

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



Diagnose on the most effective reading strategies used by fourth-year students from
Licenciatura en Idioma Ingles Opción enseñanza, in reading printed academic texts on
Readings and Conversations II academic year I-2012 at the Foreign Language Department
at the Universidad de El Salvador

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To obtain the degree of:

Licenciatura en idioma ingles: Opción enseñanza

November 18th 2013

Main Campus, San Salvador , El Salvador

UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS Y HUMANIDADES
DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS



**DIAGNOSE ON THE MOST EFFECTIVE READING STRATEGIES USED BY
FOURTH-YEAR STUDENTS FROM LICENCIATURA EN IDIOMA INGLES
OPCIÓN ENSEÑANZA, IN READING PRINTED ACADEMIC TEXTS ON
READINGS AND CONVERSATION II ACADEMIC YEAR I-2012 AT THE
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSIDAD DE EL
SALVADOR.**

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**INFORME FINAL DE INVESTIGACIÓN ELABORADO POR ESTUDIANTES
EGRESADAS PARA OPTAR AL TÍTULO DE LICENCIADAS EN IDIOMA
INGLES OPCIÓN ENSEÑANZA**

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TOPIC

Diagnose on the most effective reading strategies used by fourth year students from Licenciatura en Idioma Ingles Opción enseñanza, in reading printed academic texts on Readings and Conversations II academic year I-2012 at the Foreign Language Department at the Universidad de El Salvador.

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to diagnose the most used reading strategies applied by fourth-year students specifically at Readings and Conversation II from Licenciatura en Idioma Ingles Opción enseñanza. This study aims also to modify the Advanced Intensive English II syllabus to improve how reading strategies are taught to the Advanced Intensive English II students. This project will take place at the Foreign Language Department of the Universidad de El Salvador.

The elements that take place in this project are as follow: first, the topic is stated as a brief introduction to give the reader a general idea what this research is about. Then, the general and the specific objectives are listed to identify the purpose of this investigation. After that, the justification is presented to describe the importance of this study; second, the theoretical framework is developed to provide deep information about previous literature that studies this topic in different scenarios. Third, the methodology is explained as a simple description of every single step that researchers followed to gather, process, and analyze data; deliberate sampling is used in this project. Forth, results are presented for the deliberate sampling and discussed in order to make more remarkable important findings. Then, a proposal to improve and renew the way reading strategies are taught in the Advance Intensive English II program. In the renew program one reading strategy is added at the beginning of each unit, so the teacher can explain a new reading strategy for each unit, this in order to improve students' knowledge about reading strategies. Finally, the bibliography is listed to help readers to find a broad range of information sources about this topic.

I. FRAMING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

A. Statement of the Problem

At the Foreign Language Department specifically in Licenciatura en Idioma Ingles Opción Enseñanza, students are taught how to apply reading strategies by teachers in different subjects such as Readings and Conversation I and II, whose purpose is to teach the way students can apply reading strategies.

Despite the fact that teachers apply different ways to teach reading strategies, most of the time, teachers do not have enough time to explain each reading strategy since there are only 16 weeks in the course to cover all the academic contents of the syllabus.

Therefore, teachers are more focused on covering all the syllabus content than on explaining each reading strategy and the reason is because teachers must cover all the contents in the semester; on the other hand, students struggle to catch up with all reading material, without applying variety of reading strategies and most of the time just by having an idea of what the most common reading strategies are but not applying them in a deeper way and how to take advantage of each reading strategy. Advanced Intensive English II Students still face problems on comprehension of reading because they are not being prepared to take Readings and Conversation I and II subject. Moreover, large classes in Readings and Conversation II affect negatively the reading comprehension and according to la Ley de Educacion Superior La Universidad de El Salvador Capitulo III article 22 says:

“Dentro de sus funciones administrativas, docente, técnica y disciplinaria, el Consejo Superior Universitario tendrá las siguientes atribuciones y deberes:

g) “Establecer normas generales para la elaboración de los planes de estudio de las distintas Facultades”;

h) “**Aprobar, revisar y reajustar planes y programas de estudio,** ciclo de estudios profesionales o de perfeccionamiento y especialización, la organización de cursos y secciones paralelas, así como de las carreras con salidas laterales y el funcionamiento de cátedras libres; por iniciativa propia o a propuestas de las Juntas Directivas de Facultades”. In that sense, the Readings and Conversation II program had been reviewed every year by the teachers in charge of this subject. In which some few changes have been made like in the specific objectives that had suffered minor changes according to the students material used during the semester, while the general objectives remain the same, as well as the evaluation system has changed from time to time (changing the percentage rate and also the items that are evaluated).

Finally teachers in charge to teach Readings and Conversation I do not continue teaching Readings and Conversation II, some of them continue teaching the next semester as it shown in the following chart.

