered in student`s reading comprehension. There is a fact that people are not alone in the planet, in this context, the reader is surrounded by noise, loud music, disturbing the environment at the moment they are in the reading activity. Based on the result of the survey, the students said these disturbing environment elements interfere with their concentration and their level of concentration can be reduced. Dennis D.V (2008) the environmental influences affect the students attempting to read a piece while in a hectic or unorganized environment will find it more difficult to understand the piece than readers in a quiet and controlled space. Safety is also another factor. If the student is in an unsafe home environment, he or she may find it difficult to concentrate on homework or reading. When placed in safe environments, his or her reading comprehension skills may improve. Loud noise such as televisions or radios or loud conversations can also serve as distractions for readers.

Finally, the quality of reading material is a factor that played an important function in the development of students' reading comprehension, because the organization, complexity of the structure and the elaborated language of the reading makes a reading easy or difficult. According to the results in the survey, students considered that a poor and bad organized reading material can be a puzzle for some of them to get the ideas about it.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Based on the result gotten in the survey addressed to 4th year major students the following major findings are:

One important aspect that called the researchers' attention is that from the sample chosen, a great portion of students studied their high school in private schools, and as it is well known that in our country the students in those educational institutions take English as a complementary subject since they are in kinder garden until they graduate from high school. It means, that it can be expected that those students have an appropriate English proficiency level in order to study at the FLD, in other words they have a good English background.

Another important finding is that from the sample most of them are fulltime students, in other words, it can be presumed that those students after attending their regular classes had enough time to read the different readings assigned as homework or the ones the professors asked them to read for developing their classes. Nevertheless, a considerable quantity of the sample does not read their reading assignments completely. As a matter of fact, the majority of them confirmed that they did not have time.

Another relevant finding is the one related to the fact of reading authentic texts such as online articles, essays, textbooks, magazines, and the likes, it was found that the greatest proportion of the sample considered these types of readings difficult to understand. It can be presumed that these kinds of authentic texts are less read by the students because they have a lot of unknown words, complex concepts, and they believe they are in a way boring to read.

Another prominent finding in this research was concerned to the motivation students felt when reading and giving their opinions about a specific text during the class, it was found that the majority of them had a negative feeling when giving their own ideas during a normal class.

Furthermore, another appropriate finding in this research was concerned to the reading habit of authentic texts because it was found that the students surveyed seldom read essays, journals, documentaries, scientific papers, textbooks, technical documentations, or any reading not graded by the professors.

Finally another noteworthy finding in this research is related a combination of the lack of interest the students have in their own studies with different non-academic interests they have and the cognitive factor is the strongest factor that affects their reading comprehension when reading authentic texts.

CONCLUSIONS

✓ After the research it can be concluded that it is important to have good background knowledge in order to comprehend authentic texts such as magazines, essays, articles, and the likes. (see graphics 3, 8, and 9)

✓ The adequate use of the different reading strategies help the students to comprehend the texts in an easier way, even thought, in the reading can exist several unknown words, long length and complex sentences, and the grammatical complexity of the language used. (see graphics 16,17,18,19,20,21,and 22)

✓ Having a really well developed reading habit in English helps the students to comprehend any kind of authentic text, nevertheless, some textsare not related with their personal interests.

✓ The lack of interests that students have in their own academic studies and different interests besides the academic ones are factors that the experts consultedin this research did not consider themin their studies as factors that affect the students` reading comprehension.However, these factors strongly affected to the 4th year English major students` reading comprehension. (see pag. 36, graphics 6 and 7)

✓ Finally, it is important to emphasize that all the factors mentioned in this research, directly or indirectly affected students' reading compression of fourth year students. The difference among them settled in the percentage by which each factor affected the sample. The selected sample was strongly affected by cognitive factor than the other factors investigated.

CHAPTER VI: RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research before presented, the recommendations for this research are:

- ✓ Students need to read more authentic texts such as magazines, essays, online and scientific articles, and the likes in order to have a better reading comprehension about different kinds of written texts in the language they are studying.

- ✓ To encourage the students to identify what are the factors that could affect them in order to get a deep understanding about what they read.

- ✓ To provide to the professors the information about the different weaknesses that pupils have in order to help their students to develop a good reading comprehension skill.

- ✓ This research can be considered as background for future investigations related with the students' reading comprehension.