YEAR \ SEMESTER	SEMESTER I	SEMESTER II
	Readings and conversation II	Readings and conversation I
2008		Lic. Cesar Augusto Guzmán Licda. Claudia Vides Lic. Ludwig Cornejo Lic. Fidel Navidad Morales
2009	<u>Licda. Claudia vides</u> Lic. Ricardo Cabrera <u>Lic. José Ludwig Cornejo</u> Lic. Fidel Navidad Morales	<u>Licda. Claudia Vides de Guzmán</u> Licda. Cecilia Reyes de Amaya Licda. Gilma Zepeda de Laínez <u>Lic. José Ludwig Cornejo</u> Lic. Cesar Augusto Guzmán
2010	<u>Lic. José Ludwig Cornejo</u> <u>Lic. Miguel Ángel Carranza</u> Licda. Nelda Yvette Henríquez Lic. Mauricio Contreras Lic. Cesar Guzman	Lic. Gilma Zepeda de Laínez <u>MsE. Miguel Ángel Carranza</u> Lic. Claudia Vides de Guzmán Lic. Cecilia Reyes de Amaya <u>Lic. José Ludwig Cornejo</u>
2011	<u>Lic. Miguel Ángel Carranza</u> Lic. Juan Carlos Cruz Lic. Rhina Franco Ramos Lic. Fidel Navidad Morales Lic. Cecilia Reyes de Amaya	Lic. Ludwig Cornejo <u>Lic. Miguel Carranza</u> Licda. Nelda Yvette Henríquez Lic. Mauricio Contreras Lic. Cesar Guzmán.
2012	Licda. Carolina Ramos <u>Lic. Cesar Guzmán</u> Lic. Alex Landaverde Lic. Mauricio Contreras Lic. Francisco Rodríguez <u>Lic. Cecilia Reyes de Amaya</u>	Lic. Carolina Ramos de Gómez <u>Lic. Cesar Augusto Guzmán</u> <u>Lic. Cecilia Reyes de Amaya</u> Lic. Yvette Henríquez Lic. Sara Méndez Gómez Lic. José Ludwig Cornejo

The selection of the teachers in every semester is not regular in Readings and Conversation I and II. This causes a negative impact in the way teachers deliver the teaching material since there are constant changes in the distribution of the teachers, as shown in the previous table.

In this table a comparison is possible between the two Readings and Conversation I and II teachers, each semester; teachers are switched in both subjects causing an inconsistency in the group of teachers that are in charge of these subjects; this inconsistency in the consolidation of teachers team does not allow the development of a solid syllabus, which prevents students from learning the Reading strategies in a deep way.

At present Readings and conversation I and II programs highlights reading strategies; however they are not explained in a deeper way and this situation causes weakness on students' performance in the different subjects that students register along the major. Also it is remarkable to mention that teachers that were in charge of Readings and Conversation I are not teaching Readings and Conversation II which shows that there is no a follow up from the previous semester.

B. Significance

1. Significance for theory

Reading is a complex process that requires many factors which may affect or enhance readers' reading ability. Some of the factors that cause reading difficulties are learner's lack of target language proficiency and vocabulary, unfamiliar with the content or formal schemata of the texts to be read and inefficient reading strategies. Reading strategies have been defined as mental processes or behavior that control and modify the readers' effort to interpret a text, understand words and construct the meaning from the text. These processes help readers to understand more what they have read and also improve their reading skills effectively.

This study explores and proposes a solution to reinforce the way reading strategies are taught in the Advanced Intensive English II by proposing an improvement in the syllabus. It also shows the most common reading strategies which are divided in 2 groups, cognitive and metacognitive, applied by the Readings and Conversation II students.

Metacognitive Strategies are the ones that function to monitor or regulate cognitive strategies. they involve about the learning process a) Planning for learning, b) Monitoring of comprehension, and (c) Evaluation of learning after the language activity is completed (Skehan, 1993, p.87).

A) Planning for learning is the way that the readers set reading purposes or goals, and then keep purposes or goals in mind, figure out what needs to be accomplished, identify

reading task expectations, plan steps or actions before reading, and finally overview texts before reading.

B) Monitoring of comprehension is checking if comprehension occurs, checking comprehension when coming across new information, controlling concentration or attention during reading, noticing when confusion occurs, and double-checking comprehension when encountering ambiguous information.

C) Evaluation of learning is accessing levels of text difficulty and reading demands, engaging self-questioning while reading, and evaluating accuracy in reading such as via task completion performance.

Cognitive reading strategies are mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information in order to learn summarizing main information, using dictionary, rereading and using grammatical rules to understand meaning. Cognitive strategies are Comprehending Strategies, Memory Strategies and Retrieval Strategies.

A) Comprehending Strategies consist of several processes which are: identifying main ideas, author's attitudes or tones, summarizing main information, analyzing author's purposes, guessing the content of a text, translating message into native language guessing meaning of unknown words using context clues, using dictionary to clarify indirect meaning, and making inferences based on the available information to connecting important ideas in text.

B) Memory Strategies are making use of available typographical features such as bold face, italics, pictures, tables or figures in text. Then readers need to reread the texts and take note, underlining main ideas or highlighting important information. Moreover, recognizing previous words or information and paraphrasing or simplifying information are also helping readers remember what they read.

C) Retrieval Strategies are using prior knowledge or experience relevant to the topic, relating new information in text with previously read text, using grammar rules to understand meaning, applying knowledge of word stems, prefixes or suffixes, and recalling reading purposes or task obligation.

The results of this study will help students and also teachers at the Foreign Language Department, especially in academic reading instruction at the college level. The findings will show the use of the most common reading strategies applied by the students. Also, the results of the study can be useful for course developers and reading instructors to create or provide activities to train their students to use their reading strategies more effectively.

2. Significance for policy and practice.

Along the major, students have some limitations when developing reading strategies, due to the short period of time (16 weeks) in which the strategies are taught. Reading strategies are really important because they help to develop reading skills that help students to understand any type of reading in every subject during the major.

It is important to mention that in order to contribute to eliminate the limitations of using reading strategies, a modification of the Advanced Intensive English II syllabus is proposed by focusing it on the most common reading strategies applied by the students to create bases on the students' reading skills. With this proposal, students and teachers will take advantage of the following benefits:

- Benefit the students with a renewal and improvement of the syllabus of Advanced Intensive English II, because reading strategies will be included in every unit making emphasis on the reading section, and will let students know the strategies getting an explanation about the strategy and its theory, and then students will have the opportunity to practice and get used to each strategy.

- Improve the reading comprehension; that will be one of the biggest benefits and students will be capable to decode a simple or a complex reading by applying reading strategies because they will get the basis on the Advanced Intensive English II, and when

they take Readings and Conversation I and II, this will facilitate the reading exercises during the class.

➤ Improve student's self-esteem; this is an important point because if students comprehend the reading strategies, they will feel more comfortable in the classroom, they will be able to develop the reading section of the text book, and once they have the basis, they will feel capable to express their ideas or participate by giving their opinion about a specific reading.

➤ Efficient use of time class that will allow teachers to successfully cover the syllabus, if students get the basis in a previous subject like Advanced Intensive English II, the reading section in every subject will be used wisely, because students will be able to cover the contents and also they will be able to participate by developing an activity and letting the teachers know how much students know about the content.

➤ Students with a better reading comprehension will be able to take advantage of all the academic knowledge along the major; if the students learn the reading strategies, they will be able to increase their knowledge not only learning new vocabulary from the readings, but also interpreting every reading with their own words and finishing the activities in the reading part using less time.

C. Delimitation of the focus of study

The target population of this study were students from Readings and Conversation II in fourth-year majoring in Licenciatura en Idiomas Ingles Opción enseñanza at the school of Sciences and Humanities of Universidad de El Salvador (UES). The group was composed of 40 students and they belong to group 02. Cesar Guzman, M.A, was in charge of this group from 2:00pm to 3:00pm semester I/2012.

This study is limited to diagnose the most common reading strategies applied by the students from Readings and Conversation II. It also proposes an improvement in the Advanced Intensive English II syllabus by adding an emphasis to the reading strategies.

II. Objectives

1. General Objective:

To propose reading strategies to be taught to 3rd year students major specifically Advanced Intensive English II syllabus, at Universidad de El Salvador through an improvement in the Advanced Intensive English II program.

2. Specific Objectives:

- To diagnose reading strategies that EFL students have applied along the major.
- To identify reading strategies with best results in order to help comprehension on students' part.
- To classify cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies in students when using reading strategies in academic text in English.
- To propose an improvement in the Advanced Intensive English II syllabus by making emphasis on the reading strategies.

III. Posing the research question

Research Questions

1. General questions

- What are the most effective reading strategies applied by Readings and conversation II students when reading academic text in English?

2. Related questions

- Should Advanced Intensive English II be modified?
- What type of reading strategies do students from Advanced Intensive English II course use?
- How often do students apply reading strategies while reading academic English material?