- ✓ This research can be contemplated for future experimental investigations where the students can be exposed to the factors that were shown in this study in order to identify the impact level that these factors affect the students' reading comprehension.

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

OBJECTIVE: *To inquire about the different factors that affect in the development of reading comprehension process of 4th year English major students when reading authentic texts.*

GENERAL INSTRUCTION: *we would like you to help us by answering the following questions concerning to reading comprehension skill. This survey is conducted by a graduation project group from the FLD. This is not a test so there are no "Right" or "Wrong" answers and you do not have to write your name on it. Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation.* THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!

Mark with an "X" or write the information about you.

GENDER: Male_____   Age:_____   HIGH SCHOOL: Public _____
Female_____   _   Private_____
What do you do? Work: _____   Study: _____   Work and Study: _____
Have you taken English courses? _____

Please mark ONE choice

1. When did you begin reading magazines, online newspaper articles, arguments, essays, textbooks, or any reading not graded by the professor written in English?
☐   Always   ☐   Usually   ☐   Generally   ☐   Occasiona   ☐   Seldom   ☐   Rarely
                                                                lly

2. How often do you read online articles, essays, textbooks, magazines, or any reading not graded by the professor written in English?
☐   Always   ☐   Usually   ☐   Seldom   ☐   Never

3. What is necessary to understand authentic texts?
☐   Good command of language
☐   Previous exposure to this kind of texts.
☐   Excellent grammar knowledge.
☐   A huge knowledge of different vocabulary and genre.
☐   Another reason: _____

4. How many times do you need for reading and understanding a text?

☐   Once   ☐   Twice   ☐   Three times   ☐   Four times   ☐   More than five times

5. Do you consider that your English language proficiency level is adequate to comprehend any kind of authentic text?
☐   Strongl   ☐   Agree   ☐   Neither   ☐   Disagree   ☐   Strongly Disagree
     y   agree nor
     Agree   disagree

6. When the professor in a subject assigns you a reading as homework, do you read it completely?
☐   Yes   ☐   No

7. What is the reason why you did not read it completely?
☐ Because you did not have time
☐ Because you were not interested on that reading (it's boring)
☐ Because the reading was difficult
☐ Because you did not have the reading habit well developed
☐ Another reason: _____

8. Do you consider that is easier for you to understand a text, if there are just a few unknown words in the reading?
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree   ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree

9. Before reading a text, do you consider what you already know about the subject?
☐ Always   ☐ Usually   ☐ Seldom   ☐ Never

10. When reading a text that calls your attention, do you comprehend it easily?
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

11. When the teacher asks you to read a text aloud and then give your understanding about this. How do you feel?
☐ Comfortable   ☐ Afraid ☐ Anxious   ☐ Frustrated ☐ Self-confident

12. When there are interruptions such as noise, loud music, heat and other factors, do you consider your reading comprehension is lower than reading in a peaceful place?
☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

13. Do you consider that a complex and not well organized reading is difficult to understand?
☐ Always   ☐ Usually ☐ Seldom   ☐ Never

14. Do you consider that the length and complexity of a text   make it more difficult to understand?
☐ Always   ☐ Usually ☐ Seldom   ☐ Never

15. What kind of reading do you consider more difficult to understand: fiction readings (novels, short stories, fables, tales, etc.) or non-fiction readings (newspapers and scientific articles, essays, textbooks, etc.)?
☐ Fiction readings   ☐ Non- fiction readings

16. Before reading a text, do you pay attention to its title and images?
☐ Always   ☐ Usually ☐ Seldom   ☐ Never

17. Before reading a text, do you guess what it is going to be about?
☐ Always   ☐ Usually ☐ Seldom   ☐ Never

18. When reading a text, do you pay attention to words that are synonyms of a specific unknown word?

☐ Always ☐ Usually ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

19. When the meaning of a word is not clear in a text, do you look it up in the context, so that you can understand it?

☐ Always ☐ Usually ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

20. When the text you read is not so clear, do you ask yourself what the text was about?

☐ Always ☐ Usually ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

21. When finish reading a text, do you keep track of what you have learned from it?

☐ Always ☐ Usually ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

22. When finish reading a text, do you make a list of everything you already knew about the topic and joint it with something new you read?

☐ Always ☐ Usually ☐ Seldom ☐ Never

Thank You