IV. Theoretical Framework

English has long been considered a global language used for communication by the majority of people in most countries around the world. To communicate in English effectively and successfully, people need four language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. Of all the four skills, reading appears to be the most essential skill for people who learn English as a second and foreign language in the academic setting (Grabe, 1991), and also for readers who do not have an opportunity to further their studies in a formal educational system. Reading is an important tool for English as a second language (ESL) learners and English as foreign language (EFL) learners to acquire knowledge in their field, whereas reading is more important for those in non-formal educational system to self-study for their life-long learning. In addition, reading in English is required because it is the language for science, technology, advanced research and so forth (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 2). Therefore, the ability to read in English efficiently will make greater progress and attain greater development in all academic areas for learners both in academic and non-academic contexts (Anderson, 1999, p. 1). ESL/EFL learners both in the formal and non-formal educational system all around the world need to develop reading skills to take advantages from available information from the printed academic materials. In academic context, the ability to read in English is essential for students at all levels, particularly university students both undergraduate and graduate students. Those students require the academic reading skills and strategies when they read academic texts as well as critical literacy skills (Levine, Ferez & Reves, 2002). However, a number of studies have revealed the reading problems and the quality of reading of ESL/EFL students. Some of the

problems those ESL/EFL students encounter are inability to read selectively (Dhieb-Henia, 2003), lack of target language proficiency and vocabulary (Kasper, 1993), unfamiliarity with the content of the texts (Carrell & Floyd, 1987) and inefficient reading strategies (Carrell, 1989). These are factors that may have an influence on ESL/EFL students' reading ability (Tercanlioglu, 2004, p.562).

One of the main difficulties of ESL/EFL students at the university level is related to the nature of reading itself. In 1983, the Michigan Department Education conceptualizes reading as the process of constructing meaning through the text, and the context of the reading situation. In Cross and Paris's definition (1988) reading is a powerful activity requiring the orchestration of a wide variety of cognitive strategies to decode, comprehend and learn from text. Oxford and Crookall (1989) see reading as a complex process of constructing meaning through which readers use strategies to facilitate their comprehension. Goodman (1996) defines reading as an active process in which readers use effective strategies to extract meaning from a text. Such definitions suggest the need to use reading strategies to get comprehension from the text. For ESL or EFL readers, reading appears to be more problematic because in the process of reading means the readers need to construct meaning from a written text, which is not their native language. In addition, Carrell and Escay (1998) point out that "reading is a receptive language process that starts with linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs" (p.12). Anderson, (2000 as cited in Phakiti, 2003) state that reading in a second language is a complex, dynamic and multi-dimensional because it involves interaction among the reader's interlanguage competence (e.g. Incomplete, fragment or not-fully developed linguistic, strategic discourse and socio-

linguistic competence. Similarly, Cunningham, et. al., (2000 as cited in Wirotanun, 2002) assert that readers also need linguistic and background knowledge, knowledge about vocabulary, and also cultural knowledge, and they also require reading strategies to help achieve reading comprehension when their linguistic and background knowledge is insufficient. These definitions suggest an important role of the interaction between the readers, the text and the linguistic knowledge.

Another cause of difficulty is linked to the inability to adapt reading skills to suit the texts. That is, students have not been taught suitable skills for approaching different kinds of texts. Most importantly, ESL/EFL students need to overcome factors that hinders their comprehension because of differences between L1 and L2 including linguistic knowledge and types of texts (Anderson, 1999). Consequently, to develop ESL/EFL students' reading ability to become proficient readers, the teachers have to teach them reading strategies appropriate for different types of texts. In brief, apart from linguistic and background knowledge and knowledge of vocabulary and types of text, it appears that an essential tool to help the readers to reach the higher level of reading comprehension is to teach them to use reading strategies correctly.

It is important to understand the concept of reading strategies and the role they play on reading comprehension. Cohen (1990) defines reading strategies as mental processes that readers consciously choose to use in accomplishing reading tasks (pp. 83-84). In Carrell (1998) reading strategies are referred to as the actions that readers deliberately select and control to achieved desired goals or objectives. Carrel further

describes that reading strategies also include a wide range of tactics that readers use to engage in and comprehend the reading text.

Research has also shown that how the readers use reading strategies is related to their effective reading comprehension. Some research has also revealed that reading strategies are the hallmark of effective reading (Alderson, 2000; Brown, 1989; Oxford, 1989; Anderson, 1999; Carrell, 1998). According to Golinkoff (1975), the reading strategies employed by high and low proficient students are different. High proficient students tend to set goals for their reading. They often note and organize the texts, and create a mental overview or outline of the texts to help them reach their goals. After reading, good readers often think about, or reflect on what they read. On the contrary, low proficient students have difficulty reading the texts. They may have trouble connecting the ideas of texts.

In addition, some low proficiency students do not understand texts because they are not familiar with the vocabulary in the text, and have insufficient background knowledge. After reading, they do not think about or reflect what they have read. They almost never seek out further information that is related to the topic. Similar to the previous studies, Pressery and Afflerbach, (1995 as cited in Carrell,1998) state that skilled reader or proficient readers are selectively attentive and they know and use many different strategies while reading text. In an attempt to understand what they have read, the good readers also integrate reading strategies across the text.

In contrast, less proficient readers often get tuck to the decoding single words, fail to adjust their reading to meet the reading goals or meet the reading purposes. They seldom

use self-questioning or self-evaluating strategies to monitor and improve their comprehension. In brief, there are differences in reading strategies used by high and proficient readers, while high proficient readers are usually strategic readers; they use a number of comprehension strategies to get meaning from texts, and they are aware of when and how to use those strategies. In contrast, low proficient readers use few reading strategies to comprehend the meaning from texts, and the use of strategies is usually less effective.

Reading strategies are divided in two categories, cognitive and metacognitive. Cognitive reading strategies are mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information in order to learn such as summarizing main information, using dictionary, rereading, using grammatical rules to understand meaning. Cognitive strategies are Comprehending Strategies, Memory Strategies and Retrieval Strategies.

A) Comprehending Strategies consist of several processes which are: identifying main ideas, author's attitudes or tones, summarizing main information, analyzing author's purposes, guessing the content of a text, translating message into native language guessing meaning of unknown words using context clues, using dictionary to clarify indirect meaning, and making inferences based on the available information to connecting important ideas in text.

B) Memory Strategies are making use of available typographical features such as bold face, italics, pictures, tables or figures in text. Then, reread the texts and take note, underlining main ideas or highlighting important information. Moreover, recognizing

previous words or information and paraphrasing or simplifying information are also helping readers remember what they read.

C) Retrieval Strategies are using prior knowledge or experience relevant to the topic, relating new information in text with previously read text, using grammar rules to understand meaning, applying knowledge of word stems, prefixes or suffixes, and recalling reading purposes or task obligation.

Metacognitive Strategies are the ones that function to monitor or regulate cognitive strategies are called metacognitive strategies. It involves about the learning process a) Planning for learning, b) Monitoring of comprehension, and (c) Evaluation of learning of learning after the language activity is completed (Skehan, 1993, p.87).

A) Planning for learning is the way that the readers set reading purposes or goals, and then keep purposes or goals in mind, figure out what needs to be accomplished, identify reading task expectations, plan steps or actions before reading, and finally overview texts before reading.

B) Monitoring of comprehension is checking if comprehension occurs, checking comprehension when coming across new information, controlling concentration or attention during reading, noticing when confusion occurs, and double-checking comprehension when encountering ambiguous information.

C) Evaluation of learning is accessing levels of text difficulty and reading demands, engaging self-questioning while reading, and evaluating accuracy in reading such as via task completion performance.

In addition, metacognitive strategies include “checking the outcome of any attempt to solve a problem, planning one’s text move, monitoring the effectiveness of any attempted action, testing, revising, and evaluating one’s strategies for learning.” (Brown, 1994, p. 115) In other words, metacognitive strategies are used to plan, monitor and regulate the reading as it occurs.

V. Proposal

The proposal includes a renewed program for Advanced Intensive English II, that includes an emphasis in the Reading Strategies. Students will be exposed to a new reading strategy on each unit that will allow them to first receive the theory for each reading strategy for a week and then students will have the opportunity to apply the reading strategies in the reading section of each unit (see **annex III**). This renovation of the Advanced Intensive English II syllabus is based on the article 36 La Ley superior de Educación:

“Los requisitos mínimos para que una institución de educación superior conserve la calidad como tal, son los siguientes:

Disponer de los planes de estudios adecuados, actualizados al menos una vez en el término de duración de la carrera y aprobados para los grados que ofrezcan”. Taking into consideration this article a renovation is needed, and focused on the reading area for the Advanced Intensive English II students; this will improve students’ knowledge in the reading area and additionally they will be able to take advantage of this knowledge in all the subjects they will have along the major.

According to the current Advanced Intensive English II syllabus one of the specific objectives is to read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, applying reading strategies. There is not emphasis on the Reading Strategies; students just read the reading section of the text book just to get some specific information. There is no explanation for each reading strategy before the

reading part so that the students can comprehend the text in a deeper way, a specific period of time should be given to each reading strategy in each reading section, with the purpose that students get used to apply the reading strategies. On the other hand, it is important to mention that keeping the same group of teachers in charge of Advanced Intensive English II and Readings and Conversation I and II is essential to give a follow up to the process of acquisition of reading strategies in each subject to achieve their objectives. If not there would not be any consistency in the teaching process of reading strategies in the Advanced Intensive English II as well as in the Readings and Conversation I and II subjects.

A. SAMPLE AND COLLECTING DATA

The target population of this study were students from Readings and Conversation II in fourth-year majoring in Licenciatura en Idiomas Ingles Opción enseñanza at the school of Sciences and Humanities of Universidad de El Salvador (UES). The group was composed of 40 students, but at the moment that the questionnaire was delivered only twenty four students out of 40 participated in the study; they belonged to the Readings and Conversation II group 02 and Cesar Guzman, M.A, was in charge of this group from 2:00pm to 3:00pm semester I/2012. This sampling was chosen because, at this academic level, students are supposed to have the knowledge about the various reading strategies.

The main aim of this research was to explore the most effective reading strategies used by these students, specifically, group 02 was chosen due to the large population it had (40 students), since it was the largest group of the 3 Readings and Conversation II groups in semester I/2012. Deliberate sampling is used in this research, which is known as purposive or non-probability sampling. This sampling method involves purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for making up a sample, which represents a universe. When population elements are selected for inclusion in the sample on the basis of access it can be called convenience sample.

This present study is qualitative data collection and analysis. The study is an exploratory study aiming to a diagnose of reading strategies from Readings and Conversation II group 02, at Universidad de El Salvador whose results will be used to propose an improvement in the teaching – learning process of the most common reading strategies applied by students.

In order to collect the data, first a Reading Comprehension test was administered in order to know if students apply different reading strategies when they read; they were given 15 minutes to read and answer questions related to the reading. Then the reading scores were used to classify the most common reading strategies applied by students (**see annex I**). After the test, a questionnaire with 14 multiple-choice questions was applied to obtain data about reading strategies students used in reading printed texts (**see annex II**).

The administration of the questionnaire was run twice, once in the middle of the semester I/ 2012 to be piloted and the other one at the end of it. The first test and questionnaire were taken as a pilot test. This was administrated to group 03 from Advanced Intensive English II under Lic. Rene Hernandez Rivas; responsibility during this time, the researchers could identify the weakness of the different items which were later taken into account while preparing the second and the final version of the questionnaire (**see annex I and II**).

B. RESEARCH STRATEGY

Data coding is a data analysis process used in qualitative research to categorize and label the major themes; so this was the data analysis used to determine the most common reading strategies applied by students from Readings and Conversation II semester I\2012.

The data was collected as described in the following items:

Design of the instrument (multiple-choice questionnaire and mini- reading test) Pilot test to verify the validity of the questionnaire and mini-reading test were applied to the group. First the questionnaire was composed of 14 multiple-choice questions to obtain data about reading strategies students used in reading printed texts, next the mini-reading test was passed, and it was composed of a mini-reading and 4 multiple-choice questions about the mini reading. Students were supposed to select the correct answer for each question.

There is an explanation of the steps followed to get the final results of the research as shown below:

First step- Administration of the instrument to the Readings and Conversation II students group 03.

Second step- Analysis of test results to find out the most common reading strategies applied by students from Readings and Conversation II

Third step-Proposal to improve the weak areas found in the test.

The main objective of this part of the research was to explore the most common reading strategies applied by students from Readings and Conversation II students of fourth year of Licenciatura en Idioma Ingles Opción Enseñanza, at Universidad de El Salvador.

C. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

The technique applied was a multiple-choice questionnaire, which was composed of fourteen multiple-choice questions; also, a mini-reading test that was made up of four multiple-choice was used since the main goal was to find out the most common reading strategies applied by students.

D. RECORDING AND ANALYZING OF DATA

The following is a description of the process that took place in order to achieve the data for this research. First of all, the population of the study was selected and a questionnaire with specific purposes was designed for its approval by the advisor; after the advisor's approval, a conversation with Professor Cesar Guzman in charge of group 02 of Readings and Conversation II, was held in order to get permission to administrate the questionnaire and a mini-reading test. The questionnaire was composed of fourteen multiple-choice questions and the mini-reading test was made up of four multiple choices. After that, a date was fixed to administrate the test.

On the date that the test was administrated, twenty two students attended the class in which the test was administrated for thirty minutes. While the test was being administrated, the students were relaxed and concentrated on the test, and some of them were analyzing the readings even after the test was handed in to the researchers. After this process, the data analysis categorized each question in five different variables of frequency that showed certain number of times that students performed a reading activity; with the gathered information, the team got these findings:

- Most of the students believed to know at least one reading strategy, that is why some of the students applied common reading strategies but not in the correct way since students just have a basic knowledge about the reading strategy they apply.
- Students know at least one reading strategy and the findings show that the most effective reading strategy for the students is scanning (cognitive strategy) which is a reading strategy to look up specific information in a text.

Researchers analyzed the information as follows.

Each question had 5 possible answers so each answer was given up to 20% of accuracy.

A = from 0% to 20% = never

B = from 21% to 40% = seldom

C = from 41% to 60% = sometimes

D = from 61% to 80% = often

E = from 81% to 100% = very often

VII. Results

After administering the questionnaires, the resulting data revealed three interesting facts about reading strategies. The first fact is most of the students believed to know at least one reading strategy cognitive or metacognitive. This was found in the results since 50% of the students said they often apply reading strategies while reading and just 23% of the students said they very often apply reading strategies while reading.

Most of the students devoted time to reading English material but not enough time in order to improve their English academic performance. According to the results, 37% of the students sometimes devoted time to reading English material and only 17% very often devoted time to reading English materials.

Finally according to the research the most effective reading strategy is scanning, since 50% of the students consider scanning the most effective reading strategy. Scanning is a cognitive reading strategy, which is a mental process directly concerned with the processing of information in order to learn such as summarizing main information, using dictionary, rereading, using grammatical rules to understand meaning.

XIII. CONCLUSION

The results of these data revealed that the most effective reading strategy applied by the Readings and Conversation II students Group 02 is scanning, which belongs to the Cognitive reading strategies group. As it was already explained, cognitive reading strategies are mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information in order to learn such as summarizing main information, using dictionary, rereading, using grammatical rules to understand meaning. Some examples of cognitive reading strategies are Comprehending Strategies, Memory Strategies and Retrieval Strategies.

A proposal to improve the Advanced Intensive English II syllabus was given in order to improve the way students learn reading strategies and also the way students take advantage of the reading strategies. To design the proposal, the Readings and Conversation I and II programs from 2008 to 2012 were analyzed to check the teacher's staff that has been selected to teach these subjects; it was done to verify the continuity each teacher has in each semester, and how it affects the acquisition and practice of each reading strategy. In some semesters there is a continuity of some teachers that taught Readings and Conversation I and II in the same academic year. The proposal mentions the importance to keep a specific group of teachers being in charge of Readings and Conversation I and II to achieve the objectives of the subject.

IX. Recommendations

Readings and Conversation I and II staff should be the same every year for at least three years in a row for a most effective result and also to consolidate the team work. With this proposal, students and also teachers will benefit in the following way: First, teachers will be able to keep on track of their student's learning process from the previous course Readings and Conversation I, so teachers will be able to apply the best strategy to approach their students' needs for the subject Readings and Conversation II. Also students will take advantage of this improvement, since they will be able to build a stronger relation with their teachers from the Readings and Conversation I and II subjects and, as a result, students' learning process will improve.

Teachers from Readings and Conversation I and II will be able to devote more time to the actual application of the reading strategies, since students will be taught reading strategies in the Advanced Intensive English II subject and this will save time for the teachers and students for extra explanations. Students will be able to apply reading strategies in their Readings and Conversation I and II subjects more easily.

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Uluslararası Sosyal Aratırmalar Dergisi The Journal Of International Social Research
Volume 1/2 Winter 2008

Annexes

ANNEX I



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



Objective: To validate this present instrument in reading strategies that EFL students have acquired along the major.

Indication: Please answer the following questionnaire, the information that will be provided will be strictly confidential, in advanced thank you very much for your valuable cooperation.

Student information:

Gender: Male ___ Female___ **Age:** ___ **Major:**_____

Academic year_____ **Teacher's Name:**_____

After reading each statement, please indicate by selecting the number

(1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) which applies to you. Each statement is followed by five numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and each number means the following:

1 = Never

2 = Seldom

3 = Sometimes

4 = Often

5 = Very Often

1) How often do you read English in printed form such as, textbooks or research journal each day?

1 2 3 4 5

2) Before reading, I read the introduction and conclusion of the passage to figure out what the passage is about.

1 2 3 4 5

3) While reading, I will predict the content of the text.

1 2 3 4 5

4) When I read, I will recognize the failure/ success to understand a portion of the text.

1 2 3 4 5

5) When I read, I will pay more attention to the meaning of the reading passage.

1 2 3 4 5

6) While reading, I will pay more attention to the meaning of each individual word.

1 2 3 4 5

7) While reading, I break down larger clauses into smaller parts to help me understand difficult sentences in the passage.

1 2 3 4 5

8) While reading, I will adjust reading rate to increase comprehension.

1 2 3 4 5

9) While reading, I will identify the grammatical function of an unknown word before guessing the meaning.

1 2 3 4 5

10) Do you use background knowledge to understand the text?

1 2 3 4 5

11) Do you back and forth while reading

1 2 3 4 5

12) Do you know any reading strategy?

A) Yes

B) No

13) Which of the following reading strategy do you consider is the most effective when you read? (select only one)

A) Scanning

B) Skimming

C) Skipping

D) Summarizing

14) How often do you apply the strategies when you read?

1 2 3 4 5

ANNEX II

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

Objective: To diagnose reading strategies that EFL students have acquired along the major.

Student information:

Gender : Male ___ Female ___ **Age:** ___ **Major:** _____

Academic year _____ **Teacher's Name:** _____

Reading Mini-test

Indication: Check your progress in understanding meaning from context by completing the following Mini-test. Select the correct answer you will have 15 minutes to complete the task. In the last couple of decades, marine researchers have observed that epidemic diseases are attacking a variety of sea creatures. Some of them are affecting rare species that are already at risk of extinction. For example, in the 1980s a mysterious epidemic struck a species of sea urchin in the Caribbean, wiping out over 90 percent of the population. Later in the same decade, harbor seals in the Baltic and North Seas succumbed to an unidentified affliction. The green sea turtle has expired in large numbers as a result of developing tumors, known as fibropapillomas, which eventually cover the creature and prevent it from seeing or eating.

Coral reefs and the species that inhabit them have also witnessed an explosion of new diseases. Most of these reported diseases are infections that have appeared recently or are increasing in incidence or geographic range. Some scientists infer that human activity is responsible for spreading these afflictions. Perhaps industrial pollution is weakening the immune system of marine population and making them more susceptible to pathogens.

1. The word "affliction" is closest in meaning to
 - a) situation
 - b) toxin
 - c) disease
 - d) seizure

2. In stating "The green sea turtle has expired in large numbers," the author means that the sea turtles have
 - a) died from an illness
 - b) declined in numbers
 - c) quit coming to the Caribbean
 - d) become extinct in the Baltic and North Seas

3. The word "incidence" is closest in meaning to
 - a) rate of occurrence
 - b) degree of circumstance
 - c) degree of severity
 - d) rate of exposure

4. The word "susceptible" is closest in meaning to
 - a) attractive
 - b) heedful
 - c) perilous
 - d) vulnerable

ANNEX III

Proposal for a renewal of Advanced Intensive English II

UNITS	OBJECTIVE	CONTENT	METHODOLOGY	TIME
1- ATTITUDE	To apply cognitive reading strategies in the reading part.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to reading strategies applying scanning into the reading part. (cognitive strategies) • Understand continuous and perfect verbs • Give opinions on graffiti Write a letter expressing opinions	Reading, lectures, group work and teacher's feedback	1 week
2-COMMUNICATION	To apply cognitive reading strategies in the reading part.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying skimming into the reading part. (cognitive strategies) • Understand spoken attitudes • Describe cellphone features and dress codes Write a blog	Reading, lectures, group work and teacher's feedback	1 week
3-HATE	To apply cognitive reading strategies in the reading part.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying summarizing into the reading part. (cognitive strategies) • Follow extended speech using colloquialism and idiomatic expressions • Use get in multiple forms Effectively express annoyance	Reading, lectures, group work and teacher's feedback	1 week

4- RELATIONSHIPS	To apply cognitive reading strategies in the reading part.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying guessing the content of a text into the reading part. (Cognitive strategies). • Use modal verbs accurately • Express attitudes to body shape <p>Use colloquial language in a role play.</p>	Reading, lectures, group work and teacher's feedback	1 week
5- CLUBS	To apply cognitive reading strategies in the reading part.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying underlining main ideas or highlighting important information into the reading part. (cognitive strategies) • Summarize main ideas in texts about contemporary issues • Make and respond to arguments and counterarguments • Prepare and give a presentation 	Reading, lectures, group work and teacher's feedback	1 week
6- CHILDREN	To apply metacognitive reading strategies in the reading part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying planning for learning into the reading part. (metacognitive strategies) • Tell stories about childhood • Use spoken narrative techniques <p>Write humorous texts in a specified style</p>	Reading, lectures, group work and teacher's feedback	1 week

7- HAPPINESS	To apply metacognitive reading strategies in the reading part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying monitoring of comprehension into the reading part. (metacognitive strategies) • Use conditionals to express regrets • Use language effectively to cheer people up • Discuss advertising <p>Write a detailed description of an experience</p>	Reading, lectures, group work and teacher's feedback	1 week
8- NUMBERS	To apply cognitive reading strategies in the reading part.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying retrieval strategies into the reading part. (cognitive strategies) <p>Identifying and giving opinions about world problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use past tense modals, discourse markers and compound adjectives accurately. • Evaluate and suggest improvements for other students' speech <p>Understand implicit information in informal speech</p>	Reading, lectures, group work and teacher's feedback	1 week

9- SPACE	To apply cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies in the reading part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of cognitive reading strategies Describing the features and functions of plants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose the best summary of a text • Plan a tour Role-play a public meeting	Reading, lectures, group work and teacher's feedback	1 week
10- THE END	To apply cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies in the reading part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of metacognitive reading strategies • Summarize a complex text orally • Understand euphemisms • Talk about movies 	Reading, lectures, group work and teacher's feedback	1 week